



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY, MOREHOUSE COLLEGE, AND SPELMAN COLLEGE PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO STUDENTS AND FAMILIES FOR LIMITED SPRING IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CAMPUS RESIDENCY

ATLANTA, Georgia, November 16, 2020— To allow students and their families the necessary time to prepare for the 2021 spring semester, the presidents of Clark Atlanta University (CAU), Morehouse College, and Spelman College today shared preliminary plans to begin spring courses on February 1, 2021. Reflecting awareness and anticipation of a fall spike in national COVID-19 cases, the plans include an adjusted academic calendar and a limited return to in-person instruction and campus residency for specific groups of students. These plans are subject to change based on public health information which is monitored on an ongoing basis.

Each of the institutions will identify and invite cohorts of students to live and/or learn on campus while other students will continue virtual learning. Classes for the 2021 spring semester begin on Monday, February 1, 2021 for all CAU, Morehouse, and Spelman students. AUCC member institution Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM), which follows a separate academic calendar, will continue in-person and hybrid instruction and has enhanced health and safety protocols. The Robert W. Woodruff Library of the Atlanta University Center (AUC) will provide both in-person and virtual services for AUC students.

After a fall semester of virtual instruction, each institution would ideally prefer to return all students to campus. However, by reducing the number of students on their campuses, CAU, Morehouse, and Spelman are best able to implement rigorous health and safety protocols designed to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Through the AUCC, the member institutions will implement a rigorous science-based safety strategy, to include COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, isolation, quarantine, and treatment measures to mitigate the transmission of the virus. As part of these measures, the institutions will identify and isolate those who could potentially spread the virus and provide medical guidance to students. Students, faculty, and staff will be tested for COVID-19 prior to arriving on campus and periodically during the semester. Students will have access to student health services on their home campus or through the newly opened AUC Student Health Center. Health protocols will be coordinated with MSM, a national leader in treating and addressing the impact of COVID-19 among minority populations.

Specific instructions and policies for students, faculty, and staff regarding academic, residential, co-curricular, and health and safety policies will be provided by each institution and can be accessed through that institution's website.

Health and Safety

Health and safety protocols are based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, World Health Organization, and Georgia Department of Public Health. Key elements include:

- **Mandatory Testing and Monitoring of Students, Faculty, and Staff.** Students, faculty, and staff will be tested for COVID-19 prior to arriving and periodically during the semester (a minimum of once per week or more frequently based on health data trends). All students must produce a negative result from a COVID-19 test administered 72 hours before arriving on campus. Further, each institution will perform contact tracing relative to students who test positive for the virus, isolate students who test positive, and quarantine students who have come into close contact with a person who has tested positive. The institutions will use technology and algorithms to monitor symptoms and pinpoint increases in community virus transmission, as well as to perform contact tracing and to communicate with stakeholders.
- **Social Distancing.** To promote social distancing, event sizes will be limited, visitor access will be restricted, and some staff will adhere to adjusted work schedules. The campuses have also adjusted facilities and posted signage to indicate maximum occupancy for instructional and gathering spaces.
- **Mandatory Face Coverings.** CDC-endorsed masks must be worn in all public spaces including the Robert W. Woodruff Library of the AUC. AUCC campuses will provide one washable mask to all students and employees.
- **Symptom Checking.** Students, employees, and all persons entering AUCC campuses will undergo temperature checks and may need to complete an app-based symptom screening daily.
- **Modified Facilities and Access to Campus.** To reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure, adjustments have been implemented related to campus entry points, pedestrian traffic patterns, and facility layouts. In addition, the number of hand sanitizing stations has been increased and ventilation systems have been evaluated.
- **Health Services.** Students will have access to student health services on their home campus or through the newly opened, state-of-the-art AUC Student Health Center on Lee Street.

Modified Academic Calendar

The academic calendar for Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spelman College has been designed to reduce opportunities for potential spread of the COVID-19 virus during the 2021 spring semester. As previously announced, the start of the spring semester will be delayed until February 1, 2021. There will be no official spring break. However, there will be a mid-point break from Wednesday, March 31, through Friday, April 2, 2021 (Good Friday) to help reduce stress and support mental well-being. The last day for final exams will be Friday, May 7, 2021. The calendar applies to all students, including both those attending in-person classes and those learning through virtual instruction.

