

March 25, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

I know that you are all well briefed about the current Federal and State Emergency Declarations, and so I will resist the temptation to review them here.

With extended Spring Break now drawing to a close, I would like to update you regarding how Five Towns College is moving forward.

1. Classes Resume Online this Monday, March 30, 2020

Approximately 90% of all courses running during the Spring 2020 semester will resume online using the College's Schoology Learning Management System on Monday March 30th. These courses will continue without interruption until May 15th. The faculty has been working for weeks to make this transition, and so it is critical that you check you FTC email and Schoology Accounts for information from your instructors. A complete list of courses, including the date of resumption, and assigned faculty member is posted in the Online Education Division webpage. Please note in a few cases there has been a change of instructor.

2. Course Specific Materials

If a course has a unique or specific equipment or software requirement, that requirement will be addressed in the course's Schoology site. Please direct questions or specific issues that you may have regarding that to your instructor or Online Student Mentor (see below).

3. Supplemental Experiential Learning Workshops

The faculty understands that a number of courses that have become fully online lose something in the translation to online education. Courses that have significant hands-on components, such as those offered by the Audio, Film/Video, Mass Communication, Music, and Interactive Computer Graphics divisions may fall into this category.

While most of those courses will be completed fully online, the Division faculty will offer intensive supplemental hands-on experiential learning workshops to students in those classes when on-ground operations resume. These workshops will provide additional hands-on opportunities beyond the course. The College has tentatively scheduled these supplemental hands-on intensive workshops during the period May 26 – July 16. All students will be able to avail themselves of these important division-wide productions/workshops. Please adjust your calendars accordingly.

4. On-Ground Classes

Approximately 10% of the courses offered during the current Spring 2020 semester require significant hands-on learning, and will not be transitioning online. These courses have been placed on hiatus, and are now scheduled to resume on Tuesday, May 26th and will continue until Thursday, July 16th. On-ground courses will run concurrently with the Supplemental Experiential Learning Workshops. You will be advised in advance if that schedule should change again.

5. Delayed Online Classes

Approximately five classes will move online, but with a delayed resumption date due to faculty changes. The start and ending dates for these courses will be determined by the Dean of Online Education, Prof. Karen Pellecchia, and noted on each course site. If you have a course that has a delayed resumption date, you will receive an email from your Online Student Mentor. Please check your FTC email.

6. Private Instruction for Music and Theatre Arts Division Students

Private Instruction for Music and Theatre Arts Division students may resume as of March 30, 2020. These private lessons may continue from a distance using a variety of technologies, provided the technology and teaching schedule meets the needs of both the student and the instructor. The College strongly recommends Zoom for this purpose. Schedules for online private instruction, including reports documenting each lesson will be facilitated through Music Division faculty member, Prof. Audra Moricca. If you are currently scheduled to take private instruction, you will receive an email from your instructor or Prof. Moricca. Please check your FTC mail.

7. Online Student Mentor

All students have been assigned to an Online Student Mentor. You will be receiving an email and an Electronic Student Resource Folder from your Mentor. Please check in with him or her, as they will be best able to answer your individual questions and to point you in the right direction. They can also help with technical questions or obstacles. Your Online Student Mentor will also coordinate with your regular Academic Advisor to help you plan your schedule for the Fall 2020, and to help you keep you education on-track.

8. Online Student Support Services

Student support services will be provided online. These include counseling, career, Access, HEOP, tutoring, and Library/Learning Resource Center services. The College will also continue to provide reasonable learning accommodations to students with documented disabilities who are learning online. Additional information and links to these services and support personnel can be found in the Electronic Student Resources Folder you will received from your Mentor. Access and HEOP students will be contacted individually by those offices. Students seeking counseling and support services for the first time may also contact those offices directly. Directory information is available on the Online Education Division homepage and in the Important Contacts document located in the Electronic Student Resources Folder.

