

To: President's Cabinet  
From: Denise M. Trauth  
Subject: President's Cabinet Meeting  
December 14, 2020

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

Dr. Emilio Carranco introduced to members of the President's Cabinet, Dr. Sarah Doss as his backup in case he is out due to illness or injury. Dr. Carranco provided an update on the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Carranco compared data from the week of December 7, 2020, to data from the week of November 30, 2020. In Texas, week-to-week comparisons revealed an increase in the average new cases per day from 10,789 to 11,443 cases per day, and a decrease in the positivity rate from 14.2 to 13.1 percent.

In Hays county, average new cases per day decreased from 82 to 69 cases per day, and a decrease in the positivity rate from 9.4 to 7.8 percent

In Williamson county, average new cases per day increased from 177 to 204 cases per day, and the positivity rate decreased from 11.3 to 9 percent.

During the week of December 7, 2020, preliminary analysis indicates 1,218 tests were conducted on students, faculty, and staff on the San Marcos Campus, with 35 returning positive for a positivity rate of 2.9 percent.

As of December 11, 2020, there were 118 active cases at Texas State. The number of students housed in isolation is one and in quarantine is nine.

Dr. Carranco provided a COVID-19 update for other universities. During the week of December 7, 2020, at The University of Texas at Austin, 3,034 tests were conducted with 29 returning positive for a positivity rate of 0.96 percent. At Texas A&M University, 4,256 tests were conducted with 247 returning positive for a positivity rate of 5.8 percent.

Dr. Carranco provided an update on the strategies in play to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. To ensure the safety of students and employees, Cabinet members discussed expanding COVID-19 testing capacity in two ways. First, a second Curative, Inc. testing kiosk has been requested for the San Marcos Campus, to increase testing capacity to about 500 PCR tests per day. Second, the Student Health Center staff are planning to offer free antigen testing for up to 2,000 students living in residence halls who were not able to test for COVID-19 within the week prior to returning to campus in the spring. The free antigen tests will be provided at two sites on January 18, 2021. The total cost to cover the antigen tests (2,000 tests at \$18 per test) and the staff to perform the tests is about \$40,000. Dr. Rodney Rohde, Chair of the Clinical Laboratory Science program, will assist with identifying students in the Clinical Laboratory Science Program to help perform the testing. Cabinet members approved two sites for mass testing -- The LBJ Student Center and the Student Recreation Center. Staff from Residence Life and Housing will meet with Dr. Carranco and Ms. Pantlik later in the week to discuss ways to promote the day of mass testing.

Dr. Carranco provided an update on COVID-19 vaccine distribution. On December 11, 2020, the U. S. Food and Drug Administration issued the first emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. The initial distributions were small. For example, Hays county received 975 doses in the first distribution. Distributions are expected to continue to be small for the next two months; larger allocations are expected in February or March 2021. The vaccine is expected to be available to priority groups prior to May 2021, and to the general population beginning in May 2021.

While the Texas Department of State Health Services has established prioritization guidelines for vaccine allocation, Texas State will need to determine internal priority groups in the event that Texas State does not receive enough doses to cover all of the targeted groups. With more than 5,000 faculty and staff on Texas State campuses, Cabinet members began a preliminary discussion about who will be the first to receive the vaccine if the supply is limited. Dr. Carranco proposed to develop a priority list, based on guidelines established by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Texas Department of State Health Services. Provost Bourgeois recommended that faculty and staff who are working in-person on campuses be included in the first group of essential workers. Initial groups include health care personnel with potential or indirect exposure to COVID-19 and custodians who support their units; first responders in the University Police Department; and frontline/essential workers, such as those who provide in-person instruction or support services.

Dr. Carranco named potential sites for vaccinating 1,000 to 4,000 people per day. Cabinet members tentatively approved using the LBJ Student Center Grand Ballroom for mass vaccinations and the second LBJ Student Center Ballroom for intake and waiting. Given that the ballrooms served as remote learning computers labs in fall 2020, President Trauth asked Mr. Pierce to explore the feasibility of moving the labs or identifying other labs on the San Marcos Campus to meet students' remote learning needs.

Dr. Carranco described the current process of how the flu vaccine is administered on the campuses. To speed up the check-in process for the COVID-19 vaccine, Dr. Carranco will explore the possibility of developing a scheduling app.

Dr. Carranco described the operational costs that will be associated with mass vaccination. The Federal government currently allows a vaccine administration charge to be assessed and billed to insurance companies. Cabinet members asked Dr. Carranco to verify federal guidelines and work on messaging.

Dr. Carranco continued the discussion from a previous Cabinet meeting on the validity of using a smell test to indicate whether an individual may have COVID-19. In a previous meeting, it was suggested that a scent be added to the sanitizers in dispensing stations and encourage users to perform a smell check. Since then, Dr. Carranco learned that scents cannot be added to the sanitizers. Cabinet members agreed that the smell test is a viable screening tool. Mr. Algoe discussed developing campaign materials raising awareness that a sudden loss of the sense of smell is one of the earliest signs and best predictors of COVID-19.

