

DRAFT SCRIPT FOR DR. NUNEZ'S VIDEO MESSAGE

I appreciate this opportunity to connect with you personally during this critical period in our University's existence.

These are unprecedented times. Our university, our state, our nation—the entire world for that matter — is facing a unique health crisis that is impacting all of us and changing the very nature of our daily lives.

However, just as we overcame the impact of September 11 and we rebounded from the Great Recession of 2009, I am confident that America will emerge from the coronavirus pandemic as a stronger, and hopefully more unified nation.

In the face of the coronavirus pandemic, I appreciate all that each of you is doing at Eastern to ensure your own health and safety, and that of those around you, during this current public health emergency. Please continue to take the precautions that we have outlined to secure your well-being.

I also want to especially thank the faculty for working hard to develop and implement our plan to offer all courses online for the balance of the semester. I want to acknowledge all our employees working at home so that we can continue to function. Finally, I want to especially thank the staff who are continuing to perform essential tasks on campus; I am grateful to you for your commitment to our students and to your colleagues.

On Tuesday, March 17, I informed students, faculty, and staff that Eastern will be providing all instruction online after Spring Break — for the remainder of the spring semester. Systems have been implemented to ensure that essential academic support services—such as tutoring and advising—will also be delivered online.

In collaboration with other members of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities System, we will be closing our campus to all but personnel deemed essential by Eastern. All other employees will be telecommuting from home until further notice.

In addition, it makes me very sad to inform you that our annual commencement exercises, which have been held each spring for the past 130 years, will not be held at the XL Center in May. However, plans for a virtual conferring of the degrees is being considered. We are still committed to ensuring that all our students finish the semester and that our seniors earn their degrees.

All other campus events have been cancelled. However, committees—such as the Strategic Planning Committee, NECHE and other groups—should continue

meeting telephonically. Further, meetings of the University Senate will be held remotely and organized by Professor Andrew Utterback.

Arranging for residential students to pick up their belongings, housing refunds or credits, and many other details associated with these operational changes are being decided as I speak and will be communicated to the campus community as soon as possible.

I encourage each of you to check your email daily. All Eastern communications regarding the coronavirus pandemic can also be found on our website. (<https://www.easternct.edu/coronavirus>.)

While we refine the details on how Eastern will manage the rest of this semester, I want to reiterate that I am deeply committed to the health and safety of every member of our campus community. My cabinet is meeting daily and the Continuity of Operations Team is also meeting regularly to respond to the needs of students, faculty and staff during this time. I am so appreciative of the support I have been given personally and the commitment they have demonstrated to our students.

Students who have questions related to housing and other Student Affairs functions should email Vice President Walter Diaz (diazw@easternct.edu). Faculty who have questions related to delivering online instruction should email Provost William Salka (salkaw@easternct.edu). Employees who have questions related to telecommuting that their supervisor cannot answer should email Associate Vice President Maria Weinberger at weinbergerma@easternct.edu. Employees should also keep in mind that our Employee Assistance Program is available during these stressful times; check the Human Resources website for details.

Again, for further details and updates, please continue to monitor your email and visit our website.

I look forward to the time when our campus is back to normal. In the meantime, be safe, work together remotely, and practice the preventative measures we have previously shared. We will get through this because Eastern has always been a strong community.

Stay safe and healthy.

Elsa M. Núñez
President