Slots Sought For Students From College

Claremont Community College Could Be an Answer for Some

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Tuesday, August 26, 2014

Lebanon — Officials from River Valley Community College met Monday with the president of Lebanon College to discuss how the Claremont school might enroll students from the Lebanon institution, which abruptly canceled classes for the fall semester.

“They spent a couple of hours on the campus, talking about our students and how we can both work to maintain some way of an ease of transfer into the community college system without an interruption of their schedule,” said Lebanon College President Ron Biron.

River Valley President Alicia Harvey-Smith said details are still to be worked out, but she is hopeful that Lebanon College students will be able to enroll in RVCC classes for this fall, which start on Sept. 2.

She noted that the two schools have overlapping programs in a number of fields, including criminal justice, radiology, early childhood education and business programs.

“The bottom line is we are really focusing in on students and how to make this as painless as possible for them. It’s a great institution, and we want to respond to them and respond to students,” Harvey-Smith said.

Among those in the meeting with Biron and Harvey-Smith were Ron Rioux, a former banker who is vice chancellor of the Community College System of New Hampshire, and Susan Henderson, RVCC’s assistant to the president for strategic initiatives.

Lebanon College, which has been struggling with low enrollment and about $2 million in debt, last week said it was canceling classes for its 53 full-time students, including 18 who were to be new students this fall.

Biron said Lebanon College and RVCC officials planned to meet with all of the affected students Thursday at 5:30 p.m. at the Lebanon College campus on the Mall in downtown Lebanon to discuss what might be involved in transferring to the Claremont campus, and how credits would be transferred.
Both college presidents noted that some of River Valley’s classes are offered online, so Lebanon College students who might not be able to travel to Claremont still could enroll in RVCC.

“Our criminal justice program is 100 percent online. A lot of our (general education classes) are also online. For students who are unable to commute the 35 to 40 minutes, we will be able to accommodate them,” Harvey-Smith said.

Whether Lebanon College students dependent on financial aid will be able to qualify for financial assistance in time at River Valley this fall “is a little more tricky,” Harvey-Smith said. “We will be working with the financial aid directors at both locations.”

Biron said he is pleased the discussions are taking place.

“I’m hopeful. Our message from this college to RVCC, and I think they are in agreement, is we want all of our students to be taken care of,” he said.

Lebanon College has mailed refund checks to the more than 20 students who had already made tuition payments for the fall semester, and has refunded application fees from all newly enrolled 2014 students. Biron said many of the other students had not yet given deposits for the fall, especially those heavily dependent on financial aid.

Lebanon College’s website said the clinical rotations planned for year-two radiography students “will continue uninterrupted” and begins this week.

Other Upper Valley schools have also been reaching out to Lebanon College students.

Vermont Technical College last week said it would waive the “transfer by exam” fee for Lebanon College students, easing the financial impact for students hoping to pursue credit hours from VTC.

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