

To: President's Cabinet
From: Denise M. Trauth
Subject: President's Cabinet Meeting
October 19, 2020

Impact of COVID-19 (#770)

Guest Dr. Emilio Carranco provided an update on the COVID-19 pandemic. Across Texas, the trends have increased over the last week. When comparing the week of October 12, 2020, to the week of October 5, 2020, the seven-day moving average daily case count increased from 3,365 to about 3,500 cases per day, and the positivity rate increased from 6.9 to 8.3 percent. In Hays County, the seven-day moving average daily case count increased from 12.3 to 16.9 new cases per day, but the positivity rate decreased from 16.8 to 16.3 percent. In Williamson County, the seven-day moving average daily case count increased from 29.7 to 31.4 new cases per day, but positivity rate decreased from 3.5 to 2.5 percent.

During the week of October 12, 2020, 4,400 Texas State faculty, staff, and students were randomly selected and invited via email to participate in COVID-19 testing. Of the 1,217 tests performed on the San Marcos Campus, 19 tests returned positive for a positivity rate of 1.6 percent. This is down from a positivity rate of 2.5 percent during the previous week. At present, there are 54 active cases. The number of students housed in isolation is three and in quarantine is one. Contact tracing has yet to reveal evidence of transmission in classrooms, residence halls, or offices.

Dr. Carranco provided a COVID-19 update for other universities. When comparing the week of October 12, 2020, to the week of October 5, 2020, at The University of Texas at Austin, the positivity rate increased slightly from 0.6 to 0.7 percent, while at Texas A&M University, the positivity rate decreased from 3.8 to 3.2 percent. Texas State continues to remain somewhere in the middle of where other major universities are in terms of positivity rates.

Dr. Carranco will send out bi-weekly COVID-19 updates, alternating between employees and students.

Dr. Marc Turner, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research, is working on adding Curative, Inc., testing data to the COVID-19 dashboard.

Dr. Cavitt reminded Cabinet members that the current policy is on-campus events cannot include off-campus guests, unless an exception is granted by a vice president.

Dr. Cavitt will work with Dr. Carranco to develop safe and healthy guidelines for on-campus events and for celebrating the upcoming holidays.

Commencement (#143)

Guests Dr. Vedaraman Sriraman, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs; Ms. Kristin McDaniel, Commencement Coordinator; Mr. Elias Martinez, Assistant Vice President for University Marketing; and Mr. Whitten Smart, Special Assistant to the Vice President for Information Technology discussed the fall 2020 Commencement planning. Provost Bourgeois shared the results of the fall 2020 commencement surveys sent to spring and summer 2020 graduates, fall 2020 candidates, faculty, and staff. As of October 19, 2020, 80 percent of the spring and summer graduate responders (n=879) and 85 percent of the fall candidate responders (n=1,249) indicated that they would attend a socially distanced outdoor commencement ceremony requiring masks in Bobcat stadium. In contrast, 79 percent of faculty responders (n=348) and 71 percent of staff responders (n=228) indicated that they would not. Cabinet members discussed revisions to the health and safety protocol to consider/address the common concerns raised in the survey.

Cabinet members approved in-person commencement ceremonies to be held on December 11, 2020, in addition to a virtual commencement ceremony on December 12, for fall 2020 graduates. Spring and summer 2020 graduates will have the opportunity to attend in-person commencement ceremonies on December 10, 2020.

The number and times of ceremonies were discussed. However, final decisions will be based on the number of formal RSVPs received from participants. Only four guests per candidate will be allowed entry. The ceremonies will be spaced far enough apart to allow adequate time for cleaning and disinfecting of the facilities.

To enhance the quality of the virtual commencement ceremony, Cabinet members discussed hiring a producer. Mr. Martinez reported that University Marketing has reached out to six production companies, and he will provide additional information to the Cabinet members via email.

Crisis Management (#710)

Dr. Breier and guests Ms. Sandy Pantlik, Assistant Vice President of University Advancement; and Ms. Yvonne Rhodes Assistant Director of Communications provided an update to the Rapid Response Guide. The focus of the guide is to guide red team activation and follow-up messaging in response to an emergency situation. The guide clarifies the differences in messages between University Police Department and University Communications.

Dr. Trauth asked that a statement indicating that Texas State officials do not comment on personnel issues be added to the guide. Dr. Trauth also requested that the guide contain instructions to send out a statement in the event of a student, faculty, or staff on-campus death. Dr. Cavitt suggested to add Round Rock Campus points of contacts to the emergency contact list.

Dr. Lloyd will add a “Red Team” channel to Teams to store related documents.

Coordinating Board Meeting (#5)

Dr. Lloyd discussed the October 22, 2020, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board meeting. Three items involving Texas State were discussed. First, the Board will be considering adopting the certification of gifts that are fundable through the Texas Research Incentive Program for the Emerging Research Universities, which includes Texas State. Second, Ms. Dede Gonzales, Associate Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships, is being recommended to join the Financial Aid Advisory Committee. Third, the Master of Education in Middle School Mathematics Teaching and the Bachelor of Science in Technology Management are being phased-out, while the Bachelor in Mechanical Engineering is being planned.

President's Update (#556)

President Trauth announced former presidential candidate, Mr. Beto O'Rourke will teach a class on Texas politics in spring 2021, pending finalization of his hire. As an adjunct lecturer, Mr. O'Rourke will teach one class with a maximum of 25 students. President Trauth noted that Dr. T. Vance McMahan, former U. S. Ambassador to the United Nations under President George W. Bush, also teaches a class on Texas politics.

Significant Issues (#01)

Dr. Cavitt announced that Student Affairs will be holding more face-to-face student activities to keep students engaged. Likewise, Provost Bourgeois will ask the College of Fine Arts and Communication to hold more outdoor concerts.

Dr. Silva provided an update on the Texas State's response to the [Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping](#). A Workplace Training Review Subcommittee from the university's Council on Inclusive Excellence convened to carry out a process to ensure training materials align with the Order. The members of this subcommittee include:

- Dr. Stella Silva, Interim Chief Diversity Officer and Assistant Vice President for Institutional Inclusive Excellence for Faculty and Staff Initiatives (Chair)
- Dr. Scott Bowman, Special Assistant to the Provost for Inclusion and Diversity, Associate Professor in the School of Criminal Justice and Criminology
- Dr. Mary Brennan, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts
- Ms. LynnAnn Brewer, Director of Talent Acquisition, Inclusion, and Retention
- Dr. Candice Hastings, Director of Faculty Development

This evaluation process involves submitting a description of DE&I training materials to the subcommittee at ss23@txstate.edu for review and evaluation. If necessary, the subcommittee will recommend ways to align the materials with the Order so that the training may proceed. To date, Dr. Silva has received nine submissions.

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Posted to web at <http://cabinet.president.txstate.edu/> on November 12, 2020.