



February 28, 2020

Faculty:

As we think about the possibility of an outbreak of the flu or other respiratory illnesses, we need to be prepared to put all of our classes on Canvas so learning can continue even if the campus is shut down. We have a policy which addresses such events, Policy 2.41: Continuity of Operations Plan.

It would be in your best interest to review the policy in case it becomes essential for us to move classes to the online environment.

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O Magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. Psalm 34:3

BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

AREA: Academic Affairs

NUMBER: Policy 2.41

SUBJECT: Continuity of Operations Plan

This policy primarily addresses contingencies for suspension of on campus operations for periods of up to two weeks, with some strategies for addressing longer evacuation periods. Obviously, no plan can cover every contingency. Each storm or emergency may present a different set of unforeseeable challenges for the city and the College. These guidelines are meant to be just that - a set of prescribed actions that are meant to cover the foreseeable scenarios and to help with decision-making in those unforeseen. As decisions and exceptions must be made as new challenges present themselves, persons at each level should make decisions that at least follow the intent of these guidelines, if not the exact directions.

A. Complete Evacuation

In an evacuation, all on campus operations cease. All faculty, staff and students are instructed to leave campus. An evacuation will be ordered at the suggestion of the Chair of the Safety Committee and under the direction of the President.

Evacuation may occur as a result of a weather/earthquake emergency calling for a complete evacuation or from a more local, area-specific emergency such as a hazardous material (HAZMAT) scenario, for example, material (as flammable or poisonous material) that would be a danger to life or to the environment if released without precautions.

During weather/earthquake-driven situations, the decision to evacuate will ordinarily coincide with the evacuation of the city or the neighborhoods adjacent to the College. The Blue Mountain Offsite Recovery Team, led by the College president and composed of members of the President's Cabinet and others as deemed appropriate, will travel to a designated offsite location, currently in Ripley, MS.

During an evacuation forcing the relocation of the student body, all campus buildings will be locked and access strictly prohibited until the threat passes and safety has been confirmed by the Chair of the Safety Committee, Director of Facilities, Blue Mountain Police/Tippah County Sheriff, or the President.

Faculty and students are expected to evacuate and be prepared to continue instruction by distance learning methods which may include the Campus Learning Management System, and completion of reading, writing or other assignments specified on individual course syllabi.

Online courses and programs will continue normal operations. Faculty teaching in online programs, in consultation with online program directors, will notify their students of changes in availability while faculty members are traveling to their evacuation destinations.

B. Suspension of Campus Operations

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Campus operations may be suspended when external conditions on or around campus may be unsafe, but not severe enough to evacuate. Faculty and staff will be directed to leave campus by a specific time. Only personnel designated by the Chair of the Safety Committee may remain on campus after suspension goes into effect.

Residential students will continue to be housed on campus in locations designated by the Office of Student Affairs in consultation with the Chair of the Safety Committee.

During a suspension of campus operations, all academic and administrative buildings will be closed and locked. Laboratory science faculty may be allowed access to labs provided access has been approved in advance by the Chair of the Department of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Chair of the Safety Committee in consultation with the Director of Facilities and Campus Security. Access will only be allowed when it is safe. If power failure occurs, buildings must be checked individually to ensure life-safety equipment is fully operational before any access to any building is granted. Security personnel must report power outages to IT immediately.

On-campus classes will continue instruction in distance learning mode utilizing the Campus Learning Management System, and completion of reading, writing or other assignments specified on individual course syllabi.

Online courses and programs will continue normal operations. Faculty teaching in online programs, in consultation with online program directors, will notify their students of changes in their availability.

C. Assumptions for Operations in Academic Affairs

1. Academic Affairs will be directed by, and its activities will be consistent with, the overall College emergency plan.
2. The College will not close during an evacuation or suspension of on-campus operations; academic instruction will continue in a distance learning mode as long as the academic term has begun.
3. Student enrollment and contact with students will be maintained.
4. Faculty and instructional staff will check in with their Department Chair within 48 hours of an evacuation.
5. All students and employees will have current alternative personal contact information on file with Human Resources.
6. The College will maintain a robust Campus Learning Management System.
7. All faculty and instructional staff will maintain a level of presence on the Campus Learning Management System for each of their courses.
8. Students will be required to keep up with course assignments within 24 hours of evacuation or suspension of on campus operations.

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9. All academic rules and regulations will remain in force during an evacuation or suspension of on campus operations.
10. The College will post information within hours of an evacuation or suspension of on-campus operations.
11. Each department will develop departmental instructional plans.
12. All campus buildings will be locked during an evacuation or suspension of campus operations. Except for laboratory science faculty that made advance arrangements, requests for building access will be denied until campus operations resume.
13. Direct communication with faculty, staff and students, will be made using voice mail, email, and text messages.

D. Instructional Responsibilities and Enrollment Policies

Normal tuition refund policies will remain in effect during an evacuation or suspension of on campus operations.

The College will adjust the academic calendar as necessary to adhere to accreditation and federal financial aid requirements.

Depending upon the length of time for suspension of campus operations in the fall, the College may normally extend the semester for one additional week in December. However, exams will not extend beyond December 22.

If an evacuation or suspension of campus operations takes place in the first part of the fall semester, the College may use the Fall Break and some Saturdays may be designated by the College as make-up days. Alternatively, faculty will conduct make-up classes via the Campus Learning Management System or other alternative instructional methods.

1. On-Campus Instruction

Instruction of on campus courses will continue during an evacuation/suspension through distance education and will be maintained in all courses as follows:

One Week or less

- a. Reading and writing assignments prepared in advance and as indicated on syllabus or other assignments made prior to the evacuation/suspension.
- b. Campus Learning Management System or other online assignments such as watching a lecture/video and writing a paper.

One to Two Weeks

- a. Faculty will continue instruction by holding a minimum of one class session via the Campus Learning Management System or other distance learning protocol. These sessions may include one or more video lectures, PowerPoint presentations, interactive Campus Learning Management System assignments, or reading and writing assignments emailed to students by the course instructor.

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b. Additionally, homework assignments equivalent to one week of class work will be given to students.

More than two weeks

a. Instruction will continue in all courses via the Campus Learning Management System or other distance learning protocol except those specifically designated by the department chair as inappropriate for extended distance education (e.g. lab courses, private music instruction, studio classes).

b. Students enrolled in courses designated inappropriate for extended distance education will be assigned a grade of "IP" in those courses.

2. Online Program and Course Instruction

Instruction in all online courses will continue on the Campus Learning Management System given the guidelines for both faculty and students below.

Students in an area impacted by an emergency event:

As with traditional students, online students impacted by an emergency event will be required to keep up with course assignments within 24 hours. Online students impacted by an emergency event will be given seven (7) days to contact the program coordinator if any additional support is required. Students impacted by catastrophic events prohibiting communication will be addressed on a case-by-case basis at the program coordinator's discretion.

In general, students will be allowed to redress their absence given the following:

Student misses 10 - 20% of an academic term directly due to event

- a. Extensions will be granted to the student.
- b. Faculty may have the option to waive particular assignments at their discretion.
- c. A grade of "I" may be assigned if the event occurred near the end of term.
- d. Students will be allowed to enroll in subsequent courses even if the incompletes were not addressed.

Student misses 21 – 25% of an academic term directly due to the event

- a. A student with proper documentation may request a grade of "I" at the course instructor's discretion.
- b. A student may have to finish this coursework before enrolling in new courses at the discretion of the program coordinator.

Student misses more than 25% of an academic term directly due to the event

- a. A student with proper documentation may request a grade of "I". This grade will be assigned at the program coordinator's discretion.

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Proper documentation: Provide proof of home address at the time of the emergency event. This address must be within an area declared a Federal or State disaster area.

b. Whenever foreseeable, it will be the responsibility of the faculty to give students up to two weeks of content to be accessed offline in case of Internet disruption. These materials must be given to students 24 hours before a foreseeable emergency event.

Faculty in an area impacted by an emergency event:

a. All faculty will have 48 hours to contact their supervisors. Online instructors will contact their students within 48 hours to set their expectations immediately following an emergency event. If there is a disruption of instruction longer than two days, it is the faculty's responsibility to contact their program coordinator to report the outage.

b. Program coordinators will use their discretion to cover courses with absent instructors due to disaster/emergency events as per the Faculty Handbook.

E. Academic Administrative Responsibilities

Vice President for Academic Affairs

1. Pre-Evacuation/Suspension

- a. Ensures that each Department Chair has individual College plans for academic instruction continuation.
- b. Ensures that the *Continuity of Operations Plan* is posted and widely communicated.

2. During and After Evacuation/Suspension

- a. In case of evacuation resulting in the activation of the off-site recovery location, serves on Blue Mountain College Off-site Recovery Team with the President's Cabinet. The Off-site Recovery Team will evacuate to an off-site location, currently in Ripley, MS.
- b. In case of suspension, establishes immediate communication with Department Chairs to ensure timely updates to faculty, staff, students, and families.
- c. In consultation with the Department Chairs, develops plans for resumption of instruction on campus.
- d. Ensures that Faculty and Staff have prompt access to campus as soon as it is feasible so that they can expedite the return to normal operations.
- e. In evacuations/suspensions lasting more than two weeks, establishes contact and consults with Department Chairs and Faculty through electronic communications.
- f. Communicates necessary changes in academic policy and procedures caused by the evacuation/suspension.
- g. Upon resumption of on campus operations, obtains feedback from faculty and staff using an electronic questionnaire.

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3. Communicates to everyone in the college that the main College webpage (bmc.edu) will be the source of official College updates.

Department Chairs

Each Chair is responsible for the following activities:

Pre-Evacuation/Suspension

1. Develops and shares the department's continuity plan with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Department planning will include the following:

a. An understanding within the College and its departments of what discretion means in terms of faculty holding or canceling classes prior to an official College announcement of evacuation or suspension of campus operations.

b. Description of plans for continuity of instruction, including exceptions noted above (courses inappropriate for extended distance education (e.g. lab courses, private music instruction, studio classes).

c. Provisions for distinct needs of a department or program for campus access. These provisions must be approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Chair of the Safety Committee.

2. Ensures that faculty and instructional staff receive training in utilizing the Campus Learning Management System or other means of online instruction.

3. Encourages faculty to prepare and post-on syllabi assignments for all their courses in case of an evacuation or suspension of campus operations, consistent with the College plan.

4. Coordinates College-wide evacuation/suspension policies for faculty, staff, and students including evacuation training.

5. Department of Mathematics and Natural Sciences only: Obtains name, contact information, and location of science faculty who may need access to on campus labs during suspension of on-campus operations and provide this information to the Chair of the Safety Committee, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Chief Operating Officer, Director of Facilities, and Campus Security.

6. Takes laptop computer, supplies, and documents that may be needed while away from campus. This is critical because if a laptop is issued and work is expected to continue, those laptops are expected to be used to work remotely. A few extra thoughts:

a. Ensure you save frequently used business URLs (or "favorites") in order to access necessary sites for work (many of us do not know specific web addresses and simply click on a "favorite").

b. What about thumb drives/flash drives? Do you use them for document back-up? If so, make sure you have them ready to go and packed in your "kit."

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- c. What about laptop chargers (often under the desk and forgotten) and mobile device chargers? Don't forget them.

During Evacuation/Suspension:

- a. Establishes immediate contact with faculty, staff and students.
- b. Communicates with the Vice President for Academic Affairs regarding the status of college activities.

Faculty

Pre-Evacuation/Suspension

1. Become fully familiar with continuity (emergency) plans of the College, Office of Academic Affairs, and Department.
2. Ensure that each course has a Campus Learning management System presence and participate in scheduled training sessions.
3. Develop assignments appropriate for evacuation/suspension periods and, when appropriate, distribute prior to evacuation/suspension.
4. Develop a syllabus that clearly states the following:
 - a. Information about how students are to log on to the Campus Learning Management System.
 - b. Communicates to students the expectations for course continuation during an evacuation/suspension
 - c. Provide a two- to four-week plan of reading and assignments. Specify what course work to complete even if student does not have access to the Campus Learning Management System due to power outage.
5. Obtain contact and alternate contact information from all your students (email, voice, text). If class has not yet met, use student contact information in the Campus Student Information System.
6. Faculty in the sciences and in equipment-intensive disciplines will ensure that their laboratories and sensitive equipment are secure and that temperature sensitive supplies (e.g., tissue or cell cultures, certain chemicals, etc.) or materials that require constant care are evacuated/secured as appropriate.
7. Science faculty that may need access to labs during suspension of on campus operations will notify their Department Chair of lab location and access needs.

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8. All campus buildings will be locked during suspension of campus operations. No access will be allowed, except for science faculty that have made advance arrangements with their Department Chair.

During Evacuation/Suspension

a. Communicate with the Department Chair regarding the status of courses within 48 hours of an evacuation or suspension of on campus operations.

b. Continue course instructions as described in D. Instructional Responsibilities and Enrollment Policies and restated below:

One Week or less

a. Reading and writing assignments prepared in advance and indicated on syllabus.

b. The Campus Learning Management System or other online assignments such as watching a lecture/videos and writing a paper.

One to Two Weeks

a. Faculty will continue instruction by holding a minimum of one class session via the Campus Learning Management System or other distance learning protocol. These sessions may include one or more video lecture, PowerPoint presentation, and interactive Campus Learning Management System assignment, or reading and writing assignments emailed to students by the course instructor.

b. Additionally, homework assignments equivalent to one week of class work will be given to students.

More than two weeks

a. Instruction will continue in all courses via the Campus Learning Management System or other distance learning protocol except those specifically designated by the department chair as inappropriate for extended distance education (e.g. lab courses, private music instruction, studio classes).

b. Students enrolled in courses designated inappropriate for extended distance education will be assigned a grade of I in those courses.

c. Report student and advisee contact information to Department Chair.

d. Based on post-evacuation/suspension conditions, maintains rigorous and reasonable assignment policies.

Information Technology Services

Pre-Evacuation/Suspension

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1. Assists faculty in development of online courses and ensures appropriate use of the Campus Learning Management System applications by faculty and students.
2. Works with faculty to develop electronic reserves within the Campus Learning Management System.
3. Serves as a campus liaison with the Campus Learning Management System.
4. Tests IT disaster recovery plan.
5. Maintains contract with the Campus Learning Management System for off-site hosting and 24/7 user support.

Post-Evacuation/Suspension

1. Provides instruction and follow-up instruction to faculty and students in use of the Campus Learning Management System for distance education.
2. Activates shadow Web site within hours of loss of service to the main campus
3. Activates alternative e-mail accounts
4. Activates 1-800 number at alternative location

Library

1. Provides access to electronic resources, including full-text journals and electronic books.
2. Provides 24/7 reference assistance.
3. In the event of an extended evacuation/suspension provides interlibrary loan/article delivery services and support for media applications.

Office of Registrar

Post-Evacuation/Suspension

1. Provides each Department Chair with currently enrolled students and their courses.
2. Provides each Department Chair with current candidates for graduation.
3. Provides contact information for students - permanent addresses, phone numbers, cell phone numbers and email addresses.

Students

Pre-Evacuation/Suspension

1. Practice signing on for each course through the Campus Learning Management System.

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2. Provide regular and alternative e-mail address and phone contact information to each instructor.
3. Pack textbooks, assignments, syllabi and any other needed materials for each course and bring during an evacuation/suspension.

During Evacuation/Suspension

1. Faculty will continue to expect the same level of responsibility and performance from students during an evacuation/suspension.
2. Students are required to keep up with course work during the evacuation/suspension as specified on course syllabi and on-line Campus Learning Management System courses.
3. Students should complete any reading and/or writing assignments given by professors before emergency began.
4. Students should also monitor the main College site (www.bmc.edu) for general information.

Assuming a power source is available...

5. Log on to College Web site within 48 hours of an evacuation/suspension.
6. Log on to each course through the Campus Learning Management System or e-mail within 48 hours of an evacuation/suspension.
7. Log on to the Campus Learning Management System site within 48 hours of any evacuation/suspension to receive further information regarding contacting course instructors for assignments, etc.
8. Complete Campus Learning Management System and/or other online assignments posted by instructors (students are required to turn in assignments on time during the evacuation/suspension period and once the College campus has reopened.
9. Students are required to contact instructors during an evacuation/suspension (or as soon as classes resume on campus) to explain any emergency circumstances that may have prevented them from completing expected work.

[Cross Reference with Policy 6.07: Continuity of Operations Plan]

SOURCE: Board of Trustees: February 26, 2016