

Thursday, May 19, 2020

Dear VSCS Community,

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to bring new developments by the day or even hour. This requires difficult and rapid decisions and adjustments for everyone.

I so appreciate and admire the strength of courage and the tremendous commitment to our students that so many VSCS faculty and staff are demonstrating this week. Our colleges and universities have stepped up to the challenge of a rapid transition to remote learning to help students complete the spring semester, to maintaining essential operations while significantly expanding the use of telework, and doing everything responsible to protect the health and safety of our communities. None of that is easy, but we are Vermont Strong. Thank you.

Among other actions, the most recent guidance from Governor Scott and the Vermont Department of Health restricts visitor access at long-term care facilities, prohibits non-essential gatherings of more than 50 people or 50% of a location's capacity, whichever number is lower, closes schools and daycare centers, as well as all bars and restaurants. In addition, the White House has called on us to avoid social gatherings of more than 10 people.

There will continue to be lots of uncertainty for the foreseeable future. Each of our colleges and universities, as well as the VSCS, have dedicated COVID-19 update pages on their websites. I encourage you to visit them on a regular basis. You can find them, as well as the Vermont Department of Health site, at these links:

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/infectious-disease/2019-novel-coronavirus>

<https://www.castleton.edu/covid-19-coronavirus-updates/>

<https://ccv.edu/2020/03/12/information-on-coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.northernvermont.edu/about/nvu/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.vtc.edu/news/update-covid-19-coronavirus>

<https://www.vsc.edu/covid-19/>

I did want you to know that we have created a VSC temporary COVID-19 response committee with representation from each of the colleges and the chancellor's office to coordinate, troubleshoot, and facilitate issues and decisions across the system. Many issues and decisions are best left at the college and university level. Many others call for consistency at the system level; for example, the decision made to close dorms and end face-to-face communication for a period of time.

The committee membership is as follows:

Castleton: Dennis Proulx, Dean of Students

Community College of Vermont: Andy Pallito, Dean of Administration

Northern Vermont University: Sharron Scott, Dean of Administration

Vermont Technical College: Lit Tyler, Dean of Administration

Chancellor's Office: Todd Daloz, Associate General Counsel; Yasmine Ziesler, Chief Academic Officer, Steve Wisloski, Chief Financial Officer

I fully recognize that we are and will be asking a great deal of you all in these uncertain times and unprecedented challenges. It won't be easy, but I am confident we will adapt to the new realities and fulfill our mission for the benefit of Vermont.

Very sincerely,

Jeb Spaulding, Chancellor
Vermont State Colleges System