

Dear Faculty, Staff, and Students:

Thank you for your resilience, perseverance, and commitment to the University during this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. I continue pray that you, your families and loved ones are well, staying safe, and following the recommendations of health care experts.

I wish each you a Happy New Year as we move into 2021. I appreciate your hard work and diligence, and I am proud of our efforts to create a safe educational and work environment while ensuring that TSU operates effectively for students, employees and the other members of the TSU family. We will use our experiences from 2020 to improve the operations of the University for Spring 2021 as we continue to evaluate safety measures and best practices, with the continued focus on the health and safety of the campus community.

I want to assure you that we will remain resolute in our commitment to educating students, ensuring that faculty and staff are equipped with the necessary support, and providing a safe and healthy academic environment for students. Please find below an update on our operations during the spring 2021 semester.

Academics

- Student safety is a primary concern as they pursue academic endeavors. We will ensure that students are safe and will learn in an environment conducive to their success. Students will return to campus beginning January 19, 2021, and classes will start on January 25. Students living in on-campus residential facilities will be subject to COVID-19 testing and other health and safety requirements.*
- Classes for Spring 2021 will be offered in the same manner as Fall 2020, which is a combination of online, hybrid, and in-person, with approximately 85% of the course delivery being online. To assist students with the online classes, additional technology devices will be provided to those students who did not receive them last fall, and also to faculty and staff as needed. Again, we will work diligently to ensure that our students have first class, high-quality instruction.*
- For the first two weeks of the Spring 2021 all classes will be online.*
- Faculty will be allowed to teach online, in person or in a hybrid form. Faculty will follow the same procedures for Spring 2021 as they did for the fall semester and will have the option of teaching online or in-person.*

- Staff also will follow the same plan for Spring 2021 as they did for the fall and will follow the directions of the Unit Heads to determine their campus contact. This will generally involve most employees continuing to work on a remote basis, other employees returning to campus, or some form of a hybrid approach.
- Additional online technical support and virtual student services have been secured to assist students and faculty with delivery of online courses.

Testing and Tracing

- TSU will continue to follow the health guidelines from the Tennessee State Department of Health, the Center for Disease Control and other agencies regarding testing, contact tracing, face-coverings, social distancing, hygiene, facility cleaning, and other recommendations designed to slow the spread of COVID-19.
- All employees are asked to self-screen for any COVID-19 related symptoms and will be subject to a temperature check upon arrival on campus.
- Students will continue to be tested in the same manner as in the fall 2020. We will perform aggressive testing; and will have self-testing kits available for students, faculty and staff, with pre-paid express shipping. And we have implemented rapid testing procedures that allow results in around 15 minutes.
- Testing for students and employees is available daily. Test kits are available at the Campus Health Center located on the third floor of the Floyd-Payne Campus Center.
- While we strive to have zero students with positive test results, the number of positive cases at TSU has been significantly lower than many of the other universities in the Tennessee system. Students in quarantine or isolation will continue to be moved to a separate facility and are monitored regularly throughout the day during the time in that facility.
- Students who are experiencing coronavirus symptoms must contact the Campus Health Center at (615) 963-5291, email Studenthealthservices@tnstate.edu or contact the TSU COVID-19 non-emergency phone line and email at (615) 963-6888 and COVID-19@tnstate.edu. [View the TSU Testing Plan here](#).
- Please make sure to visit our COVID-19 website regularly for the most up-to-date information and guidance at <http://www.tnstate.edu/return/>.

Campus Life

- *As students start to return to campus in the coming days, we want to assure you that we take seriously the institution's role in protecting the health and safety of the campus community. To that end, we are continuing the policies, protocols and procedures that were implemented during the fall semester to ensure the University's operations adhere to federal, state and local guidelines and protects the campus community.*
- *These policies include requirements for all students and employees to wear masks at all times while in public spaces and areas, exercise social distancing (at least six feet apart from other individuals), and for everyone to wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer frequently while on campus. All policies governing COVID-19 operational matters will be posted on the TSU website shortly.*
- *We understand your concerns regarding your health and safety during this unprecedented time. We also understand that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be a fluid situation. We are committed to creating a safe environment for students and employees and to revising and updating our health and safety measures as the circumstances warrant.*
- *We ask students to again modify their expectations as it pertains to student activities and adjust to the virtual environment for the Spring 2021 semester. Health and safety protocols will remain in effect and the university will require strict compliance.*
- *With student returning to campus from various locations and environments, we will resume the Safer in Place policy for the first fourteen days of the Spring 2021 semester, restricting students from leaving their residence halls without the express permission of the Student Affairs office, and limiting faculty from coming to campus without authorization. The Division of Student Affairs continue to review residence life and student activities and will make adjustments as necessary.*
- *Additional online technical support and virtual student services are available to assist students and faculty with delivery of online courses.*
- *Tele-counseling services are available for students who may be experiencing anxiety or need guidance.*

Operational Matters

TSU will continue to operate under the COVID-19 Remote Operations Guidelines. Under those guidelines, only approved individuals engaged in essential functions that require working on campus are authorized to come to campus.

- All other employees are required to carry out their duties and responsibilities on a remote basis under the supervision of their unit head.*
- Unit heads shall continue to remain in close and regular contact with the employees in their respective units to ensure the continued effective operation of the University.*

Health and Safety

- I continue to stress the importance of students and employees following all public health guidelines. Our protocols are for the sole purpose of protecting the faculty, staff, and students from contracting COVID-19.*
- We require everyone on campus to follow all health and safety guidelines including social distancing, face-coverings, temperature checks, hygiene, cleaning, avoiding large crowds and encouraging others to do the same.*
- These policies include requirements for all students and employees to wear masks at all times while in public spaces and areas, exercise social distancing (at least six feet apart from other individuals), and for everyone to wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer frequently while on campus. All policies governing COVID-19 operational matters will be posted on the TSU website shortly.*

In closing, the TSU Family will continue to face this COVID challenge together and share in the responsibility of keeping ourselves and others healthy. We are here to work on your behalf and we will do all we can to ensure your success, as well as your safety. Please remain prayerful, safe and encouraged.

*Sincerely,
President Glenda Glover*