

May 5, 2020

Dear UA System students, faculty and staff,

The Board of Trustees met virtually on Monday, May 4, to continue to address the issues arising from the outbreak of COVID-19. The Board heard an informational report on the coming distribution of emergency student grants under the CARES Act, which institutions across the system will begin providing soon to help students meet needs that have arisen from the disruption of campus operations due to the virus. We know many students have needs as a result of this crisis, and our goal as a system is to get these funds to students as soon as possible. Additionally, [the Board passed several items regarding the UA System's response to the COVID-19 pandemic](#), including:

- A resolution on reopening campuses for the fall semester. The resolution acknowledged the need to continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 and to ensure reopening plans are aligned with state and federal health directives. To this end, a UA System task force including campus leaders and representatives from the system administration was formed to recommend steps to reopen institutions, including measures to protect campus constituencies from the spread of COVID-19.
- A resolution thanking Governor Asa Hutchinson and state officials for their daily updates to the citizens of Arkansas and their continued calm, capable leadership during the pandemic.
- A resolution thanking the employees across the system who have served as frontline and essential workers during the pandemic, ranging from the doctors, nurses, and staff at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences for demonstrating outstanding courage and bold perseverance in their daily work fighting the pandemic, to the custodial staff at every campus of the system who have worked to clean and disinfect campus buildings in the weeks since the outbreak of the virus.
- A resolution delaying the scheduled implementation of a 1% increase to the mandatory minimum employee-funded retirement contribution to help employees during the uncertain economic times. The increase from 4% to 5% beginning July 1, 2020 has been delayed to July 1, 2021.

We understand that campus life will be different as we all do our best to protect each other through responsible social distancing and other behaviors; however, we are confident in the ability of our institutions to use the resources at hand to reopen in a responsible way. We thank each of you for your patience and cooperation during these unique times. The Board will continue to monitor the progress of each institution over the summer and address other COVID-19 related issues as needed.

Sincerely,



Donald R. Bobbitt, President
University of Arkansas System



John Goodson, Chair
Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas