

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT/SUPERINTENDENT
PRESIDENT'S CAMPUS UPDATES



February 19, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to share some of the good work we are doing on campus with regard to COVID-19 safety protocol efforts. Campus leadership provided an [update at this week's Board meeting](#), and I am sharing the highlights with you. The Board of Trustees consistently states that the safety of our employees and students is a top priority, and this topic will be a recurring agenda item at future board meetings.

On-Site Testing

I am pleased to share that we were just approved to be able to conduct COVID-19 PCR employees and students. Test results will take about 48-72 hours. More information regarding this partnership is coming soon.

Vaccine Distribution

The LA county 7-day average testing positivity rate is currently around 6 percent, which is very good considering it was much higher in the past. Vaccine distribution continues to be an issue, with the most recent challenge being transportation delays caused by winter storms. The LA County Department of Public Health has the capacity to vaccinate up to 1 million people per week if more vaccine supply becomes available. As of now, approximately 1,6 million have been vaccinated in LA county and approximately 500K people have received the second dose.

Beginning March 1, educators (that includes all Cerritos College employees) will be allowed to make appointments to receive the vaccine in LA County. Keep in mind, however, that the county has not received any additional allocation of vaccines, so appointments may be difficult to schedule.

Cerritos College is authorized to become a local vaccination distribution center through CalVax but we are awaiting an allocation of vaccines. Not all of the 100+ higher education institutions in LA County will receive allocations of vaccines; some of us may have to go through county sites or partner with other institutions to be able to receive them. As of now, our top priority is to secure vaccines on campus for interested employees. We also continue to advocate to the county so that we can become a community vaccination site.

It is unlikely that students will be eligible for vaccines at this point in time. Young people may be eligible to be vaccinated around June or July. I want to point out that the majority of our students are

in the age group with the highest transmission rate, and they often present as asymptomatic. Also, remember that because we are still in the [Purple Tier](#), there are many restrictions that continue to prohibit the gradual reopening of our campus.

Reopening

A campus reopening date continues to be an elusive target. At this time, we are hoping for a partial reopening in spring 2021, but we cannot yet determine to what extent that may be. By fall 2021, we are considering an expansion of some of our offerings. We believe we will have more clarity in a month or two as vaccinations become more available. We will also be taking into account the **campus survey results**. Campus leadership is also developing initial protocols to expand offerings for the fall semester.

Return to Campus Survey

Early next week, we will send a survey to each of our employees. We will be asking for your feedback regarding returning to campus and vaccines. The goal of this survey is to obtain a general understanding of how our campus community feels about returning to campus.

Contact Tracing and Student Health Services

Dr. Mennella and the Student Health Services staff continue to do phenomenal work to ensure the health and wellbeing of our students and employees. You may be aware that they follow established COVID-19 protocols and use a system called Optimum HQ to prescreen students who come to campus, conduct temperature checks, and provide daily access wristbands. They established several [Campus Wellness Screening Assistants at various locations on campus](#).

In addition, SHS staff regularly conduct contact tracing and exposure management for the campus. They have undergone training and traced over 146 cases thus far. Working with faculty, they conduct contact tracing within one business day of being notified. Staff ascertain where the student was on campus, who they interacted with, and make contact with individuals accordingly. While unfortunate, an affected student will have to miss class and quarantine for a minimum of ten days. Staff update Optimum HQ so that the student cannot enter campus once quarantined, and they report cases to the Department of Health. SHS staff checks in with individuals sees how they are feeling and whether they retest. Once the student is cleared to return to campus, the system is updated and appropriate contacts are notified.

Air Filtration and Ventilation in Buildings

Vice President Lopez and the Facilities Department are rolling out HVAC system modifications to provide better air filtration and ventilation in our buildings. The campus is moving toward [MERV 13](#) filters in all campus buildings, which trap small particles more effectively than filters with lower MERV ratings. The filters also meet efficiency criteria toward LEED green building certification. Our Health and Wellness Complex is already equipped with these filters as it is LEED certified. Phase 1 of the rollout will be to upgrade the filters in occupied buildings, and Phase 2 will be to upgrade the remaining buildings by the start of the fall 2021 semester.

While there is no specific recommendation to prevent COVID-19 transmission via HVAC systems, the American Society of Heating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHAE) suggests that upgrading to MERV 13 or higher filters is a worthwhile step in emergency response plans.

Employee and Student Communication

Vice President Flores-Church and Human Resources are working hard to update our campus procedures in accordance with the new state law [AB 685](#), which allows the state to track COVID-19 cases in the workplace more closely and includes specific requirements on how we notify employees about cases on campus. We continue to provide written notice to employees who may have been exposed to COVID-19 within one business day. The communication includes information on our leave policy, employee protections, and district safety protocols. We also report cases to the Department of Public Health, including instances of an outbreak, which is defined as three or more employees that test positive in the same worksite (i.e. building) in a 14-day period. We have not had any outbreaks to date.

We accomplish these efforts by maintaining a database to track employees on campus; this information is also utilized should contact tracing become necessary. Managers report cases via a disclosure form, then the District provides notice to employees followed by a districtwide notice for Clery compliance. Student communication is similar to employee communication, with notices to students sent from Public Affairs.

To conclude, **make sure you take a moment to complete next week's survey related to COVID-19.** Your safety remains a top priority and your feedback is incredibly important.

Have a great weekend and stay safe.

Jose

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