



# News Release

For Immediate Release – 6/26/2020  
Contact: Laura Kuvaas, Director of Marketing,  
Recruiting & New Student Experience  
320-222-6090

Fax: 320-222-5212  
[laura.kuvaas@ridgewater.edu](mailto:laura.kuvaas@ridgewater.edu)  
[www.ridgewater.edu](http://www.ridgewater.edu)

## **Ridgewater will Offer In-Person and Distance Learning Fall Semester; On-Campus Tours Resume July 6**

As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, Ridgewater College has announced it is resuming campus tours and adjusting its strategy to welcome back students and deliver courses.

### **Campus Tours Resume**

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, Ridgewater has only been open for current students to access essential technology resources, like printing and computers. Campus visits and other services have been conducted remotely. However, starting July 6, in-person tours will resume by appointment only and limited in size to no more than nine guests.

### **Plans for Fall Semester**

Ridgewater will offer both in-person and distance learning options for fall semester. While the college had initially announced a fully online and remote instruction start to the semester, with a possible conversion to face-to-face instructions when conditions allowed, that plan has changed.

“We heard from many students and parents who wanted more certainty about our plans for fall,” said Ridgewater College President Craig Johnson. “COVID-19 has made it difficult to provide concrete answers, but as conditions have been fairly stable in our area to date and with safety guidance from CDC and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), we’ve developed strategies to deliver a portion of our classes via face-to-face instruction on campus for fall.”

**As a result, the college will now commit to a firm plan for course delivery for the entire fall semester, with final decisions on which courses will be delivered face-to-face by mid-July.** According to Matt Feuerborn, Dean of Instruction for Technical Programs, decisions on course delivery will be based on the **health and safety** of students, faculty, and staff, along with the effectiveness of instruction and support services for students. “The safety of our students, faculty and staff continues to be our top priority,” Feuerborn said.

Distance learning, including online and remote courses, will continue to be offered. Students should expect a mix of course delivery methods, including: face-to-face, primarily for classes that have a lab or a critical hands-on or face-to-face component; online synchronous (online/remote class you attend at a scheduled time with the rest of your classmates), and online asynchronous (online/remote class with no regularly scheduled class times). The delivery

method for each course will remain the same throughout the entire semester to provide consistency for students, which is a key change from the college's original plan.

For on-campus, face-to-face classes, Ridgewater will follow its back-to-campus preparedness plan to support a safe and healthy environment for all. Facilities staff will disinfect and clean rooms and furnishing regularly according to CDC and MDH guidelines. Social distancing guidelines will also be followed and enforced, with masks strongly encouraged. When social distancing isn't possible, masks must be worn. Additionally, students and visitors will be screened upon entering campus.

At this time, the plan for fall is a one-semester strategy. Ridgewater leadership will adjust for Spring Semester 2021 as more information becomes available. "It's important that we remain flexible," Johnson said. "It's possible Minnesota could experience a resurgence of COVID-19, at which point, we may need to adjust our plans accordingly."

### **Learn more**

To schedule a campus tour, visit [ridgewater.edu/visit](http://ridgewater.edu/visit). For more information about Ridgewater's back-to-campus preparedness plan, visit [ridgewater.edu/covid-19](http://ridgewater.edu/covid-19).

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Ridgewater College is a community and technical college with campuses in the central Minnesota communities of Willmar and Hutchinson. The college serves more than 5,000 students through its nearly 100 academic programs and more than 68,000 training hours for individuals and businesses through customized training and continuing education. The college is a member of Minnesota State and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

*Minnesota State includes 30 community and technical colleges and 7 state universities serving approximately 400,000 students. It is the fourth-largest system of two-year colleges and four-year universities in the United States.*

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