

To: President's Cabinet
From: Denise M. Trauth
Subject: President's Cabinet Meeting
February 15, 2021

Board of Regents' Review (#500)

This item was not discussed. Invited guests Dr. Janet Bezner, Faculty Senate Chair, Mr. Catching Valentinis-Dee, Student Government President, and Mr. Noel Fuller, Staff Council Chair, were unable to join the virtual meeting due to power outages and connectivity issues resulting from the inclement weather.

Board of Regents News Release (#626)

Guest Mr. Jayme Blaschke reviewed possible topics for inclusion in a news release about the February 2021 Board of Regents meeting. The press release will address the temporary change in freshman admissions standards due to the COVID-19 crisis and financial aid support.

President Trauth discussed issuing a press release later in the year announcing a virtual groundbreaking ceremony for the Infrastructure Research Laboratory at the Science, Technology, and Advanced Research (STAR) Park. In preparation, Provost Bourgeois will task University Marketing with developing a promotional video about how the research space will be used by the civil engineering degree program.

Impact of COVID-19 (#770)

Guest Dr. Emilio Carranco compared data from the week of February 1, 2021, to data from the week of February 8, 2021. In Texas, week-to-week comparisons revealed a decrease in the average daily case counts from 11,814 to 8,357 cases per day, and a decrease in the average daily positivity rate from 11.7 to 10.3 percent.

In Hays county, the average daily case counts decreased from 98 to 72 cases per day. By meeting time, Hays county had yet to release the positivity rate for the week of February 8, 2021. For the week of February 1, 2021, the positivity rate was 9.1 percent.

In Williamson county, the average daily case counts decreased from 327 to 167 cases per day, and the average daily positivity rate decreased from 12.3 to 8.3 percent.

Texas State conducted 1,668 tests, with 40 returning positive for a positivity rate of 2.4 percent.

As of February 15, 2021, there were 168 active cases at Texas State. Due to its focus on the recent winter storm, the Department of Housing and Residential Life was unable to forward isolation and quarantine numbers by meeting time.

In comparison to other Texas institutions of higher education, for the week of February 8, 2021, The University of Texas at Austin reported 77 positive results out of 4,595 tests for a positivity rate of 1.7 percent; and Texas A&M University reported 138 positive results out of 1,001 tests for a positivity rate of 13.8 percent.

Dr. Carranco provided an update on local vaccination distribution:

- Hays county, which has been designated as a Vaccine Hub, is consistently receiving weekly vaccine doses -- 1,950 of the Pfizer vaccine and 2,500 doses of the Moderna vaccine. Hays county has launched a preregistration site, and about 25,000 people in the 1a and 1b groups are on the waitlist. Only a few area clinics have received allotments of the vaccine, about 100 at a time. A federal effort is underway to supply pharmacies across the country directly with the vaccine. To date, the HEB pharmacy in Kyle has received 100 doses.
- Both the federal and state governments are exploring sites that can be used for mass vaccination. Mr. Algoe added that the Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) has been informed of Texas State's willingness to participate in large scale vaccination. In about a month, it is anticipated that TDEM will have a mass distribution plan in place.
- The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is expected to be approved by the end of February 2021.
- Based on current vaccine rollout, college-aged individuals will likely have the opportunity for vaccination in May 2021.
- Regarding when educators will have access to the vaccine, it remains unclear who the state of Texas will designate as the next priority group.

Dr. Carranco and Dr. Hernandez continued the discussion regarding spring break, including whether additional mitigation strategies need to be implemented. Dr. Carranco presented recommendations from the Health, Wellness, and Safety Work Group. Requiring a negative test to return to residence halls following spring break will be difficult. The current mitigation measures have been and are expected to continue to be effective; however, more will be done leading up to and following spring break. Recommendations included a steady stream of messaging leading up to spring break to raise awareness of the latest CDC travel guidelines, especially as they relate to travel by car, bus, and plane; an increase in testing capacity the week following spring break; and messaging strongly encouraging students, faculty, and staff to be tested upon their return from spring break. Dr. Hernandez and Dr. Carranco will continue to meet with various constituents and will be prepared to discuss recommendations during the next Cabinet meeting.

RTA 3/1/21 Discuss COVID-19 spring break mitigation strategies.

Dr. Carranco presented recommendations from the Health, Wellness, and Safety Work Group regarding summer camps, such as: ensuring current health and safety guidelines are followed,

participants being placed in pods, and limiting attendance. Cabinet members discussed whether to require participants to produce a negative test upon check-in. Cabinet members agreed to the requirement for overnight camps. The requirement for day camps will be discussed at a future meeting.

RTA 3/1/21 Discuss resumption of summer athletic camps.

Pandemic/Post Pandemic Work Groups (#771)

Invited guest Dr. Angela Ausbrooks was unable to join the virtual meeting due to a power outage resulting from the inclement weather. Cabinet members reviewed the Faculty and Staff Morale Final Report, discussed the recommendations, and identified ways to meet the recommendations. Dr. Ausbrooks will be invited back to a future Cabinet meeting to continue the discussion.

RTA 3/8/21 Continue discussion on the Faculty and Staff Morale Final Report.

The role that supervisors play in supporting faculty and staff morale was underscored. Mr. Algoe asked Vice Presidents to encourage all supervisors in their respective divisions to participate in the [HR Essentials for TXST Managers certificate program](#).

For employees who believe they have experienced inequities with workplace assignments, Mr. Algoe shared that UPPS 04.04.41, Staff Employee Mediation and Grievance Policy, outlines the appropriate grievance reporting process.

UPPS 06.02.01, Communication with Governmental Agencies

Dr. Lloyd led a discussion on revising UPPS 06.02.01 to add clarity to the process of how Texas State employees are to engage with elected officials. Cabinet members provided suggestions, shifting its focus from government agencies to elected officials. The policy only applies to faculty and staff, not students. Dr. Hernandez will look into the protocol as it relates to student organizations.

President's Update (#556)

President Trauth announced that the February 16, 2021, Cabinet meeting has been cancelled due to the inclement weather. It will be rescheduled for later in the month.

Significant Issues (#01)

Provost Bourgeois reviewed the weather forecast for the week of February 15-19, 2021, and discussed the guidance faculty will be given about how to make up for lost contact hours due to the current weather-related closures. A final decision about when classes and events will resume will be made by 5:00 p.m., on February 16, 2021.

Mr. Algoe provided a facilities update. Students affected by power outages and/or water leaks have been relocated temporarily. Power outages and water leaks are expected to continue until the inclement weather subsides.

Portions of the San Marcos Campus are without power. This is a statewide issue, and it is unclear how long it will continue. Texas' electric grid operator, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), has declared an Energy Emergency Alert Level Three. Electric providers across the state are required to rotate power outages because there is not enough power available to keep up with consumer demand.

Mr. Pierce provided an update on the status of the phone system, servers, the research data center, and fuel availability for generators.

Mr. Pierce sought clarification regarding the university's position on employee travel for fall 2021. Provost Bourgeois shared that the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs has begun accepting and approving travel requests for late summer and fall 2021. This item will be discussed at a future Cabinet meeting to ensure consistency across divisions.

RTA 3/22/21 Discuss employee travel guidance for fall 2021.

DMT:ta

Posted to web at <http://cabinet.president.txstate.edu/> on March 12, 2021.