



Message from the President

Hill College Family:

Yesterday, the Hill College Board of Regents held a special board meeting in order to receive an update on our COVID-19 preparedness and altered operation efforts. The Board approved a Resolution allowing a delegation of authority and accountability expectations to me, as Hill College President, during the COVID-19 emergency situation. I urge you to review the information regarding COVID-19 that may be found at the Hill College COVID-19 webpage, link: <https://www.hillcollege.edu/Safety/COVID-19.html>.

The Regents and I would like to convey to our employees and students that they are proud of the work and commitment that has been shown during the pandemic.

Hill College understands that these are unprecedented times, and with that being said, listed below are my main objectives:

1. To protect the health and safety of our students and employees
2. To continue assisting our students for the completion of the spring 2020 semester through online and alternative coursework
3. To keep students on track for completion
4. To enable the majority of the College employees to work remotely, while continuing to provide necessary services, with the remainder of our employees working on site; and
5. To retain full-time and part-time employees, reduce turnover, increase morale, and facilitate a prompt future return to normal College operations

A. FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT (FFCRA):

On March 18, 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), Public Law 116-127, 134 Stat 178, was signed into law by President Trump. The FFCRA includes paid leave for community college employees, in certain and specific circumstances, when affected by COVID-19 through the provisions in the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA) and the Emergency Family Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA). The legislation is effective April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020. Attached is information regarding FFCRA regulations.

Several questions have come up this week in regards to essential operations and availability to work. Included below is information that hopefully will be beneficial to you:

B. COLLEGE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE:

My last communication to you indicated that the College would be closed to the public and not reopen until April 6. Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases throughout Texas, the President's extension of the CDC guidelines until April 30th, and Governor Abbott's Executive Order to close public schools until May 4, 2020, Hill College offices will be closed to the public until further notice. Employees who have been deemed as performing essential functions will be notified, approved, and scheduled by their supervisors to be on campus.

C. EVENTS:

All events on campus have been cancelled through May 15, 2020.

D. INSTRUCTION:

All 16-wk, 2nd 8-wk, and dual credit courses will continue to operate through distance education through May 15, 2020. All instruction that can be moved online/remote/distance education should be moved.

Continuing Education courses will continue to be assessed.

We are currently registering for the May mini-mester and summer terms.

E. BUSINESS OFFICE FUNCTIONS:

Procedures for bill payment will include the following:

- (1) Copy of the approved purchase order
- (2) "Copy" of the invoice; and
- (3) Invoice should be marked (a) ok to pay, (b) requisition number, (c) purchase order number, (d) date of approval for payment, and (e) signature or initials

During the current COVID-19 crisis, the Business Office will accept the above information in the form of an email addressed to Kim Loggins at kloggins@hillcollege.edu.

F. PAY COMPENSATION (EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2020):

In keeping with the objectives mentioned above, I want to explain the College's plans about payroll and compensation during the period of altered operations. **First, the College is committed to payroll being processed on the regular distribution schedule.** Our payroll is processed electronically and sent directly to regular employees' bank accounts, which allows for on-time delivery.

Second, compensation during this altered operations period is intended to provide certain regular employees with their normal base compensation as described below. For compensation to occur, those employees must be Available for Work.

Definition of "Available for Work" is as follows:

1. **Working onsite** – These employees will include select areas such as Student Services, Administrative Services, Instruction, Information Technology, External Affairs, and Human Resources. These areas will be specifically requested, approved, and scheduled by a member of President's Council to report to a campus/center.
2. **Working remotely** – Employees must be responsive to calls, texts, and instant messages within one hour of contact; review and respond to emails; work with supervisor for assignments, project completion and accountability; and available for regular check-ins with supervisor.

Availability to respond – If the case should arise that employees need to be called to campus, they must be able to arrive onsite within two hours of being contacted to report. President's Council approval is required prior to an employee being directed to report onsite.

G. FULL-TIME REGULAR EMPLOYEES:

Full-time exempt (does not clock time) – Employees will be paid their regular monthly salary if they are Available for Work. Employees must be responsive to any emails, texts, and assignments. If an employee is not Available for Work, employees must use personal or vacation leave time. Sick leave can be used under the sick leave provisions indicated in the current policy found on the Hill College website.

Full-time non-exempt staff (does clock time) – Employees will be paid for 40 hours per week if they are Available for Work. Employees must be responsive to any emails, texts, and assignments. If an employee is not Available for Work, employees must use personal or vacation leave time. Sick leave can be used under the sick leave provisions indicated in the current policy found on the Hill College website.

H. PART-TIME FACULTY:

Part-time faculty paid by the course – These employees will continue to be paid for current courses being taught. Per normal practices, courses that do not make will not be paid.

Part-time faculty paid via timesheet submission (credit courses) - These employees will submit a timesheet for processing pay as the pre-approved work, if any, is performed.

Part-time faculty paid via timesheet (non-credit courses) - These employees will submit a timesheet for processing pay as the pre-approved work, if any, is performed.

President’s Council or an appropriate supervisor’s written consent is required prior to any part-time employee performing work for the College that has not been pre-approved.

I. PART-TIME STAFF:

The following compensation provisions apply to part-time staff through this spring semester.

Permanent/Temporary Part-Time Staff (non-work study) – These employees will continue to be paid per normal practices, as the pre-approved work, if any, is performed (clocked hours).

President’s Council or an appropriate supervisor’s written consent is required prior to any part-time employee performing work for the College that has not been pre-approved.

Payroll will be communicating the details for entering time in ADP.

J. TECHNOLOGY REQUESTS:

Employees must be responsive to calls, texts and instant messages within one hour of contact; review and respond to emails; work with supervisor for assignments, project completion and accountability; and available for regular check-ins with supervisor. If you need technological resources to work in this capacity, please contact your supervisor immediately. Failure to report technological issues in a timely and responsible manner will constitute not being Available for Work.

Although, we are sailing in uncharted waters, we will get through this together. We will continue to reassess daily. From an instructional standpoint, we want to complete this spring semester and work with students to enroll in the May mini-mester and summer semesters.

I appreciate the Board’s support and approval of the Resolution regarding various matters associated with the COVID-19 virus. This support is a direct reflection of their love for Hill College and the Hill College family. I could not be more proud of the work that each of you are doing and will continue to do during this COVID-19 altered operation period. Please know that we do not have all of the answers, and we may not get everything 100% correct; however, we are making decisions with compassion and concern for our employees and our students. We will adjust and change course as the circumstances change.

Sincerely,

Pam Boehm, Ed.D.
President