

To: President's Cabinet
From: Denise M. Trauth
Subject: President's Cabinet Meeting
March 8, 2021

Impact of COVID-19 (#770)

Guests Dr. Emilio Carranco, Mr. Raymond Loriaux, and Chief Laurie Clouse provided a vaccination update. Texas State University has been notified that it will receive the COVID-19 vaccine including 300 doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccine allocated by the Texas State Department of Health Services (DSHS) and 500 doses of Pfizer vaccine provided by Hays county as part of a new collaboration between the university and the county. Because the doses are expected to arrive in the next day or two, plans are being finalized for a vaccination event in the LBJ Student Center Grand Ballroom on March 12, 2021.

Texas State is expected to receive 500 doses from Hays county each week. As part of this partnership agreement, Texas State will administer 250 doses to county residents at future vaccination events on the San Marcos Campus.

As Texas State receives additional vaccine, the Student Health Center may consider holding vaccination events two days per week.

Vaccination events will be held in the LBJ Student Center Grand Ballroom through the mid-April 2021, and then, they will be moved to a different location to accommodate The Texas State University System Board of Regents May 2021 meeting. A new location will be identified at a later date.

To ensure that the vaccination events run smoothly, Dr. Carranco will:

- hire temporary employees to carry out non-clinical tasks (e.g., registration);
- seek volunteers from the St. David's School of Nursing and athletic trainers in the Department of Athletics to assist with clinical tasks (e.g., injections); and
- seek assistance from Parking Services to managing parking for community members.

Mr. Algoe discussed enlisting the help of the Hays County Community Emergency Response Team to support the vaccination efforts.

Faculty, staff, and students who are eligible for a vaccination based on the DSHS vaccine priority guidelines will be contacted via email and provided with a vaccination registration link. At present, the DSHS vaccine priority groups include:

- Phase 1A: Healthcare workers and support staff, EMS providers, pharmacy staff, public health and emergency response staff involved in COVID-19 testing or vaccination, and mortuary or death service providers.

- Phase 1B: People 65 years of age and older, people 16 and older with a chronic medical condition that puts them at an increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, teachers, school staff, and childcare workers.

Because vaccine supply is limited, decisions about which groups to prioritize within Phase 1A and 1B will be based on risk of direct exposure to COVID-19, risk of serious illness and death with increasing age, and the national priority to reopen schools. Based on these considerations, Cabinet members approved that vaccinations at Texas State will be provided in this order of priority:

1. Healthcare: Student Health Center staff, athletic trainers, College of Health Professions faculty, staff, and students providing direct patient care
2. Emergency responders: University Police Department staff
3. Staff involved in providing vaccinations
4. Death service providers: Forensic Anthropology Center faculty, staff, and students
5. Childcare providers: Child Development Center faculty, staff, and student assistants
6. Faculty, staff, and students 65 years of age and older
7. Faculty, staff, and students who work in preK-12
8. Faculty, staff, and students with chronic medical conditions who are 50 and older
9. Faculty, staff, and students with chronic medical conditions who are 40 and older
10. Faculty, staff, and students with chronic medical conditions who are 16 and older

Ms. Sandy Pantlik discussed the messaging plan. A general announcement will be shared with the University community followed by a targeted email to those in the priority groups.

Dr. Carranco compared data from the week of February 22, 2021, to data from the week of March 1, 2021. Week-to-week comparisons revealed:

- In Texas, the average daily case counts decreased from 4,243 to 2,800 cases per day, and the average daily positivity rate decreased from 9.9 to seven percent.
- In Hays county, the average daily case counts decreased from 62 to 31 cases per day, and the positivity rate decreased from 8.9 percent to 6.5 percent.
- In Williamson county, the average daily case counts increased slightly from 71 to 73 cases per day, while the average daily positivity rate decreased from 8.3 percent to six percent.

For the week of March 1, 2021, Texas State conducted 1,477 tests, with 37 returning positive for a positivity rate of 2.5 percent. Given the low positivity rate, Cabinet members agreed to expand the offering of in-person events as long as strict safety protocols are in place and enforced.

