



Office of the President

A Message from
President Adela de la Torre, Ph.D.

Dear SDSU Community,

Our responsibility to you and to our students is to make every decision only after extensive planning and coordination, and with the deepest care for health and safety. The consequences of any major decision for a complex and highly diverse university like San Diego State are themselves complex and uncertain. And yet, we know our community is looking for clear direction about what to expect for Fall.

My priority is to share information with each of you in as timely and transparent a manner as possible. We know that our current students and their families need to make individual decisions immediately, and we also need to allow time for new members of our San Diego State University community — students who will be joining our family as new members this fall — to do the same.

In the days ahead, we will also be sharing information about the CARES Act: Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund assistance for SDSU and SDSU Imperial Valley students. The funding we have received for our students, which students do not have to pay back, will provide much needed assistance for food, housing, care and other urgent needs.

With this message, I share an update on our progress and recent announcements from Governor Newsom.

COVID-19 Outlook

This week, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced that California will move into the first portion of Stage 2, detailed in California's Pandemic Roadmap in modifying the state's state-at-home order, effective today. This is part of a larger four-step process that would lead the state to full reopening. At this phase, we will begin to see certain changes, albeit with restrictions. The first half of California's Stage 2 marks the reopening of some of our parks and beaches, and we will begin to see certain retail stores reopening, with more restaurants offering curbside pickup and delivery.

The renewed energy in our communities is promising, but we cannot become complacent. Our state is phasing in Stage 2 incrementally; the state is still not permitting schools and office-based businesses to repopulate, and we are a significant distance from being able to return to the types of in-person entertainment and athletics events that create community cohesion.

Notably, one of the prevailing indicators marking our county's ability to loosen stay home orders any further is a recorded 14-day period without a COVID-19-related death.

Until we reach this point, our state and our county will not allow campuses or businesses to loosen current orders further and, thus, our community is not yet able to begin returning to campus. I urge all members of our community, no matter where you are currently located, to continue following the guidance of county, state and federal authorities.

Establishment of Guiding Principles

As every major plan with the potential to have far-reaching impacts must begin with foundational knowledge and guiding principles, I have created a number of ad-hoc bodies to address planning around every matter of business with repopulating campus and support student success.

These groups have been meeting over the last several weeks focused on data analysis and modeling and working in consultation with public health officials, the CSU, faculty experts, and other campus stakeholders. These teams are identifying solutions for, and not limited to: returning students, faculty and staff to campus; expanded faculty training to ensure quality education online; continuing critical research; student retention and success; and on campus housing plans.

Throughout our assessments and planning, we are guided by three main principles, described here:

Continuity in our teaching, research and community support at the highest possible levels given public health constraints and the broader social context.

- Ensure students are offered the highest quality education possible.
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- Ensure that, during the pandemic and where pedagogically possible, each course can be offered using various teaching modalities.
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- Ensure faculty, staff and student researchers are able to pursue their research at the highest levels possible.
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- Ensure that staff are provided with the resources they need in order to pursue their work at the highest levels possible.

Maintain student access to degree programs and services designed to enhance student success.

- Ensure the offering of robust financial aid and scholarships, and the promotion of additional resources through the Economic Crisis Response Team (ECRT).
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- Provide faculty and students with the resources needed to pursue courses that may be offered using various teaching modalities.
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- Ensure that all members of the SDSU community are treated with dignity and have equitable access to resources and activities.

Ensure the safety of our students, staff, administrators, and faculty.

- SDSU has aligned its plan with repopulation frameworks already established by county, state and federal agencies to ensure the safety of our community, respecting physical distancing orders that will remain with us for the indefinite future.

I thank all the many experts who have been core to the development of these principles and to the current work of evaluating our Fall 2020 plans.

Next Steps

Our emergency response teams have been prudent and are working as expeditiously and inclusively as possible in our decision-making, relying on still-evolving information about the conditions, to include a difficult financial outlook.

Future communications will share more specific information about course offerings, student support services, on campus housing and repopulation plans.

I appreciate the ongoing contribution of specialists in all divisions and all auxiliaries, as well as our student leaders, who are devising operational plans and solutions so that we may retain and graduate our students and also sustain a safe and productive working environment for faculty and staff.

Adela de la Torre
San Diego State University President