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Jimmy H. Baker
CHANCELLOR

MEMORANDUM #2020-EXE-021

DATE: March 20, 2020

TO: Presidents, Alabama Community College System
Presidents' Assistants, Alabama Community College System

FROM: Jimmy H. Baker, Chancellor 

RE: Graduation Ceremonies

On yesterday, Gov. Kay Ivey and the Alabama Department of Public Health Issues a statewide health order to aid in Alabama's efforts to contain the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). If public health projections are accurate, we are likely to see many more confirmed cases and will remain under stringent public health orders for some time to come. As this unprecedented situation continually evolves, we must make every effort to protect our colleges and the well-being of our students, families and our state. To that end, I am directing each College to cancel all traditional graduation ceremonies scheduled for this semester as they would involve large gatherings of people. You are free to use your discretion in considering alternatives to the traditional ceremonies or rescheduling your graduation ceremonies for a later date. For example, colleges may choose to consider having a "virtual" graduation that can be live streamed or recorded this spring and invite the graduates to participate in a traditional ceremony to be held later. Given the uncertainty of this situation, I encourage you to consider looking at dates at the end of summer term or beyond if you decide to reschedule. In any case, please provide your institution's plan for graduation to the System Office's point of contact, Rachel Adams, Communications and Marketing Administrator, at 334-293-4651 (work), 334-328-6191 (cell).

This is a difficult decision that I have not taken lightly. I recognize that each college is different and has its own unique culture and sense of community. Our common thread is the deep commitment we have to serving our students and focusing on their success. I look forward to learning of your plans to honor and recognize our students for their achievements. Please know that the entire System Office team stands ready to assist you as needed.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to student success.

JHB/lmt

cc Board of Trustees, Alabama Community College System
System Office, Vice Chancellors & Associate Vice Chancellors
Boone Kinard, Executive Director, External Affairs
Rachel Adams, Communications and Marketing Administrator