April 17, 2020

Dear Staff & Faculty,

Since March 13, the Seminary has adapted to the rapidly changing guidelines with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic.  I am grateful for the many ways in which this community has responded to a different way of working.  Zoom and Teams Video apps have made it possible to stay connected and keep some semblance of being together.  The staff and faculty have done a fantastic job in all we do to ensure that learning continues, business operations keep flowing, and constituents are contacted.   Much has been accomplished in a short period of time and everyone is to be celebrated.

On April 13, Travis County issued a new order ([full text can be found on the Travis County website](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Travis%20County%20-%20Stay%20Home-Work%20Safe%20Order%20-%2004-13-2020.pdf)) that extends the Stay Home – Work Safe guidelines through May 8.

Austin Seminary continues to comply with the County’s order and require non-essential staff and faculty to work remotely.  For essential employees and those that do need to be on campus from time to time, you must be following guidelines with respect to social distancing, wearing a face covering (except while alone in your office space), washing your hands, staying home if you or anyone in your household is sick or has been exposed to the coronavirus. As plans are rolled out with respect to opening the economy, we will continue to monitor both the Texas guidelines and the county guidelines to ensure the safety of our entire community.

Plans are also in the works to change the Spring Board of Trustees meeting, scheduled for May 22-23, from an in-person meeting to a virtual meeting.

Again thank you for all you are doing at this time.

Heather Zdancewicz, Vice President of Finance & Administration

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Dear Seminary Community:

At the its regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday this week, the faculty discussed prospects for Austin Seminary’s summer semester. The faculty decided to move the summer semester (for DMin and masters programs) to an on-line format, continuing the pattern we have adopted since spring break. This decision mirrors the decision of the University of Texas and most other institutions of higher education in our region. It is also in line with the continued guidance we are receiving from the city of Austin in light of the outbreak of COVID-19.

In addition, President Wardlaw has asked the Seminary’s board of trustees to act on a proposal to move our commencement ceremony to a new date, November 1, 2020, so that we may gather in person as a community to celebrate the class of 2020. That proposal also includes plans for an on-line “farewell” worship service for our graduating students during the last week of the spring semester.

These decisions mark significant shifts in our normal, end-of-academic-year patterns, but are clearly necessary for the continued well-being of our community. I ask for your continued prayers for everyone affected by this disease and for the brave people on the front lines who care for the afflicted and help to find a cure.

In Christ,

David Hadley Jensen, Academic Dean