

March 16, 2020

Coronavirus Announcement and Next Steps for Hudson County Community College

Dear HCCC Students, Faculty, and Staff,

I want to thank many members of our HCCC community for outstanding work that is occurring across the College to migrate all instruction online effective March 30, when students will return to coursework following the extended spring break that began today. I thank our faculty, staff and students who are preparing for online coursework in support of our shared goal of ensuring that all students are able to maintain academic progress during this challenging period of COVID-19. Our extension of spring break and migration to online instruction until further notice is in full compliance with Governor Murphy's announcement today that seeks to limit the risks of face-to-face spread of the virus.

This afternoon, members of the Cabinet and I participated in virtual meetings with NJ college and university presidents and staff, and NJ Secretary of Higher Education Zakia Smith Ellis. We received clarification that the Governor's announcement of "closing" colleges and universities effective Wednesday, March 18 pertained to the cancellation of face-to-face classes and migration to online instruction until further notice, which we have already accomplished. There is not presently a directive to close all on-the-ground college operations effective Wednesday, although we fully support migrating office support and services off campus to the fullest extent possible in the coming days. There will likely be a small number of essential services that we will need to continue to operate on campus in support of students.

Planning for online office and support operations is well underway, and some staff are already providing services remotely. I have asked the Cabinet to expedite plans to now migrate most College offices and services to remote locations as soon as possible, with clear plans for how all staff can continue working to support our students and our College during this period of challenge. You can expect to hear from Cabinet leaders and supervisors as early as tomorrow to review and expedite these plans.

I encourage you to review my March 12, 2020 communication to the College community that is posted on the HCCC website. The spirit of that letter remains fully intact. Our primary goals are fulfilling our teaching and learning missions while ensuring the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff and visitors.

We will continue to support all employees who are sick, need to care for family members, or take care of children due to school closing, without penalty or impact toward their time-off accruals. 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.

Our COVID-19 Task Force will continue to keep all of us informed and will offer college-wide support and answers to questions. Please direct specific questions pertaining to your unit's plans and needs to your immediate supervisor.

We will continue to monitor changing circumstances and make adjustments with full transparency and the well-being of our College community at the center of our efforts. Please be safe.

With sincere gratitude,



Christopher M. Reber
President