

MC offers refunds, discounts and testing waivers for students

Special to The Clinton Courier

Mississippi College leaders recently announced a series of refunds going to students as a result of the COVID-19 health emergency.

MC officials will soon issue prorated refunds to students who paid for university housing and meal plans during the spring 2020 semester.

Refunds will be prorated for the period from March 23 (the Monday after the extended Spring Break) through the end date for final exams in early May. Cash refunds are issued through the university's partner, BankMobile.

MC President Blake Thompson announced refund details in a letter to Mississippi College students and families. The MC Board of Trustees approved the plan at an April 16 meeting.

"I know that one of your most critical concerns is credits and refunds for unused room and board," Dr. Thompson said. "On behalf of the many people who have worked diligently through the decision-making process, I offer my sincere appreciation for your patience. This was a critical decision, and we wanted to get it right."

The amounts going to students will vary.

The refund formula considers costs for the student's specific residence hall room and board meal plan on the Clinton campus, less any MC institutional funds applying.

In the letter, President Thompson reported the Christian university has also created the MCares Fund to help students in need.

The fund provides emergency assistance to students hardest hit by the health crisis. That includes assistance with housing, food and other costs to enable students continue their MC studies. Families are given the option of donating refunds to this new initia-

tive. More information is available at mc.edu/MCares or by contacting the Advancement Office at 601-925-3257 for instructions.

Additionally, Mississippi College leaders recently announced seniors will receive a thirty percent tuition discount for their MC graduate school studies this fall, and the university



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will also waive national test scores for prospective graduate students to ease financial hardships stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. Going into effect for the summer and fall semesters, the decision applies to such exams as the GRE, Praxis, and GMAT.

The tuition reduction applies to this spring's graduating seniors. The students would be eligible by enrolling in MC graduate school classes, either full-time or part-time. Fall semester classes begin in late August.

"I'm excited we can provide this opportunity for our graduating seniors," says Admissions Director Kyle Brantley.

"We know the job market will likely be tougher this year, so perhaps this is a good time to continue into a graduate program. We'd love for them to continue with us at MC," adds Brantley, a Mississippi College alumnus.

If applied to the current graduate school rate of \$625 per hour, the amount gets trimmed to \$437 hourly,

says Interim Provost Debbie Norris. Savings increase as the number of course hours grow. The full-time load for a graduate student is eight hours. In that case, the graduate student saves more than \$1,500 this fall, says Norris, the Graduate School dean.

Members of the Class of 2020 gave up their traditional senior year and

standardized exams typically required for graduate school entrance at MC.

Brantley sees benefits for students wanting to enter MC's graduate school pipeline in 2020. Waiving national test scores, he said, will "reduce barriers and undue stress for many seeking to enroll in the immediate future," says the MC graduate. "This could be a big incentive for students seeking enrollment the remainder of the year."

Testing dates and administration protocols for many of the standardized exams required to enter grad school haven't been established following the global outbreak of the coronavirus.

"Thank you again for your patience and for the encouragement you've given us in these unusual times," Thompson told families.

For more than a month, Mississippi College students have adjusted to online classes at their homes. The Baptist-affiliated university enrolls nearly 5,000 students.

"We know that many of you have endured a lot of upheaval and loss in a short period of time, and we want you to know that we continue to pray for each of you," Thompson said. "We are an institution that relies on our Christian faith in times of crisis, so please continue to pray for the university and the entire Mississippi College family."

To get the refund process started, students must complete a form found online, available by going to mc.edu/refunds2020. In addition, there are COVID-19 FAQs on the MC website at mc.edu/coronavirus, including graduate school and testing information.

For additional questions, email MC officials at roomandboardrefunds@mc.edu. Those interested in the graduate programs are encouraged to contact the graduate recruitment team at gps@mc.edu or 601-925-7367.

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