



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY, MOREHOUSE COLLEGE, AND SPELMAN COLLEGE ANNOUNCE PLANS FOR FALL 2020 IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CAMPUS RESIDENCY IN ADDITION TO CONTINUED REMOTE INSTRUCTION**

ATLANTA, Georgia, July 1, 2020— Three Atlanta University Center Consortium (AUCC) institutions— Clark Atlanta University (CAU), Morehouse College and Spelman College— today announced comprehensive plans to safely resume in-person instruction and campus residency for specific cohorts of students during the Fall 2020 Semester, with significant adjustments made to normal operations due to the continuing coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19, pandemic. Additional students will continue remote instruction. Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM), also an AUCC member institution, operates on a separate timetable due to the unique medical and public health mission of the school. The Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library also announced plans to provide both in-person and remote service to AUCC students.

Fall classes begin on August 19. Specific instructions and policies for students, faculty, and staff regarding the Fall 2020 Semester will be provided by each institution.

The highest priority of AUCC institutions is protecting the health of AUCC community members. The institutions are deploying an innovative data-driven and scientific approach which relies on comprehensive testing and data-driven protocols through coordination with MSM. A renowned academic health center, MSM is also leader of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Infrastructure for Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 within Racial and Ethnic Minority Communities. Informed by sophisticated data algorithms, AUCC institutions will be able to closely monitor the situation, perform frequent and targeted testing, provide appropriate medical services if needed, and more generally provide the AUC community with a high degree of confidence that campuses are safe as possible.

**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. CAU, Morehouse, Spelman, and the AUC Woodruff Library will coordinate with MSM to implement a layered approach to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 on AUCC campuses. Key elements include:

- **Mandatory Testing of Students, Faculty, and Staff.** Students, faculty, and staff will be tested for COVID-19 prior to arriving for the Fall 2020 Semester and periodically during the semester.

- **Social Distancing.** To encourage social distancing, in many cases, event sizes will be limited, visitor access will be restricted, and adjusted work schedules for some staff are being implemented.
- **Mandatory Face Coverings.** Face coverings (such as masks) must be worn in all public spaces including the AUC Robert Woodruff Library.
- **Symptom Checking.** Students, employees, and all persons entering campuses will undergo temperature checks and must complete an app-based daily symptom screening.
- **Modified Facilities and Access to Campus.** Adjustments to entry points on the campuses, pedestrian traffic patterns, and facility layouts have been undertaken; additional hand sanitizing stations have been installed; and ventilation systems have been evaluated to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure.
- **Comprehensive Physical and Mental Health and Wellness.** Individual campus health and mental wellness services will be augmented with support from the AUCC Student Health Services team via a new state-of-the art facility.

### **Academic Continuity and Career Development**

- AUCC institutions are committed to maintaining academic quality and continuity and all students should progress regardless of whether they are on campus or learning remotely.
- The AUC Woodruff Library will operate on a reduced schedule providing services to both in-person and remote students.
- AUCC Career Services, the Dual Degree Engineering Program, and similar programs will continue to be available to students, operating using a hybrid of both online and in-person services.

### **Modified Academic Calendar**

The Fall 2020 semester will end before Thanksgiving. Key dates in the academic calendar include:

- Aug 10-14: New Student Orientations (different based on each institution)
- August 19: Classes begin
- November 16-20: Final Exams
- No fall break, classes and exams conclude before Thanksgiving

While we fully recognize and understand that no mitigation measure is guaranteed to eliminate all spread of the virus, we believe that the data-driven, thoughtful and measured approaches outlined in each institution's plans mitigates risk to students, faculty, staff, and their families while maintaining the academic quality and traditions historically associated with the institutions. National or state developments in community spread of the virus may cause plans to be adjusted. All stakeholders will need to maintain awareness and flexibility, as well as take personal responsibility for adhering to AUC requirements and public health guidelines and for keeping the AUC community safe.

More information is also available at [aucenter.edu](http://aucenter.edu). Please refer to each institution for more information on their individual plans and policies.