Dr. Carranco and Dr. Lloyd discussed the need to operationalize a plan for communicating information about COVID-19 during spring 2021. Dr. Lloyd will work with Dr. Carranco, Ms. Sandy Pantlik, Assistant Vice President for University Communications, and Mr. Elias Martinez, Assistant Vice President for University Marketing, to develop a COVID-19 communications plan for spring 2021 that will include biweekly COVID-19 updates, a beginning of the semester letter from President Trauth to the university community, and ways to message important aspects of the roadmap, and address the following topics: the revised health and safety measures, the revised quarantine protocol, the importance of testing, residence hall student testing, the importance of Bobcat Trace/contact tracing, smell test for screening, vaccination plan and priorities, employee training, and important information for supervisors.

Dr. Lloyd sought clarification about several COVID-19 related items:

- The process for seeking approval for business-related travel in the spring 2021 will be the same as it was in the fall 2020. Requests must include strict operating procedures and are approved by the divisional vice president on a case-by-case basis. Approved travel will primarily be limited to research-related travel.
- Close contacts will be instructed to quarantine for 10 days; student-athletes identified as close contacts may get out of quarantine after seven days with a negative test result.
- Students, faculty, and staff, who travel domestically and internationally, will be directed to follow current CDC [travel](#) guidelines
- A decision on the status of Education Abroad programs during summer 2021 has yet to be made. Provost Bourgeois is monitoring how quickly and successfully the rollout of the vaccine occurs.
- During the winter break, the Dashboard will be updated weekly and contact tracers will be available even though the Curative, Inc. will not be conducting tests on the campuses.

Dr. Lloyd discussed inquiries from Staff Council regarding remote work for spring 2021. Cabinet members agreed that, for the most part, university operations in the spring 2021 will look like fall 2020. There is not a one-size-fits-all solution. While divisional vice presidents have the discretion to make adjustments based on need, all supervisors are encouraged to work with their employees to adapt and remain flexible during the pandemic.

### **Inclusion and Diversity (#747)**

Dr. Silva provided a fall update from the Council for Inclusive Excellence (CIE) and guest Dr. Benn discussed the Council's spring 2021 initiatives. During fall 2020, the Council members completed a survey to generate ideas and provide feedback related to topics and initiatives for spring 2021; drafted institutional definitions for equity, diversity, and inclusion; reviewed, provided feedback, and endorsed a restorative justice initiative in support of student concerns; recommended adding the letter A to the DE&I acronym, such that DEIA would stand for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; and endorsed adding CIE priorities to the Institutional Inclusive Excellence (IIE) Strategic Plan.

For spring 2021, the Council will develop specific objectives to be added to the IIE strategic plan, continue a discussion on Universal Design, review Bring It Up Bobcats 2020 Report and discuss strategies to address emerging themes, and review and provide feedback to: the Elections

Task Force final report; the Naming Committee's recommendations; the DE&I Training Task Force's recommendations; and the Affirmative Action Plan.

### **Campus Recreation**

Dr. Cavitt shared a proposal from Campus Recreation seeking approval to expand services in spring 2021. With the caveat that strict protocols are in place and enforced, Cabinet members approved American Red Cross classes for employees, guest sales, swim lessons (capped at eight participants), an adventure trip program, group exercise passes, climbing center memberships, and outdoor intramural events/sports clubs (capped at 10 participants). Cabinet members did not approve hosting events open to outside guests.

**RTA 2/1/21 Dr. Hernandez to provide an update on the expanded services offered by Campus Recreation at the beginning of spring 2021.**

### **Board of Regents Follow-Up (#57)**

Mr. Algoe summarized the motions approved at the December 2020 Board of Regents meeting, including but not limited to the approval of the design development documents for the Infrastructure Research Laboratory, contracts for janitorial products and supplies, contracts for promotional and branded items, and a contract involving the Edwards Aquifer Authority, City of San Marcos, and Texas State concerning the Edwards Aquifer Authority Habitat Conservation Plan Program.

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

President Trauth reviewed topics from the December 2020 Board of Regents meeting. Though it is unclear what changes the 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature will make to funding of public institutions of higher education, TSUS component institutions were encouraged to begin preparing for an additional five percent budget cut. President Trauth discussed how Regents will be informed about contracts prior to their submission as a Board motion.

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

This item was not discussed.

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

Provost Bourgeois announced that Mr. Cyrus Cassells is a finalist for the Texas Poet Laureate.

Provost Bourgeois announced that the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) has voted to grant 10 years of Continuing Accreditation to the Professional Athletic Training Program at Texas State.

Provost Bourgeois lauded the efforts of Associate Vice President Sriraman Vedaraman, the commencement planning team, and all other Texas State faculty and staff who participated in the

five commencement ceremonies held December 10-12, 2020. The ceremonies were well attended, and graduates and their family members were appreciative. Provost Bourgeois read an email that he received from a parent thanking all who were involved.

Provost Bourgeois discussed the 2020 Affirmative Action Plan. Dr. Debbie Thorne has been collaborating with Dr. Silva and Ms. Annalisa Turner, Affirmative Action Specialist, reviewing the plan for accuracy, concurring with elements, and addressing issues raised by the Office of the Provost.

Mr. Algeo asked Cabinet members to make sure that all employee performance reviews and required certifications for certain positions in their respective divisions are up to date.

Mr. Pierce stated the university's subscription to Elsevier will end at the end of December 2020, along with 21 other Texas institutions' licenses. Texas State is a member of a Texas Coalition comprised of 43 Texas universities who assembled to negotiate more amenable terms for access to the materials. It is unclear whether Elsevier will terminate Texas State's access during negotiations. University Libraries will continue to keep faculty informed.

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Posted to web at <http://cabinet.president.txstate.edu/> on December 18, 2020.