

Subject: District Instruction and COVID-19
Date: Friday, March 6, 2020 at 12:59:50 PM Pacific Standard Time
From: Wallace, Jeremy
To: All Faculty
CC: Claire, Michael E., Moore, Jamillah, Lopez, Kim, Jackson, Jannett, Taylor-Mendoza, Jennifer, Holtzclaw, Mike, Robinson, Tammy, Mitchell, Karrie, McVean, Aaron, Reed, David, Lacefield, Hyla, Carranza, James, Pouncil, Matais, Hartman, C. Max, Chapple, Tarana, Ridgway, Kristi, Diamond, Heidi, Demsetz, Laura, Wolf, Andreas, Frontiera, Charlene, Duncan, Krystal, Moe, Rolin, Kane, Michael, Morello, Jr., Joseph, Gibson, Chris, Hernandez, Raymond, Redding Lapuz, Danni, Escobar, Luis, Schwarz, Karen
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Colleagues,

As promised, I want to give you a quick update regarding the district's response to the COVID-19 coronavirus. I'd like to start by emphasizing that the three colleges are not in imminent danger from the COVID-19 virus. However, like most government agencies and educational institutions, the district has started to create contingency plans should we need to close the campuses.

I've been asked by many of you whether the senates have been involved in this planning since this virus does pose a potential threat to the continuation of instruction, whether it be a student or member of the faculty who has to miss classes due to illness or even a full campus closure. The answer is yes. The district's senate leadership did meet with the colleges' VPIs and district personnel to discuss potential responses to campus closures. It was a productive conversation, and it will have implications not only for the current pandemic but also for future wildfire closures. In other words, the district is taking both short-term and long-term steps to prepare for a disruption in teaching and learning.

Finally, I wanted to provide some early recommendations so that we all can be prepared for a campus closure in the future (again, these are recommendations for closures due to all public health emergencies, from viral outbreaks to smoke from wildfires).

1. Our district's COVID-19 emergency planning is dependent on our ability to catch local outbreaks early; as a result, **we are recommending that all faculty start taking attendance immediately.** This will allow us to spot large numbers of absences in single course sections and within the colleges as a whole. We will have more guidance on these thresholds soon, but in the meantime, I'd like to encourage you all to take roll via printed rosters or through Canvas.
2. Please let your students know that they should stay home if they are feeling unwell (especially if experiencing flu symptoms). Similarly, be flexible with your attendance policies. If a student misses class, please work with them to make up their work, either digitally or when they get back to class.
3. And finally, should the campus close due to a public health emergency, we need to be prepared to continue instruction digitally. I encourage all faculty to update their Canvas shells with, at the very least, syllabi and course schedules. However, we may want to start uploading work sheets and readings as well. We will be discussing disruptions in instruction at Monday's district academic senate meeting (2:15 – 4:30 at the College Vista Clubhouse) and we will have further guidance from the district soon. I also recognize that digital instruction will be a barrier to many students who do not have access to a computer or the Internet. The district office, in collaboration with the VPIs and senate leadership, are identifying ways to mitigate these barriers. I can speak for the entire district academic senate when I say that it would be unacceptable for a campus closure to disproportionately impact the learning of our most marginalized and vulnerable students.

As mentioned above, the campuses are not at an imminent risk of being closed due to the COVID-19 coronavirus. However, in the unlikely event that we must close the campuses, we should all be ready to continue instruction remotely. Ultimately, this preparation is in the best interests of our academic mission and our students – we must not let this emergency threaten our students’ health nor disrupt our students’ academic goals. Our district has the most talented and competent professoriate in the state’s community college system, so I am confident that we will be able to serve our students no matter what happens. I will update you all as more information and guidance becomes available.

Have a great weekend!

Jeremy

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