



The *New* Normal

Mercy's Reopening Plans Put Students First

So how does a college weather a global pandemic? In Mercy's case, it meant never losing sight of its top two priorities: keeping students safe and healthy, and ensuring they will continue to receive an uninterrupted affordable education. The grounds may have been quiet, but the College was busier than ever: faculty successfully transitioned to online instruction, President Hall conferred undergraduate and graduate degrees for more than 3,000 deserving students at a special, virtual commencement ceremony, and the Admissions team welcomed hundreds of accepted students at virtual receptions during the spring.

"Our Accepted Student receptions were remarkably successful," says Vice President for Admissions Adam Castro. "We developed an innovative virtual program, which gave everyone a complete picture of life and learning at Mercy. We couldn't meet them to share the excitement in person, so we re-engineered the event for an online audience. Now they know what to expect, and we're looking forward to welcoming them as new Mavericks this fall."

The College announced its "OnCampus Plus" re-opening plan for the fall semester in June. It offers students the flexibility to access classes, student support and student life events both online and in-person. Mercy invested in both new health and safety measures, and new technology for its classrooms. Five internal workgroups developed guidelines on various aspects of the phased-in opening of college life, including academics and academic technology, the work environment, classrooms and safety, student spaces and residence halls, campus events, visitors and transportation. The residence halls, including the new Dorm34 at the Manhattan Campus, are open this

fall with limited capacity, and classes (also reduced to ensure social distancing) began as scheduled.

"Maintaining the continuity of life at Mercy College is an enormous undertaking," says Vice President of Student Affairs Kevin Joyce. "We are more than up to the challenge. Our PACT mentors who work one-on-one with students, our multi-campus Career and



OnCampus *Plus*

Professional Development team, our Residential Life leaders – everyone knows it's all-hands-on-deck for Mercy students. We can't wait to see them – but the truth is we've never stopped serving them."

In order to keep everyone safe and healthy, the College is limiting campus access to students, faculty, staff and invited guests for the time being, and is excited to transition many fall activities to virtual events so our community can still celebrate together. These include virtual panel discussions with Mercy Leaders, student events and orientation.