

CAMPUS MEMO

from the Office of the President

November 16, 2020

Let's Finish Strong

I would like to begin this update with a huge THANK YOU for your efforts to keep our campus community safe and the doors of Seminole State College open. The innovation and creativity used in the delivery of instruction, advising and serving students, and continuing the work of College offices during this pandemic-filled semester has been amazing. I appreciate your caring and cooperative actions and attitudes. Because of YOU, we have kept our numbers of COVID-19 positive cases and related quarantine numbers low. To date, we are extremely fortunate to be able to say that due to safety protocols and an abundance of caution, we have had no record of Coronavirus transmission traced back to activities on campus – either in the classroom or the residence halls.

As mentioned in our COVID-19 update Zoom meetings for students, faculty and staff last week, Thanksgiving break will be a critical time in our fight to control exposures. Over the break, we urge you to continue to be diligent in your personal behavior – limit your interaction with others, wear face masks, wash your hands often, and stay home if you exhibit symptoms of the virus. When we return following the holiday on November 30, 2020, I urge you to use extreme caution in all interactions. At that point, there will be one week of classes prior to the beginning of final exams. For that period, faculty are encouraged to evaluate each of their classes on an individual basis to determine how best to provide a good and safe learning environment for their students to finish the semester. Some classes and testing may transition to virtual learning – while others may want to relocate to larger spaces on campus to meet with students. This classroom management may vary among the academic divisions and most assuredly among faculty across campus. I trust that all instructors want to provide the best educational experience possible for their students. This flexibility in the delivery of courses should be extended to the delivery of all services. Our residence halls and dining services will remain open, so there will be students on campus. Let's continue to be compassionate, understanding and flexible in how we operate. We have made it this far – for the sake of all – let's finish strong!

Spring Enrollment Issues

I want to share a concern about our ability to get current students enrolled for the Spring, 2021 semester. We are considerably behind our enrollment numbers for Spring over this time last year due to several understandable factors. Of course, our pandemic world has changed us all. Some may be fearful to plan for the future – even for the start of classes in two months. Last fall, we had a very successful enrollment week where we opened the Haney Center for a week-long one-stop enrollment experience. This is not possible this year due to safety concerns. Additionally, we have over 500 current students who cannot enroll for Spring because they still owe over \$200 (some much more) for their tuition and fees this semester. All types of efforts are underway to reach these students – from emails to texts to phone calls – to offer advice and help. If you know of students who are having such issues, please ask them to reach out to the SSC Business Office



***Lana Reynolds, President
Seminole State College***

or the SSC Financial Aid Office to explore utilizing payment plans or student loans. If possible, we want to help them through any financial issues they may have – and we want them to return to SSC to continue their educational journey.

Foundation's No-Show Holiday Reception

Speaking of helping our students, the SSC Educational Foundation has had a tremendous impact this fall with the awarding of \$44,000 in scholarships, purchasing of masks for faculty and staff, providing new lawn chairs for outside socializing of our residential students, and spending nearly \$10,000 on academic assessment software. Many of you support the Foundation with ongoing monthly contributions through payroll deductions and others give generously in support of Foundation fundraising events. Next month, when the Foundation would traditionally be hosting a holiday reception for its donors and SSC employees at the Shawnee Country Club, they will host a “no-show” fundraiser. Invitations to *not dress up* and *not get out in the cold* to go to a party will be distributed this week. There will be some fun associated with this “non-event” as a virtual holiday trivia contest will be presented on Monday, December 7 for Foundation supporters – complete with prizes! Please consider making an end-of-year tax-deductible donation to the Foundation, and also plan to join us for some fun and games at the no-show reception.

Farewell

Assistant Professor of Life Sciences **Susan Walker** will be retiring at the end of the current semester. For the past six years Susan has taught microbiology and biology at SSC, putting in a tremendous amount of time and effort to build our program. Prior to that she had an extensive academic background in higher education, public K-12, and scientific research. In announcing her plans late last August to retire, Susan stated that she and her sister have been caretakers for her parents who live on their family farm. Due to her sister's health issues, Susan will be assuming those duties full-time. While we can't gather in our normal fashion to celebrate Susan's career, we do want to thank her for her service to Seminole State College and wish her much health and happiness in the future. If you don't see Susan on campus, please take a moment to drop her a farewell note or email.



Happy Thanksgiving!

Despite the challenges of 2020, I realize I have a lot to be thankful for. I appreciate the opportunity to work at this institution. I am privileged to be part of a community of dedicated and caring Regents, faculty and staff who work together to provide life-changing educational opportunities for students. I am thankful for my health, family and friends. Best wishes to each of you for a safe and happy Thanksgiving!