Clark Atlanta University: [www.cau.edu](http://www.cau.edu)

Morehouse College: [www.morehouse.edu](http://www.morehouse.edu)

Morehouse School of Medicine: [www.msm.edu](http://www.msm.edu)

Spelman College: [www.spelman.edu](http://www.spelman.edu)

Robert W. Woodruff Library of the AUC: [www.auctr.edu](http://www.auctr.edu)

**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](http://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 bachelors, masters 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](http://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 named 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](http://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](http://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 Ph.Ds in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The College's status is confirmed by U.S. News and World Report, which ranked Spelman No. 51 among all liberal arts colleges and No. 1 among historically Black colleges and universities. The Wall Street Journal ranked the College No. 3, nationally, in terms of student satisfaction. Outstanding alumnae include Children's Defense Fund Founder Marian Wright Edelman, Starbucks Group President and COO Rosalind Brewer, former Acting Surgeon General and Spelman's first alumna President Audrey Forbes Manley, global bioinformatics geneticist Janina Jeff and authors Pearl Cleage and Tayari Jones. For more information, visit [www.spelman.edu](http://www.spelman.edu).

**About the Robert W. Woodruff Library of the AUC.** The AUC Robert W. 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. As the intellectual center of this prestigious academic community, the Library's mission is 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 AUC Woodruff Library 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 a front-runner in the innovative delivery of digital resources. The AUC 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](http://www.auctr.edu).

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**Media Only Contacts:**

For information about plans at individual intuitions, contact:

*Clark Atlanta University*

Jolene Butts Freeman  
Director of News and Media Relations  
Phone: (770) 376-5991  
Email: [jbutts-freeman@cau.edu](mailto:jbutts-freeman@cau.edu)

*Morehouse School of Medicine*

William F. (Bill) Doughty, MA, APR  
Marketing Director, Academic Affairs and  
Advancement  
Phone: 720-212-1290  
Email: [wdoughty@msm.edu](mailto:wdoughty@msm.edu)

*Morehouse College*

Aileen Dodd  
Sr. Manager of Media and Public Relations  
Phone: (470) 639-0734  
Email: [aileen.dodd@morehouse.edu](mailto:aileen.dodd@morehouse.edu)

*Spelman College*

Joyce E. Davis  
Director of Marketing & Communications  
Phone: (404) 270- 5871  
Email: [jdavis44@spelman.edu](mailto:jdavis44@spelman.edu)

For information about the *Atlanta University Center* in general or the *Atlanta University Center Consortium, Inc.* contact:

Cedric Mobley

Director of Communications, Marketing, and Events  
Atlanta University Center Consortium  
Phone: (202) 641-8308 | Email: [cmobley@aucenter.edu](mailto:cmobley@aucenter.edu)

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## — Frequently Asked Questions —

### **What is an AUC student?**

Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Spelman College students are first and foremost students of those institutions; however, they are also considered students of the broader Atlanta University Center (AUC), which has formally and informally connected the institutions for ninety years. Though each institution has its own unique and storied history, resources, traditions, student body, and faculty expertise, AUC colleges and universities have many common interests and goals due to their related missions and the close proximity of their campuses. CAU, Morehouse, MSM, and Spelman are formally connected through the Atlanta University Center Consortium, Inc. (AUCC). Through collaboration and opportunity-sharing among AUCC institutions, students benefit from opportunities and efficiencies traditionally found at large institutions while receiving the academic instruction, individual attention, personal development, and co-curricular programming associated with the unique values of their home institution.

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

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

- **Mandatory Masks.** Masks have been proven effective in lowering the rate of transmission of the COVID-19 virus, particularly in reducing the unwitting spread of the virus from an asymptomatic person. In accordance with Centers for Disease Control guidance, masks will generally be required for anyone in a class, gathering, meeting, or public space on an AUCC campus.
- **Testing of All Students, Faculty, Staff, and Recurring Vendors.** Though not without error, testing can help identify persons with the COVID-19 virus, triggering treatment and self-isolation which can prevent spread. In addition, testing can help identify locations where cases of the virus may be increasing, alerting campus and public health officials that additional and more aggressive mitigation efforts may be necessary. All students, faculty, staff, and recurring vendors must return a negative test result before being allowed access to an AUCC campus.
- **Handwashing, Hand Sanitizer, Cleaning and General Sanitation.** AUCC community members will be encouraged to wash hands frequently using methods effective in removing harmful elements. In addition, hand sanitizer will be readily available and easily accessible in multiple areas across each campus. Facilities will also be cleaned with enhancements in detail and frequency.
- **Social Distancing.** In all public areas, efforts will be made to increase the distance between people as they engage in study or work. This includes limitations on gathering sizes and reductions in the number of people allowed to occupy various spaces and buildings on each campus.
- **Density Limitations.** Fewer people will be present on campuses this fall as in-person instruction is focused on specific cohorts of students. Preparation is ongoing to welcome all students back to our campuses as soon as it is safe to do so during subsequent semesters.

