

April 21, 2020

To the New England College Community,

We are now in the fifth week of our College's new mode of virtual teaching and learning. Life in the sheltered environment is starting to take on the feel of regularity, if not normalcy. I find myself questioning what "normal" will feel like once this virus is behind us.

I'm pleased and proud to know that our faculty and our students have adapted to the virtual classroom and that our attendance continues to be high. We are disappointed that Commencement will not be possible this May but look forward to the October ceremony and hope as many graduates as possible will be able to join us in Henniker for that celebration.

The rate of increase for the virus appears to be slowing in New Hampshire and across the country. We hope to see the "flattening" of the infection curve, which will be the precursor to a decline in cases. What a happy day it will be when there are few or no cases left in our state, across the United States, and the world.

We are starting to receive some stimulus dollars and expect two installments of Department of Education funding, one this week and the second later in the year. These funds help NEC manage the shortfall in revenues for this year and next. We hope that the federal government continues to approve funding to higher education in the next wave of stimulus funding. In the past two weeks we have had several calls with our Congressional delegation, all of whom have been responsive and supportive. I have been invited to speak (*virtually*) at the Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery. As Chair of the New Hampshire College and University Council and representing the private colleges, along with the Chancellor of the NH University System, I will be discussing the impact that the COVID-19 virus has had on higher education in the State. We are hopeful that New Hampshire will be able to provide some assistance to higher education as well.

These are and will be challenging times for everyone in the country. Higher education, like other businesses, is not immune to the loss of revenue necessary to sustain ongoing operations. That said, New England College is in a good place financially, for now, and we are positive about the future.

This evening I will be delighted to make introductory remarks at our Student Awards Night – via Zoom, of course. This annual event is always such a delight to attend and even though we will be there in virtual mode the accomplishments of our students and the tremendous support and mentorship of our faculty and staff are very, very real. Congratulations, students, for your achievement and for your hard work and determination. You make us all so very proud.

I want to thank everyone, faculty, staff, students, and all community members for their courage and commitment to excellent education as we weather this unprecedented storm. We will get through this and the College will survive. I often think of our mission statement when I have a few moments for reflection: "New England College is a creative and supportive learning community that challenges individuals to transform themselves and their world." This mission statement was rewritten and approved twelve years ago. It defined our college then and it defines us now. We are innovative; we are nimble and can adapt to challenging circumstances; we are a small college that thinks big; we work together as trusted colleagues; we know that we can change the world.



*Office of the President*

98 Bridge Street  
Henniker, NH 03242

Have a safe and productive week.

All the best,

Michele Perkins, EdD  
President