



Dear Campus Community,

As the end of the fall semester approaches, we write to share an update with you about spring semester. First, we want to express our appreciation to our entire community for your collective resilience in the face of COVID-19. We know 2020 has been a long, difficult year for many reasons, but you have demonstrated a remarkable ability to adapt to ever-evolving information and guidance. To our faculty and staff, thank you for all that you have done to provide the most academically enriching experience possible to our students in this time. To our students, your commitment to your educational progress is inspiring to us – we are working hard to ensure your ongoing success.

We also want to thank everyone who has been conscientiously following health and safety measures these past several months. Scientific breakthroughs are bringing hope for a COVID-19 vaccine next year, but until they are widely available the pandemic continues to pose a serious threat nationally and around the world. Health experts have indicated that we are now in the midst of the largest surge since the onset of the pandemic in March. Increasing cases of COVID-19 are putting a strain on our healthcare infrastructure, and it is critical that we do everything we can do help “flatten the curve.”

In fact, Gov. Gavin Newsom just announced today a new regional stay-at-home order in our state based on available intensive care unit capacity. The governor has defined the regions as Northern California, Southern California, the San Joaquin Valley, Bay Area and greater Sacramento. The stay-at-home order will apply when ICU capacity falls under 15%. Newsom indicated that four of the five regions – including our region of Southern California – will be at that threshold early this month, leading to a three-week stay-at-home order. While more updates are to come, we wanted to share what we know about the new order at this time.

With that said, our current challenge is to also look at how we might continue to further mitigate and decrease the spread of the virus over these next critical months through the adjustment of our academic calendar. We share your frustration that changes to our calendar are disruptive. Unfortunately, these changes are called for and necessary during this urgent health crisis, and we appreciate your understanding.

Limited Number of Spring Face-to-Face Classes will Meet Virtually through End of January 2021

Already, we had planned to offer only a limited number of face-to-face and hybrid classes during the spring semester with the majority offered in virtual formats except those that use specialized equipment or have certain accreditation/licensure requirements. Given that the current surge is anticipated to last through the end of January 2021, and with the guidance of the California State University Office of the Chancellor, [ALL classes will be held in virtual formats beginning the first day of the semester, Jan. 25, through the end of the month, Jan. 31, 2021.](#) Those that have been approved to meet in person may be able to do so – if health conditions allow – beginning Feb. 1, 2021.

Possible Alterations to Spring Academic Calendar

In addition, public health experts have advised colleges and universities that spring breaks that are scheduled typically in March and April will provide another challenge in our efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, we have requested the input of Academic Senate on potential alterations to the spring academic calendar that considers scenarios in which spring break days are moved to the beginning or end of the semester, distributed throughout the semester, or left as is but with the understanding that all classes might need to resume virtually for a period of time following the break.

Spring Campus Activities

As in the fall semester, no in-person events or activities will be able to take place in early spring. Unfortunately, it is too early to determine if in-person commencement ceremonies will be able to take place, but we are committed to celebrating the accomplishments of our December 2020 and May 2021 graduates via a car parade or other safe, virtual option. We expect to provide an update on commencement planning in early 2021.

Thank You

We know that this has been an incredibly stressful year, and the last thing we want to do is add to the emotional and mental burden of our students and employees. Please know that we are committed to working through the unpredictability ahead, drawing on the flexibility, creativity and commitment to care for each other that our campus has demonstrated since the onset of the pandemic last March. We will continue to provide timely updates when new information is available to allow you to plan as best as possible for the future. In all our actions and decisions, we will be guided by our twin commitments to ensuring the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff and the communities we serve, as well as enabling progression toward degree for the greatest number of our students.

We know, especially during the holiday season, so many of us are feeling fatigued by the pandemic and miss the personal connections with our family and friends. We continue to be in this together as one university. Please continue to care for yourselves and one another.

With appreciation,

Ellen Neufeldt
President

Carl Kemnitz
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

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