- **Dining.** Significant changes will be made to dining options, particularly regarding access to interior seating.

### **Are young people susceptible to contracting COVID-19?**

Although younger people often experience less intense symptoms and lower mortality rates, they are absolutely susceptible to contracting COVID-19. In fact, many younger people with the virus are asymptomatic (not exhibiting symptoms) and unknowingly pass the virus to family and friends while going about their normal lives. This is especially problematic if the virus is passed to older people or people with health conditions that put them at greater risk for serious illness if they contract the virus.

In addition, it is important to know that young people can develop serious illness if they contract the virus, especially young people who may have underlying health conditions of which they are not aware.

It is very important for young people to observe recommendations for protecting themselves and others, especially while present on an AUC campus.

For more information about how COVID-19 impacts young adults, review guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/stress-coping/young-adults.html>.

### **How will on-campus living arrangements be affected?**

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

### **What if a student simply feels uncomfortable attending class?**

Students who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend class and should follow their institution's health and safety protocols. If the student simply feels uncomfortable attending class, he or she should contact their instructor or Office of Academic Affairs for further guidance.

### **What if a faculty or staff member feels uncomfortable coming to work due to personal health risks or risks to persons 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 persons 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?**

Once on campus, if a student feels that he or she is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, or if he or she has tested positive, he or she should immediately isolate themselves in their residence hall room and contact the health services associated with their institution. The health services program will provide

additional instructions about how to receive treatment, if necessary, and avoid contact with others. In some cases, isolated, asymptomatic students may still participate in remote courses and/or receive the materials and work from in-person courses.

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.

### **Are there proactive health precautions students should take before returning?**

All students who are eligible for in-person instruction must be tested for COVID-19 before arriving on campus for the fall using a home testing kit provided by their institution or other acceptable PCR test. It is also important to ensure that all health information is up to date, including any pre-existing conditions, allergies, medications, family history of serious illness, insurance information (if they have it), and contact information for a personal doctor or health care provider if they have one. This will help facilitate the treatment process should it become necessary.

### **How are intercampus co-curricular activities affected?**

In order to incorporate social distancing and reduce close contact, there will be adjustments to co-curricular activities which are normally open to students from multiple campuses. Please pay careful attention to specific policies related to each activity to determine who is eligible to participate.

### **How has the academic calendar been affected?**

Both in-person and remote classes will begin on August 19 and conclude before Thanksgiving to reduce possible spread of COVID-19 due to travel. For similar reasons, the start of the Spring 2021 semester will be delayed until February 2021. Decisions about in-person instruction for the Spring 2021 semester have not been finalized.

### **How is access to the library and library services affected?**

Robert Woodruff Library, shared by all AUC students, has proactively instituted policies to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 spread, which 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.

### **How has shuttle service to the library been affected?**

The Robert W. Woodruff Library will continue to operate its routine shuttle schedule. To give passengers more space and provide for a safe and healthy travel experience, Robert Woodruff Library has reduced the number of passengers on each vehicle by blocking certain seats to maintain appropriate

social distancing among riders. Priority may also be given to persons who have health conditions which necessitate additional assistance. Riders and shuttle drivers will also be required to wear face masks.

### **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 assisting will be limited.

It is also highly recommended that move-in activities be limited to a single engagement, and that traditional day-of visits to Atlanta-area grocery stores, big box retailers, and other places for supplies be avoided to reduce the potential for the virus to be contracted and introduced onto an AUC campus after a student has been cleared to move into their residence hall.

### **How will campus life be different?**

Students at each AUC institution will continue to receive an education in the best traditions of their institution. The history of Atlanta University Center institutions is one of an ingenious community able to adapt and excel through any circumstance. Though gatherings will be smaller in Fall 2020 and there will be fewer people on campus, students will still receive the quality education and co-curricular support and opportunities they have come to expect from their institution.

### **What will happen if there is a spike in cases on one of the campuses?**

Every effort is being made to mitigate the risk of spread on an AUC campus. However, each campus retains the flexibility to intensify mitigation actions including closing buildings, isolating pockets of potential spreaders, and instituting a return to remote learning. Contact tracing will be utilized to identify any persons who may have come into contact with a person testing positive for the virus.

