Howard University's Academic Departments in Preparation for Crisis-level Disruption

Academic Continuity is the preservation of teaching and learning. Crises in higher education impact different aspects of the university and warrant institutional responses in a variety of ways, depending on the type, scale, and level of crisis. Emergency preparedness is a systemic way to deter or avert crises or manage those that do occur. Sound planning can help to avert potential crises or result in more successful outcomes.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this guide is to provide a general framework to guide planning and decision-making as it pertains to the academic functions of the university in the event of a crisis which in short or long-term occurrence disrupts the usual order of teaching and learning.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING

The following serve as principles which should be considered throughout the planning process to help guide considerations for academic continuity planning.

Examples of Crisis

- Prolonged campus closures or quarantines
- Extensive damage to campus infrastructure
- Disruption of campus networks and technological infrastructure
- Acts of God, severe weather or environmental conditions which require campus closure for prolonged periods of time

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Howard University emergency planning and preparedness encourages students, faculty, and staff to take measures as recommended for all regional and national emergency scenarios that may include possible disruptions to any of our academic offerings, regardless of modality.

In an emergency, Howard University students will receive notification alerts through the Bison S.A.F.E. App. The Bison Safe Emergency Notification System is the official emergency notification system for Howard University. Bison Safe is used to provide prompt notification to students, faculty, and staff if there is a condition that may threaten the health of safety of those on campus. The Department of Public Safety manages the Bison Safe Emergency Notification System. Only emergency information will be sent out via Bison Safe. Howard University will send non-emergent information via university communications.

Bison Safe utilizes multiple notification methods to reach out to students, faculty, and staff during an emergency. The Bison Safe Emergency Notification System utilizes the following channels to send emergency messages:

- Push Notifications

- Email
- Text Message
- Bison S.A.F.E. Mobile App

Contact Information

Department of Public Safety: (202) 806-1100 Email: hudps@howard.edu

INSTRUCTION

Principles and Guidelines for Planning

Teaching, research and instruction are the primary activities and responsibilities of the university and are most susceptible to interruption during crisis. In the event, the Howard University campus is officially closed, without disruptions to campus infrastructure, Emergency Remote Instruction (ERI) will be leveraged for academic continuity. Howard University maintains institutional membership with Quality Matters and will implement its ERI practices to inform continued instruction. In the event the campus infrastructure is compromised, the academic department, faculty, and students will be notified and addressed based on incident type, impact to normal operations, and impacts to health and safety. The university has a "Classroom Management Committee," comprised of key stakeholders including faculty, administrators, staff, and students who inform academic continuity strategies, particularly those involving emergency instruction.

If a decision is made to suspend in person instruction and/or close administrative offices, the university will provide recommendations and options to faculty to implement Emergency Remote Instruction (ERI). We are aware that this may not be a feasible option for certain laboratory-based, clinical and other classes. Essential personnel will continue to be maintained on campus at reduced levels. Transitions to ERI and remote workplace environments can be implemented in a phased manner, starting with large lecture-style courses, and those that are already utilizing a significant online component.

Issues and Considerations

Flexibility will be a vital piece in continuing with academic function of the university in the time of crisis. The following guide accommodations which should be considered during planning:

- Academic units and faculty alike should be flexible in allowing students to make up missed time/coursework in the case of certain students being affected by a crisis and others not.
- Alternative course offerings should be considered whenever possible, either through the use of technology, alternate teaching space, etc. These decisions should be situational and empower faculty to consider creative solutions to upholding student learning as a principle priority.
- Clinical courses/student teaching/fieldwork — Schools will inform students participating in courses which meet at locations other than campus classrooms what procedure will be

used to determine if the student should attend the offsite experiences. Attendance expectations at offsite locations may differ from the decisions for campus buildings and are outside of the oversight of Howard University. Each school having students enrolled in clinical or off-site courses should review its existing policies about clinical make-up rules in light of a possible crisis. Consideration of accreditation and graduation requirements should be factored into planning and decisions.

If an emergency prevents students from academic continuity, they are eligible to receive an irrevocable letter of credit and or assistance with transfer if we are not able to resume academic operations. The institution agrees that it and/or its home state have adequate measures to protect student records in the event of closure.

HEALTH & WELLNESS CONSIDERATIONS

As a matter of planning and preparedness, we encourage students, faculty, and staff to take measures as recommended for all regional and national emergency scenarios that may include disruptions in supply chains. As a precautionary measure, consider which medication and resources you might need if supplies are unavailable for three or more days. Shortages may include food, medicine, personal hygiene products, fuel, and public services.

As noted, the University will continue operating under normal circumstances as we continually assess circumstances and consider updates from the DC Department of Health and CDC. Employees and students who may be immunocompromised should contact the University Health Center to discuss proactive plans to protect their health.

OTHER ISSUES

Library Services

The Howard University libraries provide strong collections, quality service and instructional programs, and leadership in the application of information technologies. Students will have access to University enterprise research journal subscriptions and virtual collections.

Financial Aid

The campus office of financial aid serves a vital role in supporting and advising students. However, awarded state, federal, and institutional aid are embedded with various stipulations and nuances. The Offices of Enrollment Management, the Bursar, the Registrar and other support functions will provide virtual meeting and counseling resources for all students as needed.

Student Information Systems

Students will continue to have access to BisonHub, the university's comprehensive student information system powered by Workday, for registration, financial aid management, academic records, and other essential services. Faculty and staff will also utilize BisonHub for relevant administrative functions during emergency operations.