

September 4, 2020

Dear Students,

As we complete our third week of classes, I am very proud of how well those of you who are on campus have lived up to their pledge to be responsible community members. Your actions make me hopeful that SUNY Cobleskill will continue our on-campus instruction as planned. Faculty and staff worked hard to create a safe learning environment, and you, the students, have accepted the challenge to stay safe.

You have chosen to protect your fellow students, and you have demonstrated your desire to actively engage in your learning experience. I applaud and thank you for your efforts and your caring. As you know, our sister school, SUNY Oneonta, has been ordered to shut the campus down as a measure to stop the spread of the virus. Our close proximity to Oneonta's campus will require that we all continue to be diligent about staying safe. There are no guarantees that our campus will be immune from the outbreak experienced at Oneonta, and we may be required to stop on-campus instruction at some point. Still, our collective behavior will play a major role in our ability to remain open. We are in this together, and you have earned a seat at our planning table.

We had promised you that we would talk with you about the next steps once we were a few weeks into the semester. We will honor our promise as long as our positive cases remain low. We are developing templates for you to build your COVID plans for possible on-campus club activities and residence hall visitation from other on-campus students. As was the case in the College's master COVID plan, your plans will need to be vetted by the local department of health and SUNY.

If we remain vigilant in following the COVID guidelines, we have a strong chance that our campus will remain open. I know that the continuing students are relying on their friends and our new students to keep their semester intact. If you have been in a situation where you were not socially distancing, or if you may have been with someone who was symptomatic or tested positive for COVID, I strongly encourage you to report your potential exposure to the Wellness Center staff. They are here to support you and will help you determine if you need to be tested.

As the students from Oneonta pack up to leave, we are saddened that their on-campus experience is over. It only takes a few who violate the rules to cause the hardship and pain that many Oneonta students and faculty are now experiencing. Stay Coby Strong and stay diligent about wearing your mask and following social distancing guidelines. Thank you for doing your part, and I look forward to co-planning our next steps with you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marion Terenzio
President, SUNY Cobleskill