

Sunday, March 29, 2020

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Dr. Gee and other Public Health Officials:

Central Wyoming College (CWC) has been an active participant in full implementation of all recommendations of local, county and national health experts in slowing the spread of COVID-19 in the communities we serve. As per Governor Gordon's declaration issued March 13, 2020, CWC closed the main campus in Riverton, as well as all outreach facilities in Lander, Dubois and Jackson. College employees who could work remotely were instructed to do so. The college extended its traditionally one week Spring Break to a full two weeks, which ends today, March 29, to promote social distancing and allow faculty time to move as many courses as possible to remote instruction.

Prior to the Governor's extension of the mandatory school closure, which was announced Friday, March 27, the college planned to commence all classes online/remote instruction beginning March 30, with limited on-campus instruction beginning April 3 for courses that absolutely could not move all instruction to a remote modality. Courses that transition to remote instruction would continue this method of course delivery through the end of the spring semester, May 7, 2020.

It is the recommendation of CWC's Emergency Response Team (ERT) to seek an exception to the March 27 mandate for extended closure to allow the above plan to continue without alterations.

The ERT has been meeting daily to review the health risks to the college and students, as the ERT is the group responsible for making recommendations to the college President regarding the college's response to the rapidly evolving public health situation. The ERT members include the:

- College President,

- Vice President of Academic Affairs (who is currently serving as the President's liaison in the event he is unavailable due to health reasons),
- Vice President of Student Affairs,
- Vice President of Administrative Services,
- Director of Physical Plant,
- CIO,
- Dean of Students/Athletic Director,
- Public Information Officer, and the
- Director of Campus Security.

In regard to the exemption request to allow on-campus instruction, the college is requesting permission to continue with limited in person coursework related to these areas:

- Automotive Technology and Welding courses that require skill demonstration on site due to specialized facilities and equipment;
- Film, Media, Art and Photo courses that require use of software only available to students on specific college computer systems. This software is typically too cost prohibitive for individual students to acquire based on purchase pricing and the type of computer system required to run the software applications;
- Equine Science courses that require skill and communication demonstrations that cannot be completed via distance means;
- Medical Assistant courses that require skill demonstration and final testing on site due to specialized facilities and equipment;
- Nursing courses that require in-person proctoring for computer-based final exams; and
- Limited student use of college computer labs to complete course requirements on the Riverton campus, at the CWC Lander facility, and the CWC Jackson space. If the college feels the need for access to computers is a critical one, a separate exception request will be sent to the Teton County Health Officer. The CWC Jackson staff is collecting available data on that need now.

The college has outlined multiple interventions, in italics in each of the following sections, that will be implemented if the exception is granted.

- A. With the exception of Nursing, *all courses have student enrollments less than 10. All required on-site activities can be structured so that all social distancing protocols can be followed at all times by spacing classroom/lab seating and scheduling students to complete course assignments in a staggered fashion.*
- B. The nursing department has submitted *a plan to schedule the computerized tests to occur in multiple, small groups to allow for a minimum of 6 feet between students when at the computers.*
- C. In regard to decreasing risks to students for our facilities, *all spaces will be cleaned by the college's custodial staff each day with an added focus on high touch surfaces of door*

handles, sinks faucets, drinking fountains, lightswitches and handrails using EPA approved disinfectant cleaners (VIREX), as provided in [this link](#) (click to see list in which VIREX is highlighted).

- D. Each room/space/computer lab will have spray bottles of Virex solution and paper towels to be used before and after each session in which students and faculty are occupying spaces. All high touch surfaces (door handles, working counters/desktops, phones, computer monitors, keyboards/mouse, and all pieces of equipment that could be shared for use between students) will be wiped down before and after each use.*
- E. All students will receive a review of personal hygiene requirements (covering cough, using kleenex, judicious handwashing and social distancing) and what is expected of them when using learning spaces. Adherence to these requirements will be enforced on ground by college faculty, and reinforced by the Vice President of Academic Affairs in the event of any suspected non-compliance.*
- F. Students will be asked about the presence of any signs of illness each day (cough, fever, breathing difficulties, headache, body aches) and if illness is suspected the student(s) will not be allowed to attend any class; they will be referred to contact the Public Health hotline and directed to self-quarantine immediately.*

Finally, no student will be forced to participate in any on campus activity related to their course requirements. If any student feels that their health is at risk due to any of the on-campus activities, they will be asked to notify their instructor(s) and will be provided with options if they choose to not attend, which may include being granted an incomplete (which allows for completion of the course at a later date), or withdrawing from the course.

The administration and faculty at CWC are acutely aware of the magnitude of risk the current COVID-19 situation places on our communities, and the ERT does not take this request for an exception lightly. The health and safety of our students and employees are the first priority for all decisions, but feel that the college is well positioned to facilitate completion of degree requirements for a limited group of students while providing additional recommended protections to prevent exposure to this virus.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. On behalf of the entire CWC community, I'd like to express our appreciation for everything the state's health experts and healthcare providers are doing to minimize the impact of COVID-19 for all of us. Not all heroes wear capes when using their superpowers against evil - they wear PPE.

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