



Pre-Spring Break Updates

March 23, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you are enjoying the first signs of spring: extra hours of daylight and warming temperatures. As we head into spring break next week, I wanted to share some updates on our continued progress moving forward together.

Feasibility Study on Future Bond Program

We are reminded weekly of the foresight that went into Proposition V years ago as buildings and construction upgrades come to life around us. At Cuyamaca, the Student Services Building continues to take shape, and at Grossmont, the Science, Math and Career Technology Complex and Veterans Resource Center are rapidly coming together. Solar canopy installations are sprouting up at both colleges.

Keeping our facilities current is a work in progress. We are presently updating our Facilities Master Plans with an intentional focus on the future needs of our students. This means not only maintaining and replacing aging facilities, but ensuring that our classrooms are contemporary and technology is current. Technology became even more critical during the pandemic as a lifeline connecting us together, and helping minimize disruptions to learning.

Recognizing the ongoing need to invest in the future, the Governing Board last week voted to conduct a feasibility study on a future bond program. With the help of the contractor Clifford Moss, LLC, we will gauge whether pursuing a bond measure makes sense this year or in the future. A critical piece of this work will involve amplifying our marketing and communications, to ensure our communities – and prospective students – know of the opportunities available at our colleges. A secondary benefit to this effort is that it will help reverse our declining enrollment. After an extensive community awareness effort, a poll will be conducted this summer, and we will determine the feasibility and timing of a new bond measure.

Smooth Transition Back to Campuses/Return to Activities

We have now been fully back on our campuses for about a month. I want to express my gratitude for how smoothly the transition has taken place.

It has been wonderful to see more people out and about, as well as community events returning to our campuses. Both colleges are planning to hold their spring commencements in person for the first time in three years, and our students are thrilled.

The health and safety of our campus community will always be our top priority. Since our return to campus on Feb. 22, a total of four employees who were on campus tested positive. None are believed to have been exposed on campus.

COVID-19 trends are moving in the right direction. While we hope the worst is behind us, we will continue to monitor the public health situation and respond accordingly.

As of now, out of an abundance of caution, we continue to require face coverings/masks indoors regardless of vaccination status. Masking is optional in outdoor spaces.

Transition to a Merit System

We are planning for a successful transition to a merit system for classified employees. Following is a timeline of initial steps that will lay the groundwork for the new system in the months ahead:

- At a special Governing Board meeting March 31, the District and CSEA will announce their nominee for their respective Personnel Commissioner.
- At the Governing Board's May 10 meeting, trustees will officially appoint two nominees (one identified by the Board and one identified by CSEA) to the new Personnel Commission. Part of the approval process includes holding a public hearing to consider the District's nominee. With the first two commissioners in place, the new Personnel Commission is officially established.
- The two Commissioners must then select a third commissioner. The two approved Commissioners will consider possible appointments and then make a selection at a public meeting held by the Personnel Commission.
- The Commission must then appoint a new personnel director. This new employee of the Commission must be hired from an eligibility list established by a competitive examination given by the Commission.
- The Personnel Commission must adopt a budget by May 30.
- The Personnel Commission has up to a year to adopt all of its procedural rules and regulations. Until then, the Commission must follow the District's rules and regulations related to classified personnel.

We will keep you informed as additional information becomes available.

Generous Donations

We also have some exciting news when it comes to donations to support students. We are deeply appreciative that donors recently pledged more than \$600,000 dollars to the District and colleges. We are heartened by this generosity, particularly during these uncertain times.

The funding will go to support our students, who, like other community college students across the state, have been disproportionately hit during the pandemic.

Coming Back Together with our East County Education Partners

On April 19, we will hold our first in-person East County Education Alliance meeting in three years. Our Governing Board will host their counterparts from the Grossmont Union High School District and Mountain Empire Unified School District at the Performing & Visual Arts Center at Grossmont College. The community is invited to the meeting, which will take place in-person starting at 4 p.m.

The theme will be, “Our Journey of Resilience ... Moving Forward Together.” Our boards will review shared progress and accomplishments, with a focus on student equity data to help guide future priorities.

As we welcome spring, there is a lot to look forward to as a community. Our future is bright.

With gratitude,

Lynn

Lynn Ceresino Neault, Ed.D.
Chancellor, Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District