



Office of the President

A Message from

President Adela de la Torre, Ph.D.

Dear SDSU Community,

At the end of last month, we welcomed students back on campus with a limited number taking in-person instruction and with significantly reduced density in our residence halls and across campus. Given the unpredictable nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, and county data indicating the likelihood that we would have positive cases in our community, we knew we would need to be highly flexible this fall.

SDSU and the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) are aware of 64 probable and confirmed COVID-19 student cases since the start of fall classes on Aug. 24. This includes the previously reported 20 confirmed COVID-19 cases.

While the majority of these 64 cases include our off-campus community, we are aware of 15 cases out of our total 7,997 “on-campus” population (defined as all students registered for at least one in-person class, or who live on campus) since the start of the fall semester. The number of 64 probable and confirmed cases also includes those in an off-campus apartment building, which houses SDSU students, and is where HHSA has declared an outbreak today. In addition to that off-campus outbreak, HHSA is working with the University to investigate cases among students living in both on- and off-campus housing units. SDSU’s COVID-19 assessment and response team continues to work in close collaboration with HHSA in addressing cases.

SDSU Flex Changes

Given the rate of increase in the COVID-19 cases among the student population in the past three days, and out of an abundance of caution for the health and well-being of our campus community, we are making a number of changes. In addition to reactivating our emergency response team, the following will occur, effective Thursday, Sept. 3:

- **In-Person Instruction:** Our SDSU Flex plan has allowed faculty the flexibility to shift modality of instruction. Currently, all courses offered face-to-face will temporarily shift to virtual beginning Sept. 3 for just over a four-week period. We

will assess the flexibility of returning to in-person instruction by Monday, Oct. 5. Students currently taking in-person classes should be in touch with their faculty members via email for direction.

- **SDSU Library:** Access to the “24/7 Area” will not be allowed during the pause period, though library services will continue to be offered virtually, and SDSU will continue to maintain the 1,100 new outdoor seating spaces and wireless internet access, to include the Love Library Patio. The Library Domeside Pickup service will still be provided.
- **Housing:** The shift to virtual instruction does not impact the availability of housing, nor residential support for our students who are living on-campus. Our students are welcome to stay, and we encourage that students currently in residence remain in campus housing to help avoid community spread. As part of the SDSU Office of Housing Administration COVID-19 protocol, we have more than 130 spaces available to safely house students in isolation for those who have tested positive. Due to this announcement as well as the reduction of campus activities, we fully expect that some of our current residential students will change their residential plans for the fall. Students may submit a Contract Release Request at any time. Those with questions should contact the Office of Housing Administration and/or the Residential Education Office by emailing oha@sdsu.edu.
- **Athletics:** SDSU Athletics will also implement an additional pause of all in-person student practices and activities for a 2-week period, effective Sept. 3. All sports must remain in compliance with current public health orders and university policies.
- **Remote Support:** Students should also continue relying on virtual support services available, including remote lab support. Also, resources for employees are also available online (SDSUid required).

The intent of these changes is to ensure we can better reduce and contain the spread of COVID-19, so that we can return those limited in-person classes to normal operation. We will continue to assess testing rates and other critical metrics with the HHSA during this four-week pause of in-person instruction. At this time, no changes will occur with campus dining or with university research, as these areas remain in compliance with public health orders.

Direction for In-Person Students

We understand that these changes will cause concern and frustration, especially after months of careful planning for the fall. This planning prioritized flexibility to ensure we can make changes as needed to maintain an environment supportive of individual health and community well-being.

In collaboration with the HHSA, our data shows an increase in the number of new cases in the broader SDSU student community, and the decision to pause, and move to virtual instruction is to ensure we are acting swiftly and with the utmost respect for the health of both our campus and broader communities.

We will continue to increase efforts to identify, investigate, and pursue disciplinary action against any member of our community who is violating public health guidelines. We will continue to enhance testing and preventative measures, and will monitor the rate of new cases as we make decisions about re-starting our limited in-person classes after this pause. And, as we have always shared, we will remain flexible in making any further changes to our plans as we continue to support the needs of our community.

In Closing

We have great appreciation for every student, faculty and staff member who has carefully followed the public health guidelines. We ask that you continue to do so, following mandatory prevention techniques, including wearing facial coverings at all times and following U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Protection guidance to protect yourself and those around you. Washing your hands for at least 20 seconds, and frequently, is one of the most important ways to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In compliance with the California State University (CSU) system's Executive Order 1107, this is a reminder that we are in a public health state of emergency and additional information can be accessed via SDSU's public-facing COVID-19 site. There, we will continue to track positive COVID-19 cases online and also release information about positive cases as information becomes available.

Again, we thank members of our community who are adhering to county, state and federal public health guidelines. The safety of our community remains a shared effort, and one that we should each take seriously.

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