



Friends:

Recently, we sent out a survey asking all students, faculty, trustees, staff and other constituents about their opinions regarding the reopening of United Theological Seminary for classes and administration. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, campus facilities closed on March 18, and all classes have been taught online for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester. We thank you for your thoughtful feedback, concerns and recommendations regarding the reopening of United.

Under the leadership of United's Executive Team, the Seminary is implementing the following changes as we reopen:

1. Administrative offices reopened on Monday, June 1, with safety measures in place including social distancing and wearing face masks. Through the summer, administrative staff will work at the campus Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and remotely on Thursdays and Fridays. We will evaluate this new working arrangement in September.
2. The Course of Study classes offered June 12-13, 2020, will be conducted fully online with no on-campus component. These are the only seminary United Methodist Course of Study classes that the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry authorized to be offered online this spring.
3. Hybrid courses:
  - A. The Spring hybrid courses scheduled to be offered on-campus Monday, June 22, through Friday, June 26, will now be offered only virtually. Virtual instruction will take place in real-time via video conferencing.
  - B. The Fall hybrid courses scheduled to be offered on-campus Monday, August 10, through Friday, August 14, will be offered both on campus in person and through the virtual classroom. Students are not required to attend in person, but may if they choose to.
4. The Doctor of Ministry intensive week planned for Monday, August 24, through Friday, August 28, will meet virtually. Normally, about 200 DMin students, faculty, mentors and administrators attend the DMin intensive week comprised of plenaries, classes and cohort meetings. The feedback from DMin students and mentors was to conduct it all virtually. The theme for the August 2020 intensive is "Ministry in Times of Crisis." Dr. Harold Hudson, Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, will send out the schedule of plenary speakers and chapel leaders, along with information about how to conduct cohort meetings virtually.

5. The Contextual Ministries retreat scheduled for Wednesday, September 9, through Friday, September 11, will only meet virtually. About 150 masters students and mentors normally attend this retreat, which was planned to take place on-campus this year, and it would be exceedingly difficult to practice social distancing for that many people on our campus. Dr. Madeline Henners, Director of Contextual Ministries, will send out additional information about this retreat to all participants.
6. Opening Convocation will be held completely online on Wednesday, September 9, 2020, at 1 p.m., with Bishop Michael Lowry as our Convocation preacher.
7. Fall classes will begin on Monday, September 14, with both on-campus and virtual attendance options.

St. Paul sometimes communicated with his congregations in person and sometimes through his letters, but the message about God's amazing grace and unconditional love which comes to us in Jesus Christ was the same regardless of the modality. United will continue to prepare faithful and fruitful Christian leaders who make disciples of Jesus Christ, whether we are able to do it face-to-face or through virtual modalities.

To God be the glory!

Grace and Peace,

Dr. Kent Millard, President

Dr. David Watson, Academic Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Scott Kisker, Associate Dean for Masters Programs

Dr. Harold Hudson, Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies

Dr. Madeline Henners, Director of Contextual Ministries

Steve Swallow, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Chad Clark, Director of Student Success