

Benedictine College extends break, implements online learning, due to COVID-19 (KAIR)--Atchison's Benedictine College is extending its Spring Break, and beginning online courses, due to COVID-19.

According to a release, the decision was made by college leadership due to “an abundance of caution.”

The release notes that Spring Break is extended for the week of March 16-20, and preparations are made for distance learning, in an effort to protect “students, faculty, and staff from the spread” of the coronavirus.

Benedictine College will remain open and all business operations will continue. Services, such as the dining hall, residence halls, the student health center, and the library, will remain open through the extended Spring Break.

Students will be allowed to return to campus beginning March 22. However, anyone experiencing cough, fever or shortness of breath who has traveled to a high-risk area should not return to campus and should contact their health provider for further direction.

Beginning March 23, all classes will be provided in an online environment.

College President Steve Minnis, in the release, said “there is no immediate threat or alarm,” but the decision to make the changes “seeks to minimize any potential risk for spreading the virus.”

There are no known COVID-19 cases within the student population; and, according to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the Atchison area continues to be at no or minimal risk for COVID-19.

Minnis created a Coronavirus Response Task Force on March 2 and that group is meeting daily to monitor the global and domestic coronavirus situation. Working in conjunction with guidelines established by federal, state and local health agencies, the team is charged with refining campus strategies for dealing with contagious diseases.

The release notes that the college will continue to monitor the situation week to week with the hope of resuming face-to-face classes.