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Good afternoon faculty and staff,

I hope this message finds you and your family safe and well. With this semester ending, I want to take the opportunity in the beginning of my message to say thank you for your commitment and dedication to the students and to the College. I know the last few weeks have not been easy. Not only have you had to navigate working remotely, transforming face-to-face courses to alternative delivery courses, but you have also been home-schooling your children, and caring for and trying to protect yourself, a parent, or loved one from this pandemic.

As I look ahead, the Stay at Home Orders issued by Governor John Bel Edwards and Mayor Cantrell expires on May 15, 2020. To that end, we are at the point in which we must slowly begin to turn the corner and re-open the College in a manner that is safe, strategic, and thoughtful. A multi-phased plan has been devised that aims to do just that. This plan is based on Center for Disease Control (CDC) Guidelines, and guidance from healthcare experts, as well as state and local officials.

By now, your supervisors should have reached out to you to discuss plans for the office or division in which you work, and they should have provided expectations. If they have not, they should be in touch before the week ends as it is my understanding that Human Resources has provided guidance to all managers. Please know that the plan is not a full return; however, it is one that will allow staff to return to the office with limited hours and in limited numbers.

It is my expectation that supervisors will determine which employees can work from home at an optimum productive level and will be allowed to continue to do so, and which employees who cannot and will be expected to return. This will be done adhering to all safety guidelines by healthcare experts and the CDC.

There will be mandatory check-in points from 7:30-9:30 am each workday. You will not be allowed to enter the building without going to one of those check-in points, or after the check-in point is closed. Please adhere to these guidelines and understand that your safety and that of others is paramount. At the check-in points, your temperature will be taken and you must complete a wellness form. If your temperature is 100.4 or above, or your responses to the wellness questionnaire do not meet safety requirements, you will not be allowed access to the building and will be referred to Human Resources.

So far, this is a four-phase return plan. The reason I say *so far* is because as you know so much can quickly change. The first two phases encompass planning for our return along with the cleaning and disinfecting protocols that had to be done before our return, as well as the cleaning and disinfecting protocols that must be in place daily. Phases three and four encompass strategies for the return of employees and only those students who must complete hands-on components of spring courses. Please note that phases three and four only address the weeks of May 18 and May 25. It is important to know that as we progress to later weeks, changes in check-in point locations and times of check-ins may occur, as well as increases to the numbers of faculty, staff and students allowed on campus. Click [here](#) to view the plan.

We are doing extremely well with summer enrollment. Today, we have 4,244 students enrolled for summer and this time last year we had 4,092 enrolled. However, fall enrollment is not where we would like it to be but I am hopeful. Today, 2,612 are enrolled for fall as compared to 3,221 last year at this time. If you can recall, the theme of Spring 2020 Convocation was “Delgado Community College: Resilient, Focused, and Strategic.” If only we had known then the crisis we were soon going to face. What we have done this semester in spite of COVID-19 and the giant steps we have made for summer and fall speaks to this theme.

No one knows what fall 2020 will hold in terms of COVID-19. However, most of the information from medical professionals and epidemiologists indicate that this virus will continue through the fall. Therefore, we must be prepared to respond and deliver instruction via several paths.

To that end, I have asked that Interim Vice Chancellor Gaspard create an academic affairs instructional continuity task force with the following charge:

Develop an academic plan for fall 2020, which can immediately be implemented based on the COVID-19 landscape and guidance by local and state officials. This plan will provide guidance as it relates to the scenarios listed below:

Scenario A: (Face-to-Face Instruction) We are allowed to start the semester with face-to-face courses; however, we must adhere to social distancing and PPE requirements.

I have also asked for an assessment of classrooms needing technology, especially if we would need zooming capabilities. The syllabus of all face-to-face classes must provide guidance on how the instruction will be continued should the course have to shift to remote instruction, and a student survey which would indicate the student’s ability to shift to remote instruction (computer, Wi-Fi, camera). This should be a standard survey given to every student.

Scenario B: (Alternative Delivery) We are not allowed to start the semester with face-to-face instruction and the Stay at Home Order is reinstated.

