

## **Community College Presidents Op Ed**

### **Dear Students, Finish Strong!**

With the coronavirus outbreak, we have all had to adapt to new ways of doing things. The majority of you are adjusting to online or remote learning from your homes, faculty are transitioning to virtual classrooms from their homes, and staff are supporting you through the use of technology from their homes. Even though our physical campuses may be closed, we are open for business and focused on helping you finish this semester.

The uncertainties and challenges related to COVID-19 may have us feeling anxious and isolated. We understand the temptation for you to simply not finish the semester, perhaps thinking you will return when things get back to “normal.” We encourage you to think about it differently.

This is the perfect time to dig back into your studies and focus like never before, using new tools in new and exciting ways. Your priorities may have changed, and you are likely facing different pressures, but the time you are afforded now is a gift when it comes to the ability to concentrate on your studies. You can set a positive example for others by committing to your studies and experiencing success.

You are over half-way through the semester already, and are well down the path to finishing your degree or credential. Stay on track. Don't let the challenges caused by the coronavirus derail you; instead, let them motivate you. Your higher education is more important today than ever.

Having a college degree matters, especially in times like these. Individuals with higher levels of education have higher earning capacity throughout their lifetime and are less likely to be unemployed. Your degree will not only set you up for future opportunities, it will help you weather times of uncertainty like these we are experiencing today.

Furthermore, staying on track to complete this semester and ultimately finishing your degree or credential is essential to the recovery for our entire State. Having an educated workforce will be key to Wyoming weathering this storm, and more importantly, to our ability to thrive afterward.

We implore you to continue to invest in your future. Your Wyoming Community Colleges have been working hard to ensure you have the support and resources you need. We are here for you. We need you to engage and let us know if you are in need. We believe that all of our students can be successful in their classes, even while juggling personal demands and dealing with the challenges brought on by these uncertain times.

Things may feel very different right now, but your faculty members and their commitment to you are the same. The staff ready to help you are the same people that have always cared about your success.

We know you have the courage and resilience to do this. We have seen it in you on our campuses. We know you can not only finish this semester, but finish strong.

You've got this!

Dr. Darren Divine, President  
Casper College

Dr. Brad Tyndall, President  
Central Wyoming College

Dr. Lesley Travers, President  
Eastern Wyoming College

Dr. Joe Schaffer, President  
Laramie County Community College

Dr. Walter Tribley, President  
Northern Wyoming Community College District

Dr. Stefani Hicswa, President  
Northwest College

Dr. Kimberly Dale, President  
Western Wyoming Community College