

To: President's Cabinet
From: Denise M. Trauth
Subject: President's Cabinet Meeting
September 13, 2021

Impact of COVID-19 (#770)

Dr. Carranco compared data from the week of September 6, 2021, to data from the week of August 30, 2021. In general, case counts and positivity rates are down, and are expected to continue to decline at a slow rate given that a portion of Texas residents, including Texas State University community members, are unvaccinated and do not wear masks.

Week-to-week comparisons revealed:

- In Texas, the average daily case counts decreased from 15,021 to 12,950 cases per day, and the average daily positivity rate increased from 14.9 to 16.2 percent;
- In Williamson county, the average daily case counts decreased from 466 to 335 cases, and the average daily positivity rate decreased from 18.7 to 14.4 percent;
- In Travis county, the average daily case counts decreased from 529 to 522 cases per day, and the average daily positivity rate decreased from 10.6 to 10.1 percent; and
- In Hays county, the average daily case counts decreased from 139 to 119 cases per day; the average daily positivity rate had not been reported by meeting time.

Across Texas, hospitalizations have decreased from 13,732 to 13,230, and in Travis county, hospitalizations have decreased from 597 to 547.

College campuses have generally had lower COVID-19 positivity rates than their surrounding communities. This has been consistently true at universities such as Texas A&M University, The University of Texas, and Texas State. For example, preliminary data for the week of September 6, 2021, indicate that Texas State had 64 positive tests out of 1,650 tests for a positivity rate of 3.9 percent. The University of Texas and Texas A&M University recently reported positivity rates of 0.65 percent (40 positive tests out of 6,168 tests) and 5.1 percent (1,124 positive tests out of 22,211 tests), respectively.

On September 5, 2021, active cases at Texas State were 474, and on September 12, 2021, that number declined to 340 active cases.

COVID-19 fully vaccinated rates of those who are 12 years of age and older are:

- 58.9 percent of the Texas population,
- 60.3 percent of Hays county,
- 67.2 percent of Williamson county,
- 68.6 percent of Travis county, and
- 63 percent of the U. S. population.

Dr. Carranco reviewed the protocol for assessing on-campus transmission and explained why the university has yet to see evidence of broad COVID-19 transmission. The likelihood of transmission is low based on Texas State's mitigation measures and the fact that more than half of the population is vaccinated and a small portion is naturally immune. In the event a cluster is observed and cases are linked together, target interventions will be initiated immediately.

Future enhancements are being planned to strengthen the university's response:

- The Bobcat Trace reporting system will be enhanced to provide professors with the name of the positive case as soon as a report is submitted and an opportunity for faculty to identify close contacts in the class (those sitting within six feet of the positive case) for immediate notification via an automated process.
- Contact tracers' investigation database will be expanded to include information on the number of positive cases in each class.
- Eight additional contact tracers will be added by the end of this week to bring the total number of Texas State contact tracers to 20. With case counts and positivity rates starting to decline on Texas State campuses and the addition of several contact tracers, it is expected that case investigations will be completed in a timely fashion.

Testing remains a key mitigation measure. It is estimated that 40 percent of those infected will have no symptoms and can spread infection to others without knowing it. It is important for persons, regardless of vaccination status, to test every two weeks or when sent a notice by the university's proactive, random testing program. Testing after potential exposures in high-risk situations is important too, such as going to a bar or concert, traveling by airplane, bus, or train, or attending a crowded indoor social gathering. With that said, Dr. Carranco announced that Texas State is expanding COVID-19 testing on its San Marcos Campus with the addition of a second testing site at the Student Recreation Center. MD Diagnostic Labs from San Antonio is providing COVID-19 PCR testing using an oral swab. No appointments for testing will be necessary. Testing will be available Monday-Friday. MD Diagnostic Labs will bill the health insurance plan for those with insurance or the CARES Act for those without insurance.

Data indicate that COVID-19 is not going away for several years. Cabinet members agreed that the Texas State community has the tools available to stay safe -- vaccination, face masks, and testing, to name a few -- while living their lives and thriving. Community members must take precautions and remain vigilant. Messaging will continue to be shared with faculty, staff, and students reiterating these important points.

President's Update (#556)

The Texas State presidential search committee has been appointed by Texas State University System Chancellor Brian McCall, a presidential search website will be created, and the executive search firm will hold listening sessions with key constituent groups.

President Trauth announced that the 2020 and 2021 new faculty reception will be held in the LBJ Student Center Grand Ballroom on September 14, 2021.

Significant Issues (#01)

Provost Bourgeois described the Bobcat Cares Plan to award \$40 million this fall semester. As of September 10, 2021, the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships received 21,003 applications from eligible students for the Bobcat Cares Emergency Grant. Award amounts will vary from \$1,100 to \$2,600.

Mr. Algoe announced that a UPPS for the student employee grievance process is being developed and is nearly ready to enter the review process.

Dr. Breier announced that Ms. Sonia Diaz, senior vice president of Balsera Communications and Texas State alumna, will deliver the keynote address during the 10th Anniversary Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Banquet on September 16, 2021.

Mr. Algoe shared that he received a request to place a banner recognizing Texas State's 10th anniversary of becoming an HSI on the J. C. Kellam building. The J. C. Kellam building does not have mounting bolts for banner placements, but the Old Main building does. Thus, the banner will be placed on the Old Main building. President Trauth asked that the policy for banner placement requests be reviewed at a future cabinet meeting.

RTA 10/11/21 Discuss the approval process for hanging banners on university buildings.

Mr. Coryell discussed the Texas State football team's win over Florida International University on September 11, 2021.

Mr. Coryell announced that during the September 18, 2021, Texas State football game versus the University of Incarnate Word, Texas State will honor essential workers and medical professionals who have been instrumental in leading the university community through the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Posted to web at <http://cabinet.president.txstate.edu/> on October 1, 2021.