

March 12, 2020

Coronavirus Announcement and Next Steps for Hudson County Community College

Dear HCCC Students, Faculty, and Staff,

I write today with the latest update on the additional steps we are taking to address the unprecedented challenges of Coronavirus (COVID-19). There are currently no confirmed cases of COVID-19 at HCCC. Our primary goals are fulfilling our teaching and learning missions while ensuring the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

To help us achieve these goals under demanding conditions, we are announcing the following next steps.

- Spring Break will begin one week early for all students. Spring Break will begin next Monday, March 16 and end Sunday, March 29. During this time, the College will complete planning to migrate all classroom instruction to virtual instruction beginning Monday, March 30 through at least Monday, April 6, and possibly longer depending upon changing circumstances.
- Prior to Monday, March 30, all students will receive correspondence from their faculty on how to be prepared for the first online class sessions. Faculty with specific questions will receive guidance from their associate deans. Staff should not hesitate to contact their immediate supervisors with questions or suggestions. Faculty and academic leaders will plan for making up the extra week of missed classes later in the semester.
- Although academic instruction will take place virtually beginning Monday, March 30, our campus will continue to operate during this period and on-campus services will continue to be offered, including access to the College libraries where students can use needed technology. Therefore, employees are expected to continue reporting to work until further notice. Yesterday, we began a significantly enhanced schedule of cleaning and disinfection services in all campus buildings, and a deep clean will be conducted over the weekend.
- Effective immediately and until further notice, we are postponing, cancelling or virtualizing any HCCC in-person meeting or event with expected attendance of more than 15 people. This includes recruitment events, tours, conferences, and social events.
- At this time, we are also suspending all non-essential college funded travel, both domestic and international. This does not include personal activity, but we urge you to reconsider any plans for long-distance personal travel and visits to areas that have been significantly impacted by COVID-19. Of special concern are those countries with Level 3 and Level 2 Health Notices, or as otherwise recommended for avoidance by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and State Department.

All travelers returning from these countries are required to observe a 14-day period of self-quarantine and monitoring. If faculty and staff travel, they are required to share their travel plans with their supervisors in advance of that travel.

- We are appealing to all members of our College community to help us navigate the challenges before us with integrity and with the goal of fully supporting our students so they are able to maintain academic progress. Our goal is to resume face-to-face, in-class instruction and full campus services as soon as we are able, in consultation with local and state agencies.
- We will hold all employees harmless, meaning that those who are sick, need to care for family members, or take care of children due to school closings, can do so without penalty or impact towards their paid time-off accruals. Such needs should be fully communicated with employees' supervisors. All full- and part-time employees, including work-study students, will continue to receive their salary. Our expectation is that everyone will continue working to support our students, whether on the ground, online, or in other locations.
- Please remember to take care of yourself. Stay home if you are sick, wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, cover your cough with your elbow or sleeve, and avoid touching your nose, eyes, and mouth.

Many details are still being finalized, so I ask for your patience as we work through the myriad issues involved in this changing situation. There will be ongoing communication as more details unfold.

In this stressful time, we want to remind all that there are extensive support resources available. Doreen Pontius, Associate Director of Counseling and Wellness, can assist students in finding personal and mental health support. She can be reached at (201) 360-4229 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.; dpontius@hccc.edu; mentalhealthcounseling@hccc.edu. Similarly, faculty and staff always have access to HCCC's Employee Assistance Program. E4 Health Counselors can be reached 24/7 at 1-800-227-2195.

I sincerely thank all at HCCC who have contributed to planning during these uncertain times. We realize these decisions pose significant challenges and wish they were not necessary. Our goal is to keep members of our community as safe as possible while ensuring that students can continue their coursework after Spring Break, and the daily operations of the college can continue.

We will closely monitor changing circumstances and make adjustments as needed with full transparency and with the well-being of our college community top of mind. Please be safe!

Sincerely,



Christopher M. Reber
President