

Email to Employees from President Parker

COVID-19 Update: Working from Home

March 20, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our SCC students, co-workers and communities. Thank you also for your resilience as the situation continues to evolve and grow in scope. I continue to be impressed (but not at all surprised) by your tremendous efforts, creativity and flexibility.

Our two main priorities are keeping students, faculty and staff safe and helping our students finish the semester successfully. Most of us are carrying out this important work remotely, with a few individuals required to remain on campus to take care of functions that can only be carried out on-site. Following is new information we have gathered that we want to share with you as we continue to navigate our new normal.

- **Paid COVID-19 Leave:** The Minnesota Department of Management and Budget (MMB) recently released details on the state [COVID-19 Paid Leave Policy](#). If you meet one of the following criteria, you may be eligible for COVID-19 Paid Leave:
 - You are a parent who cannot work from home because you are caring for a child who is under 12 years of age. Note: If both parents are state employees, only one is authorized to get paid leave at the same time (e.g. one parent could get it for the morning and one for the afternoon or one could get it Monday and the other Tuesday).
 - You are sick or home caring for a sick family member due to COVID-19.
 - You are self-quarantined due to potential COVID-19 exposure and **HAVE Symptoms**.
 - You are self-quarantined due to potential COVID exposure and do **NOT HAVE Symptoms** AND your supervisor is unable to provide a related substitute assignment that can be done at home.
 - You cannot work from home, because your work can only be done on campus (e.g. a general maintenance worker, some student affairs, etc.) AND you have been sent home due to the COVID-19 situation AND your supervisor has been unable to give you a related substitute assignment allowing you to work from home.
 - Your position requires that you work on campus which involves interacting with the general public, but you are concerned about possible exposure to the virus AND you cannot be assigned work at home.

Note: You may notice some MMB documents reference Priority Levels for state employees. More information will be forthcoming, but in general, all employees at Minnesota State colleges and universities are classified as either: Priority 1 (*Life/safety/operations such as some maintenance positions to make sure our buildings don't freeze or burn down*) or Priority 2 (*Essential to our Core Mission*). In other words, we are all delivering critical functions!

- **Student Workers:** South Central College has determined that student workers will continue to be paid based on normally scheduled work hours. They can work per each department's need and should do so to the extent that is possible, utilizing the same protocols as other staff regarding work location.
- **Email:** Thank you for continuing to monitor and respond to emails as you have been throughout your normal work day hours. For those working from home, please do not put an "Out of Office" message on your email, because if you're working from home, your office is at home.

- **Phone Calls:** As you know, our telephone system redirects all voicemails electronically to your email and I know you are all staying on top of these calls. Following are additional guidelines:
 - You are unable to forward your SCC office phone to your cell or home phone. This is because SCC's system does not have the capacity to support this function for all employees as it will cause the system to have issues.
 - Some of you have asked for sample language for your outgoing voicemail message. We recommend language such as: *You have reached the voicemail of [Your Name]. **Please leave a message, your phone number and email address, and I will get back to you as soon as possible.***

Note: Certain departments that students may call, such as the Welcome Center and One Stop on the North Mankato campus and Student Affairs on the Faribault campus, will continue to have a Central Phone Number with individuals in those departments able to direct callers to that phone number for immediate assistance as well.

- We value your privacy. Therefore, when a voicemail comes into your email, we offer 3 options:
 1. If the caller leaves their email in a voice message, you can respond back to them via email.
 2. If you **feel comfortable** returning the call from your cell or home phone, go ahead and do so.
 3. If you do **NOT feel comfortable** returning a call from your cell or home phone and you do not have a SCC cell phone, please work with your supervisor on other options.

As we transition into our next phase of emergency response, our priority is keeping you informed with accurate and timely information. To this end, beginning next week, you will start receiving emails **not only from me, but from cabinet members as well** with information, instructions, and guidance based on their operational areas.

On behalf of the entire cabinet, thank you for all your efforts and we look forward to continuing to work with all of you as you come up with solutions and best practices to help our students achieve their goals during this challenging time. If there are any resources we can provide to support you in your work, please let us know. Safety of our students, faculty and staff and getting our students to completion.

Appreciatively,

Dr. Annette Parker
President, South Central College