

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

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Dear Faculty and Staff,

I hope this message finds you and your family safe and well. We are in week two of our alternative instructional delivery, and by all accounts we are doing a phenomenal job. I do not take for granted the work done on the front end to make this a success, as well as the work you are continuously doing to make certain our students remain on track to complete this semester. I know at times it can be overwhelming, because you are navigating your personal life and COVID-19. I just want you to know that in these very tough times it is important for you to know that our students appreciate you, and so do I. During every meeting, Interim Vice Chancellor Gaspard expounds on how innovative the Delgado faculty are in their new roles as online and alternative instructional educators. Many faculty, as well as students, have indicated that this experience has turned out to be an enjoyable one. This speaks to the great work done by all.

Last Monday, Governor John Bel Edwards indicated he will extend the stay-at-home mandate to April 30, 2020. With that awareness, Delgado will continue Spring 2020 activities remotely. As you are aware, Spring Commencement was scheduled for May 19. However, I am certain that at that time we will not be back to normal and able to gather in large groups. Therefore, Spring Commencement has been postponed to August 4, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. at the UNO Lakefront Arena. Special thanks to the Commencement Committee for working quickly to secure this date and venue.

On the enrollment front, inclusive of Winter Session, we have 13,582 students enrolled in our academic programs. It is important to note that this number is up slightly from this time last

spring, by 4.6%. So, please encourage students to remain in classes. I know this is very difficult for them, given the circumstances. The easy way out is to quit, and that may seem the only option to some of them. Faculty, department heads, chairs, and deans, I recognize the time you have put into creating remote instruction, and I know how committed you are to the success of our students. Please reassure them that they are not in this alone, and that they can do this—because they can.

We are also excited to introduce “Maymester” and Summer Terms A & B to our Summer 2020 schedule. The addition of Maymester and Summer Terms A & B provides students four different opportunities to complete courses over the summer. We are innovating in spite of COVID-19, and we are preparing for a strong summer enrollment. With our new summer plans, students will have the opportunity to take 6 credit hours in Maymester and 12 credit hours during Term A, Term B, or the full Summer Term. This gives students the opportunity to earn 18 credit hours during the summer, thereby allowing them to complete certain certifications, and to earn transferable credits quickly and at an affordable price. Special thanks to Interim Vice Chancellor Gaspard, Maria Cisneros, all deans, and chairs for thinking outside of the box.

In addition, it is very important to note that we now have 1,400 students enrolled for summer, and for the first time in the college’s history we offer college tours virtually. Student Affairs opened its Virtual Welcome Desk on March 18. The Virtual Welcome Desk offers both real-time chat and virtual one-on-one appointments for help with all application, enrollment, and financial aid needs. To access the Virtual Welcome Desk, visit www.dcc.edu and click on the Support for Students icon. Keeping in the theme of meeting our current and future students where there are, the Enrollment and Recruitment team hosted our first Virtual Open House event on March 25. The event was a Facebook Live event and had a reach of over 425 individuals. This event was a first for the college and received rave reviews. Delgado will host and participate in more virtual events, including the Louisiana Virtual College Fair on April 6 and April 8 at 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. This event is sponsored by LCTCS and Franciscan University of Baton Rouge. Dr. Tamika Duplessis, Michelle Greco, and the Student Affairs team thank everyone for your contributions to these activities.

The Delgado Fab Lab, under the direction of Elizabeth Buehler, continues to make face shields for local healthcare professionals. To date, our lab has provided over 200 face shields for area

hospitals including the New Orleans East Hospital. Plans are underway to begin manufacturing ventilator parts in conjunction with other fabrication labs and other LCTCS institutions. In partnership with DePaul Community Health Centers, formerly Daughters of Charity Health Centers, we are now offering “telehealth” appointments for all physical and mental health needs. To access these services, email doc@dcc.edu or call 504-905-0030.

As you may have seen or heard due to the huge media attention, Delgado donated four ventilators and a large number of masks, gloves, and gowns to area hospitals. This was a result of the urgent need for personal protective equipment by our healthcare partners. Harold Gaspard, Dr. Myers, Rene Randall, and Shannon Skena went into action, and we were able to assist our healthcare community during this time of need. In addition, the city and state are in dire need of nurses and other healthcare professionals. All Delgado Nursing and Allied Health graduates are on track to complete as planned this May. A remark I share often is that there is not a hospital or clinic in Louisiana where you will not find a Delgado Community College graduate at work.

On the Workforce Development front, Folgers Coffee requested the assistance of the Delgado Maritime Center’s fire/safety instructors to provide health-monitoring services, and we were able to respond quickly to their need. Delgado instructors will be onsite at Folgers through at least May 4 providing these services. The Delgado Continuing Education department is ranked Number 1 in the state for online delivery of non-credit courses, and our small business team in partnership with the SBA has registered over 700 Louisiana businesses for assistance and training regarding SBA disaster loans. Great job, Arlanda Williams, Rick Schwab, Kim Tubre, and the entire Workforce and Continuing Education team.

The Business and Administrative Affairs team has worked diligently to ensure we maintain business continuity, and they have done a great job. Our police officers have done an amazing job ensuring the security of all sites. The officers have worked to secure buildings and facilities and to ensure no one has access to the premises except for authorized essential personnel. Great Job, Ron Russo and team.

In addition, Human Resources has not missed a beat, either, and they are also ensuring that we conduct business as usual, albeit in a virtual way. Because of COVID-19 and related new federal policies, they have had to become familiar with these regulations and the impact to Delgado employees. You will receive information from Human Resources related to the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Thanks to Carla Major and the Human Resources team for staying on top of these matters.

The often unseen but tremendously important staff in the Office of Information Technology also deserve the thanks of the entire Delgado community. They are maintaining the digital backbone that is supporting our entire virtual operations effort in these challenging times. Email, information storage and retrieval, and tech support are essential now, more than ever. Vanessa Williams and your staff, we are grateful.

I must also compliment the Communications and Marketing team for making certain that the information needed by the Delgado community reaches everyone rapidly and efficiently. These staff members have worked diligently and creatively on a wide range of communications since the COVID-19 situation began. The college's website, social media, marketing, and other communications are vital to our success and to our morale in these difficult times.

I have covered a lot in this communication, but it is important that you fully understand where we are, and know about the great work our college is doing amidst the COVID-19 situation. We have found new and innovative ways to work together, while being compassionate and demonstrating that we are great community partners. Our students need us now more than ever before, and we have risen to the occasion. In previous communication to you, I have often said that COVID-19 is our new reality. Unfortunately, it is. But we will get through this together, and we will emerge stronger.

Sincerely,

Larissa Littleton-Steib, Ph.D.

Chancellor