Key dates in the academic calendar for the 2021 spring semester include:

- Monday, February 1, 2021: Classes begin
- Wednesday, March 31 and Thursday, April 1, 2021: Mid-point break
- Friday, April 2, 2021: Good Friday
- Wednesday, April 28, 2021: Last day of class
- Thursday, April 29 and Friday, April 30, 2021: Reading Days
- Monday, May 3 – Friday, May 7, 2021: Final exams

While AUCC institutions fully recognize that no mitigation measure is guaranteed to eliminate spread of the virus, the measures implemented by each institution prioritize the safety of our campus community. AUCC and the member institutions will continue to monitor relevant COVID-19 data including positivity rates and local hospital capacity. This is a fluid situation which may necessitate further adjustments if community health conditions worsen. All stakeholders will need to maintain awareness and flexibility, as well as take personal responsibility for helping to keep the AUCC community safe by adhering to AUCC requirements, institutional policies, and public health guidelines.

More information is also available at auccenter.edu. Please refer to each institution for more information on their individual plans and policies.

Clark Atlanta University: www.cau.edu

Spelman College: www.spelman.edu

Morehouse College: www.morehouse.edu

Robert W. Woodruff Library of the Atlanta

Morehouse School of Medicine: www.msm.edu

University Center (AUC), Inc.: www.auctr.edu

— Frequently Asked Questions —

How has the academic calendar been affected?

As previously announced, the first day of classes will be February 1, 2021. There will be no spring break, though there will be a shorter mid-point break beginning on Wednesday, March 31, 2021 and ending on Friday, April 2, 2021 (Good Friday). This schedule will apply both to students attending classes in person and those learning virtually.

How will students who remain on campus participate in academic and co-curricular activities?

In order to incorporate social distancing and reduce the size of gatherings, there will be adjustments to academic and student co-curricular activities. Activities and events are being planned to engage all students, including those who will be attending virtually.

How are students/faculty/staff going to be kept safe?

Each AUCC institution is prepared to implement a proactive health and safety protocol designed to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Though specific implementation plans and details are unique to each institution, each plan includes the following:

- **Monitoring, Testing, Contact Tracing, and Quarantining.** AUCC institutions are collaborating to implement rigorous health and safety protocols guided by respected public health recommendations, data analysis, and science. Assisted by epidemiologists and public health experts, each campus will implement a series of safety measures including symptom tracking, surveillance testing, isolation for students who have tested positive, and quarantine for students who may have been exposed. Students will also have access to student health services, including the newly opened AUC Student Health Center on Lee Street.
- **Mandatory Masks.** In accordance with Centers for Disease Prevention and Control guidance, masks will be required for anyone in a class, gathering, meeting, or public space on an AUCC campus.
- **Handwashing, Hand Sanitizer, Cleaning, and General Sanitation.** Anyone on an AUCC campus will be encouraged to wash hands frequently. In addition, hand sanitizer will be readily accessible at locations across each campus. Further, building cleaning will be enhanced and occur more frequently.
- **Social Distancing and Limits on Gathering Size.** Social distancing will be encouraged across campuses, including limitations on gathering sizes and reductions in the number of people allowed to occupy various spaces and buildings.
- **Density Limitations.** Fewer people will be present on campuses this spring as in-person instruction is focused on specific cohorts of students.
- **Dining.** Changes will be made to dining services to limit the possibility of COVID-19 exposure. Specific information is available via each institution's website.

How will on-campus living arrangements be affected?

Density in most residence halls has been reduced, with fewer students sharing rooms, hallways, common spaces, and bathrooms.

Will a student attending one AUCC institution be able to attend classes and visit residence halls on another campus?

Students should expect adjustments to normal campus visitation policies and restrictions on access to facilities as each college works to mitigate any spread of the virus on its campus.

Will commuter students be invited back for in-person instruction?

Each institution will identify cohorts of students invited to attend in-person classes and any residency requirements affecting access to its campus.

What if a student simply feels uncomfortable attending class?

Some students who would be eligible to return to campus for the spring semester will choose not to return for medical or personal reasons and can continue virtual instruction. Each campus will issue

specific, science-based guidance for residential students who are symptomatic and/or test positive for COVID-19. There will also be institutional support in place for students who feel uncomfortable attending class for non-medical reasons.

What if a faculty or staff member feels uncomfortable coming to work due to personal health risks or risks to people living with them?

Policies at each institution differ. Faculty or staff members who have underlying health conditions which put them at greater risk or who live with people at greater risk should contact their supervisors or human resources departments for further guidance.

What should a student do who is experiencing symptoms? Faculty and staff?

Anyone experiencing symptoms which may indicate an active COVID-19 infection should immediately self-quarantine and seek medical attention. Students will have access to health services on their respective campuses or through the AUCC Student Health Center on Lee Street. The health services programs will provide additional instructions about how to receive treatment (if necessary), avoid contact with others, and receive meal service. In some cases, isolated and/or asymptomatic students may still participate in remote courses and receive materials and assignments from in-person courses.

