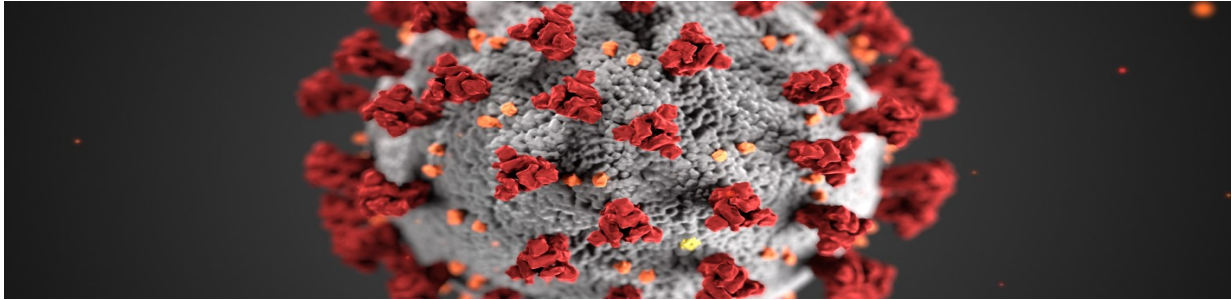


Documenting the AUC Response to COVID-19 Collection



April 20, 2020

C. J. White, Interdenominational Theological Center

“As a student leader, I began chronicling my experience while living on campus during the pandemic. The respective fellowships have been working tirelessly with students and the ITC Administration. Our prayer has been to insure that student needs are met and that safety is achieved. Most of the student population returned to their respective homes in various cities. Only a handful of us who stayed. During this unprecedented turmoil, the voices of AUC students must resonate in the very air that we breathe. Leaders must lead in calm and in adversity. No longer are we merely reading History, we are making History. The Gammon Building, on our historic campus, is both a place of isolation and are a haven of hope. The view from my dormitory is of Friendship Baptist Church, my beloved Bennett Hall, and the Atlanta downtown skyline. Travel is restricted. But these prayers go even further than the eye can see. Much suffering lies within these city walls and beyond. It will take a group effort to recover from the pestilence that has invaded and landed. Life has changed as we know it. Graduation is on the horizon. I was scheduled for May 2020 graduation; however, I am not disappointed in the postponement. Actually, I am just thankful to be alive. Commencement is the least of my worries. My concern is for my family, all families, our school, the country, the church, and the entire world. We are all connected with a universal prayer for healing and resolve. Isolation is a small price to pay for safety, good health, and peace of mind. In the words of Langston Hughes, “Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.” We must hold on to our dreams. Flight is inevitable. The horizon is nigh. There is a new normal. Weekly, we attended Chapel Services. We met for Bible Study. We met for Late Night Worship Services. Now, we participate in conference calls, Zoom meetings, and on social media in chat rooms. Our friendships have deepened. Our resolve has grown. And our appreciation for an invaluable education is fully realized. COVID-19 has affected my family directly. A cousin in Nashville contracted the deadly disease. She is in her 70's and is a dialysis patient. I prayed with her via phone. Never have I heard a cough like that in my life as it was a dry cough. It was coupled with a shortness of breath. I continued to pray daily. She was transferred to the Intensive Care Unit receiving dialysis treatments in her hospital room. In about a week, she began improving. Thankfully, she was released and is recuperating at home. Family members in the house have tested negative. To God be the Glory! With every success story, there are countless others who have experienced great loss. A former church member in Nashville (TN) moved back home to New York. He contracted COVID-19. He passed away in March. Many families have been unable to attend the funeral services. Grief is immeasurable. One of our Morehouse School of Religion (MSR) brothers received the news of his Pastor in Shreveport, LA. He was called home to be with the Lord. Another MSR brother had a father who contracted COVID-19. His father is a Pastor. On social media, they shared their family story of survival. It has received 15,000 views to date. We must share the Good News. There is a balm in Gilead. There are so many stories of survival and death. Schools connected to the Atlanta University Center (AUC) are connected

like pieces of a quilt interconnected by needlework sewn together by the Hand of the Almighty. Reflecting on the Kingdom work that lies ahead for the Morehouse School of Religion and the Interdenominational Theological Center, I am reminded of the words of Jesus. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14). CJ White 2019-2020 Morehouse School of Religion Baptist Student Fellowship 2019-2020 Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) Student Trustee."