

The Voyager

a Frontier Community College newsletter



May 2020

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY

25 College closed
Memorial Day

JUNE

2 First day of summer classes

14 Flag Day

26 Midterm

JULY

3 College closed
Independence Day observed

4 Independence Day

21 Last day to withdraw from
summer classes

24 Last day of summer classes

27 Final exams

28 Final exams

All campus and community events have been canceled or postponed until further notice. Campus activities will resume once it is safe to do so.

During the state's Shelter in Place order, which is in effect through May 31, our campus buildings remain closed.

ADULT EDUCATION MOVING FORWARD INTO SUMMER

Despite setbacks from campus closures and a transition to online learning, the Adult Education program is moving forward with classes throughout the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges district. GED Test Preparation classes were put on hold in March when the shelter in place order went into effect, but classes were restarted the week of May 11.

The program is pleased to report that they retained a majority of their students from the Spring 2020 semester. "This is particularly heartening in light of the fact that technology is a major issue for Adult Education students," said Sharmila Kakac, Program Director for Adult Education. Because of this factor, the program's instructors made extra efforts to meet the needs of their students.

"The true heroes of this situation are the instructors in our program," said Kakac. "They have kept the students motivated and engaged throughout these trying and difficult times." Kakac reported that for those who had limited or no access to technology, instructors mailed packets to their address. The students would then return completed assignments to be graded. These efforts are in addition to online instruction and learning.

To accommodate the increasing need for technology within education, the program received \$16,000 in federal funding to create a technological lending library. The program is currently planning to purchase Chromebooks as well as portable wi-fi access points.

Another 8-week section of GED Test Preparation is scheduled to begin in July. The Adult Education program hopes to offer these classes in person on campus and at offsite locations, but the plans are subject to state guidelines. New and returning students will be welcome to register for this section of classes, with on-site registration information to be released soon.

So far this year, a total of twelve students enrolled in FCC's classes have successfully completed each of the GED exam's subjects. Testing has been on hold since March, but another twelve hope to complete the program after taking one final subject test.

TITLE III WORKING TOWARDS PROJECT GOALS, PREPARING FOR FALL SEMESTER

Frontier did not anticipate a pandemic to arise in the initial stages of the Title III grant, yet many of the project goals and objectives support the college's response to it. The grant was awarded in an effort to develop high-quality online and hybrid course content, which became the norm for not only the IECC district but also higher education institutions across the nation. Moreover, the establishment of the Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) program aims to produce medical professionals that are currently essential to COVID-19 testing and diagnosing.

As part of the MLT program development, construction in Room 21 of Mason Hall will soon begin. The project bid was awarded to Evrard Company of Marion, Illinois, and the construction crew will work to convert the current classroom into a state-of-the-art laboratory. The Title III grant team is anticipating a completion date of July 15.

To prepare for the MLT program's usage of the lab, Jennifer England, Health Sciences Specialist, has stayed busy ordering supplies and diagnostic equipment. England, who will also serve as the Program Director, is continuing to develop MLT-specific course curriculum that meets the benchmarks of the National Accrediting Agency of Clinical Laboratory Science (NAACLS). Recently, the program was approved by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and will soon be reviewed for approval at the next meeting of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). England and Carol Dreith, Project Director for the Title III grant, anticipate the MLT program to be a premier health science program offering. With the national spotlight focused on COVID-19 and the need for increased testing, as well as a growing demand for job positions, the MLT program is expected to draw students from throughout the IECC district and Southern Illinois region.

The faculty recording studio, which is housed in the Learning Resource Center, is nearing completion. Renovations were temporarily stalled due to the pandemic, as necessary supplies and equipment were in short supply and quickly went out of stock. This is thanks to the transition to online learning across America, creating a demand for online learning production throughout higher education.

Fortunately, renovations resumed with the help of Dr. Jay Edgren, President of FCC. Dreith reported that Edgren, who happens to be handy with power tools, has been designing and constructing a lightboard that will be essential in developing online lectures, specifically in mathematics and science courses. Additionally, Joy Smith, Education Technology Specialist, has been working on product development in preparation for assisting faculty with developing and recording lectures. The products and equipment include a green screen and closed captioning software.

In the coming months, the Title III team anticipates steady progress towards the conclusion of year one of the grant.

BOOKSTORE SEEKING TEXTBOOK RETURNS

Due to the shelter in place order, The Bobcat Den remains closed to students and the public through the month of May. Textbooks were originally supposed to be returned in person to the college bookstore. Instead, a contact-free method will be used for Spring 2020 returns. Andy Hill, Manager of The Bobcat Den, recently mailed return packets with labels to all students in possession of textbooks. Students should follow the instructions they receive and will not have to pay postage to return the textbooks.

Orders for Summer and Fall 2020 textbooks may be placed online at fccbookstore.iecc.edu/home. Students may choose to have textbooks delivered via UPS, or they may be picked up in person once the campus reopens according to state guidelines.

