

To: President's Cabinet  
From: Denise M. Trauth  
Subject: President's Cabinet Meeting  
September 28, 2020

### **Impact of COVID-19 (#770)**

Guest Dr. Emilio Carranco provided an update on the COVID-19 pandemic and the strategies in play to mitigate the spread. The COVID-19 pandemic is trending in an encouraging direction at the state and local levels. The seven-day average daily case count in Texas is about 3,300 cases per day. Williamson county has 26 cases per day, and Hays county has 19 cases per day.

At Texas State, 542 tests were conducted during the week of September 21, 2020, average case counts were 11 cases per day and the positivity rate was 4.6 percent. As of September 27, 2020, the active case count is 127. The number of cases in residence halls is decreasing. At present, 30 students are in isolation and 24 are in quarantine. Texas State has set aside 51 isolation units and 170 quarantine units. Students are being moved out of Sterry Hall to make additional quarantine units available. When this moveout is complete, a total of 210 quarantine units will be available for quarantine. Results from contact tracing reveal no transmission on our campuses; the primary factors driving spread are social gatherings with friends and family.

Texas State University has partnered with the Texas Division of Emergency Management and Curative, Inc., to bring free COVID-19 testing to the university community. The PCR test is collected with an oral swab and results are provided in less than 48 hours. All Texas State faculty, staff, and students are eligible for the testing, but it is not recommended for those who have had a positive test within the last 90 days. The kiosk is set up in the quad and testing has begun. Messaging will be sent out to the university community no later than September 29, 2020.

As a result of this proactive testing, the Student Health Center will reach out to the students who test positive and encourage them to report to Bobcat Trace to initiate contract tracing.

New testing options will be coming to market soon. The options will be more affordable and provide faster results, thereby enhancing Texas State's testing capacity.

The Student Health Center will continue to test students at random on a weekly basis.

More contact tracers have been hired, thereby building Texas State's capacity to contact a positive case's close contacts within 24 hours.

Dr. Carranco, Mr. Elias Martinez, and Ms. Sandy Pantlik discussed promotional responsibilities related to the Curative testing initiative. The Student Health Center is creating a university-wide email message and other communication/marketing elements. University Marketing will provide support through the main university social media channels, and the University Communications team will provide support through the President's Twitter account, TXST Connections, and

updates to the Roadmap, as needed. University Communications will also handle any related media calls. Cabinet members discussed updating the dashboard, accordingly.

Dr. Carranco discussed a study on hospitalizations and young adults infected with COVID-19. While COVID-19 receives great media attention regarding how it affects older, at risk populations, research suggests that young adults are a risk, too. Dr. Carranco requested that a communication awareness campaign be launched encouraging students to remain vigilant. Cabinet members suggested that the campaign include an op-ed piece in the *University Star*, a short video, and messaging shared through social media channels.

Cabinet members discussed preparing messaging around adhering to safe and healthy measures for Halloween and whether to allow face-to face classes to continue after Thanksgiving. Current strategies seem to be working. Texas State has been laser-focused on messaging and enforcing health and safety measures. The outcome of these actions proved helpful in preventing a surge following the Labor Day weekend. Thus, Texas State will do the same for other holidays, including Halloween and Thanksgiving. University Communications will work with University Marketing to prepare messaging for dissemination through multiple platforms.

Cabinet members discussed whether Spring Break should be held. President Trauth asked Cabinet members to give consideration and be prepared to discuss at a future President's Cabinet Meeting.

### **Video Surveillance Camera Maintenance Plan (#695)**

Mr. Pierce and guests UPD Chief Laurie Clouse; Mr. Kevin Huffaker, Director, Learning Tech Research; and Mr. Mark Hughes, Associate Vice President, Technology Resources, reviewed the video surveillance assessment performed by Network Operations. Mr. Huffaker discussed the design of the assessment, composition and distribution of cameras, quality of cameras, and recommendations (including develop process for camera selection and placement, increase storage for recorded video, improve quality of recorded video, establish parking garage minimums, and redesign parking lot coverage).

Chief Clouse shared that cameras have been useful in solving criminal cases. Cabinet members discussed the camera purchase and placement process. Provost Bourgeois led a discussion on placement of cameras in academic buildings. Mr. Algoe discussed the cost of placing cameras in parking garages and whether to hire a security consultant.

