



## Office of the President

A Message from

**President Adela de la Torre, Ph.D.**

Dear SDSU Community,

We have made COVID-19 testing available for all enrolled students since August 11, and we have been very pleased by the high percentage of students who have voluntarily sought regular testing. We have also expanded access to testing for students at multiple sites, and for our faculty and staff, through a partnership with the San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA).

As part of the next step in our health and safety efforts, and in partnership with HHSA, we have developed a plan to COVID-19 test all students living on campus through a new sustained random testing initiative: SDSU's COVID-19 Surveillance Testing Plan.

With this plan, we will expand our already robust testing options. ***All students who live in SDSU on-campus housing will be required to get COVID-19 tested, with limited exceptions.*** Surveillance testing is a common term and practice within public health, indicating random testing within a population. While this model and plan centers on students living on campus, we also continue to encourage all students who live off campus to get tested, and the University maintains a number of testing locations with HHSA for that testing to occur.

With this message, we explain the random testing model, which has been similarly adopted recently by a number of universities nationally, and why we are implementing this plan now.

### **On-Campus Student Resident Testing Expanding**

As part of the next step in our health and safety efforts, SDSU in partnership with HHSA will begin COVID-19 testing all students who live in campus housing. This enhanced testing will begin starting tomorrow, Wednesday, Sept. 16, through Saturday, Sept. 19, and again on Monday, Sept. 21, with a target of SHS and HHSA collectively testing about 500 students daily.

All students living in SDSU residence halls and apartments will be assigned testing slots at either the Student Health Services Calpulli Center, or the HHSA testing location at the Parma Payne Goodall Alumni Center, 5250 55th St., located just west of Viejas Arena. Students will be notified of their assigned testing window, along with instructions on what to do, via email to their SDSU email address.

Testing is offered at no cost, and all students will be provided a \$5 Starbucks voucher when they show their SDSUcard. Ten students will also be randomly selected to receive \$100 gift cards to the SDSU Bookstore.

All students continue to have access to testing at Student Health Services and at sites at both San Diego County and Imperial County locations. Faculty and staff continue to have access to county testing site locations, including the location at the Parma Payne Goodall Alumni Center.

### **Random Testing to be Implemented**

Following the initial phase of benchmark testing for all students in residence this week, we will then launch random testing for the on-campus housing population. During each round of testing, a set of individuals from each residential community group will be randomly sampled to be re-tested.

Periodic random testing of a representative sample of our students — specifically those who are asymptomatic — is a proven method and best practice which will provide critical information as we assess changes in the prevalence of COVID-19 within the SDSU community. This type of testing will also help us to understand where we need to take additional, quick action to reduce transmission.

### **Stay at Home Order and COVID-19 Advisory**

This new testing model will help us to capture more granular detail about the virus spread within the student population in which we have jurisdiction--our on-campus students. **If we have widespread participation in the plan, then we do not anticipate re-implementing the Stay at Home Order and COVID-19 Advisory, which expired at 9 a.m. on Sept. 14.** Each of those measures resulted in a significant reduction in off-campus gatherings and an overall reduction in the number of reported violations. Further, we have seen a significantly reduced rate of new cases impacting our residential community following those orders. Surveillance testing, built upon this foundation of good individual behavior, will help further ensure the risk of infection remains low in on-campus housing.

While these Stay at Home orders and advisories have been lifted, we ask our students to continue to follow the necessary public health measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including not gathering with non-household members, wearing facial

coverings, maintaining physical distance, and practicing appropriate hygiene including handwashing.

## **In Closing**

University researchers and experts in epidemiology from the SDSU School of Public Health are working closely every day with county health officials. For their work, we are deeply appreciative. We are closely monitoring the sensitivity, specificity and availability of COVID-19 tests, as well as the prevalence of the virus both in our student population and in the San Diego regional community.

While testing is important, reducing the spread will always come back to our everyday actions and changing our behaviors to protect ourselves and one another. Again, we thank our campus community for following public health guidelines and university policies.

Adela de la Torre, Ph.D.  
San Diego State University President

Hala Madanat, Ph.D.  
Interim Vice President for Research and Innovation

J. Luke Wood, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Student Affairs and Campus Diversity

Libby Skiles, Ed.D.  
Student Health Services Director