



Dear CSUSM employees,

It is hard to believe there are only six weeks left in the 2020-21 academic year. Together, we have navigated so many uncertainties and curve balls thrown by COVID-19. It has often felt that we have made plans and adaptations only to amend them again and again as new information has become available. I truly appreciate your flexibility and resilience throughout this time. I know it has not always been easy, but you have continually risen to the challenges with an innovative and caring spirit. Now, we are preparing to shift once again, but this time in a very positive direction.

Earlier this week, [Gov. Newsom announced](#) that California will remove the tiered system of COVID-19 restrictions on June 15, contingent on the continued drop in cases and the rapid pace of vaccinations in the state. Masks will continue to be a state-wide requirement. In addition, as of Wednesday, April 7, both San Diego and Riverside counties moved into the state's less restrictive "[Orange Tier](#)." This is wonderful news that goes along with the development that beginning April 15, all those who are aged 16 and over will become eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Furthermore, the [CDC recently updated its guidelines](#) related to cleaning surfaces. We are reviewing this new guidance and are committed to providing safe teaching, working and learning environments for all members of our campus community.

We are on track to be back on campus this fall with a majority of our classes in person, in addition to anticipating an increase in student residential density at our on-campus housing facilities. We look forward to more opportunities for modified in-person events, athletics and other on-campus activities. While we are still working through final details and consulting with faculty, staff and students, I want to send a huge thank you to everyone for continuing to keep student success at the forefront of all that we do despite the pandemic-related changes upon changes. I continue to be so thankful for all that you have done to bring our university through such a stressful, traumatic and disruptive time.

After consulting with various stakeholders, we will send out further preliminary details for employees to return to campus. In the meantime, many who have been largely working remotely over the past year have shared that they are eager to begin working on campus again. If you are interested in *voluntarily* adapting your remote schedule or gaining increased access to research or academic spaces, please indicate your interest to your supervisor (staff/MPP) or dean (faculty). We will work to accommodate as many employees as we can during this transitional time.

This past year has been extremely difficult for so many members of our community, and there continues to be uncertainty about the pandemic across our state, country and world. However, this moment does feel more optimistic than previous moments during the pandemic. While I am hopeful for the future, ongoing vigilance is key. Please know that our guiding principles continue to apply to all our planning efforts: our people, the success of our students, institutional sustainability and innovating for the future.

I have no doubt there will be ongoing changes and fluctuations in the weeks and months ahead, but I am committed to sharing more information as soon as it is available. In the meantime, I'd like to continue to encourage you to get vaccinated as soon as you are eligible and to continue to practice healthy habits.

I remain hopeful that more positive news about the pandemic will be forthcoming, and I look forward to the time we can be together on campus again.

Sincerely,

Ellen Neufeldt
President

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