

To: President's Cabinet
From: Denise M. Trauth
Subject: President's Cabinet Retreat
May 11, 2021

The focus of the May 11, 2021, President's Cabinet Retreat was to finalize university operations for fall 2021. The following agenda items were discussed. Vice Presidents (or their guests) made recommendations related to their assigned item(s). Guests included: Dr. Emilio Carranco, Chief Medical Officer, Ms. Sandy Pantlik, Assistant Vice President for University Advancement, and Mr. Elias Martinez, Assistant Vice President for University Marketing.

1. Indoor Events (All Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities, including Athletic Events)
 - Indoor events will return to full capacity, with no size restrictions or physical distancing requirements.
2. Outdoor Events (including Athletic Events)
 - Outdoor events will return to full capacity, with no size restrictions or physical distancing requirements.
3. Buses
 - Buses will return to full service without restrictions unless the Federal Transit Administration imposes restrictions.
4. Texas State's Position on Requiring Vaccination

In accordance with Governor Greg Abbott's Executive Order No. GA-35 related to COVID-19 vaccines, Texas State will not require university community members to be vaccinated. The university will continue to encourage students, faculty, and staff to get vaccinated. The university cannot prevent third parties from requiring vaccinations and collecting vaccination information (e.g., off-campus medical facilities may require vaccination of students enrolled in a practicum).

5. Quarantine and Isolation

The approach to quarantine and isolation will be similar to the approach taken during academic year 2020-2021. A building in Bobcat Village will be dedicated to quarantine and isolation; and some empty floors in other buildings will be available in case there is a need to expand.
6. Health and Safety Measures
 - Antiviral spray will continue. The spray utilized by Texas State has been shown to be effective for at least 30 days. Classrooms will be sprayed weekly and other areas will be sprayed monthly. Dr. Carranco noted that contaminated surfaces are not a significant source of COVID-19 transmission.

- Hand sanitizer stations will continue to be maintained. Mr. Algoe will verify whether College of Science and Engineering will continue to mass produce the sanitizer for the stations.
- Current signs will be replaced with updated signs, as messaging will focus more on raising awareness of benefits of mask wearing and getting vaccinated. Signs will be strategically placed in targeted areas rather than blanketed throughout the campuses.

7. Outdoor Face Covering Policy

Beginning May 15, 2021, face coverings will no longer be required outdoors but will be highly recommended where six feet of physical distancing is difficult to reliably maintain.

Factors used to determine this decision included:

- Less than 10 percent of COVID-19 infections occur through outdoor transmission and viral transmission is 18.7 times more likely indoors.
- The University of Texas and Texas A&M University do not require face coverings outdoors.
- The Centers for Disease Control recently updated face covering guidance -- fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear face coverings outdoors except in certain crowd settings.
- In Texas, the rate of transmission has decreased over time and is approaching four percent.

8. Indoor Face Covering Policy (Note. This decision was made prior to Governor Greg Abbott's [Executive Order No. GA-36](#) issued on May 18, 2021, stating: "No governmental entity, including a county, city, school district, and public health authority, and no government official may require any person to wear a face covering or to mandate that another person wear a face covering." As a state-funded institution, this Executive Order applies to Texas State University.)

Texas State will continue to require face coverings indoors. Currently, fully vaccinated people are not exempt from this policy. This decision was based on the following factors:

- Research indicates that the major route of transmission is via respiratory droplets and aerosols. While physical distancing does help some, it is not as effective as face coverings.
- Vaccination rates are relatively low. In Texas, 39 percent of residents have been vaccinated; in Hays county, 40 percent have been vaccinated; and in Williamson, 44 percent have been vaccinated.
- Many institutions of higher education have indicated a return to full classroom capacity in the fall, but none have eliminated the indoor face covering mandate, yet.

Any change to the current policy will be based on a holistic review of state and federal guidelines, COVID-19 research, and local metrics, including hospitalization rates, availability of quarantine spaces, transmission rates, and vaccination rates/herd immunity.

9. Vaccination Plan

Vaccination rates are not where they need to be. There has been a huge drop off in demand. An awareness campaign (promoting the benefits and raising awareness of where to get vaccinated) will be launched and involves many collaborators, including Admissions.

Through the end of summer II, vaccinations will be available by appointment at the Student Health Center (SHC) which could result in about 150 to 250 vaccinations given per week. The SHC is also committed to offering mass vaccination events during special events (e.g., new student orientation) or if demand increases.

In preparation for the fall, mass vaccination events will be offered one to two times per week, beginning with Bobcat Preview and continuing until demand wanes.

The cost of the vaccine is expected to be free at least through the end of 2021, thereafter, health insurance plans should cover the cost.

10. COVID-19 Testing

A kiosk for COVID-19 testing will remain on the San Marcos Campus through the summer and into the fall. Dr. Carranco will verify if the Texas Division of Emergency Management will offer testing on the Round Rock Campus. If not, the Round Rock Campus community will be directed to other nearby testing sites. Dr. Carranco noted that the Round Rock Campus will likely reach herd immunity quickly given its large portion of health professions students, who are required to be vaccinated in order to participate in off-campus clinical experiences.

