Good Afternoon:

The Michigan Community College Association (MCCA) Presidents’ Meeting took place virtually this afternoon to discuss issues pertaining to the crisis and the effects on our campuses. Senator Gary Peters shared with us highlights of the third coronavirus package that was approved and asked for the Presidents to share with his office long and short-term challenges of the bill. He stated that the fourth package will look at more funds for hospital and higher education needs. He also asked us to submit how the crisis will affect our college enrollment not just immediately, but also a few years from now. We were urged by MCCA personnel to remember that federal dollars will be needed to fill the fiscal gaps caused by the pandemic.

On the state level, Governor Whitmer vetoed almost all supplemental spending, which included the Reconnect Program funding for the Sixty by 30 initiative. She has directed all funding be designated to fight COVID-19. The state Legislature has discontinued all meetings due to two legislators testing positive for the virus.

The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs issued a directive that allows RN and PN programs to conduct up to 100% of clinical experience hours in each course using virtual simulation and/or other clinically related online activities. This allowance remains in place during the current declared state of emergency and the remainder of 2020.

The details of the Federal CARES ACT are still being unwrapped. I should receive by tomorrow a PowerPoint presentation about the Act from the MCCA to review. What we do know:

- Higher education will receive $12.5 billion.
- The funding will be distributed based on the college’s Pell percentages. The Department of Education has not figured out individual college percentage shares.
- Colleges are requested to continue to fund work-study students even if they are not working due to the pandemic.
- Colleges will not have to return Title IV Aid if the student drops because of the crisis.
- Colleges can have the campus-based aid match waived.
- Colleges can use funds to cover costs associated with campus closures or significant changes in the delivery of instruction due to the coronavirus.
- 50% of funds are set aside for student emergency assistance.

The Presidents asked questions that included high schools not awarding dual enrollment credit since K-12s are not presently in school, Pass/Fail grading options, and fulfilling federal data requirements that are due soon and must be compiled on campus.

The legislative priorities for Michigan community colleges are:
- Acquiring technology equipment
• Acquiring zero-interest loans
• Increasing administrative burden relief
• Avoiding negative appropriations

Earlier today, I had the opportunity to give an interview for a Media Arts and Entertainment student who is reporting on the preventative measures MCC took to ensure the safety of our students. I had a wonderful conversation with the student over Zoom and look forward to seeing the finished product.

We had such a great reception to all of our virtual meetings last week, that I have made the decision to continue this type of communication weekly for students and employees until we are no longer teleworking. I believe the more we share and have the opportunity to address immediate concerns, the better for our institution. Topical question and answer format meetings will take place on Thursdays for employees and Fridays for students. Look for emails announcing this week’s topic tomorrow!

I really had a lot of fun with the March birthday celebrants today! I brought the cake, candle, and birthday music. They brought smiles and keen game playing, as we learned more about each other. Happy Birthday to Academic Advisor, Dr. Mari Yancho, whose birthday is today.

Finally, it saddens me to announce that today I learned we have one student who has died from COVID-19 and another student who has tested positive for COVID-19. We are following College policy and protocol to keep our employees and students safe.

Please stay home and social distance when you cannot!

Dr. Beverly

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