



EDWARD WATERS COLLEGE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT | A. ZACHARY FAISON, JR., J.D.

March 18, 2020

Dear Students, Staff, Faculty, and Supporters of Edward Waters College:

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has presented a very serious and unprecedented threat to all of our College's constituencies, the citizens of Jacksonville, our nation, and our collective global community. Accordingly, as part of our commitment to operate as an institution of superlative distinction and *Emerging Eminence* it is imperative that our response to this expanding crisis be one that is compassionate, consistent, and considerate of every member of our Tiger family.

Towards that end, Edward Waters College (EWC) has been and will continue to closely monitor the developing Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). While I can freely admit that in retrospect all of our administrative actions in response haven't been perfect, I can nevertheless assure you that at every critical decision making juncture our foremost concern has been aimed at finding effective solutions that were in the very best interest of the tremendously valued students, staff, and faculty that we are blessed to serve. Indeed, despite a rapidly shifting international health calamity with related information being available on an at best intermittent and often conflicting basis, the EWC administrative team has worked tirelessly virtually non-stop over the past 72 hours to make very difficult decisions with wide ranging and substantial implications upon the posterity of the College and the entire Tiger family of students, faculty, staff, and supporters.

Subsequently, although there have been no probable or confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Edward Waters College (EWC), and out of an abundance of caution, care and concern for our entire EWC community in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, **effective as of close of business at 5 p.m. on Friday, March 20, 2020 the College will transition to an interim remote-work period through at least Sunday, April 5, 2020 for all non-essential staff employees with approval from their supervisor.** With the exception of employees whose jobs cannot be performed remotely, all others should be ready to work remotely **starting Monday, March 23, 2020 with prior supervisor approval.** Following health officials' guidance, high-risk employees should also work remotely effective as of the close of business on Friday, March 20, 2020. Those at high risk from COVID-19 include persons aged 65 or older; those with chronic illnesses such as coronary artery disease and diabetes; pregnancy; and/or immunodeficiency from medications or medical conditions.

Relatedly, some employees will be required to be on campus because their work is directly related to supporting remote/online learning, campus operations, and other critical areas. It is the **responsibility of supervisors to appropriately determine** which employees have duties that don't allow them to work remotely. Supervisors are encouraged to be supportive and flexible in making arrangements for remote work opportunities, and work with employees to identify regular job duties, special assignments, projects, or professional development that can be performed remotely. Hourly employees and student employees should record hours worked on their timesheets as per standard practice.



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As a result of EWC's decision to significantly reduce its on-campus population there will exist a much smaller on-campus work force which aligns with guidelines for social distancing and avoiding mass gatherings and settings with large numbers of people as well as maintaining appropriate distances (at least six feet) from others when possible. As such, the implementation of the interim remote-work operational model will impact how the College conducts day-to-day operations, but the fundamental essence of our regular business functions will proceed as customary. **For additional details and information concerning your specific job applicability (essential vs. non-essential) for participation in the interim remote-work period you should first contact your supervisor who will work in collaboration with the Office of Human Resources to respond to your inquiries.** Additionally, we also understand that there are questions concerning hourly employees, and student employees (those receiving federal work-study support), whose job duties may not be performed remotely. The College has been in communication with the U.S. Department of Education to ascertain greater clarity and guidance to address paying those employees for missed work and will communicate information as it is received.

Campus residence facilities remain open for students who need to remain on campus or are planning to return to campus post the Spring Break extension. In addition, dining services will be provided to all students who reside in on-campus residence facilities. Campus computer access will also be provided for all students who remain in on-campus residence facilities. Parents and students can return to campus to retrieve their personal belongings beginning 12 noon on Monday, March 23, 2020 through 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 9, 2020. To effectuate an orderly removal process please contact the Office of Residence Life & Housing at (904) 470-8870 or email Housing@ewc.edu to schedule your arrival.

As was communicated via my March 16, 2020 video message all academic instructional delivery will be transitioned to an online platform beginning Monday, March 23, 2020 through the remainder of the spring semester. Online training for all faculty and staff began earlier this week and will continue through this Friday. More information on the details of the training schedule can be found on the EWC website and via emailed messages previously sent to your EWC campus email. Further, the College has cancelled all campus events (i.e., Founders Day Convocation, Honors Convocation, Alumni Weekend Gathering, etc.) for the remainder of the semester. Further, and after consultation with student leadership, we have also made the decision to postpone our previously scheduled May 9, 2020 Spring Commencement to a to be determined later date. More information regarding a new commencement date will be forthcoming as the COVID-19 situation continues to develop.



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Tiger family, as President I want to earnestly impart that this administration is here to support you during this difficult season of unforeseen and uncomfortable change. Please know that Edward Waters College stands in full support of your personal health and well-being as we collectively adapt to this very challenging set of circumstances. I encourage you to continue to frequently monitor the EWC website, your EWC email, and the College's social media outlets and Tiger Alert system for pertinent news and updates in the coming days and weeks ahead.

As a faith inspired community of believers we must remain diligent and prayerful during this dire international health crisis. Even more, we should all find solace in being reminded of our institutional motto gifted to us through our founding African Methodist Episcopal tradition, that with *God Our Father*, through *Christ Our Redeemer*, imbued by the *Holy Spirit Our Comforter*, and joined by *Humankind Our Family*, ALL THINGS are working together for our collective good!

May God bless and keep you all my Tiger Family.

Yours for Edward Waters College,

A. Zachary Faison, Jr., J.D.
President & CEO