

To: President's Cabinet
From: Denise M. Trauth
Subject: President's Cabinet Meeting
November 9, 2020

Impact of COVID-19 (#770)

Guest Dr. Emilio Carranco provided an update on the COVID-19 pandemic. The United States is in the early stages of a new surge. In Texas, week-to-week comparisons (week of October 26, 2020, versus week of November 2, 2020) revealed an increase in cases per day from about 5,600 to 6,800 cases and in the positivity rate from 9.8 to 11.3 percent. Likewise, in Williamson County, new cases increased from 36 to 37 cases per day, and the positivity rate increased from three to 3.5 percent. In Hays County, public data revealed that new cases increased from 22 to 28 cases per day, while the positivity rate decreased from 17.2 to 14.25 percent.

As of November 6, 2020, there are 73 active cases at Texas State. The number of students housed in isolation is 25 and in quarantine is 15.

During the week of November 2, 2020, 1,532 tests were conducted on the San Marcos Campus, with 40 returning positive (2.6 percent). Following four straight weeks of decline (from 2.5 percent during the week of October 5, 2020, to 1.6 percent during the week of October 12, 2020, to 0.9 percent during the week of October 19, 2020, and to 0.4 percent during the week of October 26, 2020), the positivity rate for the week of November 2, 2020, increased to 2.6 percent.

Dr. Carranco provided a COVID-19 update of other universities. During the week of November 2, 2020, at The University of Texas at Austin, 4,656 tests were conducted with 63 returning positive for a positivity rate of 1.4 percent. At Texas A&M University, 4,444 tests were conducted with 354 returning positive for a positivity rate of eight percent.

Contact tracers continue to trace all positive cases within 24 hours. Contact tracing has yet to reveal evidence of transmission in classrooms, residence halls, or offices. Even with the recent spike, no clusters emerged on Texas State campuses. The spike in cases are attributable to off-campus social gatherings with friends and family, including recent Halloween events/activities, and "COVID fatigue," as some are growing wearisome of adhering to health and safety measures.

On November 5, 2020, Dr. Carranco reconvened the Health, Safety, and Wellness Work Group. The Work Group will meet again on November 13, 2020, to draft new health and safety recommendations for consideration by the members of the President's Cabinet. Dr. Carranco stated that the major health and safety measures will remain the same -- large social gatherings should be avoided; everyone on Texas State campuses should continue to wear cloth face coverings unless alone, and practice physical distancing and proper hand hygiene; and regular cleaning/disinfecting should continue.

Cabinet members will monitor case counts during the week of November 9, 2020, in order to make decisions about holding face-to-face classes after Thanksgiving and hosting December 2020 in-person commencement ceremonies.

Dr. Carranco announced that beginning the week of November 9, 2020, free COVID-19 testing will be offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00 p.m., to 6:00 p.m., in the Student Health Center located in the School of Nursing Building, Suite 116 on the Round Rock Campus. Dr. Carranco announced that the registration system works best with certain web browsers, such as Chrome, Safari, and Firefox.

Dr. Carranco announced that the COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Work Group will convene during the week of November 9, 2020, to develop a comprehensive plan to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine once it is available. As part of the plan, the Work Group will recommend an easily accessible location with ample parking and along a bus route. Mr. Algoe suggested that the Work Group consider the possibility of using tents, instead of facilities, since the operations will take about eight weeks.

About 20,000 students, faculty, and staff are expected to be inoculated. Administration of the vaccine will require two doses, separated by 21 to 28 days. Administration of each dose should take no more than two weeks. The Student Health Center staff will administer the vaccine, but additional staff will be needed to support the administration/management of the process.

Dr. Carranco announced that he will participate in a tabletop exercise to walk through an actual point of dispensing the vaccine on November 23, 2020.

The Federal government indicates that the vaccine(s) will arrive in phases based on degree of availability. Phase I, which may begin as early as December 2020, will target healthcare workers. Phase II, which may begin in February or March 2021, will target vulnerable populations and university faculty, staff, and students. Phase III, which may begin as early as late spring 2021, will target the entire population.

Dr. Carranco suggested that Texas State make cold storage units available so that one shipment can satisfy the university's needs. Relying on weekly delivery of doses will make mass vaccination difficult.

Dr. Carranco stated that Texas State may be asked to give the vaccine to first responders from the community. Cabinet members requested more information about scope and scale, but initial feedback was in support of the possible request.

President Trauth discussed whether Texas State should develop a communications plan around the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines. Dr. Carranco shared that the Centers for Disease Control will lead that effort.

