



Concerned About the Fall? Choose Year 1 at Home

By Cynthia E. Spiers, PhD, President of Rhodes State College

The sudden onset of the pandemic took many things from us, from the most precious to the most routine, and among the questions it continues to leave unanswered is, "What happens next?"

As someone who works in higher education, I am especially sympathetic to how that question impacts the recent high school graduates heading off to their first year of college this fall. I recall that time myself as one filled with both the excitement of new independence as well as the nervousness of new responsibilities. Today, however, a more fundamental concern grips seniors and their families: "Will I be able to go at all?"

The large, four-year residential universities are attempting to provide both housing and classroom instruction in ways that comply with public health safety policies. There are no guarantees they will open or whether they will be able to remain open if the pandemic spikes.

Today, more than ever, students should not let anything break the momentum of their educational careers. Rhodes State College is a safe and cost effective higher education option that will keep students' four-year plans on track. For many students, this is an option that may seem very different than what they planned. We know that many students' career plans require a four-year degree. **Year 1 at Home** isn't intended to replace those plans. Quite the opposite, **Year 1 at Home** is designed to keep those plans moving forward by avoiding the uncertainty and possible disruption inherent in a residential campus experience.

Like Ohio's 22 other community colleges, Rhodes State College is encouraging first-year students to consider **Year 1 at Home**. It is simple: students take their first-year, general education courses, delivered by Rhodes State, online from home, at a lower cost. Rhodes State's courses are virtually identical to Ohio's four-year universities, thanks to Ohio's transfer assurance guidelines. Rest assured, Rhodes State's first-year courses transfer seamlessly.

The sudden economic recession has caused widespread unemployment and financial challenges for some families, so it is important for students and parents to consider the cost for the first year at a university compared to Rhodes State College. On average, Rhodes State's tuition is less than half the cost of public or private four-year universities. And, living at home will also save the cost of room and board.

The pandemic reminds us that we cannot control all things in life, and we must be open to adjust our plans. Staying on track will test our resilience, as well as our ability to adapt. This current situation doesn't need to disrupt students' four-year degree and career plans. Choosing **Year 1 at Home** at Rhodes State can help students achieve their educational goals with safety and financial certainty.

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