In order to be prepared for this, we must develop and offer online, hybrid, and other alternative modality training to faculty over the summer. We must conduct a survey of faculty to determine what worked and what did not work this semester. What resources are needed? What can we do to make the fall a success if we have to operate in this space again?

Scenario C: (A Combination of the Above) It is possible that we will have to fluctuate between the two scenarios during the fall semester. We must have a plan and faculty must be prepared to pivot and provide instruction within the two scenarios with little notice.

In regard to students, I have received numerous emails and calls from students during this crisis. Many of them have wanted to give up and quit because it has all been too overwhelming. I have also received numerous calls acknowledging how tough life is but how wonderful the faculty and staff have been in working with them. Please encourage the students that you communicate with to continue their academic journey. Now is not the time to quit. As I have previously stated, this economy and workforce will rebound, and it need will our students educated, trained, and ready.

Within the next few days, eligible students will receive CARES Act funding. What I feel is important for you to know at this time is that federal guidelines were provided related to student eligibility, and the College is adhering to all federal guidelines. Also, all LCTCS colleges are working together on this, and as I am sure you can imagine there is a great deal of work that must be done from a Systems and IT perspective to make certain this is done correctly. We are very fortunate to have excellent student affairs, business/finance, and IT teams who have done an outstanding job in getting us to the point that we are able to draw down the funds and disperse them to students this week.

As it relates to the budget, this pandemic is one of global and national proportions and it has without a doubt impacted the economy of our state. I am expecting state budget cuts to higher education and the College is preparing for that possibility. We have been informed that we must reduce the current year's budget by \$400,303 from the losses incurred from casino revenue. As a result of the impending budget cuts, we have placed a freeze on hiring and non-essential purchasing. It is extremely important that our summer and fall enrollment exceeds last year's enrollment numbers. We will have to think outside of the box for fall enrollment and instructional delivery, but this is not anything new to us. We are in a good place as it relates to the financial health of the College but we will restrict spending to brace for what is to come.

Now, on to ***good news.*** I have been informed that the College has received an e-Learning Innovation COVID-19 Response Funds grant, thanks to the work by Dr. Jeanne Samuel and Angela Camille with the Distance Learning and Instructional Technology office. The funds will facilitate transition and improvement in the delivery of some of our most challenging courses offered in-person – including, but not limited to, math and fine art studio courses. We recognize that remote learning is not the same as online learning, and we are embracing the momentum and change from the spring semester to create and improve online learning for all classes. In addition, the College has received funding from the Board of Regents Comprehensive Departmental Enhancement Grant entitled “Supporting Transformation: Developmental Reading & Writing Reform at Delgado Community College.” The funding will provide us with the resources to create a curriculum that is truly transformational. We will be able to build the infrastructure to support innovation in and out of the classroom for years to come, allowing us to become statewide leaders in developmental education reform. We are grateful for the support. Special thanks to the efforts of Emily Cosper, Dean of the Communication Division, Elizabeth Shaye Hope, Phyllis Dunham, and Ari Zeiger for this tremendous opportunity.

Also, it is my pleasure to announce that I have approved promotion-in-rank recommendations made to me by the appropriate college committees and Mr. Harold Gaspard, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and College Provost. Your official letters will be placed in the mail. Promotions with salary increases are effective with the start of the 2020-2021 academic year. Please know that the budget information provided above will in no way interfere with the promotion-in-rank salary increases. This is a well-deserved increase, and I thank our faculty members for what you do each and every day on behalf of our students.

Thank you so much for the stellar work you have done this semester. As we begin to turn the corner, I will need you more. The next few months may not be easy, as we will have to navigate budget cuts, increasing enrollment while adhering to social distancing protocols, and finding innovative instructional techniques, as well as new ways to support and advise students. We are Delgado, we are resilient, we are focused, we are strategic, and we will emerge successful because our students, our city, and our state expect nothing less from us. Thank you for the emails and texts that you have sent to me throughout this crisis. Please continue. Your support and confidence in me as your leader is sincerely appreciated. Also, when you see our police officers and housekeeping staff, please thank them. The work that they have done and will continue to do during this pandemic to keep us safe is beyond remarkable.

Sincerely,

Larissa Littleton-Steib, Ph.D.

Chancellor