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COVID-19 Story
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In person or online learning at CTC

By KRISTEN WETOVICK

CTC students face an uncertain academic future as college officials grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic. The health crisis means the school year could be moved entirely online, sending CTC students home.

CTC officials said their goal is to keep everyone safe during the pandemic.

“Tech is following CDC guidelines to the letter,” said Layla Clapton, CTC president. “We are doing everything we can to ensure the safety of our students. We want to keep our students on campus, where they can achieve the best possible outcomes.”

After closing down campus in early March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CTC released its plans to reopen for the fall. CTC did not report any cases of COVID-19 during the spring, although Cornville Regional Medical Center was overwhelmed with 62 cases of COVID-19 in early April. Every room in the hospital was full, forcing patients that were in less critical condition to be housed in hospital hallways or in makeshift rooms that were set up in the hospital dining hall.

Though CTC is following CDC guidelines, testing hasn’t been campuswide.

“I wish we could test everyone, but the university simply can’t afford it,” Clapton said. “It costs more than \$100 per test, and right now we’re trying to avoid laying off faculty and eliminating programs.”

CTC is instead relying on random testing of 50-75 students and faculty in an effort to monitor the spread of the virus. Out of the 224 students and faculty tested so far, only 14 have been positive.

Though few have tested positive and masks have been mandated in all classrooms, some students and faculty still have reservations about in person learning.

Faculty at CTC started a petition calling for the administration to move to remote learning as soon as possible. So far, 124 have signed.

“We’re worried the administration is putting dollars first and will worry about the health of the campus community later,” said Melinda Gates, a teacher at CTC and president of the faculty senate. “We need to switch to online delivery as soon as possible, before the pandemic gets out of control.”

With the continued debate of in person or online learning, many wish to just have a normal school year.

“I wish my fellow Tech students would take COVID seriously,” said Led Zeppelin, a CTC senior music major. “I want to finish my education on campus, working with my professors and fellow students. I don’t want to spend my last semester talking to a professor on Zoom.”