9. Course Grades and Academic Progress

The faculty recognizes that for many students online education will present a new set of challenges, which may impact their final course grades and success. You may rest assured knowing that the faculty will display a great deal of understanding and flexibility to all students who demonstrate a serious effort. In some cases, students will be invited to campus over the summer for supplemental instruction, mentoring, and testing in order to assure that each student has the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies they need to succeed, and the opportunity to receive a grade that fairly reflects their abilities.

10. Residence Halls

The College's residence halls will remain closed until Tuesday, May 26th, when they will reopen for all students who have at least one on-ground course or Supplemental Experiential Learning Workshop to complete. The halls will remain open until Thursday, July 16th. While access to the residence halls is currently restricted, those with a compelling reason to gain access to their rooms prior to May 26th may file an email request for access to the Public Safety Office.

11. Administrative Offices

Administrative Offices will offer online services. Each office will resume operations on a staggered schedule to be announced. You will receive emails from each major office, when operations resume. Contact information will be included in both the email and on the Online Education Division webpage. Affected offices include Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions, Bursar, and Residential Life. Other offices will provide online services to students as of March 30, 2020. These include HEOP, Access, Counseling, and Career Services. The responsibilities of the Academic Advisement Office have been transferred to the Office of Online Education, which will provide students with online tutoring and academic advisement/mentoring services.

12. Commencement 2020

Commencement 2020 has been postponed, not cancelled. A new date will be announced after on-ground classes resume.

13. Tuition Rate Lock Guarantee, Institutional Scholarship, and Community Service Requirements

The College's Board of Trustees has waived specific scholarship and community service requirements for the Spring 2020 semester. Renewable institutional grants will be continued for the Fall 2020 semester for all students. The re-registration deadline for Tuition Rate Lock-Guarantees has been extended until Friday, May 1 for all students.

14. Campus Life

We recognize that an important part of college is campus life. To that end, Director of Campus Events, Prof. Michael Cavalli will work with the Office of Online Education to provide digital student group meeting sites and other online events that engender student social interaction. He will be assisted in this task by Prof. Ryan Schimmenti. Please note that the first on-line Common Hour is tentatively scheduled for this Tuesday, March 31 at 12:30 p.m. The first Common Hour will feature Music Division faculty member Dr. Stephen Briody. An expanded schedule will be released shortly. Students interested in performing in a Common Hour event should send an email to michael.cavalli@ftc.edu. The Common Hour will be streamed live on FTC Facebook and FTC YouTube. Please check your FTC email for additional information.

Other significant on-ground events, such as Theatre Division plays, Music Division performances and juries, Film/Video Division film festivals, and other events will be rescheduled when on-ground classes resume, and held during the period May 26 – July 16.

15. Coming to Campus

Please do not come to campus without an appointment. Most members of the College Administration and Faculty are working remotely, and will not be present on campus until Governor Cuomo lifts the ban on working on-ground. You will be advised when this occurs.

16. Please be Patient and Tolerant

Nearly all of the online initiatives announced by the College are new for you, as well as for the faculty and staff. Please be patient as they work out the kinks and the hiccups. I have asked them to be patient with you as well. Please be mindful that we have been focused on the resumption of instruction online, so that you can get your education back on-track. As a result, the Administration is not fully online yet. Remember, we will notify you as each office becomes fully operational, and we will address any questions or concerns that you have.

I know that these are trying times for everyone. The manner in which the entire Five Towns College community has rallied together, to keep the academic process moving forward and to assure that no student is left behind, is truly inspiring. If we all emerge from this emergency only having to adjust our annual calendars to include some a few weeks of summer study, then that would be a huge accomplishment.

If you have specific questions or problems that have not been addressed in this memo, please do not hesitate to ask your Online Student Mentor or me via reply email.

I extend my best wishes to each and every one of you. I pray that you and your families remain healthy and strong.

I look forward to welcoming you back to campus as soon as the circumstances allow.
Sincerely,

David M. Cohen, J.D.
President
Five Towns College
305 North Service Road
Dix Hills, NY 11746
david.cohen@ftc.edu
www.ftc.edu