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September 10, 2020

To Faculty and Staff of Glendale Community College:

The fall semester is off to a successful start and although we are barely two weeks into the new school year, it is necessary to address the status of the upcoming winter session and spring semester. Therefore, I am announcing that Glendale Community College will continue to serve our students and community in an online and remote learning environment through June 2021, including the remainder of the fall 2020 semester, winter session 2021, and spring 2021 semester. This decision is made at this time in the best interest of the health and safety of our students, employees, and the community. It also will give our students, faculty, and staff a needed level of certainty as essential planning is required.

To some, this announcement may appear counterintuitive, coming just days after many California counties began easing segments of their COVID-19 restrictions. While it is certainly good news that some aspects of our lives are cautiously returning to normal, the challenges we face on a college campus require an abundance of caution to ensure that our students, faculty and staff remain safe.

Since priority enrollment does not begin until late October, we might have waited a few more weeks to see if incidents of Coronavirus infections lessened. However, medical experts continue to forecast a second wave of infections to arrive this fall and there is no information that suggests the pandemic will be under control in the near future. Rather than lose time hoping for change, we can focus these next few weeks on proper planning.

In addition to making decisions based on safety, we also must consider the logistics of operating a college district with more than fifteen thousand students and staff. We are well into the planning stages for the spring semester during which we must lock in class schedules, publicize course offerings and determine the few classes that may be necessary to offer through in-person instruction. By committing to remote instruction now, we can focus on making the GCC educational experience as vibrant as possible.

Thanks to the amazing efforts of the GCC staff and faculty, the move to remote learning in the spring was successful by most measures. Students' persistence, retention, and successful course completion numbers remained similar to past semesters and a survey of students in May 2020 identified only 5% said remote instruction was "working badly" for them.

Since March 2020 when the pandemic necessitated going remote, we have continued to learn how best to meet the needs of our students. Along with implementing new practices and approaches, we will continue focused professional development for our faculty and staff so that we can assure that we are providing the highest levels of student support services and teaching.

Our GCC vision calls for us to be “the Greater Los Angeles region’s premier learning community where all students achieve their informed educational goals ...” That focus remains as we meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While we continue to serve in this remote environment, we will not lessen the involvement of faculty, staff, and students in the decision-making process at GCC. College governance committees will continue to meet and address our primary areas of focus during the 2020-2021 academic year:

- addressing COVID-19 pandemic issues regarding remote instruction and work, including a safe return to classroom instruction and in-person support;
- maintaining a balanced budget with a 5% ending year cash balance;
- defining and implementing concrete means for advancing racial equity and social justice, and remedying identified systemic racism and bias at GCC;
- refining and improving the scaled implementation of Guided Pathways in year five of the six-year implementation plan;
- ensuring the college is progressing toward its goals aligned with the systemwide priorities for increasing the number of students acquiring degrees, certificates and credentials, achieving transfer, and becoming employed in their field of study; and for reducing the achievement gaps among underrepresented student groups and the number of units accumulated by students for degree completion;
- improving the learning environment at GCC that provides academic and student support programs in order to enhance access, equity, diversity, and inclusion and reduce the achievement gaps among identified student groups;
- assisting students in receiving adequate basic needs support for food, shelter, technology, and transportation to improve persistence and completion of their educational goals and successful access to employment in the workforce;
- supporting the training and education needs of unemployed and underemployed individuals to achieve their successful transition to employment in essential industry sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the emerging and dominant industry sectors in the post-COVID-19 economy;
- expanding energy conservation and sustainability efforts; and
- facilities improvements.

The GCC Board of Trustees and I thank the leadership of CSEA and Guild for their work in our achieving Memoranda of Understanding that outline the rights and expectations of our faculty and staff related to the COVID-19 crisis. We also thank all employees of GCC who have stepped forward, whether working remotely or continuing to work on-campus, to meet the educational needs of our students and the organizational needs of our college. Each in your own way is making a difference as we prove “GCC is Ready and Able.”

I admit it seems a bit strange to be talking about a semester that is more than four months away, but I believe that by creating certainty in these most uncertain times, we all can focus on our tasks at hand. For now, that is making the fall semester as successful as possible.

With respect and appreciation,



David Viar
Superintendent/President