



Special Message March 23, 2020

Colleagues,

We have jumped into what can only be described as a, “grand experiment” created by the necessity as human beings to keep one another alive. We will only know in the next few months what will actually happen, but in the meantime, experiment we must. I’m writing to you today to let you know that we are working very hard behind the scenes to solve real time challenges, and to support you.

As you all know, the campus is closed. Only essential personnel are there to watch over our beautiful college and its physical (and plant and animal) assets. As you know our true assets, our students and all of us, are now faced with carrying out what we do in a very different way. Many efforts are underway to support this new reality. We have deployed numerous workshops to facilitate content shifts to remote learning, we have shifted student services to remote access, and tutors have been in workshops to learn how to support students in this new environment. We have classified professionals setting up their home stations so that they can continue their important work remotely. We are working with licensing agencies to assess the impact on our allied health students, and of course our higher education partners to assure that we will be able to transfer our students successfully when we teach remotely. We are working directly with students to assess their needs. We know that we cannot reach everyone, but we are working right now on ways that faculty and classified professionals can connect students who need support to those supports. Our Mesa College Foundation and Associated Students have stepped up by providing resources for students, whether that be technology, or other emergency funds...we are trying to support students in every way we can.

Tomorrow, I will embark with all of you who are parents/grandparents on working at home with the littles. Our 5 and 7 year olds will be here and I imagine it will be somewhat chaotic. I have already volunteered to cover spelling, reading, and PE. I’m grateful that I can share the load, as I know that we have lots of parents and single parents that are doing it all. If you are a caregiver for a spouse or other loved one, we know that the weight of worry is real.

As we navigate this together, I am hopeful that we will find new ways to connect with each other. I have seen virtual happy hours...reading books to children...science experiments...group yoga and so much more that you are all sharing on social media. As you discover what works for you, share it with us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or your choice of platforms...or just call each other. Check in, support, and laugh about the absurdity of toilet paper hoarding and now the giant pasta shortage. This is a very serious time, but we do not have to be somber about it 24/7.

Know that your executive administrative team is meeting every morning via Zoom and that the Chancellors Cabinet is meeting regularly. Deans, chairs and - of course - departments are connecting as well. Additionally, the CEO's of all of the San Diego and Imperial Valley Colleges (SDICCCA) are meeting every other day. We are learning from each other and I am grateful for their support and collaboration. Chancellor Oakley at the CCCCCO is communicating with us regularly and providing critical operational support. There are a million details that we are working through...grading, transfer, basic needs, supports, facilities, technology, access and so much more. We will be working in real time to solve these issues, and I look forward to communicating with you as we do.

Finally, the most important aspect for me is to promote hope. Our students need for us to be encouraging, helpful and compassionate. I know that you are...I'm hearing from many students that they are already feeling isolated. A message of hope goes a long way, including putting it out there that we are not perfect. All of us are in this together, and I could not be more thankful to be doing it with all of you.

#WeAreMesa.....

Love and light to all of you...our Mesa grand experimenters...

#WeGotThis

PrezPam