

To: President's Cabinet

From: Denise M. Trauth

Subject: President's Cabinet Meeting
January 4, 2021

Impact of COVID-19 (#770)

Guest Dr. Emilio Carranco provided an update on the COVID-19 pandemic. Guest Ms. Sandy Pantlik joined the meeting to discuss strategies for communicating messages about COVID-19.

Many health departments were closed during the week of December 20, 2020, and incomplete testing data was recorded; thus, Dr. Carranco compared data from the week of December 27, 2020, to data from the week of December 13, 2020. In Texas, these comparisons revealed an increase in the average daily case counts from 11,443 to 14,686 cases per day, and an increase in the average daily positivity rate from 13.1 to 20.2 percent. As a point of reference, the average daily positivity rate at the beginning of the fall 2020 semester (i.e., the week of August 24, 2020) was 9.4 percent.

In Hays county, the average daily case counts increased from 69 to 209 cases per day. Hays county had yet to post the positivity rate for the week of December 27, 2020.

In Williamson county, the average daily case counts increased from 204 to 222 cases per day, and the average daily positivity rate increased from nine to 12.4 percent.

In Hays county, the number of COVID-19 hospitalized patients as a percentage of total hospital capacity is approaching 15 percent. Counties with seven consecutive days in which the number of COVID-19 hospitalized patients as a percentage of total hospital capacity exceeds 15 percent may be subject to increased restrictions, such as venue capacity reductions.

During the winter holiday break, the Student Health Center was closed, and the Curative testing kiosk was moved off-campus. Thus, no tests were conducted on the campuses. However, seven positive tests were reported to Bobcat Trace. Currently, no student is in isolation or quarantine on the San Marcos Campus.

Additional mitigation strategies for the month of January 2021 were discussed, and the following will be implemented:

- Dining facilities will reduce capacity to 50 percent and enhance activities promoting to-go meal options.
- All students, faculty, and staff will be expected to get a COVID-19 test prior to the start of the semester. An email from the Vice President for Student Affairs will be disseminated to all students on January 4, 2021, encouraging students to make a testing appointment for the week of January 11, 2021, to meet the deadline. An email from the Chief Medical Officer will be prepared and disseminated the week of January 4, 2021, encouraging faculty and staff

to get tested. The Vice Presidents and the Director of Athletics will then follow-up with a personalized message to their respective divisions.

- To keep residence halls safe, students and staff residing/working in residence halls will be required to take a COVID-19 test within seven days prior to their return and then submit their result via an online system. Those with a positive test result will be asked to isolate for 10 days prior to returning to campus and report to [Bobcat Trace](#). Those who do not comply ahead of time will be required to take a test upon their arrival and will not be allowed to move into their room until they produce a negative test. Between Sterry Hall and units at Bobcat Village, there is enough capacity to isolate/quarantine about 200 students. Dr. Carranco will meet with staff from the Department of Housing and Residential Life to finalize the testing and enforcement plan for those who reside/work in residence halls. Additional information will be sent later in the week from the Department of Housing and Residential Life to all students living on campus.
- As much physical distancing as possible will be promoted.
 - Supervisors will continue to be encouraged to reduce workplace density, if possible. Personnel must still be available to students and good customer service must be maintained. Decisions will be left up to individual supervisors, as there is no one-size fits all solution. Suggestions include allowing those who work in shared spaces to work flexible (e.g., flexible in-person work during the week and on weekends) or alternating schedules (a combination of in-person and remote work). The Roadmap includes additional suggestions on temporary ways to reduce workplace density.
 - Some additional courses have been or are currently in the process of being moved to larger settings to reduce classroom density to less than 50 percent.
 - Faculty teaching face-to-face classes will be given flexibility to deliver course content remotely for the first two weeks of the spring 2021 semester.
 - Many large in-person social/co-curricular gatherings or events will not be allowed.
 - In-person fitness programs, sports club activities, and intramural sports will not be allowed.

Additionally, throughout the spring 2021 semester, random testing will continue to be offered and face coverings will continue to be required.

Provost Bourgeois reported that about 55 percent of courses will be delivered using a face-to-face or modified face-to-face modality and 45 percent will be delivered virtually.

