



San Diego Community College District
Office of the Chancellor

April 23, 2020

CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19: UPDATE #7

To: SDCCD Colleagues and Friends

From: Constance M. Carroll, Chancellor

I hope this message finds you all well in our “new normal” of remote instruction, services, and operations. You are a phenomenal group of people who continue to exceed all expectations for dedication and creativity in your support of our students and necessary functions. Thank you again for all that you are doing! This certainly rivals Mr. Toad’s wild ride in *The Wind in the Willows*, and there is no clear end in sight. However, we are all doing our very best under the circumstances.

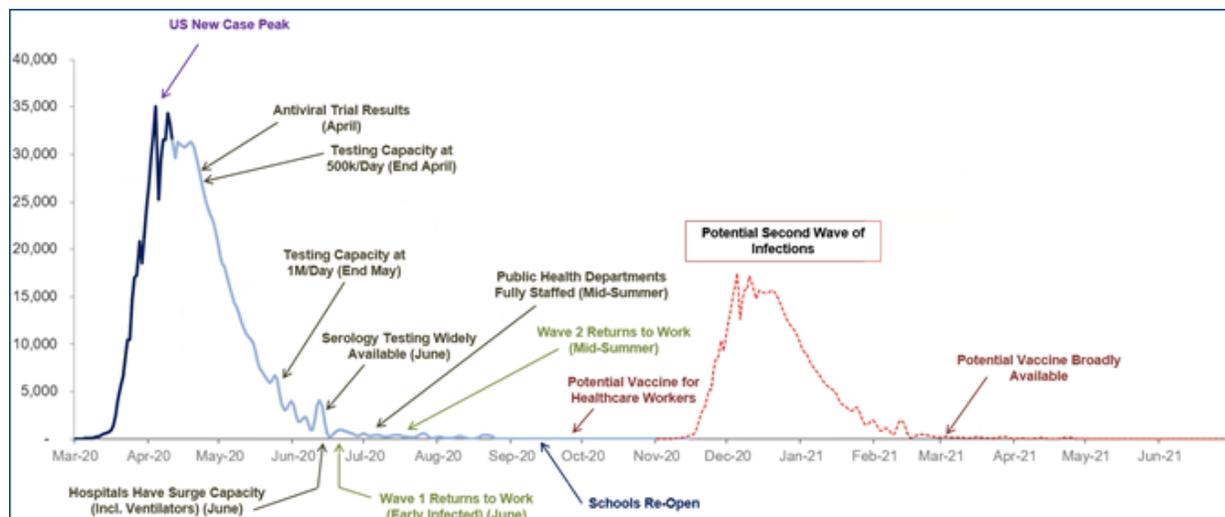
It is important for us to remember that we are operating in an unprecedented crisis, a true emergency with life-and-death implications. Everything we are doing is based on that understanding and on the imperative of keeping people healthy by not exposing them to life-threatening conditions. Today, in San Diego County, there are approximately 2,500 confirmed cases of the COVID-19 virus and almost 100 people have died. The strategies of sheltering-at-home and avoiding in-person gatherings have contributed to keeping these figures from spiking into higher numbers. However unpopular or inconvenient it may be, all of us are doing our part in that regard.

Although not without problems, the conversion of classes to online and distance education modalities and the adoption of a remote operations format have presented opportunities for learning new ways of doing work. I hope you will join me in viewing this as an opportunity to develop new skills, both in instruction and in other work responsibilities, that will expand our range of abilities in the future. We have come this far in an exemplary manner, and I can only view this experience as ultimately strengthening our districtwide capabilities in the future. My message today is intended to bring you up-to-date regarding our current plans and actions relative to this novel coronavirus.

