

COVID's Effect on Hampton University

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As students from Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications take online classes because of the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty and staff are preparing for the day when students will return to campus.

"While students are learning remotely, Scripps classrooms are undergoing significant technological upgrades, so I look forward to the day students are able to return to utilize these learning resources," Scripps Assistant Dean for Administrative Affairs Edward "Butch" Maier Said.

In the Scripps Howard building, new computers and smartboards have been added to classrooms. New cameras, tripods, microphones and lights have been obtained for the studio.

Joining the evolutionary additions to the classrooms, Augmented and Virtual Reality labs and spaces were secured by Dean Da'Vida Plummer's efforts to partner with 21st Century Fox and EON Reality. The Scripps Howard School of Journalism has benefited heavily from this summer's donation.

"With all these upgrades and additions, you still feel right at home in the building you've come to affectionately know as your home by the sea," Dean Plummer said.

Several large donations assisted Hampton in gaining these technological advancements, including a \$30 million gift from Amazon's Mackenzie Scott and \$100 million IBM grant split with 12 other universities.

IBM representatives said their gift to Hampton University will add assets such as curriculum content, guest lectures, and software by the end of this year, according to a news story by WAVY-10 News. IBM-HBCU Quantum Computing Center is a multi-year program that connects students and faculty to the field of quantum computing.

As universities monitor COVID, the additional funding has helped them keep safe and improve technology. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation gifted Hampton University with \$200,000 for COVID-related expenses. From this, each on-campus student received \$100 to assist them in retrieving articles from campus when they returned home during the early days of the pandemic.

Hampton University President William R. Harvey and his wife, Norma, have also provided financial support to students who had needs related to COVID-19. Dr. and Mrs. Harvey made a donation of \$100,000 for student expenses.

Hampton University students have not returned to campus for the Fall 2020 semester because cases have increased in states where some of the student body is located. These states include California, Georgia, Illinois, Texas, and

Pennsylvania.

"Online courses took a while to adapt to, but the safety of students and faculty at this moment is more important," Scripps Howard Senior Olusola Fakinlede.

While students adjust to online learning, professors have been trying to find their groove as well. "I teach hands-on production courses which is tricky to replicate online. I feel there's been a greater learning curve regarding the material. The inability to physically guide the students through the experience is not ideal especially when trying to receive feedback," Scripps Howard Assistant Professor Thomas Heffron.

According to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, cases are expected to increase if precautionary steps are not taken seriously. Dean Plummer said the return of students to campus will be based on factors of health and welfare of the student body in conjunction with guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Everyone will need to get tested for coronavirus before returning to campus, and on-campus tests will be conducted frequently. In public places and outdoors on campus, face coverings must be worn by students, faculty and staff. Visitors will also be ordered to follow campus health and safety measures. Food will not be self-served, but will be pre-packaged for safety. This semester was also cut short, beginning August 10 and ending November 20, 2020. Hampton University's administration has not made a decision on whether Spring semester will be in person or online.