



July 9, 2020

Dear members of the KVCC community – students, faculty, staff, and administration,

**We continue to live a moment in history**

COVID-19 is a serious, highly contagious virus that has rapidly transformed how we live, work, and study. This is the case not only in Maine or in the US, but across the globe.

Last semester KVCC shifted rapidly to remote learning wherever possible. We concentrated on helping students to complete their required learning, assess competencies, and make meaningful progress toward their degrees and certificates. As a result, nearly all seniors were able to graduate on time, and others soon followed.

**Furthering your education at a critical time**

We are just halfway through 2020 and have witnessed unemployment across the US go from record lows to record highs - with the hardest hit sectors being those dominated by public-facing jobs that cannot be replaced with telecommuting.

But KV graduates are now able to reinforce Maine's skilled workforce at a time when we need it most. The skills learned at KVCC are essential to reviving our economy and collective wellbeing. We are redoubling our efforts at KV to ensure that the people of mid-Maine can develop technical proficiencies and insights that will move us all forward.

The credentials that students earn at KV send a strong signal to employers: with a solid education you are better equipped to land a new job, revive the economy, care for the sick, and help to revitalize our community. Moreover, students interested in a four-year degree can also get a head start at KVCC by completing general education requirements and prerequisites, or by exploring career options. All general education credits transfer through our Block Transfer Agreement to the University of Maine System.

Congratulations to all of our new and returning students for taking important steps toward ensuring a bright future for yourselves and our communities.

**Framework for Fall 2020 – Opening on time / Safety first / Fewer people on campus**

The fall semester at Kennebec Valley Community College will begin on schedule, with the first day of classes beginning August 31, 2020.

The health and safety of our campus community is our top priority. Since spring break, we have been actively building a framework for the coming academic year. In all of our deliberations and decision making at the System and College level we have kept the guidance from the US Centers for Disease Control and the Maine CDC at the forefront.

Note that KVCC is unique in the higher education landscape of our region, with over 70 percent of our academic programming in the technical trades, allied health professions, and lab sciences. Each of these specialized academic areas requires in-person, hands-on training in KV labs or off-campus in healthcare settings. Our goal is to offer an outstanding, flexible, engaging academic experience while at the same time modifying the delivery of that education to reduce the overall population density on campus this fall.

**Kennebec Valley Community College**

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Let me explain how we intend to reduce the population density on campus this fall and describe to you the general safety protocols that will be in place.

### **Remote work**

There will be fewer faculty and staff on campus, since many will be working remotely or working alternate schedules to avoid clustering. Each faculty member, administrator, or staff member will sort out their individual schedules and work protocols with their relevant Dean. Having a certain number of faculty and staff working remotely at any given time will help us to mitigate risk for those on campus, and to expand the facilities available for teaching and learning.

### **On-campus instruction for Fall 2020 will be limited to hands-on instruction**

On-campus instruction will be limited to those courses or programs that require hands-on learning or demonstrations on equipment located on campus. The on-campus classes may be smaller than usual to meet physical distancing requirements and parts of the class, such as lectures, will be delivered remotely. We estimate that 57 percent of KV students will require essential hands-on learning.

### **Remote delivery for Fall 2020 will be the norm for all other classes**

Many courses will be taught remotely using the new KVCC learning management system called Brightspace with some faculty choosing to supplement the Brightspace platform with other interactive tools, such as simulation software, video conferencing tools, home-based activities, or specialized pedagogical software solutions. We estimate that 43 percent of registered students will be engaged in remote instruction this fall.

To find out which classes will be face-to-face or remote, check the most up-to-date class schedule on the KVCC portal. The academic calendar will remain the same announced for 2020-2021 with the normal holidays and semester dates and deadlines.

### **Standard protocols**

While the campuses will be operational, the College will strictly limit access to its buildings and facilities to the people who must be on campus to safeguard our community's health. No unscheduled outside guests will be permitted.

- Many campus spaces are undergoing physical modifications to support our public health goals. These include plexiglass, plastic, or glass partitions, enhanced cleaning schedules, personal protective equipment for custodians and security guards, hand sanitizer and wipe stations, and signage outlining our public health community guidelines.
- In the spirit of mutual respect, we will require everyone on campus to follow standard safety protocols; these include wearing cloth face coverings inside buildings or in public spaces, maintaining a safe physical distance from others, and encouraging hand washing or use of hand sanitizer. Details about those protocols are on the MCCS [COVID FAQ page](#).
- The College will strictly limit congregate seating or access to common areas on campus. Use of the outdoors will be encouraged, but within CDC protocols.
- The College will be adopting simple screening protocol so that faculty, staff, and students have clearance to enter the buildings on campus. This will be done with an easy-to-use specialized app.
- We will be asking students to make appointments for meetings with tutors, navigators, counselors, or financial aid advisors.
- Details on the app, related screening protocols, and appointment system will be forthcoming.

### **Academic experience**

The faculty have been working this summer to make all courses user-friendly and engaging, whether delivered in person or remotely. The faculty and staff are committed to an exceptional KVCC educational experience and to supporting every student's academic progress.

### **Excellence in remote learning**

The KV faculty have taken advantage of summer grants to complete additional training in our new online learning management system called Brightspace, with a focus on instructional design and user experience.

We are working to ensure that all students are prepared for remote learning. The KVCC Librarians, IT staff, and Student Services are preparing to respond to student requests for guidance and technical support. They are also assembling a collection of remote learning resources and will be offering orientations to incoming first-year students or to those who need a refresher.

### **Student life**

There will be opportunities to make meaningful connections with faculty, staff and each other. The KVCC Director of Student Life, our student navigators, the TRiO team, and the staff overseeing the Learning Commons, counseling, and disability services are working this summer to ensure that all students have a positive experience.

Over the coming weeks this framework will continue to be shaped into a practicable plan. We will continue to be forthcoming and transparent about any changes in direction or decisions that we may be called upon to make on short notice.

Please continue to check your email, the KVCC app, the College Facebook page, and the KV website for updates, additional information, and answers to frequently asked questions.

Please remember to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as there are generous financial aid packages available, some of which go unclaimed each year.

As always, you can send your questions about the College's framework or your own individual needs to [COVID-19@kvcc.me.edu](mailto:COVID-19@kvcc.me.edu)

I remain grateful for the collective spirit at KVCC and across the Maine Community College System as we move forward to start the new academic year.



Richard Hopper  
President  
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