KC safety protocols for COVID-19 pandemic

The following (in addition to required face coverings) are safety protocols for employees, students and visitors:

SOCIAL DISTANCING:
All employees, students and visitors to any Kilgore College campus/facility are required to abide by social distancing guidelines. These include:
• Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people.
• Do not gather in groups.
• Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings.

PERSONAL HYGIENE:
These precautions must also be followed:
• If you are ill, do not enter any campus facilities.
• Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
• Wash your hands often with soap and water.
• Utilize available hand sanitizer.

KC continues to follow guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and communicates routinely with Gregg County Public Health and the Texas Department of State Health Services. Visit their webpages for the most accurate information and advice.

Face coverings required on campus beginning May 5

As part of the campus reopening planning, KC is requiring that all employees, students and visitors wear face coverings beginning May 5. Employees, students, visitors and vendors will be expected to supply their own masks that meet the following requirements:
• Covers the nose and mouth
• Fits snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
• Is secured with ties, ear loops or similar mechanism
• Includes multiple layers of fabric
• Allows for breathing without restriction

In addition, cloth face coverings must be laundered on a daily basis. Disposable face coverings must be disposed of on a daily basis. Employees, students, and visitors will not be allowed into campus facilities without one. Employee face coverings may be removed if an employee is in a private office and no other individual enters the office to within six feet of the employee. Faculty may remove face coverings while lecturing as long as social distancing is maintained.

Distribution plan being finalized for CARES Act emergency grants

As part of the recently announced Coronavirus, Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the U.S. Department of Education is providing colleges and universities with funding to be awarded as Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students. Students will be able to use their grant funds for costs related to the disruption of campus operations during the pandemic. KC is currently finalizing a plan for distributing CARES Act emergency grants. Once the plan is finalized, students will be notified via Kilgore College email, website updates, and social media announcements.

Although KC has not confirmed all eligibility criteria, it knows only students who are or could be eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), may receive emergency financial aid grants. The requirements to participate in programs under Section 484 of the HEA include but are not limited to the following:
• U.S. citizenship or eligible noncitizen;
• a valid Social Security number;
• registration with Selective Service (if the student is male); and
• a high school diploma, GED, or completion of high school in an approved homeschool setting.

Students must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to demonstrate eligibility to participate in programs under Section 484 the HEA. Therefore, encourage students to complete the FAFSA (https://fafsa.ed.gov/) if not already submitted.
Getting Back to Business as Usual… How?

The question above is probably a question currently being asked by many individuals across the world. I know, from speaking with colleagues, that this question is being asked by all fifty of the community colleges across Texas.

As you know, Governor Abbott has issued guidelines to “Open Texas.” However, he stated in his speech that education, including higher education, would remain closed for the rest of the school year (the end of the spring semester for post-secondary institutions according to the THECB webpage). Hence, the question remains, what does that mean for Kilgore College going forward?

Our direction at KC will continue to come from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). As I mentioned in my email to KC Business on April 21, THECB Commissioner Harrison Keller and his staff at the Coordinating Board will be navigating “Open Texas” guidelines for post-secondary education. The Coordinating Board will continue to communicate those navigational points via a FAQ (frequently asked question) webpage on their website: http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/misc/coronavirus-update-for-higher-education/frequently-asked-questions/.

The last update to the website was posted on May 1. The guidance provided in that post specifically outlined how Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs offered by public and private institutions of higher education that require hands-on instruction that cannot be delivered online can continue to be delivered.

Your administration is hard at work determining how best to reopen Kilgore College in an effort we are calling “Ranger Reopening.” The first challenge faced was how to safely bring CTE students back to the College to complete any I (incomplete) grades pending the spring term or in support of the summer I term. Phase one of this work will commence and all guidelines associated with this phase will become effective on May 5. This phase is in response to, as well as in accordance with, the guidance from the THECB.

Elements of this phase, listed on Page 1 of this newsletter, include social distancing, personal hygiene and face covering.

You may consider this first phase as the college's attempt to "stick its toe in the water."

Other phases, as we receive clearance from the Governor’s Task Force, via the THECB, will be forthcoming.

You will continue to be made aware of those stages as we continue to navigate the process of getting back to business as usual in support of our students.

Until next month,
Texas Shakespeare Festival raises record funding on East Texas Giving Day

The Texas Shakespeare Festival’s 2020 summer season was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but generous patrons helped the festival raise record funding during East Texas Giving Day on April 28.

The TSF received the largest donation in Gregg County at $21,419; followed by the Longview Dream Center, which operates a food pantry and clothing giveaway, at $15,212; and the Asbury House Child Enrichment Center, a preschool program for children from low-income families, at $11,508.

East Texas Giving Day is an 18-hour day of online giving that provides critical funding for area nonprofits.

As stated on the ETGD website, “The purpose of an area-wide giving day is to bring the region together on one day and as one community, raising money and awareness for East Texas nonprofits. This initiative, organized by East Texas Communities Foundation (ETCF), provides citizens across ETCF’s 32-county service area an easy platform to support the mission of local nonprofits that serve our communities.”

Utilize library resources during COVID-19 pandemic

During the pandemic, feel free to utilize the vast online resources of the Watson Library:

**Telephone Service:**

Please remember the staff at Watson Library will take phone reference queries at any time during business hours, especially in support of KC students and employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Call (903) 983-8237 for more information.

**Watson Library Electronic Resources:**

- About 150 databases on a large variety of subjects.
- Tutorials – The library offers multiple tutorials from its home webpage (Help>Tutorials)

**Possible Outside Resources:**

- TeachingBooks Virtual Teaching Ideas: Secondary Ideas are lower on the page.
- Gale Cengage: Resources to support libraries & educators impacted by COVID-19.

**Institutional Planning: Did you know?**

KC’s student-to-faculty ratio is 19-to-1.

Data provided by the KC Office of Institutional Planning

**Partnership with Workforce Solutions provides career resources**

Kilgore College Career Services, in partnership with Workforce Solutions East Texas (WSET), is providing the general public free career-related services for job seekers.

Free services include resume writing, interview assistance, advice for job searches, career exploration and information on professional development, skills training and educational programs.

“This partnership will expand avenues of assistance for people who need career resources or advice,” said Kyla Sather, KC Career Coach and Academic Advisor.

“We can steer people in the right direction with a variety of job readiness programs and can give information on how the college can help with educational training for career-specific employment.”

All services are currently offered remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For information on career resources, contact Kyla Sather at (903) 392-6024 or ksather@kilgore.edu.

**Sather**