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OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita surprises students by canceling classes Oct. 16, declaring Student Catch-Up Day



By Lindsey Hyde

March 12, 2021

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5206

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Ouachita Baptist University surprised its students today, Oct. 16, by declaring it Student Catch-up Day and canceling classes in an effort to encourage self-care. The unplanned break was largely in response to a survey of students conducted last weekend to check in on their academic and personal well-being in the midst of an unprecedented semester. While students reported doing well overall, their comments reflected a sense of weariness and desire for a break.

“Our hope is that today has been restorative for each student, whether they needed to catch up on academic work, exercise, sleep or other activities,” said Dr. Ben Sells, Ouachita’s president. “The pandemic has had a wearying effect on all of us, so we wanted our students to have the opportunity to recharge as we turn our attention to the final third of the semester.”



The university is conducting classes in-person in Arkadelphia with an adjusted academic calendar, and Oct. 16 marks the 61st of 100 days on campus for the fall semester. Classes began one week early in August, typical semester breaks such as Labor Day and Fall Break were eliminated and students will not return to campus following Thanksgiving, completing final exams remotely.

Students were notified of the Student Catch-up Day with an email and text message at 5 a.m. this morning from the president. Administrative offices remained open and faculty were available to serve students throughout the day. Planned social events for the weekend also will continue as planned.

“Ouachita is unusual among the college landscape this year in that we have found ways to continue in-person classes – and even many campus life activities – with COVID-19 precautions in place and achieving our highest enrollment in 20 years,” Sells noted. “Our students, faculty and staff have risen to the challenge to embrace these new restrictions and be creative in reimagining campus traditions to maintain the tight-knit college experience Ouachita is known for.”

For more information, contact Brooke Zimny, assistant to the president for communications and marketing, at zimnyb@obu.edu or 870-245-5208.