

March 15, 2020

Email Subject: Senate Exec on COVID-19 and Courses at Mesa

Colleagues,

As I'm sure you're all aware, the growing national concern around the COVID-19 epidemic has caused many state, county, and local entities to make difficult decisions regarding the operations of many public venues and events. In fact, here in San Diego, we've already seen the closure of several universities and public school districts, as well as the cancellation of many public events such as the Latino Film Festival. In response to this growing concern and after the SDCCD Board of Trustees voted in favor of a resolution which declared a "state of emergency" in the district, Chancellor Carroll has issued a new district-wide strategy (You should've received an e-mail from the Chancellor on Friday, March 13th outlining the strategy).

The purpose of this e-mail is to clarify several of the main points in the Chancellor's strategy and how they'll impact our courses especially within the next two weeks. We'd also like to offer some suggestions on behalf of the Senate Exec:

All Classes, no matter the format, are suspended between March 16th and March 21st: What this means is that students have a break and shouldn't be expected to turn in assignments, do Zoom meetings, group chats, etc. If you haven't done so already, we highly recommend that you email your students ASAP, so they are not left in the dark, and let them know that since classes are on hold next week, that you will contact them the week of March 23rd with your plans and assignments for them. Under NO circumstances should you be meeting your students face to face—either next week or beyond. The point of social distancing is precisely that: we're all limiting exposure to each other to minimize the possibility of the spread of the COVID-19 virus. We understand that this is difficult, but the whole reason school is shutting down is to keep people apart.

Work is NOT canceled next week for classroom and non-classroom faculty and staff. What this means is that if you feel comfortable, come to campus to work on transitioning your courses to alternative, remote formats, do professional development trainings to help you do this transition if need be, use the resources on campus to aid in switching your classes over, etc. Again, this does NOT mean you can schedule face to face time with your students. At school, we'll still be maintaining distances between people and minimizing contact. This is an opportunity to get our courses squared away before we have to work away from school for how ever long we'll need to. **Keep in mind that you are not required to come to campus. If you feel that you have the resources and knowledge to prepare your courses from home, please feel free to do so.** The LRC and Katie Palacios have done an excellent job of compiling lists of resources that we can use to help prepare our courses and have shared them with us via e-mail (I've attached PDF versions of those messages to this e-mail for your convenience). We certainly encourage you to take advantage of these.

Classes will resume in alternative, remote formats beginning on Monday, March 23rd: Unfortunately, given the serious concerns for our students' health, the Chancellor has also determined that all classes will be taught in remote format beginning March 23rd and last at least until Spring Break. It's important to emphasize that you, as the instructor of the course, can determine what remote format works best for you and your students. It's also important to point out that the Chancellor's office continues to explore how to address courses and labs that may not work within an "online" format. We encourage you to send any concerns to the Senate Exec and Senate President Manuel Velez, and we'll make sure to share them with the Chancellor.

Be prepared for more than two weeks of Remote Teaching: While we know definitively that all courses will be offered through remote formats until the end of Spring Break, it's important to note that the Chancellor has also stated that "there is no knowledge of when or if on-campus instruction will resume during the spring semester." For this reason we urge you develop a plan for remote teaching that goes to the end of the semester. It's entirely possible that such a plan may not be necessary, however given the rapid fluidity of this situation it would be a good idea to have a plan ready "just in case". It's also important to keep in mind that you and your students may decide to remain in a remote format even if/after the Chancellor's office decides that face-to-face courses can resume, especially if you don't want to disrupt the flow of your class.

Thank you so much for all you've done and continue to do for our students: We recognize that these changes have occurred suddenly and certainly have caused a great deal of disruption as well as more work on your part and the Senate Exec truly appreciates your efforts. It's through your willingness to adapt to these changes and to put in the extra work that has made this entire process so much smoother than it could have been, given all of the circumstances, and it's a reflection of your dedication to our students' well being and health. We encourage you to let us know about any concerns or issues that arise and we will make sure to share them where ever relevant. Finally, above all, we urge you to use this time to also take care of yourselves and your loved ones. In the end we are all a part of communities and have people who depend upon and provide us with support and love. Now is the time to place them at the fore front of our thoughts.

Thank you

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