As of March 5, 2021, there were 86 active cases at Texas State; three students were in on-campus quarantine and five students were in isolation. Following spring break, Dr. Carranco expects the number of active cases to increase but not to levels seen during surges.

For the week of February 22, 2021, The University of Texas at Austin reported 35 positive results out of 4,466 tests for a positivity rate of 0.8 percent.

Cabinet members discussed the lift in the state-wide face covering requirement and agreed to maintain current safety protocols until the vaccine is distributed more widely and case counts decline further.

Pandemic/Post Pandemic Work Groups (#771)

Dr. Lloyd and guest Dr. Angela Ausbrooks, chair of the Faculty and Staff Morale Work Group, discussed the final Faculty and Staff Morale Report. The Work Group identified five themes that might have the greatest impact on morale: faculty and staff workplace concerns, transparency and regularity in university communications, increased workload for faculty and staff, pay issues and raises, and budget cuts and job protection.

Recommendations for supervisors include to:

- allow flexible work schedules and remote work, where possible;
- encourage employees working in person and remotely to use wellness time and take mental health breaks;
- participate in professional development training on how to be more empathetic and compassionate in the workplace and how to supervise employees working remotely;
- schedule brief one-on-one meetings with employees weekly or bi-weekly;
- recognize employees who go above and beyond;
- in departmental meetings, refer/review the [Roadmap](#), highlighting changes and new information; and
- support the flow of communication from university leadership, by discussing in meetings the information that they have received from sources such as their division's vice president, [President's Cabinet meeting minutes](#), [TXST Connections](#), [From the Hill](#), etc.

Recommendations for university leadership include to:

- review and revise the remote work policy for after the pandemic, exploring and identifying areas where work productivity may be enhanced via remote work;
- where possible, ensure that the remote work policy is applied equitably across divisions;
- communicate to the university community about the state of the university, the vaccine plan, and what the workplace will look like post pandemic;
- develop additional forms of training for supervisors (e.g., soft skills and managing remote workers); and
- ensure that workgroups and other committees are working together so that efforts are not being duplicated.

The report will be shared with the [Presidential Work Life Advisory Council](#) and posted on the [Faculty and Staff Morale Work Group Webpage in the Roadmap](#).

Mr. Algoe reported that [UPPS 04.04.01 General Workplace Policy](#), which addresses remote work and telecommuting, and [UPPS 04.04.32 Texas State Employee Wellness Program](#) have both been recently updated to align with current best practices and in response to recommendations received from various sources, including the Faculty and Staff Morale Group, Staff Council, and Town Hall meetings.

Mr. Algoe suggested that supervisors be encouraged to review [the HR Essentials for TXST Managers Video Library | Learning On-Demand Website](#), which includes training on employee relations, Texas State policies, promoting employee development, managing basics, etc. Mr. Algoe will ask the Office of Human Resources to add a training video on how to effectively supervise employees working remotely.

Demonstration Policy (#755)

Dr. Hernandez and Mr. Algoe discussed the enforcement of health and safety guidelines during demonstrations and other forms of expressive activity. The same set of standards will apply to those who are affiliated with Texas State (students, faculty, and staff) and those who are not. While the Demonstration Response Team will ask people participating in and observing an expressive activity to wear face coverings, their main focus will be to protect Texas State students, for instance, by establishing barriers to promote social distancing from a speaker, who may be refusing to wear a face covering.

Board of Regents Follow-Up (#57)

Mr. Algoe provided a follow-up to the March 2021 Board of Regents meeting.

Chancellor's Meeting with the Presidents Follow-Up (#623)

President Trauth summarized topics discussed at the Chancellor's meeting with the Presidents. The primary topics discussed were funding for higher education and the upcoming Texas Senate Finance Committee and Texas House Appropriations Committee meetings.

President's Update (#556)

This item was not discussed.

Significant Issues (#01)

Provost Bourgeois discussed an upcoming performance, *In Arabia We'd All Be Kings*, that will be produced and directed by a Master of Fine Arts student. Given the language used in the performance, a moderated discussion will follow.

Mr. Algoe provided clarification regarding student graduate assistant's pay during the recent university closure due to severe weather.

DMT:ta

Posted to web at <http://cabinet.president.txstate.edu/> on April 2, 2021.