

Suffolk County Community College

College Brief

NO. 72 March 10, 2020

TO: All Students

FROM: Louis J. Petrizzo
 Interim President

SUBJECT: Student Update on Coronavirus (COVID-19)

At the current time, there is understandable concern from students, faculty and community members related to the potential spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

STEPS THE COLLEGE IS TAKING

The College is implementing a number of steps to deal with the Coronavirus outbreak. To maintain clear, timely communications, we are putting the finishing touches on a COVID-19 website, that will be added to the College's website. The site will be accessible from the College home page and will provide you with access to the most current information available. In addition, you are encouraged to check your College email frequently. Email is recognized as an official communication from the College and we will utilize this option to reach you with breaking news.

The College is reviewing its day to day operations and paying enhanced attention to the spread of COVID-19. Our response plan is underway and includes the following:

- The College is in daily contact with SUNY and with County and State Department of Health officials.
- Staff are keeping updated regarding continuance of instruction and to changes that can impact existing programs and activities.
- Staff are reviewing technology options for alternatives to face-to-face instruction.
- We are also closely watching the potential impact for this summer's study abroad programs.
- We have commenced an enhanced facilities cleaning regimen.
- Please reconsider whether or not it is judicious to travel or to attend large events. The College is reviewing whether large events, such as Commencement will be held and alternate plans are being considered.

STEPS FOR YOU TO TAKE

Should the decision be made to suspend face-to-face classes after you return from spring break, the College will be prepared to provide you with an online option for the continuation of instruction. Blackboard is our online platform to provide such instruction. Most faculty have already web-enabled their in-person classes.

If you do not currently use Blackboard please take the necessary steps to access this platform. This will ensure that you are able to continue to access instruction online if a class suspension is implemented. Students should make sure they are able to login to Office 365 by

[going to office.com](https://office.com) and Blackboard by [going to suffolkonline.open.suny.edu](https://suffolkonline.open.suny.edu) If needed, they should access the following link for instructions to reset their password:

https://access.sunysuffolk.edu/Apps/Auth/forgot_pwd.asp Should College classes go fully online, the College is exploring ways to provide computer access to those students without such access.

The College does not believe students should be penalized for missing class as a result of either illness or fear of illness. The SUNY Chancellor has endorsed this position. Please speak with your faculty who have been asked to be more lenient with their classroom attendance policies at this time. It should be noted, however, that this decision does not exclude you from your responsibility for completing all work that is assigned. At this juncture, if it is warranted, the College prefers to provide students with a grade of “Incomplete” and we encourage our students not to prematurely withdraw from class. Please note that faculty, through their Associate Academic Deans, have been asked to develop ways to meet learning outcomes in alternative ways for some performance-based classes. Your instructor will provide you with more detail. If you have questions about this, you should ask your instructor, the Academic Chair responsible for that program, and/or the Associate Academic Dean on your campus.

Recent communications from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the New York State Department of Health, have emphasized personal protective measures to help prevent the spread of this virus. There is currently no vaccine to prevent the coronavirus. The best way to protect against illness, is to avoid being exposed to the virus. To minimize the chance for exposure, the CDC recommends the following everyday preventive actions:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- If you are sick, let your instructor know.
- If you have a compromised immune system, please contact your faculty member and do not come to school.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If a tissue is not available, cough into your sleeve.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

As an institution of higher education:

- We encourage everyone to self-monitor their health.
- We emphasize voluntary home isolation if you begin to exhibit symptoms and we urge you to contact your healthcare provider if your condition changes.
- Students who are ill or who exhibit symptoms should stay home and are encouraged to seek medical care.

More information is available on the CDC’s [Coronavirus webpage](#).

For information about handwashing, see [CDC’s Handwashing](#) website.

Since my last communication, the CDC has also expanded its list of [recommended](#) travel restrictions.

You are encouraged to share this communication with your friends who may not be reading their email as frequently as you are. Your continued health and well-being are important to the College. I will continue to provide updated information as it becomes available.