

Subject: Update: HACC's Preparation for the Coronavirus – April 28, 2020
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Good evening, colleagues!

It is hard to believe that this is our sixth full week of remote instruction and services, and that the end of the spring semester is approaching. What a semester it has been! Thank you for helping our students to finish strong.

As mentioned during the [collegewide Zoom session on April 23](#), we are considering the lessons we've learned so far from this crisis. We want to ensure that our students thrive and make progress on their goals as we continue with remote instruction and services this summer. We also want to make sure you have all the resources you need.

As you have come to expect, following are the commonly asked questions and our responses to them. Please note that some of these responses are tentative and subject to change.

If you have additional questions and you do not see the answers on the website, please submit the online form located on the website. Please see the webpage section called "[Information for Employees](#)." If you would like to see the information being communicated to students, please see the webpage called "[Information for Students](#)."

We will continue to update you regularly via email, the aforementioned website and Zoom sessions.

Thank you!

John J. "Ski" Sygielski, MBA, Ed.D.
Pronouns: He, Him, His
President & CEO
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1. How can students receive remote advising services?

HACC's advising team continues to serve students with their academic planning and registration needs. Students can visit [the academic advising page](#) on HACC's website to learn more about remote advising appointments and drop-in advising or to schedule an appointment. The advising team is waiting to serve you.

2. Does time on "leave without pay" count toward service credit for retirement with SERS or PSERS? Does it matter if it is a full day or a partial day?

No. Time on "leave without pay" does not count toward service credit with the State Employees' Retirement System (SERS) or Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS). Credit is based on the hours actually worked and reported.

3. Will the College reopen the window for the 2019-20 Retirement Incentive?

Yes. The current window to express your interest in the [2019-20 Retirement Incentive Offer](#) began April 20, 2020, and will close at **11:59 p.m. on May 11, 2020**.

If you meet the retirement eligibility criteria as defined in [College Policy 833 Retirement](#) and would like to retire, please complete the updated [2019-20 Retirement Incentive Acceptance Form](#).

- 4. As we approach the end of the spring semester, what will happen to Federal Work-Study (FWS) students who would have continued to work in their current position for the summer semester? Will their work study be extended or will they be let go? If they are let go, can they file for unemployment?**

Spring Federal Work-Study (FWS) students can continue to work and get paid through the summer as long as they are enrolled in at least one class in the summer semester. FWS students who are not enrolled for summer classes will no longer be paid.

- 5. Students recently received an email with the subject “Important Information About Your Emergency Financial Aid Grant” from BankMobile and may be confused why they received it. Is the email a phishing scam or are they really getting grant money?**

On April 22, 2020, BankMobile, HACC’s financial aid disbursement processor, sent an email to several large groups of enrolled students to encourage them to update their banking information. This action was in direct response to the widely publicized Emergency Financial Aid Grants that are a part of the recently enacted CARES Act.

BankMobile is one of the largest banks in the country that distributes financial aid to more than two million students. As colleges prepare to distribute the Emergency Financial Aid Grants, BankMobile was concerned that many students had not provided electronic banking information or that their mailing addresses were outdated. They were trying to be proactive to ensure students received the grant funds as quickly as possible.

At this time, HACC is actively working to determine the best method of distributing the Emergency Financial Aid Grant money to students. The guidance from the U.S. Department of Education continues to evolve, and HACC will take a thoughtful, measured approach in disbursing the funds to ensure they are distributed appropriately. HACC recommends that if you have a BankMobile account, you periodically login and review your information so that all financial aid disbursements will be received in a timely manner.

- 6. Is there a marketing plan for summer 2020 and fall 2020 registration?**

Yes. We have pre-pandemic and mid-pandemic marketing plans. We are also developing post-pandemic marketing plans.

The pre-pandemic and mid-pandemic marketing [plans](#) are available on [myHACC](#) in the Office of College Advancement section. Please see the subsection called “Off-Campus Advertising and Marketing” and note the various documents. If, after reading the materials, you have any questions or suggestions, please submit them via the online form at hacc.edu/coronavirus. Thank you.

7. If a student would like counseling, is it true that they must go to a Mazzitti & Sullivan office to receive counseling?

HACC is proud to partner with Mazzitti & Sullivan to provide counseling options 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, to enrolled credit-seeking students.

These counseling options continue, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, as counseling providers who work with Mazzitti & Sullivan are offering remote or telephonic counseling. Students can seek support from Mazzitti & Sullivan counseling providers or any of the thousands of partners who work with Mazzitti & Sullivan around the region, state and nation.

We want students to understand the availability of these services and for them to use the services during this difficult time. For more information about counseling, please contact Mazzitti & Sullivan at 800-543-5080 and identify yourself as a HACC student. You can also visit mseap.com, click on "Contact Us," fill out the employee form and identify yourself as a HACC student.

8. If a student asks about Act 48 credit, where do I send them?

Please send all questions about Act 48 credit to Erika Steenland at ersteenl@hacc.edu.

9. If a student applied for [HACC Foundation scholarships](#) but could not register for classes by April 27 due to delayed testing schedules and acceptance decisions for some HACC programs, what can they do?

Students are our top priority. Therefore, we are pleased to announce the following:

- We realize that some students will be unable to register for classes due to delayed testing and acceptance decisions.
- The students who applied for HACC Foundation scholarships and who are unable to register for classes due to delayed testing and acceptance decisions will be provided a special opportunity to receive tuition assistance funding.
- Information about that process will be emailed to eligible students in May.

10. Why didn't HACC make all Facilities Maintenance Department (FMD) employees "essential employees" so they could be on campus to work a regular shift, and work 37.5 hours instead of the few hours they are working now? Why can't all custodial and maintenance personnel go back to work full time and not be required to use their paid time off (PTO)?

All Facilities Maintenance Department (FMD) employees are essential employees. HACC has not returned to regular hours in keeping with the governor and the secretary of health's pandemic orders. Custodians, maintenance and grounds staff are working shifts set by their supervisors to maintain the building operation standards while staying within the limits of the state orders.

11. The 2019-20 budget was passed and money was appropriated for salaries until June 30, 2020. Why are we making employees use paid time off (PTO) if they are not working?

The 2019-20 budget was approved under normal conditions using the anticipated labor needed to operate the College. This budget was also constructed projecting revenues from tuition, bookstore and food sales, as well as facility rentals and contracted noncredit education. These revenue sources have been directly impacted by COVID-19 and the Pennsylvania stay-at-home order. We are working to keep our employees safe and attempting to balance our expense costs with the material reduction in revenues we have and anticipate.

12. It was stated during the April 9 collegewide Zoom session that the College is under liberal leave and that employees can use their sick time even when they aren't sick for compensation. Does this mean that if I would like to take a day off and am not sick, I can still use my sick time instead of my vacation or personal time?

The liberal leave use policy is to accommodate situations related to the COVID-19 pandemic [for example, for compensation when work is not available and to care for a loved one who may not meet the criteria for FMLA or the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)].

If an employee wants a day off as they would under normal operations, they should request and use their leave consistent with [SGP 814 Attendance, Absences and Holidays Handbook](#). As examples, if they are sick with a non-COVID-19 illness, they should request sick leave. If they need a day off to tend to personal obligations, they should request personal or vacation leave.

Particularly during the pandemic, employees and supervisors should note that occasionally an employee will need a day off to practice good self-care. A sick day may be approved for such situations.

If employees have questions about FMLA or the FFCRA, they should contact FMLA@hacc.edu.

Quote: "If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself but to your own estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment." - [Marcus Aurelius](#), from his seminal book, [Meditations](#)