Dr. Carranco provided an update on the state of Texas' vaccine distribution plan. Texas State has submitted its application to the Department of State Health Services to become a vaccine provider. Texas State has the capacity to store any of the vaccines and to perform mass vaccinations. Texas State also has several of the target populations within its university community. For these reasons, it is expected that the Department of State Health Services will move quickly to approve Texas State as a vaccine provider. Approval is expected within the next two weeks, with partial distributions following shortly thereafter. It is anticipated that, initially, Texas State will receive two or three smaller allocations followed by larger allocations.

Dr. Carranco led a discussion on priority groups, including those who are 65 and older and at risk for COVID-related illness. The Mass Vaccination Planning Work Group will draft a list of priority groups based on the [recommendations of the Texas Department of State Health Services](#) for President's Cabinet members' review.

The Roadmap will be updated to reflect the enhanced health and safety guidelines and changes to both the quarantine protocol and travel guidelines. The Dashboard will also be updated to include additional metrics (i.e., number of students in isolation and quarantine) and information (e.g., links to Travis county and Bexar county dashboards).

The CDC has revised its list of underlying medical conditions that place individuals at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Recent data indicates an increased risk of severe illness among persons with Down Syndrome from COVID-19. Dr. Carranco will work with the ADA Compliance Coordinator and the Director of Disability Services to update the current criteria for workplace and academic accommodations.

Dr. Carranco sought clarification on COVID-19 related workplace modifications. For those who were granted accommodations, their accommodations were extended through May 31, 2021. There is no deadline for seeking accommodations.

The COVID-19 communication strategy was discussed and will be executed over the next several weeks. Messaging will: address the expected increase in daily case counts due, in part, to the surge following recent holiday celebrations and ramped up testing; explain why positivity rates are a better indicator of current COVID-19 conditions rather than case counts; and delineate additional strategies set in motion to mitigate the spread. Dr. Carranco is leading efforts to develop a vaccine webpage. A town hall meeting will be held later in January 2021 to update faculty and staff on the COVID-19 response plan. This will provide an opportunity to address questions they may have about vaccination plans or mitigation measures.

President's Update (#556)

President Trauth announced that Dr. Cynthia Hernandez will be joining the President's Cabinet and attending the January 11, 2021, President's Cabinet meeting. President Trauth expressed her sincere appreciation to Dr. Mary Ellen Cavitt for serving as Interim Vice President for Student Affairs since June 1, 2020.

Significant Issues (#01)

Provost Bourgeois provided an update on the latest COVID Stimulus Bill Federal Funding bill for fiscal year 2021. Mr. Algoe suggested that President Cabinet members review an American Association of Community Colleges document titled "Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act Institutional Funding – Frequently Asked Questions" for additional information.

Provost Bourgeois provided an update on spring 2021 enrollment.

Dr. Silva announced that the process for accepting and reviewing applications for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals has now been reinstated.

Dr. Silva announced that an injunction was filed on December 22, 2020, banning the enforcement of certain sections of the Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping. Dr. Silva will consult The Texas State University System Office of General Counsel to determine whether Texas State may resume all forms of diversity, equity, and inclusion training.

Dr. Lloyd provided an update on the Inauguration Day Events. The 2020 Elections Task Force, led by Dr. Sherri Benn and in collaboration with the Department of Political Science, political student groups, Student Government, Underrepresented Student Advisory Council, and Student Involvement, are making plans to host an all-day inauguration watch party in the LBJ Student Center ballroom. This event will be similar to the Election Watch Party. Strict safety procedures will be enforced, and students, who chose not to attend in person, can still join remotely. The space will be decorated red, white, and blue. There will be giveaways, inauguration Kahoots games, and goodie bags with political factoids/education materials. This event will be promoted by participating student organizations and offices via social media, and flyers will be displayed in the LBJ Student Center. To ensure participants' safety and mitigate COVID-19 spread, Cabinet members asked that the Elections Task Force discuss their safety protocol with Dr. Carranco.

Dr. Teis provided an update on the COVID-19 testing of student-athletes.

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Posted to web at <http://cabinet.president.txstate.edu/> on January 8, 2021.