

Campus services still available yet meetings still uncertain

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Despite MCCC's limited on-campus interaction, various resources and newly renovated facilities will still be available to students this Fall Semester.

President Kojo Quartey first announced in May that the Fall 2020 Semester would consist of mostly remote online classes.

Ryan Rafko, Director of Admissions and Guidance, was contacted about the college's plans from the start of the online transfer in March leading up to the current semester.

Rafko's position oversees the recruitment of students to the college, with various counselors meeting with students to set up a plan and schedule for each semester.

He said that the decision to move to the online format was made early to not only give students an idea of what to expect for their classes, but to also give staff and faculty the whole summer to prepare.

"We have to take the precautions that we obviously have to keep the students safe," Rafko said.

The college made the decision to switch to a mostly-remote format earlier than other educational organizations in the state.

"Other schools have kind of been trending waiting, waiting, waiting sort of thing," Rafko said. "But if you look at some other schools across the state, they're moving to mainly a remote format where it's outlined too."

With most classes having an online format, many courses that were once only held on campus now have a virtual format in place.

"Post-COVID we may still be offering online sections of courses based on that want form students," Rafko said.

Despite the lack of availability on campus, Rafko and his team have been reaching out to students who need help through email, phone call, and video meetings since March, continuing throughout the summer.

After safety progress was made, various services on campus are now open for students to utilize in-person.

The Financial Aid Office, Admissions and Guidance Services and the Registrar's Office are all now located in the main suite of the A Building.



Photos by Jerry Meade

Seating in the library has been rearranged to promote social distancing.

MCCC's library, located in the C Building, will have various computer and book sources available to those taking either blended or online-only classes.

There are still 12 computers in the library open to students. "If a professor insists on face-to-face, we'll do it in small



groups." Manley said about the use of these computer for classroom meetings. Laura Manley, the college's library director, said the library will be opened to students at the start of the semester.

As is true with the other campuses buildings, masks are required for entry into the library. A small box of masks are available at the library entrance if someone enters without one.

Various Plexiglas barriers have been installed along with spread out seating to comply with social distancing guidelines.

Manley said library staff will disinfect seating every two hours, with students encouraged to sanitize their station when leaving with materials the college will provide.

The bathrooms in the library are now single-use, with two-sided Velcro signs for users to switch if the bathroom is occupied.

Manley said there are plans to renovate the library starting next May where the library collection of books will go from 30,000 to 15,000.

"It's all going to be about students creating knowledge, accessing knowledge" Manley said. "It's not going to be so much about books."

Online library reference chat will be available 24/7 during both the Fall and Winter Semesters.

Manley said the library is pushing to focus more on online resources, with COVID-19 speeding the process.

"Even if I have all online classes, I can still utilize the services here on campus," Rafko said.

The college's newly opened Founders Hall will also be open to students this fall.

Formerly the East and West Technology Buildings, the Founders Hall will be home to the Learning Assistant Lab, Disability Services and new art classrooms.

Jack Burns, Director of Campus Planning & Facilities, said the campus's parking lots 5 and 6 behind the building will be combined and available to students at the start of the semester.

The Academic Commons is a new lounging area at the entrance of the Founders Hall, located where the previously

named East and West Tech Buildings now connect.

Along with all newly renovated classrooms, the Founder Hall now has the college's first Technology Enhanced Active Learning room.

Burns said the TEAL room focuses more on group teaching. The room contains multiple four-seat tables that have screens at each station.

"It's amazing the transformation that's happened," Rafko said in regards to the renovations that have been made.

With some students being on campus during the semester, some vending options will be available.

Sue Wetzel, Vice President of Administration, said vending machines will be available in the Health Education Building, Career Technology Center, and Founders Hall.

Wetzel said the college is still working with the vendor of Market Twenty 4 Seven to see if products will be available.

"Given the expected low census of students on campus this fall, it may not be open but a final decision has not yet been made," Wetzel said.

Though many facilities will be accessible to students, it is still unclear what group gatherings will be allowed on campus.

"Club activities, events, meetings are still a little bit up in the air at this point," Rafko said.

The decision to allow such meetings is still being decided by the college's upper administration who are waiting based on state regulations.

"Events don't look good for fall; we have to see what winter looks like," Rafko said.

"Obviously the hope for winter is that things improve even more so that there can be more of these activities that can be on campus."

Rafko said that students shouldn't hesitate to contact the various help on campus for any questions or concerns.

"It's an unprecedented semester we're going to run into," Rafko said. "So we're looking forward to helping many people."