



## Office of the President

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

Dear SDSU Community,

We are very pleased that more than 1,500 students have been tested since we announced the on-campus COVID-19 testing requirement on Tuesday. This is a wonderful turnout and more than we expected in just a few days. Further, despite this increase in daily testing, the rate of new cases being identified continues to decline.

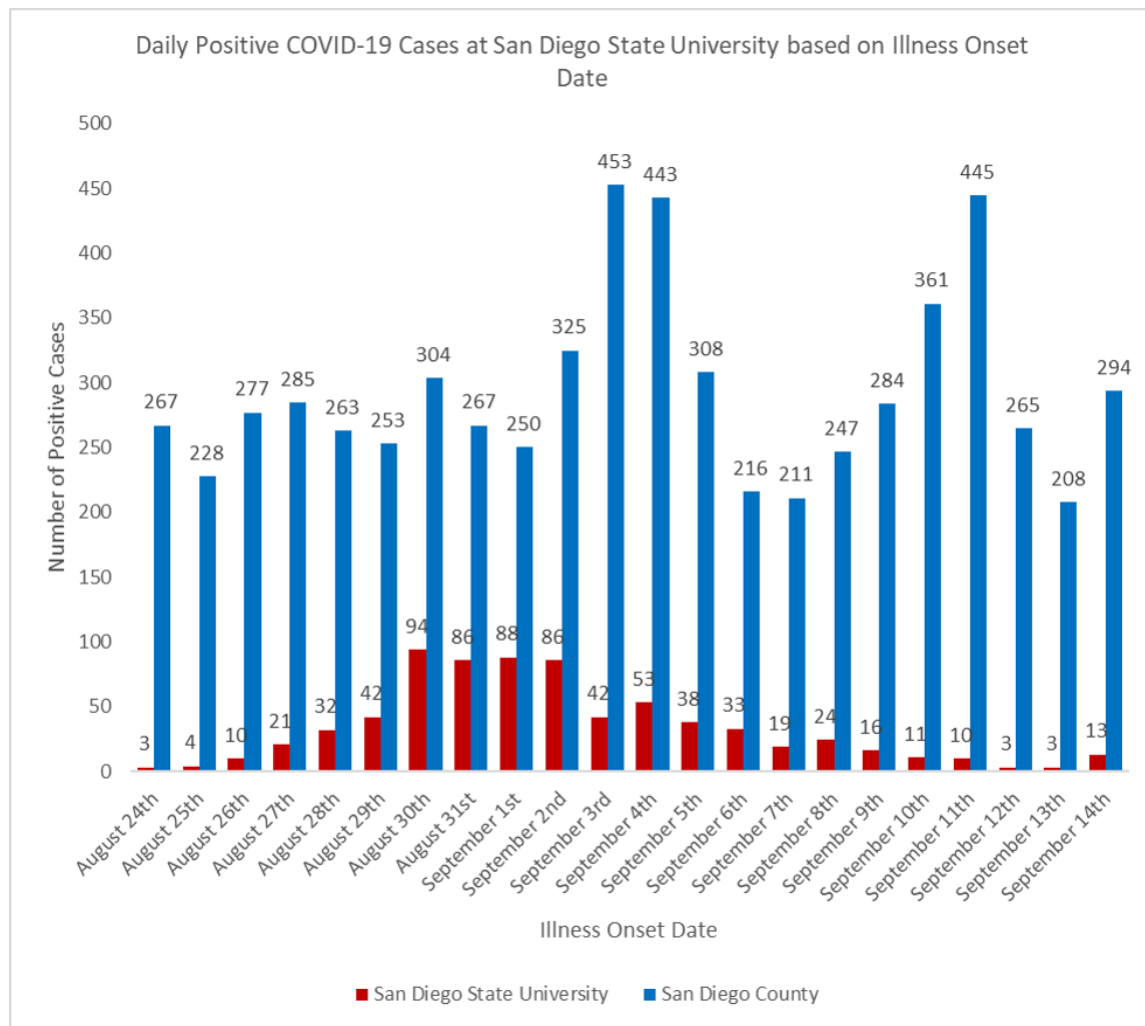
This, among other measures, indicates that the public health plan we have in place is working. Our epidemiology and infectious disease faculty are working closely with county public health partners. Our on campus students are largely following guidance to protect themselves and others. We thank all of you.

