

As we complete the 5th week of classes for this fall semester and enter the month of October, it is time to begin our planning for the spring semester and determine how and in what format we return for classes in January 2021.

As you might have seen, the Centers for Disease Control has announced that COVID-19 cases are on the rise in many states. In addition, the Center also released data that showed that young adults, those in their 20's, had the highest rates of COVID-19 infections over the past three months, accounting for one in five cases throughout the country. This trend is not likely to change as colleges and universities opened this month for the new academic year, many with on-campus classes and activities.

In Delaware, fortunately, data lines over the past few weeks continue to trend down, in incidence rates as well as hospitalizations and admissions. Clearly, public policy actions as well as individual behaviors, such as wearing masks, distancing, avoiding large crowds and proper hygiene, have our state on a healthy track in managing new COVID-19 cases.

Over the next few months, however, a couple of realities require us to be prudent and consider elements that are beyond our control as we plan for next year. First, the weather will continue to bring cooler temperatures and bring some activities and larger numbers of people indoors. This is clearly a risk factor for new COVID cases. As a complicating factor, the traditional flu season is already upon us (flu shots are being administered on our campuses this week and next) and history shows that influenza cases have peaked during the month of January in prior years.

In light of these considerations, I have determined that the Spring 2021 academic semester will remain in our current format, primarily distance learning with select sections of skills labs on campus. Delaware Tech will continue to provide targeted student support services on our campuses for those who need to access that assistance in person and we will continue to support our faculty, through professional development and additional resources, to enable them to provide the highest quality distance learning experience for our students. While this is clearly disappointing and frustrating to many students, their families, and College employees, this decision is being made with health and safety, first and foremost, being our primary consideration. The timing of this announcement will allow us to spend these valuable weeks planning and preparing for next year.

My heartfelt appreciation to the entire Delaware Tech team for all of your creativity, hard work, and commitment to our students in what has clearly been an unprecedented time of change and disruption.

Thank you again, and please be healthy and safe in the weeks ahead.

Mark T. Brainard
President