Mr. Pierce discussed resolutions from Student Government about emergency phones and cameras in parking garages.

Mr. Algoe shared that "this premise is under video surveillance" signs are being strategically placed.

The quality of cameras was discussed. Mr. Huffaker discussed the importance of selecting the type of camera based on needs.

Mr. Pierce will convene stakeholders to discuss the next steps and will keep Cabinet members informed as the project unfolds.

### **Pandemic/Post Pandemic Work Groups (#771)**

Guest Dr. Vedaraman Sriraman discussed responses to the recent thematic feedback survey. Respondents included 732 students, faculty, and staff. Responses to three questions were discussed.

From review of the responses to “How well are your fall 2020 classes are going?” many faculty, staff, and students agreed that the health and safety compliance measures were going well. Specific themes for faculty included student engagement, flexibility in course delivery, and technology software and support; themes for students fully face-to-face included peer and instructor interactions, campus services, and reduced density; themes for students enrolled in face-to-face and online courses included instructor care and responsiveness; and themes for students fully online were instructor flexibility and responsiveness, not commuting/being exposed to COVID-19, and convenience.

From review of the responses to “What challenges have you encountered?” specific challenges for faculty included heavy workload, new technology/software, and student illness and anxiety; challenges for students fully face-to-face included online offerings only for certain courses, quality of instruction, and cost of tuition and fees; challenges for students enrolled in face-to-face and online courses included adapting to multiple instruction modalities, technology issues, and instructor's familiarity with technology; and challenges for students fully online included stress, workload, and quality of instruction and level of engagement.

From review of the responses to “What ideas do you have for the classroom and instruction in spring 2021?” faculty asked for the option to select their own course delivery. Interestingly, two opposing themes emerged for faculty: to offer hybrid and online courses only versus to offer more face-to-face classes. Specific requests from staff included offering online courses only, maintain health and safety compliance measures, continue remote work options, and offer more hybrid classes; from students fully face-to-face included reopening campus and offering more face-to-face and online options; from students enrolled in face-to-face and online courses included offering more face-to-face and online options, improving quality of instruction, lowering tuition and fees, and maintain health and safety compliance; and from students fully online included improving quality of instruction and lowering tuition and fees. Interestingly two opposing themes emerged from this group: to offer only online courses versus to provide both face-to-face and online options for each course offered.

The Continuity of Education Work Group will reconvene and use the results of the survey to inform their recommendations for spring 2021. They will also connect with Student Government leadership to seek additional input.

### **President's Update (#556)**

President Trauth announced that the November 2020 Board of Regent meeting will be held face-to-face. Representation from each component institution will be limited to the president, the provost, and the chief financial officer.

Dr. Trauth informed Cabinet members that Dr. Harrison Keller, Commissioner of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, had a meeting with university presidents in the state of Texas about the upcoming biennium. Funding for Texas Grants will be reduced by five percent. Dr. Keller suggested capturing stories of students who have benefitted from the federal and state aid during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Cavitt will work with the Division of Student Affairs staff to gather this information. Cabinet members also discussed ways to show state legislators that higher education is part of the solution to the economic recovery of Texas.

### **Significant Issues (#01)**

Cabinet members discussed the new [Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping](#). Dr. Silva will consult with The Texas State University System General Counsel office staff and return to the next Cabinet meeting with additional information.

#### **RTA: 10/1/20 Discuss Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping.**

Mr. Algoe led a discussion on enhancing ways students can identify student organizations that are active during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Cavitt reported that a student organization fair was held at the beginning of the fall 2020 semester. Dr. Cavitt will ask the Division of Student Affairs staff to explore additional strategies for raising student awareness.

Dr. Cavitt announced that voters are not required to wear masks while waiting in line to vote. Cabinet members discussed strategies for mitigating the spread of COVID-19 during the election season.

Mr. Algoe discussed placing signs in prominent/high traffic areas to encourage early voting.

Cabinet members discussed how Curative is informing participants of their COVID-19 tests results via email. If a participant uses their Texas State email address, the question was asked if the email would be subject to an open records request. Clarification was provided. Student emails would not be subject to release under FERPA.

DMT:ta

Posted to web at <http://cabinet.president.txstate.edu/> on November 5, 2020.