PROBABLE DURATION OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS AND REQUIRED ADJUSTMENTS

We cannot predict when this crisis will end, although there are currently sporadic efforts to “reopen” areas of the country. Even in San Diego, our Mayor has announced plans to open neighborhood parks and beaches for “passive,” non-group activities. At the same time, the cities of National City and Chula Vista have initiated requirements for all people to wear masks in public. Our best prognosis is that the COVID-19 crisis will continue into the summer, perhaps diminishing in the early fall, and then peaking again in November or December. Morgan Stanley published a chart outlining the probable life of COVID-19. The complete article is available at this link:

<https://www.morganstanley.com/ideas/coronavirus-peak-recovery-timeline>



Although scientists are hard at work in pursuit of a vaccine, that, too, may be a year away. In the meantime, we are making decisions using the best data we can obtain. Our guiding principle is to exercise caution rather than to take risks.

MODIFYING LABORATORY/TECHNICAL CLASS FORMATS

As noted in other correspondence, the greatest challenge we initially faced with the COVID-19 onslaught was the quick conversion of our classes to online and distance education modalities. The conversion itself was difficult in the timeframe available but our faculty members surmounted the challenge. However, there are still problems in addressing classes that have laboratories, hands-on aspects, or clinical requirements. We have been working with state agencies in search of flexibility and there have been some changes, especially by the Board of Registered Nursing. However, many of our classes in the sciences, career-technical fields, and allied health will no doubt need to extend instruction some weeks into the summer. We are working with the AFT Guild on the impact of extending the instructional time limits. We are also working with the State Chancellor's Office in importing the "Labster" platform, which provides interactive laboratory simulations. Some faculty members are also being accommodated in order to visit their campus offices and laboratories for the purpose of developing simulations and videos. Addressing these issues is very much a work in progress.

SUMMER SESSION

The summer schedules of City, Mesa, and Miramar colleges, and Continuing Education have been planned with all classes online, in configurations that include fully online and partially online (hybrid) sections. Many faculty members are employing creative solutions for career-technical education classes. For example, the culinary and upholstery programs at Continuing Education are using "kits" that students can use to meet the learning outcomes of the classes that require hands-on demonstrations. At Miramar College, the public safety academies are continuing off-site. The hard-to-convert classes, primarily career education and some laboratory sciences that had additional sessions to complete at the end of the spring semester, may be allowed limited access to the campuses, practicing social-distancing protocols. However, this will occur only if it is safe to do so.

FALL SEMESTER

The fall semester is being planned for both on-campus and online options. As we get close to the start of the fall semester, we will make a final determination about which mode of instruction will be

pursued, depending upon the status of COVID-19 at the time. City, Mesa, and Miramar colleges, and Continuing Education are planning both a normal on-campus schedule and a distance education schedule in the not unlikely event that this approach is necessary due to the uncertainty with COVID-19. As stated earlier, the institutions are currently reviewing opportunities and resources that can be used for the hard-to-convert classes. The institutions are also planning for a tiered approach in the schedule formats. Some strategies may include scheduling classes in shorter segments of the term (e.g., 12-weeks) or in hybrid classes during which there would be fewer meetings on campus, as well as offering completely online classes via Canvas. At Miramar College, the public safety academies will continue to be offered off-site. Career-technical education and some laboratory science classes, career-technical classes, and allied health classes may be allowed to access the campuses. However, any on-campus activity will occur only with the guidance of public health officials.

CARES ACT “CLARIFICATIONS” FROM US DOE

As I noted in my previous update, we are closely monitoring federal relief funding from the U. S. Department of Education (DOE): the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which was passed by Congress on March 25 and 27 (S. 3548 and H.R. 748), and signed by the President. The bill addresses all aspects of necessary relief and establishes a Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), which includes \$13.9 billion in “flexible funding” to help institutions defray expenses and impacts such as “lost revenue, technology costs associated with a transition to distance education, and grants to students for food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child care.” The funding levels for colleges and universities are indexed to Pell Grant levels. The CARES Act further specifies that these funds must be used (50%) for direct emergency aid to students, “including grants to students for food, housing, course materials, technology, healthcare, and child care.”

