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HIGHER ED TODAY



CUNY Stands with New Yorkers

In times of crisis, institutions like CUNY that are integral to the life of New York and its future have an especially important role to play.

CUNY's responsibility in these extraordinary times is both to protect the safety of our community members and to ensure that all of our students, regardless of their circumstances, are able to continue their education. But we are also called to step up, to put the country's premier urban public university at the service of the state and city we call home.

able following Superstorm Sandy and the 9-11 attacks, CUNY facilities including cafeterias, gyms and some dorms are available to the State and City to increase health care capacity, when and where needed, in the fight against COVID-19.

Essential campus services like food pantries remain open in our campuses to serve our most in need students. Child care centers are operating with low demand but they remain open so they can be fully activated as part of Governor Cuomo's efforts to support the needs of



I have been moved by the resilience, fortitude and innovation that have been on display across the university in the face of this unprecedented health emergency. CUNY's 275,000 students and nearly 50,000 faculty and staff have been at their best.

In a five-day recess, CUNY accomplished the Herculean task of transitioning to distance learning most classes across 25 campuses and five boroughs. By the time classes resumed, on March 19, up to 95 percent of CUNY's 50,000 course sections had moved to distance learning instruction, and 95 percent of its nearly 50,000 faculty and staff to working remotely. Today, those numbers are closer to 100 percent. My most sincere thanks to all the faculty and staff who keep the University going while facing disruption, fatigue and anxiety in their personal lives.

To make sure that all students are equipped for distance learning, Governor Cuomo funded and enabled the swift acquisition of \$15 million worth of laptops and tablets for students, 50,000 pieces in all.

Our efforts are also aimed at doing our part to aid the widespread campaign to slow the coronavirus spread and help those in need.

Just as we made our services avail-

families of medical first responders. Responding to the need for personal protective equipment for frontline workers and other essential employees, several of our colleges have combined to donate N-95 masks, nitrile gloves, shoe covers, disposable lab coats and bottles of 70% isopropyl alcohol.

Working with Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, we have helped establish a testing site on university-owned property on Manhattan's Upper East Side. The Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy is releasing a weekly survey that provide a data-driven picture of the pandemic's effects. Queensborough Community College is in discussions to manufacture, through 3D-printing, much-needed equipment for hospitals through its Advanced Manufacturing Lab.

As we move forward with the critical effort to preserve the health and wellbeing of our city, I am grateful to the professionals and unsung heroes who have marshaled their services to ensure that CUNY remains a stabilizing, reassuring force.

Our response to this global pandemic is yet another way that CUNY is going to bat for all New Yorkers. It is yet another reminder of why I couldn't be prouder to be CUNY's chancellor.



Félix V. Matos Rodríguez is the chancellor of the City University of New York, the nation's largest urban public university, serving over 500,000 students of all ages in seven community colleges, 11 senior colleges and seven graduate or professional institutions. Visit cuny.edu.