

COVID-19 Update

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 1 attachments (8 MB)

2020-21 NOCCCD COVID Manual Final.pdf;

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you had a restful holiday weekend and were able to spend some time – virtually or otherwise – with family and friends. As we prepare to finish the Fall semester and get ready for the Spring term, I wanted to share some updates about the pandemic.

COVID-19 Guidelines and Protocols Manual

Over the past two months, many have worked diligently to prepare the latest update to the *COVID-19 Guidelines and Protocols Manual* (attached). I want to thank the campus planning groups, senate and union leadership, and Chancellor's Staff for all of the input and discussions on how to keep our work sites as safe as possible for employees and students. Please note that this version of the Manual contains Districtwide protocols and campus-specific procedures for keeping our workplace safe and for reporting positive cases when they occur. It is important for you to review the steps we can each take to protect ourselves and others. As you know, despite all efforts, the virus continues to spread and California is experiencing a second wave of infections.

COVID-19 Cases at NOCCCD

In September, we had no positive cases but since then the count has increased dramatically. Six employees and 24 students have reported positive tests. Fortunately, the majority were not on campus during the infectious period. Due to the need for contact tracing, a tremendous number of hours have been spent gathering information and completing the County's mandatory questionnaire to determine if others were exposed to the virus. One improvement we have made to our process is the implementation of an online questionnaire located on MyGateway that is automatically forwarded to the campus Presidents and District Services. While this does not eliminate the need for careful and thorough contact tracing, it does reduce the paperwork and ensures that timely and essential communication occurs for reporting and tracking purposes without multiple emails being sent. New State law requires that we report within 24 hours, so it is critical that each one of us follow the procedures for reporting any and all suspected cases.

Face-to-Face Classes, Programs, and Services in Spring and Summer Terms

We have all seen the devastating effects of trying to teach and learn in a virtual environment. Since last year, our enrollment has dropped by nearly 8% for credit courses and over 18% for noncredit and I am sure much of the decrease is a result of the challenges of trying to participate in virtual education. Whether it's providing instruction and services online or students having limited access to technology and quiet spaces, we have all struggled with the lack of connection and engagement – with one another and with our students. Most of us would prefer to be physically present on our campuses. Unfortunately, we must continue to do the majority of our work virtually while this second wave of the virus runs its course. Therefore, classes and services for students will remain primarily online during the Spring term. For the Summer term, we will plan to continue online instruction and services with the caveat that if the number of cases in Orange County decrease, we may gradually increase the number of face-to-face classes and services. As part of our planning, decision criteria for returning to face-to-face instruction will be developed with broad input from the campuses. Our discussions and plans for Summer are on-going and we will adjust as needed based on State and County directives.

Across the State and within our District, thoughtful deliberations about athletics are also ongoing. The decisions about which sports can safely resume will be made in the next two weeks.

State Directives

As you are likely aware, Governor Newsom issued a Stay-at-Home order and curfew for counties in the Purple Tier. The order is expected to continue through December 21. You can review the information at:

<https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/11/19/state-issues-limited-stay-at-home-order-to-slow-spread-of-covid-19/>

In addition, the California Department of Public Health has issued a travel advisory requiring 14 days of self-quarantine after travel: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Travel-Advisory.aspx>.

Please see the November 25 memo from Human Resources for District-specific information related to this advisory.

You can find regularly updated information on the District and Campus websites: <http://www.nocccd.edu/covid19>.

Thank you for your perseverance and resiliency as we navigate this health crisis. I hope you continue to stay well.

Cheryl

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