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Special Release

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RISING CASES OF COVID-19 INFECTION AND DEATHS: URGENT CALL TO ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR THE SECOND SEMESTER OF THE 2020/2021 SESSION

This is to inform the University community that Management has requested the Faculties to identify the courses to be taught online and those to be taught physically en route to the commencement of the blended mode of teaching and learning for the remaining part of the second semester of the 2020/2021 session.

The Emergency Remote Teaching Committee (ERTC), in its proposal to the Committee of Provosts and Deans (CoPD), in a meeting, held on the 11th August, 2021, had noted and recommended as follows:

More cases of Covid-19 are being announced nationwide. These call for caution and proactive actions which should take into consideration, in the main, the review of the mode of teaching and learning in the second semester and, as a consequence, provide a safe way to undertake pedagogical activities on Nigerian university campuses;

With the daily rising cases of the Delta variant of Covid-19, and with several cases within the main and the College of Medicine/UCH campuses, the ERTC considered a proposal of blended teaching for the second-semester lectures in the University;

The blended learning model should be officially decided in terms either of availability of sections of the student population for online or physical encounters or the categorization of courses as online or physical which neutralizes choice of location or keeps all students, in principle, in physical presence within and/or around the campus;

The ERTC platforms and tools (LMS, zoom, youtube, gsuite accounts, telegram fora, solution clinics) should be maintained for use by students and staff in all cases;

Google meet which is practically free should, in addition, be encouraged for lectures since all academics have access to Gmail accounts;

Firm decisions and systematicity should be applied on the preference for the operations of blended learning to ensure effectiveness;

Management should note the poor compliance with COVID-19 protocols by the entire University community and should ensure strict compliance through the University's Covid- 19 Committee; If the situation worsens on campus, full online engagement should be mounted for all courses as was done in the first semester, exempting only departments and units with special needs with the condition that evident strict compliance with the protocols will be observed; and

Bigger zoom rooms for courses with more than 1800 students should be purchased and added to the existing pool.

From the above submissions, it is clear that going fully online or adopting a blended approach to teaching is one of the steps to take to ensure the safety of all staff and students given the increasing rate of infections being experienced in Nigeria and on our campus.

Management commends all departments engaging in virtual/blended teaching since the commencement of the 2020/2021 Session. All departments are urged to immediately take advantage of existing arrangements and commence virtual/blending teaching. The Directorate of Information Technology and Media Services (ITeMS) and the ERTC are on the ground available to provide technical support.

Arrangements are ongoing to make vaccines available for all staff and students as soon as possible.

Details will be provided as more progress is made.

In the meantime, we all need to take personal responsibility for our safety by obeying all COVID-19 safety protocols.

If we do this, there will be no cause for panic on our campus.

Thank you.

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Registrar