At this time, it is unclear whether the State of Texas will fund Curative, Inc., testing in spring 2021. More affordable tests, including a saliva PCR test and an antigen test, will be coming online soon. Dr. Carranco reported that no data exists to support any particular COVID-19

testing strategy. Nonetheless, President's Cabinet members will finalize the spring 2021 COVID-19 testing strategy in the upcoming weeks.

Dr. Lloyd led a discussion on the topics to be covered during the November 23, 2020, Town Hall. Based on data from surveys and recommendations from various constituencies, topics to be discussed include: the status of COVID-19 on our campuses, locally and nationally; new health and safety measures (including the vaccine), if any; the budget outlook and legislative priorities; commencement; and instructional and student support service delivery in the spring 2021, including the status of spring break. Emphasis will be placed on Cabinet members' use of data and student, faculty, and staff feedback to make informed decisions. Cabinet members agreed that faculty and staff input is quite valued, and their input will be recognized during the Town Hall.

NRUF Metrics (#736)

Provost Bourgeois provided an update on the progress toward achieving National Research University Fund eligibility. For fiscal year 2020, though restricted research expenditures were down, certain metrics indicate that the number will bounce back for fiscal year 2021. Texas State had a record year for proposals submitted and of funds requested, and total research and development expenditures exceeded \$70 million.

President's Update (#556)

Dr. Trauth announced "distributed" receptions, honoring Texas State employees, will take place during the week of Thanksgiving on the San Marcos and Round Rock Campuses. Prepackaged foods and beverages will be available in different buildings. Groups will be kept small, and attendees will be required to wear masks.

President Trauth summarized a conversation that Presidents of public universities in Texas had with Chairman Brandon Creighton, Chair of the Texas Senate Committee on Higher Education. The State of Texas is expecting a shortfall of \$5 billion. This shortfall is likely to be captured by budget cuts to institutions of higher education. Chairman Creighton affirmed that Legislative priorities related to higher education are financial aid, recruiting and re-enrolling stop-outs, and supporting displaced Texas workers who need to reskill or upskill to get back into the workforce. Provost Bourgeois added that programs offered in the Department of Organization, Workforce, and Leadership Students will likely be attractive to Texas workers impacted by the pandemic who need to reskill or upskill to get back into the workforce. President Trauth will participate in a meeting with Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts Glenn Hegar on November 16, 2020, to learn more about what to expect in the upcoming Legislative session.

Significant Issues (#01)

Provost Bourgeois announced that the Department of Theatre and Dance will host a play indoors on the main stage during spring 2021.

Provost Bourgeois stated that if Texas State hosts an in-person commencement in December 2020, that President Cabinet members and faculty should be seated on the field, and Deans will be seated on the platform with President Trauth and Provost Bourgeois.

Provost Bourgeois indicated that the Education Abroad Advisory Board has made a preliminary recommendation to cancel education abroad for summer 2021. To better inform their decision, Cabinet members requested that the advisory board perform benchmarking.

Mr. Algoe reported that over the weekend there were three short-term power outages in San Marcos that impacted areas on the San Marcos Campus.

Dr. Cavitt shared that the Department of Campus Recreation is working on a preliminary plan to allow fall graduates an opportunity to jump in the river.

Dr. Cavitt suggested that Cabinet members decide soon whether camps will be offered during summer 2021.

Dr. Cavitt led a discussion on whether to make food available to students who are staying on campus during the upcoming holiday break. During the week of Thanksgiving, all students in isolation and quarantine will be provided food. Harris Dining Hall will reopen on November 28, 2020.

Dr. Chittenden discussed the article titled "Why Republicans and others concerned about the economy have reason to celebrate Biden in the White House" that he recently published in The Conversation.

Dr. Silva announced that the NAACP filed a lawsuit against President Trump's Executive Order on Combatting Race and Sex Stereotyping.

Dr. Silva provided an update on the Workplace Training Review Subcommittee. Since being formed, they have reviewed 26 sets of training materials.

Dr. Silva announced that in partnership with Associate Vice President for Financial Services Mr. Darryl Borgonah, she received a grant of \$20,000 from the Texas Higher Education Foundation. Funds will be made available to students who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic but who were not eligible for CARES Act funding.

Mr. Algoe provided an update on the Restorative Justice RFP. Four firms submitted a proposal. The review committee is expected to begin reviewing the proposals by the end of the week. A decision should be made within two weeks.

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Posted to web at <http://cabinet.president.txstate.edu/> on November 20, 2020.