

PRACTICES EXCHANGE

NEWSLETTER

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<https://yeswemustcoalition.org>

Issue 32

YWMC Discussion Forums Update

In order to provide a forum for YWMC members to share strategies and raise questions regarding the COVID-19 crisis as well as the growing movement to address racial and social inequities in our society, we have continued to hold an Open Forum via our Zoom platform for members every Thursday at noon ET, and for Faculty in particular on Fridays at 11:30 am ET. We welcome any institutional members of the Coalition who wish to join the conversation. In addition, we have created several documents which readers may find useful in their thinking about these current issues. Growing out of our awareness of the importance of listening to what our students have to say, our latest report, **The New Student Majority: In Their Own Words** (https://yeswemustcoalition.org/site/assets/files/1122/in_their_own_words.pdf) highlights conversations with 30 Pell-eligible students from 18 of our members institutions that provide important insights about the reality of poverty in college students' lives. We have also compiled a document based on suggestions from recent literature and best practices of experienced online practitioners at YWMC member schools for creating online courses that are effective for and supportive of low-income students, **Online Learning: What Works for Low-Income Students** (https://yeswemustcoalition.org/site/assets/files/1122/online_learning--what_works.pdf).

YWMC MEMBER SHOWCASE: New York Institute of Technology



Founded in 1955, **New York Institute of Technology** (New York Tech) enrolls approximately 3,700 undergraduate students and 3,300 graduate and medical students at its two campuses — a 176-acre campus on Long Island (Old Westbury, N.Y.) and a campus in New York City near Columbus Circle. As a non-profit, independent, private, and nonsectarian institution of higher education, New York Tech continues to pursue its longstanding mission to provide career-oriented professional education; give all qualified students access to opportunity; and support research and scholarship that benefit the larger world. New York Tech joined the Yes We Must Coalition in 2018.



Many of New York Tech's students are the first in their family to pursue higher education, and more than 50% of the undergraduates are Pell-eligible. The student body is one of the most diverse in the United States, ranking 4th on *U.S. News & World Report's* Diversity Index. New York Tech continues to provide resources to help support the financial, academic, and co-curricular needs of the University's students as part of a promise to ensure that all qualified students are given access to educational opportunities. One recent example, an initiative that engaged a large group of first-year students in 2019, provided enhanced academic advisement and individualized coaching between the spring and summer semesters, resulting in a 16% jump in the first-to-second-year retention rate at the New York City campus.

New York Tech's 90+ undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs include computer science, data science and cybersecurity; biology and biomedical studies; architecture and design; mechanical, electrical and energy engineering; health and medicine; IT and engineering; behavioral science; management; communications; educational leadership, and more. New York Tech's technology-infused, career-focused coursework across all six schools and colleges comprises important competencies that meet today's market demands and prepares students for careers of the future. The University is constantly addressing and incorporating emerging disciplines into the curriculum and research, and in recent years has introduced courses in data science, artificial intelligence, UI/UX design, as well as B.S. programs in big data management & analytics; applied & computational math; biotechnology; and exercise science.

Graduates go on to their first jobs as educated professionals (94% of students are employed or continue their education within six months of graduation). New York Tech has also been among the top U.S. colleges for “Salary Potential of Graduates” in the PayScale College Salary Report for the past four years.

Examples of how a “maker/doer” culture permeates all elements of a New York Tech education and offers students access to new opportunities include:

- Efforts to increase diversity in the STEAM fields, including the launch of the Women’s Technology Council, the annual Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day, and a number of initiatives for K–12 outreach to teachers and students funded by a grant from Voya.
- Student researchers at the undergraduate and graduate levels participating in faculty-led, applications-oriented research on gene mutations, bacteriophages, biomaterials, synthetic biology approaches, Parkinson’s disease, fluid dynamics, cybersecurity, robotics, and more.
- A dedicated internship certificate program (ICP) open to both undergraduate and graduate students, who gain professional skills at partner companies. The ICP, which includes orientation, practice, evaluation, and reflection, recently reported that despite the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic this semester, more than 80 percent of program participants received offers to continue in their placements.

The New York Institute of Technology has responded to the COVID-19 crisis by supporting its students in need and engaging in community outreach, including PPE production/distribution and providing meals to hospitals and health care facilities. In addition, New York Tech experts served as much-needed sources and voices for the media.

For further information, please visit their website, at <https://www.nyit.edu>.

Institutional Resources/Practices

Free COVID-19-related Courses

Coker University (SC) has launched several initiatives to offer learning opportunities related to COVID-19 in ways that are helpful to students and to community members. For example, in an effort to help students get a head start on their college credits as well as learn about the science behind the COVID-19 pandemic and how to stay healthy mentally and physically, Coker opened up three one-credit, online courses to any interested students, including incoming first-year students as well as students from other institutions. All courses were free of charge and asynchronous, and utilized the University’s learning management system (Blackboard) and Google platforms to hold online discussions. One of the courses, *COVID-19: The Science of a Pandemic*, drew the largest online enrollment in Coker’s history (48 students) and focused on five themes (pathogenesis, immune response, transmission, testing, and treatments), based on articles recently published in major science journals. The other two courses, *Personal Wellness during Social Isolation* and *Physical Wellness during Social Isolation*, also filled up quickly.

At the community level and in an effort to help teachers build on their own quick transition to online learning, Coker offered a free digital tools course to 11 local educators, drawn from Coker’s M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instructional Technology. The course, *Exporting and Evaluating Digital Tools for K–12*, introduced the multitude of technology tools, software, and hardware currently used in K–12 classrooms, so that teachers and school districts could make more informed decisions about the use, purpose, benefits, and disadvantages of such tools.

“At Coker, we are always looking for innovative ways to serve our students and our community,” says Dr. Kathryn Flaherty, Vice President of Graduate and Professional Programs at Coker University. “We know many families are facing increased financial and personal stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic and we were excited to offer these free courses, which are of particular benefit given the current situation.” For further information, contact: Katie Flaherty, kflaherty@coker.edu.

YWMC Webinar Series

There's still time to register for the next YWMC Webinar, *The Impact of COVID-19: Perspectives from Students*, taking place on Monday, June 22, at 1pm Eastern. To register, go to the following link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3HMiVpYaQJuoKtAiJuQbkw.

Webinars are free of charge. Recordings and accompanying slides of past webinars are available on the YWMC Website (<https://yeswemustcoalition.org/publications-webinars/#webinars>).

Submissions for Future Issues

YWMC members are encouraged to submit examples of policies, practices and/or resources that you have found to be effective in promoting student success and that you would like to share with your YWMC colleagues. **We are particularly interested in examples of how members are planning to address issues of social and racial justice on their campuses this fall.** Send brief descriptions to Nia Lane Chester, YWMC Program Manager. niachester@gmail.com.