



March 31, 2020

Greetings New England College Community,

I am writing to you today with some very important updates about New England College's response to the COVID-19 virus. Please be sure to read through the entirety of this message as it includes some significant changes to the work we've been doing to date.

Commencement 2020

Following our message on March 24th, we heard from many seniors and their families that while they understood the need for a virtual Commencement they hoped we would consider the possibility of a Fall Commencement instead. After consulting with Senior Team and our COVID-19 Task Force, I have concluded that a Fall Commencement on the Simon Green is possible and will take place. So, I am very pleased to announce that the 73rd Commencement of New England College will take place on Sunday, October 4, 2020 on the Simon Green. I look forward to seeing our graduates cross the stage and complete, in person, their academic journey here on our campus at NEC.

As you can imagine, there is a great deal of planning involved in Commencement. That planning has already begun and as soon as more details are available we will share them with the community.

BFA Exhibition in Manchester

One of the most important traditions for the Institution of Art and Design at New England College is the BFA Exhibition. As you may know, we have been looking for innovative ways to preserve this tradition for our Institute of Art and Design students. And while we have explored the virtual option and developing a catalog of student work, our team did not think these were enough to properly honor the hard work of our students. So, in addition to the catalog work being developed this term, I have asked our team to reschedule the BFA Exhibition for Friday and Saturday, October 2 and 3, 2020 in Manchester. Doing both the catalog in this term and the Exhibition in the Fall will serve as an acknowledgment of the work our students have completed. I am looking forward to seeing the product of our community's finest artists.

Campus Transition

As you know, New England College has remained committed to continuing housing and meals for as many students on our campuses as possible throughout the COVID-19 crisis. It has always been our view that for many students returning home was not an option. We have balanced the challenges of continuing to offer housing against the risk of community spread taking place in our community. Up until very recently, we believed we were able to mitigate the risk with safe practice and minimizing contact. This assessment was also made in the context of very low transmission rates in Henniker and Manchester.

With Governor Sununu's March 27, 2020 order and the incidents of positive cases rapidly increasing in the immediate area of Henniker and Manchester, we have decided that the time has come to ask all students in College housing to leave campus by Sunday, April 5, 2020 at 8 pm. We had hoped to be able to allow students to remain in housing through the end of the semester. Unfortunately, the continued and rapid spread of this pandemic requires us to make this decision today. Students with extraordinary circumstances who need to remain in College housing may submit a special request. More information about this process will be provided later today by the COVID-19 Taskforce.



I want to thank you all for your patience and cooperation throughout this difficult time. By all accounts, all members of our community have risen to the challenge this pandemic has presented. I could not be more proud of you all.

Additional updates will be forthcoming from the COVID-19 Taskforce. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Best regards,

Michele D. Perkins, EdD

President

New England College