### **How do I receive up-to-date information?**

Each institution will utilize a variety of communication tools to provide up-to-date information to stakeholders, including email, social media, their website, and text messages. It is also important that students sign up to receive emergency alerts on their cell phones through their home institution. In some cases, parents may sign up to receive messages as well, follow institutions on social media, and receive emergency alerts.

### **After I take a test, how long before I receive the results?**

Tests are normally processed quickly and results are expected within 48 to 72 hours.

## — AUCC COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols —

Each institution is responsible for setting and enforcing their own specific health and safety protocols as they relate to students, faculty, staff, and the limited number of allowed visitors. However, the protocol for each campus contains common elements:

- universal testing of students, faculty, staff, and recurring vendors
- requiring mask wearing in all indoor public spaces, classes, and gathering locations including AUC Robert Woodruff Library
- 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 for case increase alerts, contact tracing, and communication

### 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 can identify people obviously at greater risk of spreading the virus (because they are clearly identified as a carrier) and restrict them from the population of people allowed to move liberally across the campuses. Moreover, testing is a service which helps individuals know if they have the virus, and 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. Testing is, however, one of the most effective ways to identify infected persons and prevent spread, especially in concert with other mitigation measures.

Everyone provided routine access to an AUCC campus or facility must be tested, and CAU, Morehouse, and Spelman students, faculty, and staff must be tested prior to arriving on a campus for the Fall 2020 semester. This includes first-time students.

Testing is required whether or not someone has previously tested positive for COVID-19.

#### *AUCC-provided Tests*

Coordinated through AUCC and Morehouse School of Medicine, students, faculty and staff members at CAU, Morehouse, Spelman, and Woodruff Library will be able to be tested at no cost. MSM and AUCC, in turn have partnered with well-respected laboratories and public health companies to process tests and provide results.

The test endorsed 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 its basic genetic material, its RNA, inside a person. The RNA will only be present 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 looking in a person's bloodstream for a specific antibody produced by the body's immune system to defend against the virus.

The PCR tests used by AUCC institutions is administered using a nasal swab, during which a brush is utilized to collect samples of secretions inside the nose which would likely contain evidence of the virus if it is present. This test is more sensitive than other tests, including the antibody test, and believed to generate more informative results.

#### *Tests Not Administered through an AUCC Institution*

Numerous testing facilities exist across the country, and it is acceptable for students, faculty, and staff to obtain a test at one of these facilities in place of the test provided by their institution. Testing by another entity, however, must meet the following conditions to be accepted:

- testing cannot have been administered prior to two weeks before arrival on campus;
- results of the test must be obtained prior to arrival on campus;
- the test must be a PCR test (explained above), not an antibody or saliva test; and
- testing results must be submitted to the appropriate institutional department.

#### *Testing Information for Students*

Students invited to experience in-person instruction (whether they live on campus or commute) will receive at-home PCR test kits prior to the start of the semester.

- Students will self-administer the tests at home using a nasal swab, package the swab, and mail it to a lab for analysis (instructions for mailing will be provided along with the kit and postage is prepaid).
- Students will be contacted directly by their institution with instructions and details about how the test will be mailed to them.
- Students will receive a notification to review their test results 2-3 days after receipt of their package using text messaging or email alert.
- Testing includes self-reporting of any symptoms associated with COVID-19.
- All students must receive a negative test result before arriving on campus. Those who test positive will not be admitted to residential facilities or allowed to attend in-person classes and activities during Fall 2020 until an isolation period has concluded.
- Students will need to notify their institution about their COVID-19 status based on the test prior to arrival on campus.

If, for some reason, students cannot take the test at home, they should contact their institution for further instructions.

Students are also permitted to provide results of tests conducted through another entity, provided that the testing meets the requirements noted in *Tests Not Administered through an AUCC Institution* above.

Note that students will receive a further temperature and symptom check after they arrive on campus for the fall semester. Students will also be asked to download and use an app for smart devices which will help them log symptoms and receive up-to-date information about mitigation efforts on their

campuses. In addition, campuses will use data and algorithms to determine when students should undergo additional testing as the semester progresses should conditions warrant.

