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AS PANDEMIC PREVAILS, WAU MAKES DIFFICULT, NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS

[Takoma Park, MD, May 6, 2019] Washington Adventist University (WAU) is a vibrant and robust institution that has been serving the Adventist and local communities since 1904. We are proud of the lives we've influenced over the decades through rigorous education and consistent spiritual foundations. In 2020, a threat of unprecedented challenge and complexity has created a need for intentional, prayerful, and decisive adjustments to maintain health and longevity, and create financial flexibility for the institution.

Today, May 6, an adjusted business plan was presented to the WAU Board of Trustees in a regularly scheduled meeting. This pro-active plan takes into account the possible shrinking of enrollment, loss of donations, philanthropy, record unemployment, and many other economic factors related to COVID-19. WAU is consistently in a state of strategic exploration that has allowed the university to build strength into its foundations over the last decade. As Vision 2020 ends, WAU begins its new strategic chapter with Vision 2030. Many of the strategic pieces of Vision 2030 have been accelerated to strengthen WAU against the prevailing winds of this global pandemic.

"Just as God led our university through difficult times in the past, I am confident He will continue to guide and direct our steps and our administrative team, led by Dr. Weymouth Spence," says Dr. Dave Weigley, president of the Columbia Union Conference and chair of the WAU Board of Trustees.

The proactive adjustments being made to the university will move WAU toward a more consolidated model. WAU will focus on our strengths and allow the university to reinvest in programs that align with student enrollment to the successful career markets each of our students expect in their comprehensive learning experience. The suspension of programs and degrees does not eliminate the possibility of them being re-instated but allows the university to be flexible in responding to changes. The following degree programs will be submitted to the Maryland Higher Education Commission with the potential to be reactivated or discontinued: Education (Traditional), BioChem/Chemistry, Communication, History, Math, Political Science. Additionally, the memorandum of understanding for Social Work with Andrews University ends June 30, 2020.

Each impacted WAU student will be guided and supported with one-on-one attention to continue toward successful completion. Provost Cheryl Kisunzu states that "The highest regard



will be given to our precious students as they take their next steps toward their ordained futures. We intend to offer individualized care, such that we create vibrancy and optimism within their chosen path.”

“These adjustments to our faculty and staff will be painful for our university community,” said President Weymouth Spence. “However, it is with a solemn mindset that we approach each change and adjustment to the structure of the university. We must be faithful to the calling we have been given to continue the strength of WAU for its students, alumni, Adventist Community, donors, and friends. These adjustments will help solidify both the immediate and long-term financial health of Washington Adventist University.”

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Washington Adventist University is Montgomery County’s only four-year private college. Part of the Seventh-day Adventist system of higher education, Washington Adventist University has been educating college students since 1904 on a 19-acre campus in suburban Takoma Park, close to the nation’s capital. Approximately 1,100 students of all faiths participate in the university’s nine graduate and 42 undergraduate programs. The 2016 edition of U.S. News & World Report ranked Washington Adventist University among the best regional colleges in the north.

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