

To: President's Cabinet
From: Denise M. Trauth
Subject: President's Cabinet Meeting
January 25, 2021

Impact of COVID-19 (#770)

Guest Dr. Emilio Carranco compared data from the week of January 11, 2021, to data from the week of January 18, 2021. In Texas, these comparisons revealed a decrease in the average daily case counts from 19,129 to 14,800 cases per day, and a decrease in the average daily positivity rate from 16.2 to 15.4 percent.

In Hays county, the average daily case counts increased from 120 to 148 cases per day. By meeting time, Hays county had not reported the positivity rate for the week of January 18, 2021.

In Williamson county, the average daily case counts decreased from 397 to 384 cases per day, and the average daily positivity rate decreased from 15.6 to 12.9 percent.

The Student Health Center and Curative Inc. conducted 1,570 tests, with 85 returning positive for a positivity rate of 5.4 percent.

As of January 22, 2021, there were 241 active cases at Texas State, and four students were in isolation and eight were in quarantine.

In comparison to other Texas institutions of higher education, for the week of January 18, 2021:

- The University of Texas at Austin reported 83 positive results out of 5,263 tests for a positivity rate of 1.6 percent.
- Texas A&M University reported 201 positive results out of 3,612 tests for a positivity rate of 5.6 percent.

Dr. Carranco commented that the numbers in case counts and positive rates at Texas State were expected given that the spring semester began during the worst surge of the pandemic. The numbers do not suggest that Texas State is experiencing wide-spread transmission. State and local numbers are expected to continue to decline following the winter break.

Provost Bourgeois led a discussion on the current plan to gradually increase density on the Texas State campuses. Data from contact tracing suggests that COVID-19 transmission is most likely to occur during off-campus social engagements not affiliated with the university. There has been no evidence of transmission in face-to-face classes on either Texas State campus. Thus, the current plan to increase density will remain in place. Beginning February 1, 2021, classes coded for face-to-face instructional delivery will transition from online to face-to-face. Additionally, co-curricular programming may resume as long as strict mitigation strategies are implemented and adhered to. Standard operational procedures will be required for research, academic, and other co-curricular activities. To ease this transition, approval of non-university affiliated groups requesting to use university space will be postponed.

Dr. Carranco provided an update on vaccine allocation and distribution in the local area. Hays county and Christus Santa Rosa Hospital have received allocations. Across the state, the only university without a medical school that has received allocations is The University of Texas-El Paso. To date, they have received 975 doses.

Over the past week, the vaccine distribution strategies at state and national levels have changed considerably. The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) have begun directing most of the COVID-19 vaccines received from the federal government to Vaccine Hubs. Vaccine Hubs are sites designated by the state that can vaccinate large numbers of people within a community. Hays county has been designated as a Vaccine Hub and has identified a parking lot at the high school as a site for mass vaccinations. Texas State has not been named a Vaccine Hub.

In October 2020, DSHS published a COVID-19 vaccination plan. Since then, the Texas State Mass Vaccination Planning Work Group has been working diligently to put a university-specific mass vaccination distribution plan in place for Texas State students, faculty, and staff based on the DSHS plan. Unfortunately, recent changes to the state's approach to vaccine allocation and distribution will impact Texas State's ability to obtain the vaccine and distribute it to the university community as quickly as hoped. Accordingly, Texas State will change its messaging, as the health and safety of the Texas State community is its number one priority.

Guest Ms. Sandy Pantlik discussed that a new communication plan will be developed encouraging students, faculty, and staff who are planning to get a COVID-19 vaccination to register with a state or county vaccination site. At this time, Texas State cannot guarantee if and when it will receive allocations and does not want anyone to delay taking this important step to staying healthy. Students, faculty, and staff can get vaccinated anywhere in Texas, not just in their county of residence so they may consider registering in several places. The communications plan will include an email with a link to a video from Dr. Carranco explaining the recent shift in the state's approach to mass vaccination; a town hall open to students, faculty, and staff to provide a general COVID-19 update and a vaccine update will be scheduled. Prior to the rollout of the communication, Dr. Carranco will share this information with the Mass Vaccination Planning Work Group.

Provost Bourgeois discussed out-of-country study abroad programs for summer 2021. Given the uncertainty surrounding when students will receive the vaccine and the vaccine requirements for international travel, Provost Bourgeois will consult with Council of Academic Deans about cancelling summer 2021 study abroad programs.

Dr. Lloyd sought clarity on Texas State's position to not require the vaccine in order to work or to attend classes at Texas State. Cabinet members agreed that, generally speaking, this is Texas State's position. However, there may be certain situations, such as in clinical settings and study abroad programs, that may require vaccination in order to participate.

Dr. Carranco discussed priority groups for vaccination and how priority group lists are being developed and maintained.

Mr. Algoe announced an upcoming change to COVID-19 testing on the Round Rock Campus. Through an agreement with the Texas Division of Emergency Management, the Round Rock Campus is able to offer faculty, staff, and students free COVID-19 testing. The current provider, DAVICO, uses Curative Inc. test kits. Beginning on February 1, 2021, Spartan Medical will become the new test provider and will use Fulgent Genetics test kits. Testing will be:

- Located at a parking lot on the Round Rock Campus
- Open Monday through Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and one Saturday per month
- Open to the entire community

Development Update (#588)

Dr. Breier reviewed the fiscal year quarterly reports and provided a brief update on the Big Ideas.

President's Update (#556)

President Trauth led a discussion on spring 2021 commencement. The commencement ceremonies will be in-person and held at 10:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m., on May 13, 2021, and May 14, 2021. May 15, 2021, will serve as a make-up day in case of bad weather. Strict mitigation strategies will be implemented.

President Trauth announced that she recently joined the Texas Opportunity Coalition, chaired by Mr. Woody Hunt. The Coalition unites business leaders from across Texas who are dedicated to passing the federal congressional Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act that provides permanent legal status to Dreamers.

Significant Issues (#01)

Provost Bourgeois provided an enrollment update. As of January 24, 2021, enrollment in terms of total headcount is down 0.7 percent. Retention of freshmen from fall 2020 to spring 2021 is 91.7 percent, which is better than last year's retention rate of 90.8 percent.

Provost Bourgeois announced that Dr. Walt Horton, Associate Vice President for Research and Federal Relations, will be retiring at the end of summer 2021. Provost Bourgeois recounted how Texas State's research enterprise grew under Dr. Horton's leadership. A search firm will be hired; and shortly thereafter, a search committee will be appointed.

Mr. Algoe announced that that the Texas House of Representatives and the Texas Senate recently introduced separate, but similar, versions of the base budget. In both versions, the CORE research support funding is flat compared to the previous biennium. Texas State's initial distribution is up six percent due to its growth in research expenditures compared to other Emerging Research Universities.

DMT:ta

Posted to web at <http://cabinet.president.txstate.edu/> on January 27, 2021.