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Angels!

The Meredith Herald

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Meredith's Decisions Regarding Course Modality Spark Conversation

By Freya Dahlgren, Opinion Editor

On Jan. 10, the Meredith College community received an email from the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) stating that classes would be delivered remotely from Jan. 12 to Jan. 14. This decision was made in order to improve safety on campus following the break, with the Omicron variant being more contagious than other variants. On Jan. 13, the ELT announced that in-person instruction would resume on Jan. 18.

When asked about why the decision was made, Dr. Jean Jackson, Vice President for College Programs, and Dr. Matthew Poslusny, Senior Vice President and Provost, said in a joint statement, "Waiting to start in-person instruction until [Jan.] 18 gave us more than two weeks between New Year's Eve...and the start of in-person classes. In addition, we were also monitoring the availability of vaccinations and testing, knowing that [members] of our community were trying to schedule vaccinations, including boosters, and many wanted to test before returning to campus."

What is MC Alert?

By Aminah Jenkins, Associate Editor

At Meredith, the MC Alert system allows students to receive information about incidents that pose a threat to their safety. According to Meredith's website, MC Alert is "Meredith's emergency notification system for students, faculty and staff." The system, which is run by Meredith's Executive Leadership Team, only provides information about incidents that occur on campus.

Following recent incidents like car robberies on Hillsborough Street and on neighboring university NC State's campus have prompted some students to question why MC Alert does not notify Meredith students about these situations.

Ann Gleason, Dean of Students and Head of the Incident Response Team, explained that the safety of Meredith's community members is the College's highest priority. She stated, "Meredith follows the requirements of the Clery Act, a federal statute requiring colleges and universities to maintain and disclose campus crime statistics and security information."

Meredith's current criteria for reporting an incident is "[any] on-campus emergency that poses an immediate risk to the health and safety of the campus com-

They also stated, "While we could not reasonably change the start date of the semester to mitigate exposures over the holidays, we could change the delivery method."

Students' opinions about the start of the semester vary. Megan George, '24, said that she "didn't understand the reasoning behind the team's decision to begin with three days of online learning."

"I learn much better in person and was very disappointed to hear classes would not be in person the first week," George said.

On the other hand, Laurelyn Ponder, '22, said, "I wish I had more warning about the decision beforehand so I could continue isolation with my family than in the community dorms. However, I appreciate the [ELT's] decision to reevaluate in-person [modality]...Starting online actually really helped my anxiety

about the transition heading back into a crowded classroom."

Dr. Jackson and Dr. Poslusny said, "If conditions warrant, we could go back to online classes for a period of time." George said that "even if cases continue to rise, [she] would very much prefer to stay in person."

"I would like to go back online if the cases continue to rise," Ponder said. "Even though I am a senior and this is my last year, I'd rather be safe and locked down than be forced to go in person...We have the tools to use technology [for communication], socialization and education so why don't we use it?"

Dr. Lori Brown, Professor of Sociology and Criminology, was given special permission from the Dean of Arts and Humanities to hold classes online for

the first two weeks of the semester. When asked why she requested to do so, she said, "I am over 60, have my 83-year-old mother living with me and I am diabetic." She does, however, believe that in-person learning is more conducive to student success.

"College students need more social interactions in an environment like a classroom where you talk to people as a routine part of your day," Dr. Brown said. "However, many of the faculty and staff have high anxiety and health issues that make returning to face-to-face highly stressful."

Dr. Brown stated that she is "sympathetic with the hard choices [the ELT] and others in the community must make, and [she hopes] students take this into account as they think about these issues."

Dr. Jackson and Dr. Poslusny said that when changes to the college's schedule are made, "the Marketing and Communications team drafts a message to go out to the entire community. Once the [ELT] has approved the message, it is sent out, typically the same day."

Student Election Season Begins

By Lauryn Turner, Contributing Writer

The start of the spring semester calls for the re-election of various class and campus-wide positions. Campaigning Week, which began Monday, Jan. 31 and will run through Friday, Feb. 4, will give students the opportunity to see the running candidates.

"Running in the elections can be a crucial part of a student's college experience," Elections Board Chair Sophia Bogan said. "It can provide necessary leadership skills that you will absolutely need in the future."

Bogan also emphasized the importance of voting in the elections. "The students who are holding executive or even non-major positions are the ones who represent the student body," she said.

Candidate cards for all positions will be hung on the second floor of the Cate Center outside the Office of Student Leadership and Service (SLS). These cards include the candidate's name, the position they are running for, a picture of themselves and any strengths or qualifications they believe make them a good pick for the position.

During Campaigning

Week, candidates will also have the opportunity to advertise their campaigns through social media and posters that can be hung in various buildings around campus. Bogan added that students will be able to watch a 1-minute video of the candidate discussing their goals for the position prior to the voting period.

The polling period for the elections will run from Monday, Feb. 7 at 8 a.m. through Tuesday, Feb. 8 at 5 p.m. All ballots will be sent out via email. Results will be announced to candidates by email Tuesday night and to the rest of campus the morning of Wednesday, Feb. 9.

Bogan says students should think of these elections as just as important as the national elections for our country. "Pay attention to your student representatives and leaders on campus as they are working hard to better the Meredith campus," she added.



Photo by Elisabeth Sinicrope



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