

# Classes have resumed online

Faculty and students adjust to online learning

By ANSLEY KARY

Students logged into online classes last week and settled in for the remainder of the semester.

After spring break on Mar. 30, instead of moving back onto campus, students resumed online classes from their own locations.

Provost Michael Hammond sent out a word of encouragement over video the Sunday before classes resumed.

“This isn’t the semester any of us would have planned, but we want to make the most of it,” Hammond said.

The adjustment to online classes is not only affecting the students but the faculty who had to alter their courses to fit the online structure.

Hammond said that as students start classes he wants them to understand how hard their professors have been working to move to virtual instruction as many of them gave up their spring break to prepare.

Early March, Carrie Meyer, director of online learning, brought the possibility of online classes to the attention of the deans council.

Shortly after this was discussed Hammond supervised the assembly of the Learning Online/Virtual Encouragers (LOVE Team) comprised from individuals who serve on the deans council.

In order to efficiently teach faculty about the new online learning structure, the LOVE Team created all-faculty webinars where the team shared critical virtual learning principles and were available to answer any questions.

Currently the LOVE Team is tending to needs on a more individual basis, as they continue to support faculty and answer any questions that arise.

“Taylor is equipped with necessary technology, fabulous student support, access to wonderful digital resources through our library, excellent faculty and a high quality support structure,” said Barb Bird, dean of faculty development.

Even though classes are technically all being held remotely Bird said she doesn’t define them as true online courses.

Bird said that true online learning follows strict guidelines and quality assurance practices.

“During this crisis, our focus is on the students and helping them be able to finish strong, in a flexible format. We are calling this virtual learning,” Bird said.

The consistent message that the LOVE Team, the deans and the provost has been and continues to be, to care for the students, engage in new models of content delivery for continuous learning and demonstrate that Taylor is not defined by geography.

In a video on March 23, Interim President Paige Cunningham addressed the Taylor community.

“To our faculty, you have made an amazing pivot to transform how we do learning to help equip servant leaders to minister Christ’s redemptive love and truth in creative, albeit transformed in unexpected ways to help our students make it to the finish line,” Cunningham said.

Students have been encouraged by administration to continue to communicate their needs.

This communication includes reaching out to professors as an effort to let them know what is working and what needs to be adjusted.

“Students I also want to encourage you that the key to learning is always your own curiosity, your own desire to learn and your own drive,” Hammond said. “That doesn’t change just because you are not here on campus or in the classroom.”

The decision to suspend on-campus learning and move to virtual learning for the rest of the semester was announced on March 20.

Cunningham said that the decision to suspend classes was hard but necessary.

“It has been an incredible couple of weeks, incredible in the sense that we have no idea, day to day what would be happening, but we can be confident of this, that God is in control,” Cunningham said.

In addition to the resumed classes, chapel has continued as previously scheduled.

Faculty, students and members of the Taylor community alike have logged into Instagram Live during 10 a.m. EST to view chapel.

Chapel has included a combination of student, faculty and administration participation.

Campus Pastor Jon Cavanagh has been the leading force in the initiating guest speakers.

Such speaking quests have included Cavanagh himself, Hammond, Cunningham and Professor of Christian Ministries Phil Collins.

Cunningham has participated in viewing chapel live and said that during worship it gave her some time to grieve over not being present with students during chapel.

“Even if we are not together in person we are united by God’s Holy Spirit and that bond of fellowship is one that is not defined by geography, but is one that transcends physical limitations and for that I am so very very grateful,” Cunningham said.

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