

To: President's Cabinet
From: Denise M. Trauth
Subject: President's Cabinet Meeting
January 21, 2021

Impact of COVID-19 (#770)

Guest Dr. Emilio Carranco compared data from the week of January 4, 2021, to data from the week of January 11, 2021. In Texas, these comparisons revealed an increase in the average daily case counts from 18,900 to 19,129 cases per day, and a decrease in the average daily positivity rate from 20.5 to 16.2 percent.

In Hays county, the average daily case counts decreased from 130 to 120 cases per day. Hays county positivity rate for the week of January 11, 2021, was 15.2 percent.

In Williamson county, the average daily case counts increased from 339 to 397 cases per day, and the average daily positivity rate decreased from 16.7 to 15.6 percent.

Two Curative Inc. testing sites are now fully operational at Flowers Hall and the Student Health Center parking lot. The Student Health Center testing site provides testing Monday-Saturday weekly, and the Flowers Hall testing site provides testing Monday-Friday weekly. Texas State is working with the Texas Division of Emergency Management to extend testing on the Round Rock Campus.

For the week of January 11, 2021, the Student Health Center conducted 101 tests, with five returning positive, and Curative Inc. conducted 1,608 tests, with 61 returning positive. Combined, there were 66 positive results out of 1,709 tests for a positivity rate of 3.9 percent.

As of January 18, 2021, there were 201 active cases at Texas State, and nine students were in isolation and 10 were in quarantine.

In comparison to other Texas institutions of higher education, for the week of January 11, 2021:

- The University of Texas at Austin reported 35 positive results out of 2,171 tests for a positivity rate of 1.6 percent.
- Texas A&M University reported 227 positive results out of 4,176 tests for a positivity rate of 5.4 percent.

Dr. Carranco discussed the enhanced mitigation measures in place for the first two weeks of the spring semester. Given that data from contact tracing suggests that face-to-face classes do not increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission, the current plan to gradually increase density of the campuses over the first two weeks of the spring semester is an appropriate timeframe, and there is no need expand to add additional weeks to the plan.

Dr. Carranco provided an update on the COVID-19 testing verification process during move-in weekend. Between January 15-18, 2021, about 3,300 students provided appropriate paperwork that satisfied the COVID-19 testing verification requirement for move-in. Of these, 94 students participated in on-campus rapid testing, with all returning negative results. As of January 19, 2021, roughly 1,600 students had yet to move back in, possibly due to the fact that their classes are online for the first two weeks of the spring semester. Given that the Student Health Center prepared for more students to get tested, Dr. Carranco will confer with Mr. Bryan Dean, Associate Athletic Director, about transferring the remaining test kits to the Department of Athletics for use on student-athletes.

Dr. Carranco reported that Texas State was recently granted access to the Texas Department of State Health Services' (DSHS) vaccine ordering system. Texas State has submitted a request for 1,950 doses but has yet to receive verification that it will receive a vaccine allocation. However, 1,950 doses have been allocated to the Hays County Local Health Department, who have yet to receive the doses.

The Hays County Local Health Department was recently designated as a Vaccine Hub. With that designation, they are expected to begin receiving doses. Dr. Carranco has reached out to local public health officials to see if Texas State will have access to a portion of the vaccine doses. For now, CommuniCare in Kyle has offered to vaccinate staff working in the Student Health Center. Though Texas State is an approved vaccine provider, it is not approved as a Vaccine Hub. Thus, it remains unclear when Texas State will receive the vaccine. Despite this uncertainty, a mass vaccination plan for each campus is being finalized so that Texas State will be prepared to begin vaccinating university community members by priority group once the vaccine is received. Dr. Carranco noted that DSHS has not decided if educators fall into a priority group. Cabinet members agreed that Texas State will first focus on vaccinating faculty, staff, and students by priority group. Cabinet members discussed the details of the plan, including:

- There are enough clinical staff available for mass vaccination of the university community; nonclinical staff are being identified to assist.
- Priority groups have been established and lists are being maintained.
- A process for contacting those within the priority groups has been developed.
- The infrastructure is in place to notify and register university members by priority group for vaccination. The application system will include a waitlist feature.
- The vaccination webpage is near completion.

President's Update (#556)

President Trauth discussed questions about renaming both Beretta Hall and Flowers Hall that have risen during the Naming Task Force discussions and stated that on-going inclusive conversations about these complex issues will require collaboration and time to fully research.

Significant Issues (#01)

Provost Bourgeois provided an update on spring 2021 enrollment and scholarship awards.

Mr. Algoe discussed the second wave of federal pandemic stimulus funds. In December 2020, Congress approved a \$900 billion COVID-19 supplemental relief measure which includes the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II, totaling \$81.88 billion. The U. S. Department of Education announced on January 14, 2021, that \$21.2 billion of that funding is now available to higher education institutions to ensure learning continues for students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Though the details have not been finalized, it appears that Texas State will receive about \$50 million and that the funds may be used to cover:

- Emergency grants to students for costs that arise due to COVID-19, such as tuition, food, housing, healthcare, or childcare; and
- University expenses associated with the pandemic response, lost revenue, technology costs associated with a transition to distance education, faculty and staff training, and student support activities that address needs related to COVID-19.

Mr. Algoe announced that Facilities is piloting needlepoint ionization air treatment systems in one new construction project as well as one renovation project.

Mr. Algoe discussed construction of the new University Police Department (UPD) building. UPD will move from the Nueces Building in the central part of the San Marcos Campus to create space for an accessible Academic Testing Center that is conveniently located in the center of campus for students. Converting the Nueces Building into the Academic Testing Center and constructing a building for UPD is included in Texas State's 2017-2027 University Master Plan which was developed and vetted by the entire campus, then approved by The Texas State University System Board of Regents in 2016-2017. It provides the most fiscally responsible solution to better deliver student services.

Mr. Algoe shared that the university is discussing, with an electric provider, the possibility of installing a 40-acre solar energy research and production facility on university-owned land.

Mr. Algoe announced that preliminary review of student billing information suggests that compared to fall 2020, the number of students taking all of their courses online during spring 2021 has increased by 17 percent.

Dr. Chittenden discussed the article titled "[Biden is inheriting a wrecked economy, but Democrats have a record of avoiding recession and reducing unemployment](#)" that he recently published in [The Conversation](#). The article has had more than 8,000 reads to date, and was picked up by [Marketwatch](#), and resulted in several radio interviews.

Dr. Hernandez announced that she is working with directors in the Division of Student Affairs to develop a plan that will allow face-to-face co-curricular programming to resume as long as strict mitigation strategies are implemented and adhered to.

Dr. Silva announced that the Executive Order on Combatting Race and Sex Stereotyping has been overturned. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access training at Texas State will no longer need to be reviewed for compliance with the Order.

DMT:ta

Posted to web at <http://cabinet.president.txstate.edu/> on February 5, 2021.