Dear CAU Students, Faculty, and Staff:

The past few months have undoubtedly been the most unusual times any of us has ever seen. My team and I have worked tirelessly in hopes that we would be able to have some sense of normalcy for the Fall 2020 semester. Our initial plans were to reopen the campus for the Fall 2020 semester for freshman and sophomore students, and to provide remote and online learning for juniors, seniors, and graduate students.

However, with the challenging and rapidly changing circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become crystal clear that these plans must evolve again to recognize the newly heightened safety risks associated with COVID-19 in the state of Georgia. The health and safety needs of our students, faculty, and staff remain our top priority and have been a reference point for our planning for the fall. Therefore, we have made the difficult but necessary decision to move to a remote and online learning format for the entire CAU student body in the fall, with faculty and staff continuing to telework. Moving to virtual instruction for all students during the Fall 2020 semester was a collaborative decision between the presidents of CAU, Morehouse College, and Spelman College.

This Fall 2020 Work Plan provides the details on how we plan to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, the safety and well-being of faculty, staff, students, and community members via remote online learning and teleworking.

CAU’s Crisis Management Center Steering Committee (CMCSC), led by Chief Operating Officer Eli Phillips, developed the plans outlined in this Work Plan. The Steering Committee worked 24-7 to coordinate the details for remote campus and academic operations for Fall 2020.

The CMCSC focused on the COVID-19 pandemic and advised me on actions we should take to mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19 on the CAU campus. The full implementation plan was developed under the CMCSC’s sub-committee structure of six teams that focused on Students, Teaching/Research, Campus Operations, Finance and Legal, Human Resources, and Communications & External Relations. Each team had a broad representation from across the University.

I assure you that this plan has been thoroughly vetted and evaluated through the lens of the latest and best public health information available. The CMCSC accomplished its work by staying abreast of all guidelines, recommendations, expert opinions, executive orders and other regulations issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Governor’s Office, the Georgia Department of Public Health, the state’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the City of Atlanta, and other public health agencies.

Throughout our planning process, we have known and acknowledged that there was a possibility that our original plans for reopening in the fall would change. The uptick in COVID-19 cases has caused us great concern and further made the case that, with the exception of essential workers, it is not feasible for us to bring students, faculty, staff, and administrators to the campus in the current atmosphere. Keeping the campus closed in the fall will minimize the risk of the spread of COVID-19 on campus and in the Atlanta community. Your overall wellbeing is our top priority.

Finally, it is important for you to know we are guided by our priorities: which is to put our stakeholders’ health and safety first; to ensure that our students receive a well-rounded, excellent CAU education no matter what circumstances may occur; to carry on scholarly research; to maintain our program of financial aid; and to ensure that we keep the University on a footing that enables it to fulfill its academic mission.

CAU is indeed fortunate to have wonderful faculty and staff who have worked diligently through this crisis to ensure that in the fall and for all the semesters to come, we commit to providing an excellent academic experience for our students.

For the most up-to-date CAU developments concerning COVID-19, we encourage you to regularly visit the information page we have established on our website.

Thank you for your flexibility and adaptability in these highly unusual times. Be well, stay safe, and we will continue to keep you updated of any changes throughout the semester.

George T. French, Jr., Ph.D.
President