Based upon Pell Grant rates, our three Colleges and District will receive a total of \$13.6 million in CARES Act funding. Since the funding will go directly to City, Mesa, and Miramar, the Colleges will carry out the funding goals we have agreed to, including noncredit students. However, we are greatly disappointed by the clarifications we have recently received regarding how the funds may be used. First, the process itself is very complex, which is always difficult to manage when one is in an emergency – and for our students, this is definitely an emergency. In order to access the funds, higher education institutions must submit a “Certification and Agreement for Recipient Institutional Costs.” Institutions must also have executed the “Certification and Agreement for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students” before submitting the second certification agreement.

Second, and most troubling, is the clarification that the funds can only be used for “Title IV-eligible” students, defined as legal residents who have a high school diploma or GED and who are registered in authorized programs. The CARES Act HEERF specifically excludes undocumented, DACA, and international students from this funding. This clarification would in effect also exclude some categories of noncredit students. Clearly, our values as a community college organization are inclusive and it is our goal to help all students, especially those who are the most vulnerable. While working with coalitions to try to seek a change in these requirements, we will also turn to other sources of funds to assist the students who have been excluded by the federal government.

EARLY SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS FOR STUDENTS

Because our students’ financial needs are both immediate and great, City, Mesa, and Miramar colleges, and Continuing Education have all distributed their scholarship funds early, which was easy to do because there are no scholarship awards events this year due to the social-distancing requirements. President Ricky Shabazz reports that City College has already distributed \$283,090 to 210 students and is providing emergency funds as well. President Pam Luster indicates that Mesa College has awarded \$163,000 to 181 students in addition to using its COVID-19 emergency funding to benefit an additional 240 students. Interim President Marsha Gable says that Miramar

College has raised and distributed \$12,000 to 50 students and has established an emergency relief fund that will benefit more. Continuing Education, according to President Carlos Turner Cortez, has distributed \$40,000 to 125 students and another \$224,000 to 800 students, under the CE Foundation's "Barrier Grants" program. Many thanks to everyone who has made donations to the four institutional foundations, which have made it possible for them to provide support for our students.

LAPTOPS FOR STUDENTS: FIGHTING THE "DIGITAL DIVIDE"

Finally, there is the matter of the "digital divide," which separates people on the basis of their ability to use and access information/electronic technology. Not all students have the resources they need to access online education, which is now the only way for them to continue in their classes. Therefore, the four institutions of our District have been providing hundreds of laptop computers for these students as well as internet connectivity. In addition, the San Diego Foundation announced today that it is funding a proposal I made on behalf of all of the community colleges in San Diego County, for laptop computers and internet connectivity, since all community colleges in the county have moved their classes to an online format. The grant of \$500,000 will be distributed proportionately, with the San Diego Community College District receiving \$200,000, which will also be distributed proportionately: City College - \$49,000; Mesa College - \$75,000; Miramar College - \$41,000; and Continuing Education - \$35,000. The effort to provide computer equipment for students will be ongoing, especially since the COVID-19 impact will continue and literally thousands more laptops are needed.

EMPLOYEE NEEDS

We have also been receiving requests regarding employee needs as the result of working from home. Earlier, we addressed the issue of ergonomic furniture and the fact that employees could use some of their office furniture at home. We are also receiving questions about the need to reimburse employees for work-related expenditures, such as toner for printers, supplies, software support, etc. If you have any needs along these lines, please contact your supervisor. The District wants to be sure that our employees' work accommodations at home are as efficient and comfortable as possible.

Let me close by extending, once again, the heartfelt gratitude of the Board of Trustees for all you are doing. That gratitude extends to our community supporters for their many suggestions and for their patience with all of the changes we have had to make in our practices. Because of everyone's commitment to students, shared values, and hard work, the San Diego Community College District continues to operate as an effective and deeply caring team.

Stay well!



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