Entry testing two weeks prior to the start of the fall semester will be requested of faculty, staff, and students who are not vaccinated. If positive, they will be asked to complete their isolation at home.

Proactive screening testing will continue through the fall and involve random testing of faculty, staff, and students on a weekly basis, with a focus on those who are not vaccinated -- especially those who live in the residence halls.

As the pool of unvaccinated university community members diminishes, positivity rates are becoming a less reliable indicator of transmission levels. For the weeks between the spring and summer semesters, the weekly positivity rates will not be reported to the Texas State Dashboard. Meanwhile, the Texas State Dashboard will be reviewed, and possible revisions may need to be made. New metrics may be added, such as local community vaccination and positivity rates, to replace Texas State positivity rates. At the beginning of the fall semester, the cumulative total of cases will be archived, and a new total will begin.

11. Contact Tracing

Bobcat Trace reporting and contact tracing will continue.

12. Recognition of Employees

Strategies based on recommendations from the Faculty and Staff Morale Work Group and Staff Council were discussed.

President Trauth highlighted summer events to celebrate and honor administrative assistants on both campuses.

Mr. Algoe shared that the faculty and staff dining room in Jones Dining Center is a great place for faculty and staff to get together; and he will explore additional dining perks (such as discounted meals or an occasional free lunch) that can be made available to faculty and staff.

The Department of Athletics and Campus Recreation will explore additional ways to support faculty and staff.

Mr. Algoe will ask the Office of Human Resources to review recommendations related to UPPS 04.04.16, leave, discounts, and perks. Dr. Lloyd will encourage Staff Council to invite Human Resources to a future Staff Council meeting.

President Trauth shared that making the three percent bonus permanent depends on enrollment.

13. Worst-Case Scenarios

Though trends look promising, Cabinet members agreed that Texas State needs to be prepared for the following worst-case scenarios.

- State or federal lockdown and/or restrictions that affect institutions of higher education
- City or County Government restrictions that affect local business and schools
- A university-specific surge

Certain work groups, including the Continuity of Research Work Group and the Health, Wellness, and Safety Work Group, will be reconvened for the purposes of sharing/updating plans for fall 2021, gathering feedback to share with the President's Cabinet via the work group chair, and reviewing/updating the Roadmap.

As Texas State returns to full in-person university operations, the scenario-based planning webpage in the Roadmap, which was developed to inform the university community how decisions were being made at the beginning of the pandemic, is no longer needed and will be removed.

14. Athletics

- Upcoming Events
 - Bobcat Bonanza in the University Event Center: August 28, 2021
 - Bobcat Club Luncheons: None due to resources directed towards Bobcat Bonanza and similar timing as Bobcat Bonanza
 - Student-Athlete Orientation: August 20, 2021
 - Ring Ceremonies: August 6, 2021, and December 10, 2021
 - Women's Clinic: to be determined, but will happen after August 9, 2021

- Bobcat Football
 - Tailgating will follow the pre-COVID-19 tailgating plan approved by the 2019 Game Day Task Force.

Tailgate Central will not open up until 6 hours prior to game time.

RVs may park the night before a game.

Certain donors will be granted access to certain tailgating areas at a time earlier than normal. Mr. Coryell will present to the President's Cabinet at a later date criteria for early entrance and a staffing plan.

An online registration and payment options through Department of Athletics Paciolan Ticketing System will be implemented.

Staff are exploring numbering spaces in Tailgate Central.

- Kid Zone will return to home Bobcat Football Games with interactive activities, bounce houses, petting zoo, etc.
- Offering two post-game on-field concerts in conjunction with Brown Distributing will be explored
- Coach Spavital "Meet and Greets" will resume. Department of Athletics will host public and private events in San Marcos, New Braunfels, San Antonio, Austin, Houston, and Dallas. COVID-19 health and safety protocols established by the venue will be followed.
- As a reminder, beginning in the summer, third parties may rent university facilities provided current university health and safety guidelines are followed

15. April 20, 2021 Town Hall

Questions submitted during the Town Hall held on April 20, 2021, were reviewed to make sure they have been addressed via emails, social media, website, and other forms of messaging.

16. Marketing and Communications

Ms. Pantlik and Mr. Martinez presented a comprehensive marketing and communications plan designed to encourage the university community to get vaccinated. The plan included goals, challenges, insights, strategies/tactics, target audiences, and messaging.

Dr. Lloyd will work with Ms. Pantlik and Mr. Martinez to develop a plan for communicating items discussed and decisions made during the President's Cabinet Retreat.

President Trauth discussed holding at least once Town Hall during the summer.

DMT:ta

Posted to web at <http://cabinet.president.txstate.edu/> on May 26, 2021.