

Editor's Choice



FILE PHOTO: Federal Reserve Board Governor Lael Brainard speaks at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University in Cambridge



Defense attorney Downing arrives for Manafort sentencing at U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Virginia



Manafort defense attorneys Westling and Zehnle arrive for Manafort sentencing hearing at U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Virginia



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) annual meeting at National Harbor in Oxon Hill



Auschwitz survivor Eva Schloss, stepsister of Holocaust diarist Anne Frank, talks to the media at Newport Harbor High School after speaking with a group of students



A worker assembles an industrial valve at Emerson Electric Co.'s factory in Marshalltown Iowa



FILE PHOTO: Callamard, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial executions poses after a session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva



Rohingya children are seen at a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, March 7, 2019. REUTERS/Mohammad Ponir Hossain TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY

HCC Boasts 3rd Largest In The U.S. For Online Enrollments
HCC Launches New Online College
With 32 Fully Online Degrees

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



HOUSTON (Sept. 25, 2018) – A regular ribbon and scissors just wouldn't do for the new Houston Community College Online College. Instead, attendees held tablets and swiped their fingers across the screen for the ribbon cutting marking the launch of 32 fully online degrees and certificates. By the fall of 2019, the college will have a total of 71 fully online degrees and certificates.

"This is a defining moment in the history of HCC," said Chancellor Cesar Maldonado. "The students who have registered for online courses this fall are the first to have the option of completing a fully online pathway to a certificate or associate degree at HCC."

"HCC has offered remote learning options since the time they were referred to as distance learning, but the addition of a seventh college within the organization entirely dedicated to meeting the needs of online learners takes HCC's commitment to a whole different level," said Margaret Ford Fisher, president of HCC's online college. "We are providing students the option of completing their coursework anywhere, anytime."

With more than 21,000 students taking one or more online classes, HCC is the third largest community college in the U.S. for online enrollments. There are more than 60 areas of study and more than 5,000 individual courses available online.



"It is our goal at HCC to remove roadblocks that might get in the way of obtaining an associate degree or workforce certificate," HCC Board Chair Carolyn Evans-Shabazz said. "The online college does just that for potential students who,

for a variety of reasons, cannot conveniently take traditional classes."

"The online college expands educational opportunities for stay-at-home moms and dads, students committed to caring for elderly loved ones at home and those already in the workforce who need additional education to move up in their careers or change their careers altogether," said Norma Perez, HCC vice chancellor, instructional services, and chief academic officer.

According to a study by the Boston Consulting Group, HCC retention rates for first-time freshmen students were 9 to 10 percentage

points higher when they took at least one fully online or mixed modality course. BCG also reported that HCC students who take a combination of digital and face-to-face courses complete their degrees at a higher rate than those who take all of their classes face to face.

HCC's Online College provides counselors, advisors and tutors for its online students. All HCC online classes are taught by credentialed faculty.

More information is available at hccs.edu/online.



Related

Level One Certificate Programs Can Be Completed In Just One Full-Time Semester

HCC's "Take One & Done Launches Students Into Workforce



HOUSTON (July 30, 2018) – Houston Community College is pioneering a program to ensure students earn a level one certificate, receive resume writing assistance and get help with job interviews in just one semester. The "Take One & Done" program is being offered at HCC's Southeast College Eastside Campus.

"Students come full time and we will provide financial aid, child care from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. if necessary, and they will get a level one certificate in one of seven programs," says Melissa Gonzalez, president of Southeast College. "We looked specifically at these programs, where there are jobs and there is a demand for workers."

"Take One and Done" includes level one certificates in the following programs:

1. Welding Technology-Basic Welding Helper



2. Construction Management Technology



3. Industrial Electricity Electrical Helper



4. Business Management-Insurance Specialist/Associate



5. Logistics & Supply Chain Management - Maritime Logistics & Specialist



6. Real Estate - Residential



7. HVAC



While taking courses at the Eastside Campus, HCC will help students prepare for job searches. "They will be getting a professional resume done through our career center and we are going to provide interviews for every single student," Gonzalez says. "We are working with our industry partners to make sure they are available to interview on site before the students are finished for the semester."