### *Testing Information for Employees*

All employees at AUCC institutions must receive a negative test result before reporting to work on campus for the fall semester. Employees may obtain their own valid test (at their own expense— see above requirements) or participate in AUCC-wide PCR testing facilitated through MSM (see description above).

- Free testing for employees will occur through appointments for a drive-up operation at Morehouse School of Medicine.
- After testing, employees may depart the testing area and await results, which will normally be available within 2-3 days.
- Persons tested will be notified when results are ready to be reviewed through a text or email alert.
- Individual institutions will provide specific information about accessing the test and scheduling a testing appointment.
- After receiving results, employees should notify their institutions. Subject to unique policies at each institution, asymptomatic persons may be allowed to work remotely during an isolation period. Symptomatic persons may need to follow institutional policies related to illness and disabilities.
- Employees can additionally designate a primary care provider to also receive test results.

Employees will receive further temperature and symptom checks upon arrival for work 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 the virus and allow the institutions to immediately apply mitigation procedures which prevent spread. Upon re-entry to an AUC 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 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. Faculty, staff, and approved vendors must bring and wear their own mask unless their institution chooses to provide masks. Persons not wearing 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.* Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- *Coughing.* Cover your mouth and nose with the fold of your arm whenever you cough or sneeze.

Each institution's protocols were significantly informed by public health experts at Morehouse School of Medicine and a review of best practices developed through MSM's limited resumption of in-person operations this summer.

### — About the Atlanta University Center Consortium —

The Atlanta University Center Consortium maximizes opportunities of common interest for its member institutions— Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Spelman College. Presidents of the member institutions jointly determine the Consortium's direction. Areas of focus include collaborative efforts (such as work to mitigate the spread of COVID-19), cross-registration, procurement, technology acquisition and management, career services, the Dual Degree Engineering Program, the Data Science Initiative, community outreach, and coordination between the colleges with regards to academic affairs, student affairs, public safety, human resources, communications, research, and other areas.

## — About COVID 19\* —

On February 11, 2020 the World Health Organization announced an official name for the disease that is causing the 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak, first identified in Wuhan, China. The new name of this disease is coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19. In COVID-19, CO stands for corona, VI for virus, and D for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as 2019 novel coronavirus or 2019-nCoV. There are many types of human coronaviruses including some that commonly cause mild upper-respiratory tract illnesses. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not been seen previously in humans.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, primarily through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community (community spread) in many affected geographic areas. Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

### *Symptoms*

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with symptoms that include but are not limited to the following may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Look for emergency warning signs for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately.

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

### *Higher Risk for Severe Illness*

COVID-19 is a new disease and there is limited information regarding risk factors for severe disease. Currently available information and clinical expertise have shown that older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Based on what we know now, those at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 may include:

- People 65 years and older
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions
- People who are immunocompromised. Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease

\* Basic information about COVID-19 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For more information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

## — Informed Decision Making —

### **Thoughtful and Science-based Approach**

While no strategy is guaranteed to stop all spread, the goal has been to ensure that AUC students, faculty, and staff are among the most well protected in the nation. In coordination with Morehouse School of Medicine, health and safety protocols are based largely on the implementation of cutting-edge technology and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, World Health Organization, and Georgia Department of Public Health. Morehouse School of Medicine is leading the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Infrastructure for Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 within Racial and Ethnic Minority Communities (NIMIC). Input was also received from faculty experts at each institution, many of whom are internationally-respected authorities in educational leadership, public health, economics, public policy, and social justice, among other related fields. During the decision-making process, extensive discussions occurred with numerous stakeholder groups, including institutional trustees, current and new students, faculty, administrators, alumni, neighborhood and community partners, donors, public health experts, government officials, and peer leaders in higher education. In addition to the steps many colleges across the nation have taken to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread on their campuses, AUCC institutions have taken the additional steps of incorporating robust testing for all students and employees, conducting ongoing data-driven analysis, and partnering with innovative and forward-leaning public health companies.

Each AUC institution created institutional interdepartmental task forces to explore the factors associated with multiple options for operational and instructional formats during Fall 2020. Those task forces analyzed the array of areas which would be affected by any decision, including health and safety, academic continuity, instructional excellence, and co-curricular opportunities.

