

As a Pioneer of Distance Learning, CSM Continues 20-Year Tradition of Offering Flexible Online Choices this Fall Semester

Posted by [TBN\(Staff\)](#) On 06/29/2020

Class registration for the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) is open for the fall semester, and free virtual workshops designed to help students understand the registration process are underway. With more than 20 years of distance learning experience under its belt, CSM has easily moved its fall 2020 semester class offerings to a virtual environment, breaking classes into three categories designed for flexibility – and able to pivot with safety requirements driven by the status of the COVID-19 virus.

“What many folks may not realize is that Maryland’s community colleges were an early adopter of online education,” explained CSM Vice President of Operations and Planning Dr. Bill Comey. “We rolled out our first online courses in 1999 and offered two online degrees back in 2000.”

In fact, CSM was a founding partner in the [MarylandOnline \(MOL\)](#) organization created in 1999 – which remains a consortium of Maryland’s 16 community colleges, plus a few four-year institutions, dedicated to providing high quality online learning. Comey served on the MOL’s first Board of Directors from 1999 – 2005 and was Chair of the Board from 2001 – 2002.

According to the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), MOL began by collecting online education resources, developing standards and protocols and creating professional development opportunities.

“A key MOL focus was to generate quality course materials that met program standards for all MOL member institutions,” MACC recently reported. “That initiative spawned a curriculum evaluation process known as the Quality Matters process. Quality Matters became so popular nationally, and even internationally, that it is now a stand-alone organization.”

The [Quality Matters](#) rubric is now the international standard for online education excellence with more than 80,000 members worldwide.

“These recent months have been very trying for all of us personally and professionally as we’ve learned to adjust our life patterns to safely navigate the COVID-19 pandemic,” shared Comey. “The hard work of Maryland’s Community Colleges 20 years ago – and CSM’s long history of success in online learning – has allowed us to stay steadfast in our mission to make education accessible in these challenging times; and help our learners complete their goals.”

CSM’s Online Choices

All of CSM’s credit classes during the fall 2020 semester will be taught primarily in a virtual environment. There will be differences, however, in how CSM’s various course offerings will be presented. The classes will be offered via [Real-Time Technology](#), web-based or in a hybrid fashion.

- Web-based courses take place completely in a virtual environment, with no set or required meeting days or times. CSM has offered these classes for years, but now they are listed with a location of “Virtual Campus.” Each term has a start and end date, but these classes do not have regularly scheduled dates and times for students to log in.
- Real-Time Technology (RTT) courses take place in a virtual environment, with scheduled meeting days and times for live lectures and class activities. The campus location may be either a specific physical campus (La Plata, Leonardtown, Prince Frederick or Regional Hughesville) or the new “Virtual Campus.”
- Hybrid courses combine distance learning and in-person instruction. Some on-campus instruction or activity is mandatory for these courses, in order to meet requirements that can’t be fulfilled remotely. Examples of the classes that may require on-campus instruction include courses for Emergency Medical Technicians or involving the trades and construction. Hybrid courses have physical campus locations for the on-campus component; have start and end dates; and have specific meeting days and times.

Learn more at <https://www.csmd.edu/apply-register/>.

Class Registration Workshops

Class Registration Workshops, held via Zoom, are scheduled at 11 a.m. July 9, 16, 21, 23, 30 and there are several dates in August. These workshops will walk students through how to register for classes identified in their Student Planning account. Participants should already have access to their my.CSMD account, as well as completion of placement test alternatives.

Topics covered in each session include:

- Setting up student myMail account

- Learning where to find course materials for day one
- Searching for class section times and dates
- Registering for classes that have been scheduled
- Changing course schedule in the future
- How to find financial aid information through Student Planning
- Setting up a payment plan through Student Planning
- Paying for registered classes
- Purchasing books

Calendar:

Class Registration Workshops. 11 a.m., July 9, 16, 21, 23, 30. Zoom. CSM designed virtual workshops that will walk credit students through how to register for classes identified in their Student Planning account. Participants should already have access to their my.CSMD account, as well as completion of placement test alternatives. RSVPs are required to access Zoom information. Free. [Csmd.edu/workshops](https://csmd.edu/workshops) .

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