Gonzalez emphasizes that students also have the option to pursue an associate degree and prepare for a transfer to a four-year university. "We actually have an advisor on site from the University of Houston Downtown for our business program, but also for general UHD programs," Gonzalez says. "Texas Southern and the University of Houston also have a presence on our campus."

- Fall 2018 Registration Begins May 7
- 16-Week Classes begin Aug. 27
- Morning and Evening Classes
- No Testing Required for Program Entry
- Payment Plans Available
- Financial Aid and Childcare (For those who qualify)

Registration for classes is going on right now. For additional information on "Take One & Done," go here: <http://www.hccs.edu/campaigns/take-one>. **A video about the program is available:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33b-KFwI-tbk&feature=youtu.be>

About HCC
Houston Community College (HCC) is composed of 15 Centers of Excellence and numerous satellite centers that serve the diverse communities in the Greater Houston area by preparing individuals to live and work in an increasingly international and technological society. HCC is one of the country's largest singly-accredited, open-admission, community colleges offering associate degrees, certificates, workforce training, and lifelong learning opportunities. To learn more, visit www.hccs.edu.

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More J.C. Penney Store Closures Expected In 2020 And Beyond



J.C. Penney says it will close just 18 department stores, in addition to nine home and furniture shops, in 2019. Analysts say there could be more on the horizon. Penney Treasurer Trent Kruse says: "I think that's a fair read."

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

J.C. Penney says it will close 18 department stores and nine home and furniture shops in 2019.

That's a far cry from the predictions some analysts were making, which called for more than 100 additional stores to go dark this year.

The retailer is still operating more than 800 locations across the country, and that's likely too many, as fewer shoppers head to antiquated malls to shop. And the department store sector as a whole is increasingly under pressure, with the brands found within those stores selling more directly to consumers as additional sales move online to behemoths like Amazon and Walmart. J.C. Penney's management team on Thursday said additional store closures are a possibility in 2020 and beyond.



"I think as we go forward — as we mentioned, we're closing 18 [department stores] this year," Treasurer Trent Kruse told analysts. "I think it's safe to assume that as you roll into 2020 and future years, it's likely to see some continuation of that effort. [It's] hard to say now, but I think that's a fair read."

The department stores set for closure during the fiscal second quarter of this year are in "tough locations" and are "less productive" when compared against the rest of Penney's fleet, Kruse said. The company is anticipating recording a pre-tax charge of about \$15 million associated with these closures. It declined to provide a list of locations. A spokesperson said the closing stores employ more than 1,000 people, many on a part-time basis. Penney has been in the process of trimming its real estate for years now. It closed 138 stores in 2017. It closed eight stores last year.

Department store chains altogether — including Penney, Sears, Macy's, Dillard's and Belk — account for more than 350 million square feet of mall space across

the U.S., according to a report late last year from real estate advisory firm Green Street Advisors. Those department stores could fill up 350 average-sized malls — by themselves — Green Street said. Their reach is massive.



A 1925 newspaper ad for J.C. Penney. Penney's footprint — with more than 800 stores — in particular is massive compared with its peers. That's part of the reason why more store closures by the retailer seem inevitable. Nordstrom has less than 150 full-line department stores today. Local chains like Dillard's and Belk have fewer than 300 locations, each. Sears, since emerging from bankruptcy, continues to shrink.

Macy's has about 680 department stores, including those labeled as Bloomingdale's. Penney on Thursday said net sales fell 9.5 percent during the fiscal fourth quarter and 7.1 percent in fiscal 2018. Sales have fallen for three consecutive years, now. With its new CEO, Jill Soltau, Penney hopes the steps it's been taking so far — like getting out of the appliance business and investing more in apparel — will turn things around. "I am very pleased with the level of support from our current vendors as well as potential new partners we are meeting with, who are excited to do business with us and are proposing new ideas brands and initiatives to J.C. Penney for consideration," Soltau, who took over as CEO in October, said. "Based on everything I have seen and heard I'm even more convinced that we can establish a path to sustainable profitable growth."



J.C. Penney store closing signs starting to appear nationwide.