Although each institution has made their own decisions regarding the limited return to in-person instruction, they did so informed by the common interests of their peer institutions within the Atlanta University Center Consortium. These common interests were addressed collaboratively through an AUC-wide task force formed to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The AUC COVID-19 Task Force is made up of subgroups which collaboratively developed recommendations regarding areas of common interest by balancing the unique needs and perspectives of each institution alongside the impact of decisions made by one AUCC member institution on the others. Subgroups based their recommendations on prevailing science and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, World Health Organization, Georgia Department of Public Health, and other recognized and respected entities. Given their unique role in promoting public health, Morehouse School of Medicine provided substantial expertise. Though adjustments have been made for the Fall 2020 semester, institutions look forward to resuming traditions, activities, celebrations, events, and collegial gatherings as soon as it is safe to do so.

Groups which informed the AUCC approach include the following:

**Council of Presidents.** Direction for the Atlanta University Center Consortium is set by the Council of Presidents, made up of the presidents of its member institutions— Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Spelman College. Recommendations by subgroups and the AUC COVID-19 Task Force are subject to approval by the Council of Presidents.

**Academic Affairs Working Group.** Made up of the provosts at each institution, the Academic Affairs Working Group oversaw the development of recommendations related to in-person and remote instructional policies which impact AUC students collectively, regardless of institution, such as the development of the academic calendar and recommendations affecting-registration (policies which allow students at one AUC institution to take a course at another institution).

**Student Affairs Working Group.** The vice presidents for student affairs at each institution addressed issues related to student success, housing, dining, and co-curricular activities.

**Public Safety Working Group.** Police chiefs and public safety directors at each institution worked collaboratively to identify junctions in policies and practices, including traffic control and patterns and logistics related to access to campus for students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

**Health and Safety Working Group.** The Health and Safety Working Group developed recommendations for an extensive protocol designed to both proactively prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to address any cases identified within the AUC community. Protocol

recommendations related to testing, use of personal protective equipment, temperature checks, social distancing, and population density.

**Facilities Working Group.** The Facilities Working Group has identified areas where sanitation, changes to facility layouts, furniture adjustments, and other efforts can further social distancing and make other health and safety precautions more effective.

**Communications Working Group.** The Communications Working Group, made up of the communications, public relations, and marketing leaders at each institution, developed recommendations related to messaging, communications channels and vehicles, announcement timing, relevant content, and communications strategies.

**Research Working Group.** The Research Working Group, made up of the sponsored research leaders at each institution, explored common impacts to collective research and solutions to potential challenges.

#### — Cross-registration —

For the Fall 2020 semester, cross-registration is limited to online courses only, which are subject to capacity caps.

#### — Career Fair —

The traditional fall career fair will be hosted virtually on September 19, 2020 using a secure and robust online platform. The format allows for companies to interact with candidates virtually through streaming technology. Student must register to attend the Virtual Career Fair.

Students should also begin preparing to engage in this new format by checking in with their institution's career services department, exploring virtual interviewing and reviewing tips on general interviewing strategy, resume writing, and career paths. For more information, students should contact their career services department or visit [aucenter.edu/careerfair](http://aucenter.edu/careerfair).

#### — Dual-Degree Engineering Program —

The AUCC Dual Degree Engineering Program helps prepare AUC students for engineering careers by providing a pathway to earn a liberal arts degree from an AUC institution in addition to an engineering degree from a well-regarded engineering school. In Fall 2020, DDEP will operate using a hybrid of remote and in-person guidance, including staggered hours for in-person engagement and online guidance for students studying remotely. For more information, contact [ddepservices@aucenter.edu](mailto:ddepservices@aucenter.edu).

— Housing —

Specific institutional policies regarding housing will differ at each institution. In general, housing density has been reduced to lower the number of residents in each unit and decrease instances of close contact.

— Research —

Research is a cornerstone of faculty scholarship and expertise at each AUC institution and a key component of their missions. Each campus has developed procedures to help ensure that faculty continue to have access to needed resources and opportunities to collaborate (especially virtually), as well as to mentor student researchers.

— More Information —

More information is also available at [aucenter.edu](http://aucenter.edu). Please refer to each institution for more information on their individual plans and policies.

Clark Atlanta University: [www.cau.edu](http://www.cau.edu)

Morehouse College: [www.morehouse.edu](http://www.morehouse.edu)

Morehouse School of Medicine: [www.msm.edu](http://www.msm.edu)

Spelman College: [www.spelman.edu](http://www.spelman.edu)

Robert W. Woodruff Library of the AUC : [www.auctr.edu](http://www.auctr.edu)