Symptomatic employees, including faculty, should arrange to have a COVID-19 test through their primary care physician and adhere to their institutional policies for sick leave. Faculty and staff members who have tested positive or believe they are experiencing symptoms should not return to work and should contact their health care provider, supervisor, and human resources representative for next steps regarding positive case management.

Are there proactive health precautions students should take before returning?

Each institution will contact eligible students regarding requirements which must be met before returning to campus.

How is access to the library and library services affected?

The Robert W. Woodruff Library of the AUC, which serves Clark Atlanta University, Interdenominational Theological Seminary, Morehouse College, and Spelman College students, has proactively instituted policies to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 spread. These policies include reorganizing spaces inside the library to provide for social distancing, limiting the number of people who can access the library at any given time, requiring personal protective equipment including masks, and enhancing the frequency of surface cleaning. In addition, numerous library resources are available online and library staff is available to assist students and faculty virtually.

Is there an impact to residence hall move-in plans?

Policies at each institution will differ, but in general, move-in will occur by appointment and the number of people allowed to assist will be limited.

What will happen if there is a spike in COVID-19 cases on one of the campuses?

Every effort is being made to mitigate COVID-19 spread on the AUCC campuses. However, each campus retains the flexibility to intensify mitigation actions should conditions warrant an adjustment, including closing buildings, isolating students who test positive, and instituting a return to virtual learning. Contact tracing will be utilized to identify any persons who may have come into contact with a person testing positive for the virus.

— AUCC COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols —

In order to mitigate the spread and impact of COVID-19, each institution within the Atlanta University Center is responsible for setting and enforcing their own specific health and safety protocols as they relate to students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Students also have access to comprehensive medical health services provided on their campus or through the newly established AUCC Student Health Center on Lee Street. Because of close proximity and shared programs, AUCC institutions have implemented processes and protocols which mutually benefit the collective community, including:

- universal testing of students, faculty, staff, and recurring vendors
- requiring masks in all public spaces, classes, and gatherings including those in the Robert W. Woodruff Library of the AUC
- daily symptom testing including fever checks for people arriving on campus
- institutionalized social distancing policies
- frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer
- use of technology and algorithms to monitor symptoms and pinpoint increases in community virus transmission, as well as to perform contact tracing and to communicate with stakeholders

Testing

Testing for COVID-19 can reveal an individual's health status at a point in time. Though no mitigation is guaranteed to stop the spread of the virus, testing is a vital component of the AUC mitigation plan. Moreover, testing is a service which helps individuals know if they have the virus, prompting them to seek proper information and treatment. Testing is not 100% accurate and just because someone receives a negative result does not necessarily mean that they are not carrying the virus. Nonetheless, testing is one of the most effective ways to identify infected persons and prevent spread (especially in concert with other mitigation measures such as handwashing, wearing masks, and social distancing).

Anyone who routinely accesses an AUCC campus or facility must be tested according to frequency intervals established by campus community health officials. Further, CAU, Morehouse, and Spelman

students, faculty, and staff must be tested prior to arriving on a campus for the 2021 spring semester. This includes first-time students.

Testing is required whether or not someone has previously tested positive for COVID-19 and will be performed routinely to ensure community health and reduction of COVID-19 spread. The frequency of surveillance testing will be determined according to a number of factors including, but not limited to: regional infection rates, positivity rates in the community, and other circumstantial considerations including events, activities, or occasions that may prompt a spike in positive cases.

The test most commonly endorsed and utilized by MSM for AUCC faculty, staff, and students is a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. PCR tests detect the COVID-19 virus by searching for the presence of RNA, the virus's basic genetic material, inside a person. The virus's RNA will be present only if a person is currently infected.

The PCR test differs from an antibody test. An antibody test can be used to determine if a person has had the virus in the past by examining a person's bloodstream for the presence of a specific antibody produced by the body's immune system to defend against the virus.

Testing Information for Students

- All students must produce a negative result from a test administered 72 hours before arriving on campus. Those who test positive will not be admitted to residential facilities or allowed to attend in-person classes during the 2021 spring semester until an isolation period has concluded and they produce a negative test according to their institution's policies for COVID-19 mitigation.
- Information about available testing will be forthcoming from each student's home institution.
- Students will need to notify their institution about their COVID-19 status based on the test prior to arrival on campus.

AUCC-provided Tests

Coordinated through AUCC and MSM, community testing will be made available at no cost to all students, faculty, and staff members once the semester begins. MSM and AUCC, in turn, have partnered with well-respected laboratories and public health companies to process tests and provide results in a timely manner.

