



October 13, 2021

Return to Campus Update

Dear Colleagues,

It has been very exciting to watch us reunite and re-engage in person as a community this month.

In the past week alone, the Grossmont Symphony Orchestra and Master Chorale came together to perform live for the first time since COVID-19, making its debut at our stunning Performing and Visual Arts Center. Grossmont College hosted its first football game in front of a sizeable crowd, the Cuyamaca College Choir impressed the audience at the Samuel M. Ciccati Performing Arts Center, and Cuyamaca College hosted its first in-person student tour in two years. The energy is building.

The outlook on COVID-19 is improving, according to public health experts. And even when cases of COVID were escalating in the region, we continued to be fortunate on our campuses since we have had no outbreaks. Moreover, no employees have contracted COVID-19 on campus, and the weekly positivity rate was only 0.01% among our employees and students last week.

As we continue to closely follow public health guidance to protect the health and safety of our students and employees, we have launched an [updated COVID-19 information webpage](#) on our District website. The page is public-facing and can be accessed by clicking the aqua-colored COVID-19 box on the bottom left of the District's [homepage](#). There, we will share COVID-19 updates on a weekly basis, including case information, in lieu of sending emails. Those who have potentially been exposed will continue to receive direct notification from public health officials and/or our staff.

As we approach the midpoint of the semester, I wanted to provide some additional updates on our return to campus plans.

Return to Campus

Fall 2021

Due to the steady increase in COVID-19 cases and limited capacity to address all of the requests for accommodations, in early September, the District leadership decided to pause our phased return of employees back to campus at a minimum of two days per week. At the time, we committed to continue to monitor the public health situation before we resumed our plans for a phased return this fall.

I am pleased to report that the number of COVID-19 cases seen locally, statewide and nationally has significantly declined over the past month. As of last week, the [County of San Diego reported](#) an average daily case rate of 14.7 per 100,000 people, which is less than half the average 37 cases per 100,000 people seen in late August. Health officials are cautiously optimistic that the worst may be behind us with an increasing rate of vaccination and approval pending for a vaccine for children 5-12 years old.

Therefore, we will be moving to the next phase of our plan to return to on-campus operations. Beginning **November 8, 2021**, employees are expected to return to working on campus a minimum of three days a week to serve students and our community. Employees already working on campus full-time due to business necessity, as well as those with approved exceptions, and faculty teaching fully online will continue with their current work schedules.

Managers and supervisors will be working with their staff to plan for new onsite work schedules. Our priority is to provide a high level of customer service to students and community members both online and in person.

Spring 2022

Looking ahead to the spring, the District still plans for a full return to campus beginning **January 4, 2022**. A survey of student scheduling preferences is underway to help us optimize class schedules and services to best meet the needs of our students and community. In addition, we will be engaging our master planning partners, the architecture and design firm Gensler, to conduct a comprehensive survey of students and employees that looks to the future. This will assist us in planning for the future, including flexible work schedules as we continue to move forward.

Our priorities will continue to be both health and safety, and providing the learning and support needs that our students and community members expect. With our enrollment declining, our focus in the months ahead will be to reconnect with our students and our community, particularly our students of color, who have left our campuses in disproportionate numbers.

Many more classes will be offered either in person or on a hybrid basis (online and in person) in the spring. The campuses will continue to look and feel busier and more active. We are also ramping up our focus on registration support. We must do everything we can to welcome and support those who want to join our community.

COVID-19 Vaccines & Testing

We are scheduling additional vaccination pop-up events on our campuses for late fall and in the spring. Stay tuned for more details. In the meantime, health professionals are reporting that vaccinations and boosters are widely available in San Diego County. To schedule your vaccine or find out about booster shot eligibility, visit California's [MyTurn website](#).

We are also planning to expand COVID-19 testing in the spring, so that any employee or student can be voluntarily tested. Testing hours will expand to allow for increased capacity. For now, testing continues to be offered at these times and locations:

- Grossmont College (Bldg. 60): Mon. 2-7 p.m., Tues. 11 a.m. – 5p.m., and Wed. 1-5 p.m.
- Cuyamaca College (Annex #1): Mon. 12-7 p.m., Tues. 7-11 a.m., and Wed. 1-5 p.m.

In closing, we have weathered a great deal. We have shown resilience through these unpredictable and unprecedented times. Thank you for your perseverance and support for our students and each other as we continue to come back together as a community. Our future is bright.

With gratitude,

Lynn

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