

July 28, 2020

To HCHC students, faculty, and staff, and our friends:

Amid a tumultuous spring in the US and the world, I hope that you, your family, and your friends are well and beginning to find the capacity to turn your attention to the future – a better, more equitable future. Education is the key to achieving our aspirations, both as individuals and as a society. We at HCHC are privileged to be in a position to enable that better future, and we are looking forward to continuing to deliver Christian Orthodox education of the highest quality to all of our students.

As we plan for fall 2020, our foremost concern is the health, safety, and welfare of our students, faculty, and staff. Throughout the pandemic, our decisions have reflected the guidance of public health officials and medical experts to ensure this safety. Further, over the past four months faculty and staff have been working tirelessly to research the potential impact of reopening the campus for the fall semester. Unfortunately, COVID-19 continues to rise in many areas of the country and public health officials nationwide are predicting additional waves of the pandemic through the remainder of the summer and into the fall.

Due to the severity of the potential risks involved in reopening the campus, today we are announcing that we will continue teaching online through the fall 2020 semester and not reopen the campus. This decision was not made lightly. Administrators and staff spent countless hours exploring ways to reopen the campus. Although there were many obstacles, the bottom line always came back to ensuring the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff. Our plan is to reopen the campus for the spring semester 2021 and we will be working diligently to ensure that this occurs.

Although this may disappoint some of you, the deans, senior administrators, and I are committed to ensuring that learning will take place in a robust manner that preserves the excellence and innovation of an HCHC educational experience and engagement while also eliminating the potential for exposure to the coronavirus. Online instruction will begin on September 15 and the semester will conclude on December 22, 2020, as originally scheduled.

Throughout the pandemic, we have continued to work to enhance the student experience, improve classes, and add additional academic offerings in major ways—regardless of whether we returned to campus or stayed online.

HCHC recently selected the CANVAS learning management system to redesign how classes are presented and delivered. This new system will allow faculty to deliver courses in a seamless fashion and interact with students in a more holistic manner. Even though our students will be continuing to learn remotely, with this new delivery system, they will feel even closer to campus. We have worked tirelessly to implement this new system and I am pleased to say that our faculty are currently receiving training and working hard to come up to speed. Students will also be contacted soon to receive CANVAS basic training so that we will be fully operational by the fall.

As you know, we are offering two online classes this fall taught by world-renowned Orthodox theologians: [Rev. Dr. George Parsenios](#) and [Dr. Wendy Larson](#). These classes will enrich our current students' learning and provide them with a deeper understanding of Holy Scripture and the Eastern Orthodox Christian Tradition.

Further, HCHC is offering a new and unique fully accredited one-year [Certificate in Youth and Young Adult Ministry and Leadership](#). This program is designed for those who have completed their bachelor's degrees and offers them the opportunity to deepen their theological knowledge while developing hands-on ministry and leadership skills.

I am very optimistic and excited about these new initiatives and I want to thank our faculty, staff, and donors for making these initiatives a reality despite the challenges associated with the pandemic. Our resolve is stronger than ever and our faculty, teaching assistants, and instructional designers are actively planning for a fall semester that utilizes an online teaching and learning experience that preserves the experiential learning that distinguishes HCHC's "hands-on, minds-on" approach.

It is reasonable to assume that we will be living with COVID-19 for the foreseeable future, and during this time we must rely on each other. While we will continue teaching remotely, the safety, security, and well-being of our community will always remain the principal focus. We can and will deliver a quality education and theological experience despite these challenges.

Throughout all of this, I assure you that we will emerge stronger as a college, seminary, school of theology, and community. For us to achieve our collective goals, we must remain vigilant, disciplined, exceptionally considerate of one another, and must work together as a team – faculty, students, and staff. Over the next few weeks, all of you will be hearing further plans on orientation, courses, and virtual life from your respective deans. This will entail teamwork on all of our parts that I am confident will be successful!

Lastly, those students who were planning to come back to campus to reside in Halki and Dendrinos will be contacted shortly by the Office of Student Life. The Polemanakos Dormitory will remain closed.

I want to thank the deans, senior administrators, staff, board of trustees, and the entire HCHC team for the tireless effort they have put in over the last five months. They have kept the School moving in the right direction.

Life will not be perfect, but by the power of the life-giving Cross, our faith in Jesus Christ is. And that is enough to protect us and allow us to thrive. I look forward to collaborating with all of you and supporting you as we pursue our teaching mission energetically, imaginatively, and passionately in the face of one of the greatest challenges ever to confront our School, our Church, and our nation.

With gratitude and prayers,

George M. Cantonis



President

Hellenic College, Inc.