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SWOSU Intends to Resume In-Person Teaching for the Fall 2020 Semester

Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford and Sayre has announced that it intends to resume in-person teaching, learning and residential life for the Fall 2020 semester.

SWOSU President Randy Beutler said the university will use a measured approach to the fall semester and continue the tradition of an excellent education at an affordable price.

“The value of a SWOSU education is known far and wide,” Beutler said. “However, in order to sustain the quality of many of our programs, we cannot continue to rely solely on remote learning. Digital and virtual learning technologies are an important part of our educational system and will continue to be so, but these tools cannot be a long-term substitute for the facilities and support that our campuses at Weatherford and Sayre provide.”

Many of SWOSU’s faculty and students need access to classrooms, library, rehearsal rooms and labs to fully engage with their learning, research and instruction.

Beutler said it will be important to recognize that campus life will be different when the fall semester resumes in August. SWOSU will continue to monitor developments in the western Oklahoma area and the state related to the virus.

Using this information, SWOSU will analyze and develop ways in which students, faculty and staff can safely return to campus, including:

- Safety protocols such as social distancing will be of utmost importance in the return to classrooms, labs and residence halls.
- The dining facility serving lines are being changed to improve safety.
- Future plans will also include recommendations regarding the use of protective masks, testing and other tools.
- SWOSU will also consider ways to reduce the density of groups in campus housing, dining facilities and classrooms.

Until a vaccine is developed, many members of the SWOSU community may not be able to risk teaching or attending in-person classes.

“We recognize the needs of our faculty and staff, our non-traditional students, and the members of our community with underlying health concerns,” Beutler said. “To these and others, SWOSU will develop strategies for fall instruction which will involve a blend of online and face-to-face classes.”

Beutler said he knows there will be many questions about the logistics of how a return to campus will ensure a safe environment for students, faculty, staff and visitors to campus.

“As we continue to work through this process, we will keep everyone updated in a timely manner,” Beutler said. “We look forward to seeing our community’s eventual return to campus and the start of a great, new academic year.”

SWOSU Fall semester classes begin August 17.