Penney shares surged nearly 30 percent Thursday, on the heels of its earnings report. The stock was last trading around \$1.60, bringing the company's market cap to about \$501 million. Shares have still fallen 70 percent over the past 12 months. (Courtesy <https://www.cnbc.com>)

Related
J.C. Penney to close 24 more stores: Sales fall as department stores struggle
J.C. Penney plans to close 15 additional full-line stores and nine home-and-furniture locations as the retailer struggles to get its footing amid significant challenges for department stores.

The chain announced Thursday that it would close the stores because they are not performing well or "represent a real estate monetization opportunity."

The company declined to release a list of stores set to close.

J.C. Penney had been reviewing its locations for potential closures as it seeks to cut costs amid a downturn in sales. The retailer had 864 department stores as of Nov. 3, according to a public filing.

The latest move comes after the company had already announced three full-line store closures in January, bringing the total closures for 2019 to 27.

"Comparable sales performance for the closing stores was significantly below the remaining store base and these stores operate at a much higher expense rate given the lack of productivity," J.C. Penney said in a statement.

"Associates who will be impacted by the store closures will receive separation benefits, which includes assistance identifying other employment opportunities and outplacement services, such as resume writing and interview preparation."

Sales of products that are purchased online and picked up in the store are key to the future of retailers like J.C. Penney. (Photo/J.C. Penney)

The chain has largely scrapped sales of appliances and furniture to focus on clothing and home goods, which it sees as having more potential and more aligned with its core customers.

J.C. Penney has also been more disciplined in clearing its shelves and floors of merchandise that isn't selling to focus on items that have more appeal.

"We have incredible products in our stores," J.C. Penney's recently appointed CEO, Jill Soltau, who is pursuing a turnaround, said in an earnings call with investors. "It's also critically important to the customer experience."



Sales at J.C. Penney stores open at least a year fell 4 percent in the fiscal fourth quarter, which includes the critical holiday shopping season.

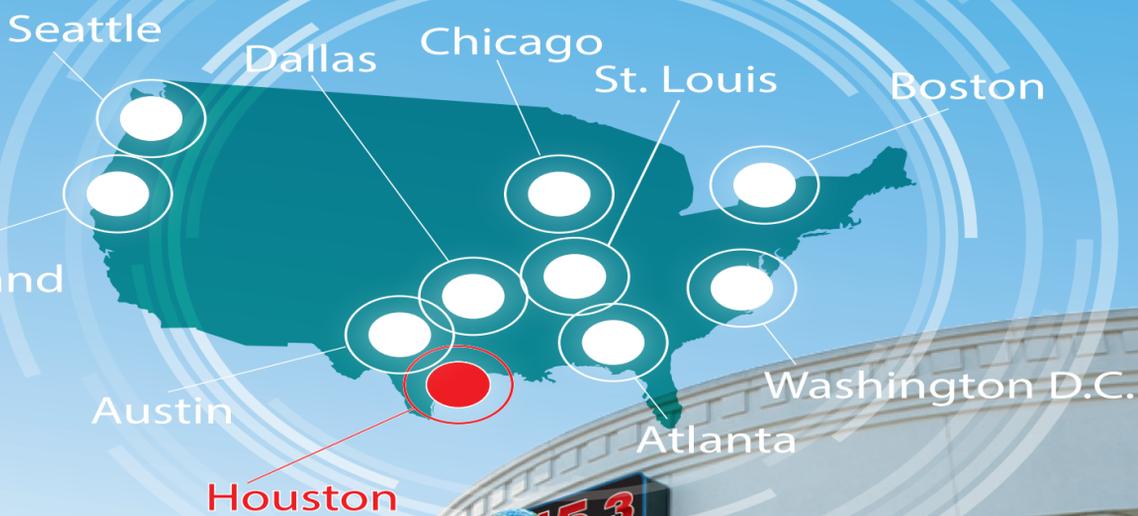
Department stores are struggling to adjust to digital competition and more innovative physical retailers.

J.C. Penney's rival, Sears, barely survived Chapter 11 bankruptcy when it was sold this month to its longtime chairman and largest shareholder. But Sears has closed hundreds of locations in recent years as its sales cratered. (Courtesy usatoday.com)



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