



Dear Campus Community,

I hope you are all taking care of yourselves and that you remain in good health. As the COVID-19 virus continues to spread, and the damage becomes increasingly worse, we remain in a highly fluid situation.

Because of the severity of this crisis, and to maintain our commitment to supporting the health and well-being of our employees and students alike, **the County College of Morris campus will remain online for the remainder of this semester and into the summer terms until June 28, 2020. This includes the Summer Early 5-week session starting May 26, and the Summer 10-week session starting June 1.** The status of the remaining sessions will be evaluated and a decision made in advance of those sessions.

Employees will continue to work from home unless otherwise assigned by their supervisor. It is entirely possible that we may remain online with the campus closed longer if necessary. That decision is currently under consideration. Please continue to monitor your CCM email and the college's [COVID-19 Information and Resource Center](#) webpage for updates. **An announcement will be made before the start of our first summer term if we need to remain online for an even longer period.**

As we continue to discover new ways to approach our work, I want to thank everyone for their patience, focus, and determination to do all we can to support one another, our students, and to honor the mission of our college. We may not be working side by side each day, but we are still CCM and the spirit of what makes us great seems only brighter as we push through the uncertainty of each day. As we go forward, we are continuing to make bold decisions in the interest of our employees and students and in support of our mission. Please understand that each decision is measured carefully and, typically, with substantial input from others across the campus, in consultation with our Board of Trustees, in conjunction with the NJ President's Council, and, when necessary, with community officials. Working collaboratively is complex and takes a little longer than when a small group works within itself but I believe this is the best approach and I appreciate your support.

A few new decisions that we have made to help ease the pressure our students are shouldering includes the following:

Pass/Fail Grading: We will be offering our students the opportunity to utilize a newly implemented pass/fail (p/f) grading method. This approach is being used by colleges throughout our state and in many other states. Given the difficult circumstances our students are working under, and the complexities encountered by our faculty, it is not realistic to expect that a normal grading process in itself will suffice. I want to thank our administrators and faculty for working together to support our students in this manner.

Multiple Measures Placement: Additionally, because the ability to offer placement tests is not possible due to restrictions implemented to battle the virus, we will be utilizing a multiple measures approach to placing new students in summer and fall courses. We have not done this before and it takes a large amount of courage to embark on this journey. Multiple measures means we will use high school transcripts and other criteria to determine which math and English courses new students should be placed into. This method has long been endorsed by organizations such as the Community College Research Center at Columbia University and longitudinal data show that it is a reliable method, arguably superior according to some studies than traditional



placement testing. Nevertheless, this method is new to CCM and it will require significant time and attention. I want to thank all involved in this process. I know you will make the right decisions on behalf of our students.

Financial Adjustments: Finally, the state is making significant financial adjustments to help weather the storm. As you can imagine, New Jersey, like nearly every other state and the nation itself, will be facing substantial revenue shortfalls. We are monitoring the financial situation closely. At this point, we expect to lose approximately \$500,000 in state funding this spring. This past Wednesday, the NJ Legislature decided to suspend the introduction of the new state budget. The state fiscal year has, therefore, been extended until September 30, 2020 rather than beginning on July 1, 2020. Although we are awaiting further details, we are hopeful that supplemental funding will be provided along the way.

Some potential good news is that the CARES ACT provides significant funding for colleges and universities. CCM expects to be eligible for approximately \$3.8 million. This funding is restricted and can be accessed only under rigid categorical conditions. We are currently awaiting further details on accessing the funds and understanding how the money can be spent. In a nutshell, it appears that it can be used to support students' basic life needs including housing, food, child care, and other necessities as well as supporting institutions with costs associated with moving online.

Financial Aid for Students: Further good financial news is that our students will have several more months to apply for federal financial aid. Their deadline date has been extended to June 1, 2020. As well, I am pleased to say that our Foundation will be launching a campaign to support students in need. Since our priorities are the health and well-being of the campus community and to support teaching and learning, the CARES Act, financial aid deadline extensions, and the work of our Foundation are all important and timely.

As we approach our Summer sessions and the Fall Semester, we will be working incredibly hard to retain our current students and to enroll new individuals seeking a CCM educational experience. I know the uncertainty that this crisis has brought into our communities and our households is adding to your stress. Please know we are continuing to manage our financial resources very carefully and that we are working closely with state officials and organizations such as the New Jersey Council of County Colleges.

In conclusion, I want to say that while many things seem unpredictable and uncertain, the results we can expect are not completely random. By working together with a collaborative and selfless spirit we will minimize the negative impact of this virus and help cultivate a better future than we might otherwise expect. We are a strong community. I ask that you continue maintaining your focus, support one another, support our students, and support our college. **Many things are different but we are still CCM and we will get through this together.** I hope you will join me in a future virtual meeting and I want to encourage you to continue participating in virtual meetings hosted by your senior administrator as well as to continue working closely with your dean, director, chair, and each other. **Three weeks ago, I encouraged you to believe that we CAN do this. These days, we can say with confidence that we ARE doing this. To be sure, we are doing this because I am, you are, we are CCM.**

Stay well and thank you for the incredible work you are all doing.

Dr. Iacono