

To: President's Cabinet
From: Denise M. Trauth
Subject: President's Cabinet Meeting
January 3, 2022

Impact of COVID-19 (#770)

Dr. Lloyd reviewed Dr. Carranco's report comparing data from the week of January 2, 2022, to data from the week of December 26, 2021.

Week-to-week comparisons revealed:

- In Texas, the average daily case counts increased from 10,201 to 11,957 cases per day, and the average daily positivity rate increased from 21.4 to 26.5 percent.
- In Williamson county, the average daily case counts decreased from 270 to 268, and the average daily positivity rate decreased from 24 to 11.2 percent.
- In Travis county, the average daily case counts increased from 261 to 469 cases per day, and the average daily positivity rate increased from 18.3 to 24 percent.
- In Hays county, the average daily case counts increased from 143 to 328 cases per day. By meeting time, average daily positivity rate for the week of January 2, 2022, had yet to be reported. For the week of December 26, 2021, the average daily positivity rate was 21.6 percent.
- In Texas, hospitalizations increased from 3,376 to 5,523.

COVID-19 transmission levels, as defined by the CDC, in Texas as well as Hays, Williamson, and Travis counties were "high" during the past week. The current surge is expected to peak in mid-January, with "substantial" to "high" levels of transmission likely through the end of February.

Common symptoms of Omicron include cough, runny/stuffy nose, sore throat, fatigue, and headache. Though illness from Omicron is not as severe as previous strains, student and employee absenteeism are expected to be high during January.

Omicron spreads more quickly and has a shorter incubation period than previous variants, making it difficult for contact tracers to effectively identify close contacts. Access to testing may also be difficult due to increased demand and limited supply.

The new CDC isolation/quarantine guidelines, which shorten the isolation and quarantine periods and do not require testing at the end of all isolation and quarantine scenarios, have been criticized by medical experts. Further clarification is expected to come from the CDC in the upcoming days. Nevertheless, the guidelines clearly indicate that face masks should be worn in all scenarios. Thus, requesting that everyone wear a face mask while inside Texas State buildings can help mitigate that risk.

Preliminary data supports the efficacy of boosting. However, of all who are vaccinated, only a third is boosted.

Universities nationwide and in Texas have either delayed the start of the spring semester or transitioned temporarily in-person classes to remote/online delivery.

President Cabinet agreed to the following university operations:

- Course instruction will be moved to remote/online delivery through January 30, 2022.
- Face-to-face course delivery will return on January 31, 2022.
- Texas State campuses and offices will remain open for business, with services offered in-person and/or virtually. The Albert B. Alkek Library, transportation services, residence halls, dining services, and access to recreation centers, the LBJ Student Center, and the Student Health Center will still be available.
- Residence halls will open for move-in as planned with all residents required to show a negative COVID-19 test result prior to move-in, but the move-in period will be extended for students who choose to come to campus following or during the two weeks of online/remote delivery classes.
- Remote work and flexible scheduling for employees will be encouraged. Supervisors should work through their division leadership team for approval of plans.
- University-sponsored in-person events may be suspended or moved to an online/virtual format. Event coordinators are asked to consult with supervisors to evaluate scheduled in-person events to determine if they will be postponed, cancelled, or transitioned to remote delivery.

Messaging capturing university operations will be disseminated university-wide on January 3, 2022.

Antigen test availability is limited. Dr. Carranco will inquire with MD Diagnostics about their ability to provide antigen testing in addition to the PCR testing on the San Marcos Campus.

Digital Signage (#773)

Mr. Pierce discussed centralizing digital signage and reviewed a draft policy for the Bobcat Digital Sign (BDS) program. The BDS program was established to improve marketing and communication, including emergency notification, across both campuses. Displays are categorized as public, departmental, and private/special purpose. Display requirements and guidelines have been incorporated into the new policy. The new policy also addresses service models and advertiser participation.

Currently, 50 displays are live; all 63 displays will be live by the start of the spring semester.

Mr. Pierce, Dr. Breier, and Mr. Coryell will meet to discuss digital advertising that may impact an advertising partnership with Athletics.

President Trauth and Mr. Pierce will seek guidance from TSUS General Counsel about advertising guidelines.

President's Update (#556)

Dr. Trauth announced that after the meeting, she will share with TSUS Chancellor Brian McCall the university's plans to move in-person classes to remote during the first two weeks of the semester.

Significant Issues (#01)

Provost Bourgeois reported that fall 2022 acceptances are up more than 30 percent compared to the same time last year and is comparable with pre-pandemic numbers.

Provost Bourgeois announced that Texas State has entered into a partnership with Amazon. Through Amazon's Career Choice program, about 2,000 employees working at the San Marcos facility are eligible to receive educational tuition benefits to pursue an undergraduate degree at Texas State. Amazon will cover the cost of tuition up to \$5,250 per year for full-time employees and \$2,625 per year for part-time employees.

Provost Bourgeois announced that two Study in America programs scheduled to be taught in spring 2022 have been cancelled due to the current COVID-19 surge.

Mr. Algoe reported that many construction projects scheduled over the break were postponed, as Texas State subcontractors had to shut down temporarily due to their employees becoming infected with COVID-19.

Dr. Breier provided a preliminary update on University Advancement fundraising during December 2021.

Mr. Coryell discussed the latest Sun Belt Conference COVID-19 policy and its implications on men's and women's basketball. Upcoming games are likely to be cancelled.

Dr. Ekin provided an update on a grant application submitted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Mr. Pierce discussed a lingering issue from a fire in a maintenance hole that impacted service provided by Grande Communications.

Dr. Silva announced that the Council for Inclusive Excellence has completed its review of the Life Anew report, and cohort members involved in the Life Anew process have been given an opportunity to provide feedback. Later in the month, Dr. Silva will provide the final report, which includes themes and recommended actions, to President's Cabinet members for their review and consideration.

DMT:ta

Posted to web at <http://cabinet.president.txstate.edu/> on January 7, 2022.