



OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY

GOD FIRST!

A Letter from President Pollard



Greetings from your Oakwood University!

It is 2021 and we are still fighting a global pandemic! At the onset of the COVID-19 crisis in February 2020, I organized a 40-person team comprised of faculty, staff, administrators, and students. The team, known as the University Responsiveness Taskforce (URT) provided, and continues to provide, daily monitoring of the pandemic environment, and makes recommendations designed to safeguard the health and safety of our campus populations. By the grace of God, URT's work has helped us keep our cases at a minimum. Faced with operating during the challenges of an international pandemic, we have been diligently planning with intentionality for the protection of our campus community. Our prayer and plan is for Oakwood University to be the safest campus in Alabama!

To that end, we have taken many important measures that are in line with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the State of Alabama statewide health orders. These measures include enhanced and increased cleaning and sanitation protocols; plexiglass shield installation; required masking and CDC-defined social distancing; routine temperature checks; reduced class sizes; facility reconfiguration and space management limitations; modification of large group gatherings; carryout meals from the Dining Hall; contact tracing and testing options; de-densifying the residence halls, as well as other living and learning spaces; and academic calendar modifications. Thanks to more than \$350,000 in 2021 grant procurement, required testing is available as well as a recommended vaccination opportunity for all students on campus, including qualifying middle-school and Academy-age students. We have also contracted with a third-party provider of hygienic products, and personal protective equipment. Sanitization stations are strategically placed and maintained across our campus.

Our plans to reopen for the 2021-2022 school year are set to begin on August 2, 2021 with Employee Colloquium. The Fall semester has been shortened to end immediately before Thanksgiving (Nov. 24); the Spring semester will resume after the New Year, on January 5, 2022. We have learned over the last year that the "new normal" affects everything from how we conduct intramurals to how we stagger dining hall entry. Be assured that the University will continue to identify medically-appropriate measures for the protection of the most vulnerable and those at greater risk within our campus community.

The information that follows here represents hundreds of hours of planning and analysis. We invite your prayers for the unique mission of Oakwood University. And please check the University's website COVID-19 page for continuing updates at: <https://www2.oakwood.edu/oakwood-university-coronavirus-covid-19-update/>.

Very sincerely,

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