



# FIVE TOWNS COLLEGE

## THIRD ADVISORY NOTICE REGARDING COVID-19:

### TEMPORARY TRANSITION TO ONLINE LEARNING

March 11, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

Currently there are no reported cases of Coronavirus in the Five Towns College population. We hope that the temporary emergency measures we have taken have helped delay the arrival of the illness on our campus and have helped to keep you safe.

Today, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that all public colleges and universities in New York State, encompassing the 1.4 million students at SUNY and CUNY, will begin immediately to transition to distance learning platforms – completing that transition by March 19, 2020. The goal of his directive is to minimize the amount of traveling and number of large gatherings in New York State. Private colleges and universities across New York State are assisting in this effort by following suit. To date nearly 100 colleges and universities across the nation have taken similar action.

And so, out of an abundance of caution and a sense of civic responsibility, Five Towns College will follow the Governor's lead. Therefore, the following protocols are now adopted:

- **EARLY AND EXTENDED SPRING BREAK – MARCH 12 – 30, 2020**

While the College was originally scheduled to go on spring break beginning Friday, March 20 and ending on Monday, March 30, the College will now go on spring break beginning at 5 p.m. tomorrow, Thursday, March 12, 2020. Spring break will continue until its regularly scheduled end on Monday, March 30, 2020.

- **TRANSITION TO ONLINE LEARNING**

- **Schoology Learning Management System**

At the conclusion of spring break, beginning Monday March 30, approximately 70% of all courses currently running on-ground will transition to an online learning format utilizing the College's Schoology Learning Management System (LMS). These courses will remain as online courses until further notice, and are expected to conclude as originally scheduled in early May. In the event that the health emergency abates, these courses may transition back to the classroom sooner. You will be notified of any further changes as we move forward.

- **Temporary Hiatus for On-Ground Applied Skills Courses**

At the conclusion of the spring break, beginning Monday March 30, the remaining applied skills classes which cannot transition fully to the Schoology LMS will be placed on temporary hiatus until the public health emergency is abated. Once the situation improves, you will be provided with additional guidance regarding the resumption of on-ground instruction.

The College will provide additional detailed guidance that identifies which courses are moving fully online now and which will be placed on temporary hiatus. You will also be notified as each on-ground class resumes. Please monitor your Schoology and FTC email accounts for additional notices.

- **NO CANCELLATIONS AND NO PENALTIES**

The College does not expect to cancel any specific course that is now currently running. The entire faculty and staff is working assiduously to assure that no student has their academic plan or progress disrupted by the current health emergency. This is particularly so for those students scheduled to graduate this semester.

In addition, we are advised by the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC), that students who are unable to make Satisfactory Academic Progress as a result of the current health emergency, will not be penalized for any State financial aid grant or award. Similarly, the College will adhere to this same protocol regarding institutional scholarships and grants.

- **MIDSEMESTER EXAMINATIONS AND OTHER COURSE ASSESSMENTS**

The faculty is charged with the authority of assigning course grades and awarding academic credit. The Office of Academic Affairs will exhibit flexibility in this regard as it rolls out new student learning assessments for the online platform. This includes, but is not limited to, the discretion to permit students to sit for examinations and other assessments after on-ground classes have resumed. Please do not become overly concerned with grades. The College will work to assure fairness in this regard. Additional guidance will be available from individual faculty members.

- **RESIDENCE HALLS**

- **Temporary Closure**

All residence halls will close at 5 p.m. tomorrow, Thursday, March 12, and will remain closed until the end of spring break or the resumption of on-ground classes, whichever date is later. Once residence halls are reopened, resident students will be permitted to return and to remain in residence until the completion of any on-ground courses they are enrolled in. Specific re-occupancy dates will be coordinated by the Residential Life Office.

Resident students departing for spring break should take with them any items essential to carrying on their education from home, such as laptops, textbooks, notebooks, etc. Students should also plan to carry home valuables and indispensable items, in the event that a sustained period will pass before they are able to retrieve them easily.

- **Foreign and Other Impacted Resident Students**

Students on F-1 visas and those from highly impacted areas may remain in residence through the extended spring break with permission. This accommodation may be extended into the summer to assure the safety of Five Towns College students. Students from impacted areas seeking to remain on campus should identify themselves to the RLO.

- **ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE**

Specific additional protocols will be adopted on a departmental basis. For example, students needing tutoring or counseling services may be provided with assistance via FaceTime or other video conferencing platforms. Similarly private music instruction may also utilize these platforms to deliver lessons from a distance at the discretion of the Music Division Chair. Please contact individual offices with specific questions and requests. The College's email directory is published on its website.

- **THE COLLEGE REMAINS OPEN TO STUDENTS**

While New York's colleges and universities are following Governor Cuomo's lead, they are not closing. Five Towns College administrative offices remain open, and its labs and libraries are expected to reopen to students after the extended spring break is over on March 30. After that time, students seeking in-person assistance may come to campus, provided the protocols announced in the First and Second Advisory Notices are adhered to.

- **REGARDING THE THEATRE ARTS DIVISION PRODUCTION OF *WOLVES***

The production of *Wolves* by students in the Theatre Arts Division will proceed this Friday and Saturday evening, March 12 and 13, as scheduled. The Sunday afternoon performance scheduled for March 14 will be closed to the public, to allow the production of a taped performance for streaming at a later date. Attendees will be required to adhere to sanitary protocols. Resident students involved in this production may remain in residence until Sunday, March 14.

These are extraordinary times. We recognize that the disruption to your academic program is not unlike that experienced by other generations – such as during times of military conflict. But with the available technology of this era, the entire higher education community is working hard to mitigate the impact.

Most importantly, now is the time for level-headed action and common sense. We are a learned community of scholars and artists. If we work together with our state and local governments, by adhering to safe sanitary protocols, avoiding large gatherings, and self-quarantining as indicated, we can respond to this emergency effectively and emerge healthy and strong.

We recognize that there will be many questions, and will respond to them as quickly as possible.

I extend my best wishes to all.

Sincerely,

David M. Cohen, J.D.  
President