



August 31, 2020

Welcome to Fall Term 2020!

We are happy to report a successful first week as students and faculty have started in-person and remote learning. Of course, as critical thinkers and problem solvers they are working to clear any hurdles associated with COVID-19 protocols. We trust your student is finding their way in and out of the designated doors, up and down the directed flow of staircases, and around the socially distanced dining hall. It's different, but it's good.

The traditional Opening Convocation was held in an untraditional setting on the Clyde W. Hall Graduation Court at twilight, Monday, August 24. For the safest possible gathering, everyone was masked and seated six feet apart in the outdoor space. Students and faculty gathered for an encouraging word from President Steven P. O'Day, special music from a student ensemble, and a rousing alma mater sung by a faculty quartet. The event was livestreamed on Facebook, and you can watch it [here](#).

Upcoming Events for Students

Opportunities Fair is next week! **Thursday, September 10**. Representatives from the many student organizations will be on the Campus Green for this outdoor event (weather permitting). We'll be following all protocols for health and safety including social distancing, non-contact sign ups, and mandatory face coverings. Encourage your student to stop by and sign up for an activity where they can make connections, use their gifts and talents, do good, and have some fun.

Other opportunities coming soon for your student:

Virtual Non-Profit Volunteer and Internship Fair on **September 10**, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., sponsored by Student Life and Career Services.

Virtual Graduate and Professional School Day on **September 22**, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., sponsored by Student Life, Career Services, and Alumni Engagement.

Special for First-Year Austin College Parents

During orientation weekend, students gathered in person or remotely for sessions about responsible behavior and details regarding the Austin College protocols for health and safety. As they put those guidelines into practice, we encourage all to be 'Roo-sponsible: go to class, manage their time, and get some sleep.

Each year the incoming students launch their Austin College experience by completing a project called First We Serve. The students observed all COVID-19 health and safety precautions, including wearing masks and gloves, while working together to weigh, package and box more than 40,000 meals to be sent to Honduras. Austin College partners with "Kids Against Hunger" for this annual service project. Working side-by-side, yet six feet apart, these students began to make early bonds with new friends while helping the world at large. Friendship and service are just two of the many important things Austin College is about.

Parent Orientation Continues

First-year parents have been having a unique orientation experience as well from the comfort of their computer screens for the Parent Virtual Orientation sessions. These remaining sessions are scheduled this week:

Session 4: A Strong Start for a Successful Finish is tomorrow night, **September 2, at 7 p.m.** Zoom links for first-year parents to attend this virtual session will come by separate email. Session information will be available afterward for those who cannot attend.

Session 5: Go 'Roos! 2020 and the Student-Athlete is **September 3 at 7 p.m.** and is intended for the first-year parents of Austin College athletes participating in varsity sports. The link will arrive by email. Session information will be available afterward for those who cannot attend.

If you were unable to attend the earlier sessions, these follow-up resources are available:

Session One: A Welcome from the Leadership. A transcript is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#);

Session Two: Living, Learning, and Other Essentials. A [video recording](#) is available.

Session 3: Meet the Mentors was purposefully not recorded or transcribed to facilitate open conversation between parents and the students' mentors.

We know there are always adjustments at the beginning of each semester—and this year more than ever. Please refer to the Austin College [COVID-19 webpage](#) for updates related to the health and safety of our community.

While we commit to taking good care of each other, we strive to make sure each student is having a meaningful college experience. As you have the opportunity to communicate with your student, please remind them that they literally hold the success of the semester in their clean hands. As our students, faculty, and staff stay healthy, we look forward to a great semester.

Go 'Roos!

Office of Student Life