



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, March 27, 2020

## **MACMURRAY COLLEGE TO CLOSE AT END OF SPRING SEMESTER**

*Board of Trustees Vote was Unanimous After Concluding  
MacMurray Had No Financial Path Forward*

JACKSONVILLE, IL – The Board of Trustees of MacMurray College has voted unanimously to close the institution at the end of the spring semester, marking the end of its 174-year-old history.

Board of Trustees Chairman Charles O’Connell (’69) said despite the generosity of alumni giving in recent years, the Board determined MacMurray had no viable financial path forward in the wake of declining enrollments, rising competitive costs, and an insufficient endowment.

“The Board spent more than a year exploring financial scenarios and potential new sources for capital,” said Mr. O’Connell, adding MacMurray had developed a strategic plan to broaden its professional degree programs and reach more non-traditional students if it was able to remain open.

“However, despite our best efforts, we were unable to secure the capital to fund a viable path forward. We deeply regret this decision and are sorry for the disruption and disappointment it will have for everyone in the Mac Family.

“But the reality is this: we were left with no alternative and had only one responsible option,” he said.

Mr. O’Connell said the coronavirus pandemic and economic disruption it has caused were recent factors that complicated MacMurray’s financial condition, but they were not the principal reasons for the Board’s decision to close.

Mr. O’Connell said the Board has expressed its deep thanks to MacMurray College President Dr. Beverly Rodgers for her “valiant stewardship of MacMurray College during this challenging

period. She has our full support during the demanding period to come as MacMurray closes its doors.”

“When I became the 17th president of MacMurray College last year, I knew we faced a tough financial future,” said Dr. Rodgers, “but I was determined to work with the Board to do everything we could to help MacMurray survive.

“This was one of the toughest challenges of my professional life, and I am so disappointed we couldn’t find a solution,” she said.

Dr. Rodgers will continue working with MacMurray’s accrediting agencies, including the Higher Learning Commission, to ensure seamless transitions for its more than 500 full-time students to seven nearby colleges and universities this fall. Dr. Rodgers and senior staff also will work to transition incoming freshmen and transfer students to other colleges and universities.

“Closing an institution like MacMurray is a demanding process that will involve countless decisions grounded in financial realities,” said Dr. Rodgers.

“In the coming days, I will share more information as decisions are reached and we will continue to communicate with students, faculty, staff and the entire MacMurray Family directly and by posting announcements and updates on the MacMurray [website](https://www.mac.edu/closure). (<https://www.mac.edu/closure>).

“For all our students, my goal is to make sure they leave MacMurray with honor and pride,” said Dr. Rodgers. “I will be especially proud of these seniors as our last graduating class.”

She said MacMurray has not made a decision on commencement, which is scheduled for May 9, but will do so as soon as possible and will be guided by orders from state authorities regarding public health and public gatherings.

“For our other students,” she said, “we stand ready to transition you to a school where you can complete your undergraduate educations without delay and build on what you learned at MacMurray.”

MacMurray has negotiated transfer agreements for its students with the following institutions, all of which are within a two-hour driving radius of its Jacksonville campus:

- Blackburn College
- Eureka College
- Greenville University
- Illinois College
- McKendree University
- Millikin University
- Monmouth College

MacMurray College employs 101 people on a full-time basis. Monday, March 30 will be the first day of the required 60-day notice period prior to termination of faculty and staff positions. The official date of termination for most employees will be Monday, May 25. A limited number of employees will be approached about continuing employment beyond May 25 to help close the college.

***About MacMurray College:***

*MacMurray College is an independent, four-year college with a strong liberal arts tradition, committed to preparing graduates for satisfying and productive professional careers. Its 60-acre campus is located in west central Illinois in the city of Jacksonville, about 30 miles west of Springfield. MacMurray College provides an accessible and affordable education to students of all ages and backgrounds, offering online and blended courses, undergraduate as well as adult learner courses, and offering financial aid in the form of grants and scholarships to 98% of students. Founded in 1846 by Methodist clergy as the Illinois Conference Female Academy, MacMurray College is one of the oldest institutions of higher education originally for women in the United States and one of the oldest private liberal arts colleges in the State of Illinois.*

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