



July 20, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As you know, our planned Phase 1 return to campus was delayed until July 27, based upon the latest information from the state and county indicating alarming increases in cases of COVID-19, both locally and statewide.

We are continuing to carefully monitor state and local conditions which indicate that the spread of the coronavirus remains a concern both locally and statewide. On July 13, the state closed businesses that had been previously allowed to reopen, including hair salons, houses of worship, gyms, and offices for non-essential sectors. Last Friday, Governor Newsom ordered many K-12 schools across the state – including in San Diego County – to remain online for the fall semester, prescribing that a county must be off the state watch list for 14 days before schools could consider reopening. Although the order pertaining to K-12 does not directly affect our District, we are concerned that San Diego County continues to remain on the state’s monitoring list and is not allowing offices to reopen because of the number of coronavirus cases occurring here.

Another important indication of the uncertainty that lies ahead as we prepare for the fall semester includes the decision by the California Community College Athletic Association (CCCAA) to shift all fall sports, including football, to the spring season, and to cancel CCCAA state championships in 2020-21. The CCCAA stressed that return to athletics in January will only happen if it is safe to do so, based on state and federal guidelines. Our college leadership is carefully planning for the shift of fall sports to the spring to ensure our student-athletes can continue to compete at the collegiate level.

Considering the totality of the situation, the Chancellor’s Cabinet has decided to delay the return of Phase 1 employees until further notice. Faculty and staff who need to access their offices or classrooms should continue to schedule in advance with their dean, Vice President, or manager to ensure the safety of the campuses.

With all the challenges we face dealing with the uncertainty of the pandemic, let us not lose sight of the many positives that are happening in our District thanks to the extraordinary efforts of faculty, classified professionals and administrators, including the following:

- Our international students and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students can be assured that they can safely attend classes and pursue their education dreams.

- Students are being supported during this challenging time through innovative delivery systems.
- Our fall enrollment is up 4% compared to the same point in time as last year, even with a reduction in the number of sections.
- We have been able to provide financial assistance and access to technology to many students to help them focus on their studies.
- Our District is making strides in advancing the Board's *Call to Action* to dismantle systemic racism in our organization and ensure the diversity of our employees to reflect our students and community, including participating in the California Community College Equity Leadership Alliance at the University of Southern California's Race & Equity Center.

I am proud that we remain committed to our students and excellent programs, even with the massive uncertainty of the pandemic along with our budgetary challenges. As we learn more about this unstable public health situation, we will keep you informed. Thank you for your patience and sustained support as we work to provide safe learning and working environments for our students and employees.

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