

March 17, 2020

Dear Campus Community:

We know you are following the fast-changing reports about the COVID-19 pandemic. In the past couple of days, California implemented a number of new measures and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended halting all gatherings larger than 50 people for the next eight weeks. We are writing today to share some important new actions we are taking in response.

Social distancing and increased hygiene continue to be the best ways to reduce exposure and spread. To enforce social distancing, cities throughout California and beyond have closed schools, public events and places where people gather. Hospitals are increasing their capacity to help those in need.

In an effort to do our part to limit the spread of COVID-19, and per direction from the CSU Office of the Chancellor, **effective Friday morning, March 20, most campus offices that are not essential to direct student support (see explanation below) will transition to working remotely, while virtual instruction continues.** However, to ensure an orderly transition, we will implement several changes to campus operations tomorrow, Wednesday, March 18, in an effort to ensure social distancing techniques are effectively implemented.

NEW ACTIONS: We are taking several significant new actions based on the evolving situation and informed by questions and concerns you've been sharing. To fully implement each of these will take some time, but we will provide additional information as quickly as we can.

The changes to campus operations as result of the accelerated social distancing measures will be the following, effective Wednesday, March 18:

1. **Duration of Virtual Instruction:** Given the current circumstances, and in close consultation with the CSU Chancellor's Office and [my cabinet members](#), Provost Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval and I have determined that **virtual instruction, which will begin this Friday, March 20, will remain in effect through the end of the spring semester, ending on May 22, 2020.**
2. **Scope of Virtual Instruction:** We will transition all face-to-face instruction of courses to virtual instruction, effective March 20, including laboratory classes and courses in areas such as performing arts, arts and kinesiology.
3. **University Farm Laboratory:** Agricultural operations will continue on our farm, and social distancing will be maintained in all mission-critical operations.

4. **Degree completion:** Students who have registered to graduate at the end of the spring semester will be able to complete the semester and graduate, subject to the completion of requirements.
5. **Commencement:** Unfortunately, we will not be conducting commencement ceremonies in May as originally scheduled. This decision, informed by guidance from public health officials, was not made lightly. We will continue to explore how and when to celebrate Commencement 2020, depending on the quickly changing situation.
6. **Library:** Beginning Friday, March 20, use of the Madden Library will be limited to essential services including the DISCOVERe Hub and other library resources (including the Center of Faculty Excellence) that are focused on supporting delivery of virtual instruction. Studying, researching and other usual activities will no longer be permitted in the library, including by community patrons, due to social distancing requirements. Additional library resources available during virtual instruction can be found [here](#).
7. **Campus Dining:** Limited to-go food options will be offered solely in the Residence Dining Hall, which is open to all campus community members while advised social distancing is maintained.
8. **Student Housing:** While the majority of our 900 student residents have already returned home, those who remain living on campus as of today and can return home are encouraged to do so by Friday, March 20.
 - a. For those students who wish to remain in Student Housing and may need access to technology for receiving virtual instruction: we will continue to provide housing and meals for our students who need to remain on campus through the end of the spring semester, unless directed otherwise by the Fresno County Department of Public Health. We are here to help: housing@csufresno.edu.
 - b. For those who decide to move out now: Fresno State Housing will refund a prorated amount of your remaining room and board plans based upon your official check-out date.
9. **Student Recreation Center:** As announced yesterday, only offices within the center will remain open at this time.
10. **Vintage Days:** Unfortunately, this popular, annual student-run event has been cancelled based on guidance from public health officials.

Please note that the following list includes most of the essential campus services will remain in operation to empower student success:

- Student Housing
- Residence Dining Hall (limited to-go options)

- The Student Cupboard will continue providing food and essential hygiene items for students in need. It is located in Industrial Technology (Room 144), at the corner of Barstow and Jackson avenues. Operating hours are listed [here](#).
- [Student Health and Counseling Center](#)
- [Services for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships](#)
- Student Accounting Services
- DISCOVERe Hub:
 - The University has purchased 1,350 mobile hotspots to loan to students who do not have access to high-speed internet for virtual instruction.
 - 1,000 additional iPads will also be available shortly to loan to students who indicated a need, based upon a recent survey conducted by the University.
 - In addition to limited in-person support at the DISCOVERe Hub on the first floor of the Madden Library, students can also get virtual support via Zoom by clicking on the following link during normal business hours: <https://t.co/1Au4JpD9NM>. Students who have questions may contact the DISCOVERe Hub via email: DISCOVERe@mail.fresnostate.edu.

Even though we have **no** confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the Fresno State campus community at this time, there are two confirmed, travel-related cases in Fresno County, and additional confirmed cases in nearby counties.

Thus, we each have a shared responsibility to do whatever we can now to slow the contagion of COVID-19 in an effort to keep our families, friends and neighbors as healthy as possible, and to minimize strain on our local hospitals and health care providers.

In this, we face an unprecedented challenge: how to ensure the health and safety of our communities while maintaining the continuity of our academic mission: to boldly educate and empower students for success. **Therefore, we are committed to delivering virtual and online instruction until the semester ends.**

These actions require difficult sacrifices for each of us, especially for our graduating seniors and the entire student body.

Additional Guidance for Students:

- Students should continue to prepare for virtual-instruction classes according to the procedures faculty will have in place by Friday, March 20.
- Student assistants will not be required to work on campus effective Friday, March 20, but will be paid the hours they would have otherwise worked through April 5, 2020. They should contact their supervisors for any specific direction.
- Student assistants on the University Farm Laboratory will continue helping with agricultural operations, and social distancing will be maintained.
- For students who have questions that are **not** academic related, a dedicated email address has been established in the Office of the Dean of Students at sadiv@csufresno.edu. (We ask that only enrolled students use this resource.)

Additional Guidance for Faculty:

- We encourage faculty to continue planning for the transition to virtual instruction, beginning with classes on Friday, March 20.
- Reach out to the [Center for Faculty Excellence](#) for assistance.
- No additional class days will be added as part of the current plan.
- Faculty will still be able to access their offices during this period.

Guidance for Staff and MPP employees:

- Employees whose job duties can be performed remotely should submit a request to telecommute. For more guidance, [see email](#) from University Human Resources, dated March 15, 2020.
- For those who cannot work remotely beginning Friday, March 20, contact your supervisor.
- Campus offices that are essential will continue to remain open with limited on-campus personnel throughout the semester.
- Additional guidance will be forthcoming from University Human Resources as to the definition of and need for essential personnel.

We know there will be additional questions, and we will continue sending regular updates to keep you informed. Please check your email and the [University's coronavirus website](#) regularly.

Please remember that our main focus is the health and safety of our campus community, and that our mission remains to educate and empower every student for success. Now more than ever, our students will need our support during this time.

Sincerely,

President Castro