



March 24, 2020

Dear KVCC Students, Faculty, and Staff:

Greetings from a social distance!

Health and safety first

At Kennebec Valley Community College, our focus is foremost on the health and safety of our community. As a result, we have had to minimize physical presence on our campuses. We recognize that this is both a burden and a jarring change to everyone affected. Please know that we are working to make this transition smooth and seamless. We ask that you avoid campus until further notice and use online tools and your phones to connect to the necessary people and resources.

Academic progress

Our next level of focus is on ensuring that as many students as possible can make meaningful progress in their academic programs over the final weeks of the semester. We are especially aware of the graduating seniors; we are endeavoring to get as many students across the graduation finish line on time as we can. There are a few programs for which this will present challenges, especially with hands-on learning and clinical requirements. The faculty chairs, the registrar, and the Academic Dean are working to find creative solutions to ensure competencies are met and all progress is appropriately recorded. Please consult with your faculty directly as they work to find solutions.

Online whenever possible

KVCC courses that can be moved online are now online. The effort to make this shift during the past week was monumental. The level of faculty cooperation in this transition has been remarkable and heartwarming. Some faculty are shifting their delivery in ways that are challenging to them and to students. Most faculty are using Blackboard, but many supplementing with Zoom, Skype, Teams, and other online tools. I commend faculty for making such a rapid transition, and I commend students for making a rapid adjustment to new modes of learning. I urge patience and kindness as you all adapt. I recognize this is not easy for any of you.

Computers and internet access

Information technology is a challenge for a number of students, as some lack appropriate hardware, and others lack internet access from home. Our Department of Information Technology is working to create or identify public areas where you can capture a sufficient WiFi signal so that you can continue your work online. A map will soon be distributed listing locations in campus parking lots so you can work from your cars, along with locations in downtown Waterville, Skowhegan, and Augusta so that students living in those areas will not need to travel to Fairfield for internet access. There are a limited number of laptops and iPads that have been made temporarily available to faculty and students who were otherwise unequipped. Please contact your faculty for any accommodations or needs you may have. They can work with the administration to help you.

Community and student support

Student services are being provided in innovative ways. A virtual student check-in with live-chat will soon be up and running so that students can get access to advising and maintain very important social connections. The KVCC app is also a way that students can stay connected and share ideas and solutions

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92 Western Avenue, Fairfield, Maine 04937-1367 | (207) 453-5000 | kvcc.me.edu

There will be peer tutors available on Blackboard, a virtual math portal, and secure-line counseling. There has been an important text messaging campaign by staff. Please contact your faculty with any questions about your classes. Of course, if you have any general urgent questions please send an email to COVID-19@kvcc.me.edu. Please check your KVCC email each day and look frequently at the KVCC Facebook page and website for updates.

Fall semester 2020

Enrollment services continue to operate fully - online and on the phone. You will soon be asked to register for summer and fall courses. Anyone who is applying for fall admission could continue with their application process. We are operating with the assumption that the fall semester will start on time, so let's make sure that anyone interested in attending KVCC will be able to do so.

Financial aid, business office, and student employment

The business office is operating virtually to help students make payments, get reimbursements, and access financial aid information. There may be some delays with regard to check printing, but such delays are expected to be just a few days. We ask for your patience and understanding as we develop ways to ensure that the business procedures can operate normally. Meanwhile, students who are employed by the college, whether on Federal Work-Study (as part of a financial aid package) or through several of our own student employment programs, will continue to have work and be paid accordingly. If you are a student employee, please contact your direct supervisor for information and directions.

Campuses

Our Safety & Security staff and custodians continue to work to protect the campus with a focus on health and safety. Buildings are closed except for limited staff access. We ask that you all be respectful of building closures. If you are using WiFi from the parking lot, we ask that you remain in your cars except to take a walk and stretch with sufficient social distance. Remember KVCC has a series of outdoor trails as does the city of Waterville. Please take advantage of these to get some exercise, again respecting social distancing norms set out by the Maine Center for Disease Control (Maine CDC).

Business & Industry

KVCC professional development (non-credit) courses have either been transitioned to online modalities or postponed to later dates. Please contact the Dean of Workforce Development for details.

Awards and student recognition

Student award ceremonies would normally be taking place in the coming weeks. Graduation for the Class of 2020 is also scheduled for Saturday, May 16. I am exploring alternatives that will put no one at risk, keeping everyone safe and healthy. Details will be forthcoming. I'm determined to find a safe solution that helps us to honor our graduates!

Team KV

I remain eternally grateful to the KVCC faculty and staff who have made this transition as smooth as possible. The deans have been working tirelessly to make sure things move forward; I am blessed to have the best colleagues on the planet.

Thank you

Thank you all for your patience, respect, and kindness during this period. Everyone is stressed and facing a range of challenges. We are working to keep things moving forward and lower your stress to the extent possible.

With every good wish,



Richard R. Hopper
President
Kennebec Valley Community College