Ridgewater College Students:

I assume you have heard from various sources that we are in the midst of a critical transition in our college due to the COVID-19 crisis in our state. I want to reinforce the messages from our Governor and the Chancellor of the Minnesota State system and provide some additional information at a college and campus level to make sure you are aware of the latest developments.

As of today, we are being advised by health experts to limit our activities and social interactions as much as possible to reduce the spread of the virus. For our college, that has resulted in several actions:

- We have suspended classes for two weeks and we are asking students to not visit our campuses unless necessary
- We are implementing social distancing requirements in all of our college services and activities
- We are working on a plan to allow many of our employees to work from home, shifting delivery of services to students from on-site/in-person visits to virtual appointments via phone and computer.

Our transition efforts are focused on finding a way to ensure that every student can complete their Spring Semester courses as planned, and allow any students on target for graduation in May to complete their degree/diploma/certificate programs. This objective involves some key challenges to convert a number of courses to alternate delivery in various formats, and our faculty are hard at work making that happen – which is why we have suspended all Ridgewater courses, including online courses, until Monday, March 30, 2020.

Many students have asked us to re-start online courses immediately rather than waiting until March 30. That view is understandable, however, we need to be consistent across the entire statewide system in how we are handling course suspensions. We also need the talent of our online instructors to help other faculty convert their face-to-face courses to an online or other alternate delivery format. We appreciate your patience during this transition phase, and hope you understand the logic in our actions.

Please note that we have closed our library and test center on both campuses until March 30. We
will renew tutoring services as of March 30, but at this time we are uncertain if in-person tutoring will be available as usual or if we will shift entirely to virtual or distance tutoring for students.

I also want to clarify guidelines for those of you who traveled over Spring Break. **You do not need to self-quarantine if you did not leave the United States** unless you were in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with the coronavirus or you are showing symptoms of the virus. Only those individuals who have traveled outside of the country or came into contact with someone who is believed or diagnosed to have the coronavirus need to self-quarantine for the recommended 14 days.

While we are focusing our efforts on finding ways to allow our students to complete their Spring Semester courses, our top priority is the health and safety of all of our students and employees in the college. That concern includes the mental health and well-being of everyone – if you need assistance to cope with anxiety or stress from our current situation, **please keep in mind that we have counselors available in the college to assist you.**

Last, if you have any comments or questions that you would like to submit to the college about the COVID-19 situation and our response plan, you can send an email to COVID19@ridgewater.edu and we will respond to your message within 24-48 hours.

Thank you for your patience and understanding during this critical period of change!

_Craig Johnson_
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**Ridgewater College Vision:** Ridgewater College is a student-centered educational leader focused on innovation, excellence and affordability.