



STAKEHOLDER UPDATE

April 1, 2020

A status update on Northern Pennsylvania Regional College, a two-year associate degree-granting institution supported by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. NPRC proudly serves students in Cameron, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, McKean, Potter, Warren, and Venango Counties.

Educational Continuity

The mission of the Northern Pennsylvania Regional College has always been to serve the underserved residents of the Commonwealth who lacked access to affordable, post-secondary education. The visionary founders of the Education Consortium of the Upper Allegheny (ECUA), the forerunner to NPRC, found that utilizing real-time video technology to connect often-isolated learners with others was a means of providing high-quality, accessible college coursework to people not always able to access education conveniently or affordably.

Fast forward to 2020, and as the broader higher education sector faces a "new normal" for teaching and learning, the NPRC model of distributed classwork that accommodates those who must practice social isolation, or who cannot easily reach available classes, looks positively prescient. As founding president of the college, I found our model to be a prime example of "disruptive innovation," as defined by late Harvard professor, Clayton Christensen in his 1997 work, "The Innovator's Dilemma."

Our delivery model has permitted uninterrupted service and delivery of classes by expanding access to the needed technology throughout our service area. While other institutions search for ways to adjust to this new reality of remote learning, NPRC has been delivering effective instruction for several years utilizing remote access with faculty who are comfortable and capable of using technology to reach our students no matter where they are.

Academic courses began using remote delivery on March 16, 2020. Students were provided with laptops and hotspots as needed and classes transitioned smoothly. We will be using remote delivery until at least the end of the spring semester, when hopefully, social distancing restrictions will be lifted.

Employees began working at home effective March 16 as well and were also provided with hotspots and any other essential equipment. We are meeting frequently via StarLeaf and are enjoying some fun meetings – like the pirate-themed meeting of the Student Success Specialists, and those meetings where pets have spontaneously joined. Despite these changes, we are continuing our progress toward regional accreditation.

Child Development Associate

NPRC has partnered with the Early Learning Resource Center to provide educational opportunities for childcare workers who will be required to have at minimum, the Child Development Associate

credential. The CDA program offers 120 hours of coursework to prepare students for the state's CDA exam. Programming is free to individuals who meet requirements. Four cohorts of classes will begin using remote delivery on April 6; April 27, May 4 and May 25. Interested students need to contact Doug McGarvey at douglas.mcgarvey@nwirelrc.org or (800)860-2281 ext. 136.

Anytime Communication with NPRC

Northern Pennsylvania Regional College is pleased to announce the upcoming launch of our newest communication tool, the AtlasRTX Edubot. The Edubot is a Real-Time-Experience platform, an advanced conversational artificial intelligence web-chatbot that will enhance the web experience as visitors navigate to our website, regionalcollegepa.org. The Edubot will be unveiled in May. Look for more information coming soon.

Workforce Development Programs

CDL programs are on hold while the EMT and Powder Metal training have been moved to remote delivery and the hands-on portion of the classes will take place when social distancing recommendations are lifted.

As we enter the summer semester at NPRC, we welcome your interest and questions about how we are meeting the workforce and academic needs of our region efficiently and cost-effectively. NPRC is affordable, accessible, and definitely achievable!