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##### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**William Woods University announces intention to start fall semester in August**

**Fulton, MO** – William Woods University (WWU) announced today its intention to welcome back students for the start of fall semester on time, with in-person instruction, as originally scheduled in August. The 2020 fall semester will begin on Monday, August 24.

The announcement comes during the week when the University began a phased return to campus for a portion of its faculty and staff, following the order of Missouri Governor Mike Parson to re-open the state of Missouri. It was the first in a series of progressive steps toward having the University operating at full capacity for the fall semester.

“Our priority and commitment are to provide our students with a safe living and learning experience on campus for the fall semester,” said Dr. Jahnae H. Barnett, President of William Woods University. “We have every expectation for William Woods University to be open for in-person classes and co-curricular activities in August.”

The University has developed a comprehensive health and safety plan to ensure the well-being of everyone on campus – students, faculty, staff and visitors – come fall, including:

* Adopting increased campus cleaning protocols of all public spaces, using products approved by the Centers for Disease Control designed to safely eliminate the COVID-19 virus within 10 seconds. Particular attention is being paid to door knobs, railings, touch points, restrooms and corridors in buildings that have been reopened.
* Providing all employees with cleaning products to disinfect and sanitize their own personal workplaces, and the cleaning and replacement of all filters for campus HVAC systems.
* Scheduling classes in rooms that allow students to sit 6-8 feet apart, with an ongoing emphasis on social distancing protocols in place across campus.
* Evaluating residential living environments for best practices with physical distancing requirements.
* Making all coursework available online, in addition to in-person classes, to maximize flexibility of delivery for each course and provide convenience for students who are temporarily unable to attend class in person for a period of time.
* Ensuring student access to the campus Health Center, staffed by an experienced nurse practitioner.
* Continuing reliance on the University’s strong partnerships with the Callaway County Department of Health and State of Missouri Department of Health, consulting with both agencies to review and strengthen health and safety policies on a constant basis.

“Extensive planning has been underway for some time to prepare for the return to campus of our most important and valued resource, our students, in the fall,” said Dr. Barnett. “We will be ready for their return in August, while keeping consistent with all updated guidance on health, and are already counting down the days until that can safely happen.”

“We understand our ‘new normal’ on campus might be an adjustment,” she added. “But William Woods has thrived for 150 years for that very reason – our capacity to adapt, improvise and innovate – and I have no doubt our best days remain in our future.”

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*William Woods University has been consistently ranked as one of the top 100 regional universities in the Midwest by U.S. News and World Report. Founded in 1870, William Woods will mark the 150th anniversary of its founding in 2020. Headquartered on 250 scenic acres in Fulton, MO, the university offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of disciplines in campus, outreach, and online settings. It is a coeducational, independent, professions-oriented institution that provides both undergraduate and graduate opportunities.*