



July 13, 2020

SOWELA Students:

I hope you are having a good summer. I would like to take some time to update you on SOWELA's plans for the upcoming fall 2020 semester. As you know, the COVID pandemic has caused a shift in how we deliver classroom instruction. The majority of our spring and summer classes, where possible, were transitioned to on-line formats. While this is a great option for some students, we are learning that many would rather return to a traditional face-to-face on-campus classroom experience. Therefore, our plans for the fall 2020 semester will include a variety of instructional formats – remote/online, on-campus face-to-face, and a combination of the two using a hybrid format. Additionally, to ease the financial burden, the College is waiving the \$40 registration fee for online courses beginning with the fall 2020 semester and extending through the spring 2022 semester.

We also know that many students have postponed registering for the fall 2020 semester because of the uncertainty of what the class schedule will look like. Our plans are to offer as many on-campus courses while still adhering to the social distancing and building/classroom capacity guidelines that will most likely still be in place at the time the semester begins which is on Monday, August 17, 2020. Many of our programs rely on lab components where students must use specialized equipment in a hands-on format. Therefore, we will offer these types of classes as much as possible. For students who participate in on-campus classes, rest assured that SOWELA will continue to adhere to the protocols necessary and will do everything possible to protect the safety and health of faculty, staff, and students as well as ensure that the classrooms, laboratories, and buildings on all our campuses are properly sanitized on an on-going basis.

The COVID pandemic will continue to influence our academic calendar and how we deliver instructional content. Our fall semester 2020 academic calendar has been modified in a fashion that will eliminate the fall and Thanksgiving breaks and, with few exceptions, will have the semester ending by Thanksgiving. This is being done to prevent the possibility of students coming back to the campus after the Thanksgiving break, who may have unknowingly come in contact with someone who had the virus, and then possibly spreading the virus to other faculty/staff/students on campus.

These last several months have been stressful to say the least as the faculty and staff have worked diligently to maintain the strong student focus that SOWELA has been known for. However, I can truly say that the College has not forgotten that the most important reason we exist is for our students. We are still committed to providing the high quality classroom and campus experience to ensure that you can achieve your educational goals. SOWELA is still in the workforce development business and we are still the #1 community college in Louisiana.

I would like to personally thank you for choosing SOWELA for your higher educational needs and I can assure you that we will continue to keep your best interests in mind.

Thanks,

Neil Aspinwall

Neil Aspinwall
Chancellor