Tests Not Administered through an AUCC Institution

Numerous opportunities for testing are available, and it is acceptable for students, faculty, and staff to obtain a test elsewhere in lieu of the test provided by their respective institutions. Testing by another entity, however, must meet the following conditions to be accepted:

- results of the test must be obtained prior to arrival on campus;

- the test most commonly endorsed by AUCC and MSM is a PCR test (explained above), as opposed to an antibody or saliva test; and
- testing results must be submitted to the appropriate institutional department.

Note that, once the spring semester begins, students will be expected to self-monitor for indications of COVID-19 through a symptom tracker and will be subject to temperature checks while on campus.

Testing Information for Employees

All employees at AUCC institutions must receive a negative test result before reporting to work on campus for the 2021 spring semester. Employees may obtain their own valid test (at their own expense— see above requirements) or participate in AUCC-wide employee COVID-19 testing.

- MSM will collaborate with AUCC sites to set up unmonitored, self-administered COVID-19 test sites at the respective campuses.
- Participants will be required to set up a web or app-based account to activate a test kit and receive their results.
- At designated times, employees will be able to report to the test site and pick up a test kit. They will be required to activate their kit through their account.
- Participants will collect their own sample through a nasal swab contained in the kit. Clear directions are provided in each kit.
- The participant will seal the swab in the provided container and deposit the sample in a designated receptacle for packaging and processing.
- Participants will receive notification that their results are available and can be reviewed through their account. Results are typically available in less than 48 hours.
- Anyone who receives a positive result should not report to campus but should contact their designated campus official immediately for further instruction.

All individuals reporting to AUCC facilities will be required to comply with routine temperature and symptom checks upon arrival on campus each day. In addition, as the semester progresses, campuses will use data and algorithms to determine when individuals with access to an AUCC campus should undergo additional testing.

Daily Symptom and Temperature Checks

Although less effective than full-scale testing, symptom and temperature checks can alert symptomatic persons that they have symptoms consistent with the virus and allow the institutions to immediately apply mitigation procedures which prevent spread. Upon re-entry to an AUCC campus, all employees and students will be screened to ensure that they are not displaying any obvious symptoms.

Masking

Numerous studies have indicated that mask wearing is effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19, particularly when all parties in proximity to one another are wearing multi-layered masks. All students, faculty, staff, and approved visitors will be required to wear masks in public places or in areas where social distancing cannot be effectively practiced. Students should bring and wear their own masks. Additionally, one mask will be provided by their institutions. Persons not wearing a mask will be denied entry into public spaces.

Handwashing and Hygiene

Every person on an AUC campus is expected to be vigilant about personal hygiene, both to prevent contraction of the virus and to prevent its spread from an infected person to others.

- *Handwashing.* Hands should be washed often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after a visit to a public place, or after nose-blowing, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol should be utilized.
- *Touching face.* Touching of eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands should be avoided.
- *Coughing.* The fold of an arm should be used to cover the mouth and nose whenever a person coughs or sneezes.

Each institution's protocols are informed by public health experts at Morehouse School of Medicine and a review of best practices developed through MSM's in-person operations during the 2020 summer semester. These practices are also informed by the latest scientific research on the virus and current guidance provided by the CDC and federal and regional health agencies.

About the Atlanta University Center Consortium (AUCC). *The Atlanta University Center Consortium (AUCC) is the oldest and largest academic consortium serving primarily African-American students. Its members are four trailblazing historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs)— Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Spelman College— which include two highly-ranked liberal arts colleges, a comprehensive research university, and a medical school. Together, Atlanta University Center (AUC) institutions confer undergraduate and graduate degrees across a range of disciplines and their graduates are leaders in their chosen fields. In addition, AUC research addresses a broad range of global challenges, with a particular focus on issues and disparities facing minority populations. For more information, visit www.aucenter.edu.*

About Clark Atlanta University. *Established in 1988 by the consolidation of Atlanta University (1865) and Clark College (1869), Clark Atlanta University (CAU) is one of the nation's foremost research institutions, offering students from around the United States and several foreign countries the opportunity to engage in 38 exciting areas of study at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. Located in the historic heart of Atlanta, one of the world's great international cities, CAU's nearly 4,000 students enjoy access to academic and co-curricular experiences, from forensic debate, to on-air broadcasting, to cancer research with world-renowned investigators. From the arts to zoology, CAU combines nearly 300 years of tradition with a solid focus on academic excellence to produce leaders who will shape the future of the global community. Notable alumni include: James Weldon*

Johnson, American civil rights activist, poet, and song writer, (“Lift Every Voice and Sing,” the Black national anthem); Ralph David Abernathy Sr., American civil rights activist; Congressman Hank Johnson, Georgia District 4; Kenya Barris, American award-winning television and movie producer; Kenny Leon, Tony Award-winning Broadway director; Jacque Reid, Emmy Award-winning television personality and journalist; Brandon Thompson, Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion for NASCAR; Valeisha Butterfield Jones, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer at the Recording Academy. To learn more about Clark Atlanta University, visit www.cau.edu.

