

To: President's Cabinet
From: Denise M. Trauth
Subject: President's Cabinet Meeting
December 15, 2021

Impact of COVID-19 (#770)

Dr. Carranco compared data from the week of December 12, 2021, to data from the week of December 5, 2021.

Week-to-week comparisons revealed:

- In Texas, the average daily case counts increased from 2,049 to 3,071 cases per day, and the average daily positivity rate increased from 9.1 to 9.5 percent.
- In Williamson county, the average daily case counts increased from 59 to 65, and the average daily positivity rate decreased from 4.8 to 4.4 percent.
- In Travis county, the average daily case counts increased from 123 to 136 cases per day, and the average daily positivity rate decreased from 5.5 to 4.9 percent.
- In Hays county, the average daily case counts decreased from 29 to 24 cases per day, and the average daily positivity rate increased from 4.9 to 6.0 percent.
- At Texas State, the average daily positivity rate increased from 2.4 percent (21 positives out of 883 tests) to 2.6 percent (18 positives out of 694 tests).
- In Texas, hospitalizations increased from 2,939 to 3,117.

COVID-19 transmission levels, as defined by the CDC, in Texas and Williamson county were high, and in Hays and Travis counties were substantial.

Omicron is very contagious and spreads rapidly. It appears to produce primarily mild illness, though more data is needed to determine how it will impact different age groups.

COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness is diminished against Omicron. Initial data, however, suggests that a third dose of Pfizer or Moderna (i.e., a booster) provides strong protection against Omicron.

It is likely that Texas State will be in a COVID-19 surge when classes resume in January 2022. Throughout the break, Dr. Carranco will monitor COVID-19 transmission and infection data, especially related to the Omicron variant.

Vaccination, mask-wearing, and testing will be Texas State's primary prevention strategies. All faculty, staff, and students will be asked to test before returning to Texas State campuses.

A formal update regarding course delivery, university operations, and health and safety measures will be shared with the university community during the week of January 3, 2022.

COVID-19 fully vaccinated rates of those who are five years of age and older are:

- 60.4 percent of the Texas population,
- 62.5 percent of Hays county,
- 68.1 percent of Williamson county,
- 79.6 percent of Travis county, and
- 64.7 percent of the U. S. population.

Requests for emergency use authorization of a COVID-19 oral treatment (pill) have been submitted by both Merck and Pfizer.

Dr. Angela Ausbrooks, Chair, Faculty and Staff Morale Work Group, discussed with Cabinet members, the responses to the results obtained from the second COVID-19 survey disseminated on October 8, 2021, designed to assess faculty and staff morale. The Faculty and Staff Morale Work Group conducted a qualitative analysis of the responses received from 443 faculty and staff. An article on organizational practices supporting mental health in the workplace was also discussed. Guest Dr. Debbie Thorne, Associate Provost, discussed the results of the third COVID-19 survey distributed on November 12, 2021, designed to assess university operations, including course delivery and student activities. There were 407 faculty, staff, and students who responded. Based on results from both surveys, recommendations were discussed and will be considered for implementation in spring 2022.

RTA 2/7/22: Discuss initiatives to reengage faculty and students in face-to-face instruction based on retention data.

Campus Master Planning for the STEM Building

Mr. Algoe discussed funding and locations for the STEM building on the San Marcos Campus and Esperanza Hall on the Round Rock Campus. Preliminary program documents had both buildings larger. The program documents are being modified to accommodate funding approved by the 87th Texas Legislature. It is unclear when funding will be available for the projects to commence.

Dr. Breier asked Mr. Algoe to develop architectural renderings for the music building to support fundraising efforts.

Mr. Algoe provided an update on the J. C. Kellam building renovations including the front entrance and 11th floor.

Review and Recommendations Task Force

Dr. Silva, chair, and guest Dr. Mary Brennan, co-chair, concluded a process that began with the appointment of the Scholars Task Force in February 2021, and followed by the appointment of the Review and Recommendations Task Force in September 2021.

In February 2021, President Trauth convened the Scholars Task Force, comprised of scholars in history, sociology, political science, and library studies, to undertake a scholarly analysis of the historical facts about and contexts of the lives and careers of Sallie Ward Beretta and John Garland Flowers. They produced a report titled *Historical Background and Context: Sallie Ward Beretta and John Garland Flowers*.

In September 2021, President Trauth charged the Review and Recommendations Task Force, comprised of students, alumni, faculty, and staff, to review the report and make recommendations based on its contents.

Dr. Silva presented their recommendations and rationale for their recommendations. The Task Force recommended to remove Beretta from the building named after Sallie Ward Beretta based, in part, on her documented:

- efforts to promote and preserve the Lost Cause Myth and glorify the memory of the Confederacy; and
- viewpoints, which are antithetical to Texas State University's current values, and its role as a Minority Serving Institution and Hispanic Serving Institution.

The Task Force recommended to retain the name Flowers on the building named after John Garland Flowers based, in part, on the fact that:

- Support of continued segregation was imposed by the Board of Regents and Texas Attorney General and seemingly beyond Flowers's control.
- Flowers attempted to work within parameters of the law as well as assist students as he could.
- Other Texas universities were subject to the same impositions from Board of Regents and Texas Attorney General.

Beretta will be removed from the academic building bearing her name after the end of the semester. Likewise, Beretta will be removed from the Beretta Lodge at University Camp. In the meantime, a communication plan will be developed to inform the university community of the inclusive process, grounded in scholarship that was followed in making these decisions.

Communications After Action Report to Cabinet: Winter Storm Uri

Guest Ms. Sandy Pantlik, Assistant Vice President for University Advancement, discussed with Cabinet members the next steps to capturing emergency contact information for students, faculty, and staff. Currently, 87 percent of students cell phone numbers are captured in Banner. Rave offers recipients a feature for recipients to unsubscribe ("opt out") their cell phones and emails. Information Technology will modify the feed from Banner to Rave to include cell numbers. Since 2018, 14 messages have been sent from Rave. Thus, the number of messages a recipient will receive each year will likely be low.

At the beginning of each semester, a university-wide email will be sent out to acquaint recipients with Rave and request that information (such as, cell phone) be updated, if necessary.

President's Update (#556)

No items discussed.

Significant Issues (#01)

Provost Bourgeois announced:

- For fiscal year 2021, restricted research expenditures (RRE) were \$34 million (third highest RRE recorded at Texas State) and total research and development (TRD) expenditures were \$72.5 million (highest TRD recorded).
- For the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2021, RRE were \$13.2 million (highest recorded RRE for a fourth quarter) and TRD expenditures were \$26.7 million.
- For the first quarter of fiscal year 2022, RRE were \$7,863,142 (34.4 percent higher than the first quarter of fiscal year 2021, and highest recorded RRE for a first quarter), and TRD expenditures were \$16,343,484 (15.8 percent higher than the first quarter of fiscal year 2021, and highest recorded TRD for a first quarter).

Provost Bourgeois and Dr. Lloyd discussed the upcoming Cabinet Retreat and shared sample templates for Cabinet members to finalize their one to two-page long briefing documents for the next University President.

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Posted to web at <http://cabinet.president.txstate.edu/> on January 28, 2022.