About Morehouse College. Morehouse College is the only historically Black college focused on educating men. Founded in 1867, the College is the nation’s top producer of Black men who go on to receive doctorates. Morehouse is also the top producer of Rhodes Scholars among HBCUs with five Morehouse Men receiving the honor. The College was recently included on the list of U.S. institutions that produced the most 2019-20 Fulbright Scholars, the nation’s flagship international educational exchange program. Prominent alumni include: Martin Luther King Jr., Nobel Peace Prize Laureate; Dr. David Satcher, former U.S. Surgeon General; Shelton “Spike” Lee, award-winning American filmmaker; Maynard H. Jackson, the first African American mayor of Atlanta; and Jeh Johnson, former U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security. Morehouse currently has more than 17,000 alumni in 14 countries. For more information, visit www.morehouse.edu.

About Morehouse School of Medicine. Morehouse School of Medicine, located in Atlanta, GA, exists to improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities; increase the diversity of the health professional and scientific workforce; and address primary health care through programs in education, research, and service, with emphasis on people of color and the underserved urban and rural populations in Georgia, the nation, and the world. MSM is among the nation’s leading educators of primary care physicians and has twice been recognized as the top institution among U.S. medical schools for its dedication to the social mission of education. The faculty and alumni are noted in their fields for excellence in teaching, research, and public policy, and are known in the community for exceptional, culturally appropriate patient care. Morehouse School of Medicine is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award doctorate and master’s degrees. For more information, visit www.msm.edu.

About Spelman College. Founded in 1881, Spelman College is a leading liberal arts college widely recognized as the global leader in the education of women of African descent. Located in Atlanta, the College’s picturesque campus is home to 2,100 students. Spelman is the country’s leading producer of Black women who complete PhDs in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The College’s status is confirmed by U.S. News & World Report, which ranked Spelman No. 54 among all liberal arts colleges, No. 19 for undergraduate teaching, No. 4 for social mobility among liberal arts colleges, and No. 1 for the 14th year among historically Black colleges and universities. The Wall Street Journal ranked the College No. 3, nationally, in terms of student satisfaction. Recent initiatives include a designation by the Department of Defense as a Center of Excellence for Minority Women in STEM, a Gender and Sexuality Studies Institute, the first endowed queer studies chair at an HBCU, and a program to increase the number of Black women PhDs in economics. New majors have been added, including documentary filmmaking and photography, and partnerships have been established with MIT’s Media Lab, the Broad Institute, and the Army Research Lab for artificial intelligence and machine learning. Outstanding alumnae include Children’s Defense Fund founder Marian Wright Edelman; Starbucks Group President and COO, Rosalind Brewer; political leader Stacey Abrams ; former Acting Surgeon General and Spelman’s first alumna president ,Audrey Forbes Manley ; actress and producer Latanya Richardson Jackson; global bioinformatics geneticist [Janina Jeff](#); and authors Pearl Cleage and Tayari Jones. For more information, visit www.spelman.edu.

About the Robert W. Woodruff Library of the Atlanta University Center (AUC), Inc. Incorporated in 2004, the AUC Woodruff Library partners with the nation’s largest consortium of historically Black colleges and universities which

includes Clark Atlanta University, the Interdenominational Theological Center, Morehouse College, and Spelman College to provide information management, instruction, and access to a variety of global information resources acquired and organized in support of teaching and learning, scholarship, and cultural preservation of the Atlanta University Center. The Library's Archives Research Center is noted for its extensive holdings of materials on the African American experience. In addition to the aesthetic benefits of this state-of-the-art learning facility, the Library has evolved into a model repository of information resources and is a front-runner in the innovative delivery of digital resources. The AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library is the winner of the 2016 Excellence in Academic Libraries Award in the university category from the Association of Collegiate and Research Libraries (ACRL). Library CEO Loretta Parham was named the ACRL 2017 Academic/Research Librarian of the Year. These top honors recognize academic libraries and librarians for delivering exemplary services and resources in support of their institutional missions. For more information, visit www.auctr.edu.

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