Also, our health metrics show that cases within the SDSU community alone do not move the county into the [state's "purple" monitoring tier](#), the more restrictive tier. San Diego County case counts have continued to increase since Labor Day, even when excluding all on- and off-campus cases among SDSU students.

With this message, we are sharing additional information about the SDSU testing requirement, about how cases are counted on and off campus, our regional situation, and what we must continue to do to reduce the spread.

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## Case Rates



***Daily positive COVID-19 cases at SDSU based on illness onset data.***

SDSU began this semester with only 7% of classes occurring with some in-person or hybrid component. This percentage has been further reduced to 1% of all classes since Sept. 3, with the beginning of the four week pause. To date, and because of these proactive efforts, there have been no positive COVID-19 cases associated with on-campus research or instruction.

*"With a strong plan and unique county partnership in place, SDSU is appropriately addressing what it can control: its on campus community, where the positivity remains quite low compared to those in the general community. And while most other universities do not report any cases that occur among their off campus students, SDSU has been incredibly transparent. This makes comparisons difficult. This is a global pandemic and a national issue for college campuses across the system and the country. There is also difficulty in controlling the behavior of young people everywhere who*

*don't see this as a health threat. This is not unique to SDSU." - Jack McGroary  
California State University Board of Trustees Member*

The case rate among adults who live in San Diego County and who are taking SDSU courses — mostly online and with limited to no campus contact — makes up the majority of the overall university-affiliated case count. While there are day to day fluctuations, cases off campus held an overall total of about 60 percent and 75 percent of all cases connected with SDSU.

This is important for every member of our community to understand.

### **SDSU, County Testing**

***SDSU currently cannot mandate testing for those who live off campus and are taking online SDSU courses. We have no such legal authority.***

However, the university can and will continue to enforce violations of both the [organizational](#) and [individual](#) student codes of conduct. Due to our limited jurisdiction, we continue to encourage those off campus to follow university student code policies and public health guidelines.

We also continue to highly encourage all students off campus to get tested and to continue following public health orders and guidelines. SDSU is also working in concert with San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) compliance officers to address reports of alleged off-campus COVID-19 violations. HHSA compliance officers continue to visit off-campus locations where violations have been reported.

HHSA is increasing testing capacity at the test site located at SDSU's Parma Payne Goodall Alumni Center. This will provide greater access to students in San Diego neighborhoods.

The county-led site will be open for an extra testing day tomorrow, Saturday, Sept. 19, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The site will then open again on Monday, Sept. 21, and remain open between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. during weekdays only.

Since this week's announcement that all students in on-campus housing are required to get tested and that we are launching a new random testing model, and as of today, we have either tested or verified testing documentation on more than 1,500 residents. That is already more than 62 percent of our residents, and testing will continue tomorrow and next week.

This provides an important baseline, to which we will measure our random testing data as part of our COVID-19 Surveillance Testing Plan. Surveillance testing is yet another tool in our multi-pronged approach, which began early in the Spring of 2020.

## Reporting of New Confirmed, Probable Cases

***Based on the degree of community transmission occurring in the general San Diego County region, and the size of the SDSU student population, current models predict that the county will report a total of 1,000 SDSU-affiliated cases (confirmed and probable) sometime this upcoming week. Projections indicate the number of on-campus cases will continue to be a small portion of the total. Estimates indicate that only about 30 percent of those cases may be related to students associated with the on campus community.***

If a 1,000 case count is reported next week, it will be important to understand what that figure represents. The count will include all students who live in San Diego County, including those who are taking fully virtual courses, and those who have not been to any physical campus location this fall.

This is an important distinction everyone should understand.

We understand that the reported case numbers have been confusing to some. Please note that, throughout California and nationally, many universities are **not yet reporting** any positive cases that occur among their off campus and online-only student populations. The norm on many college campuses is to report only those cases for those taking on-campus classes or residential students.

Locally, HHS is reporting all cases among students as SDSU affiliated cases no matter where they live in San Diego County, and even if they are fully online. This makes comparisons with other counties and universities difficult, as there is not a single standard for reporting.

### San Diego County Context

***A number of factors dictate a county's move into and out of restrictive monitoring tiers. Not a single factor, like case counts connected to SDSU, can dictate tier-based movement.***

San Diego County was recently removed from the state's purple tier which is the most restrictive tier. With the move, certain businesses and public facilities were allowed to reopen, under strict guidelines. The tiers, recently updated, assess each county in the state on their case rates, and dictate reopening plans. About 30 California counties across the state are in the purple tier.

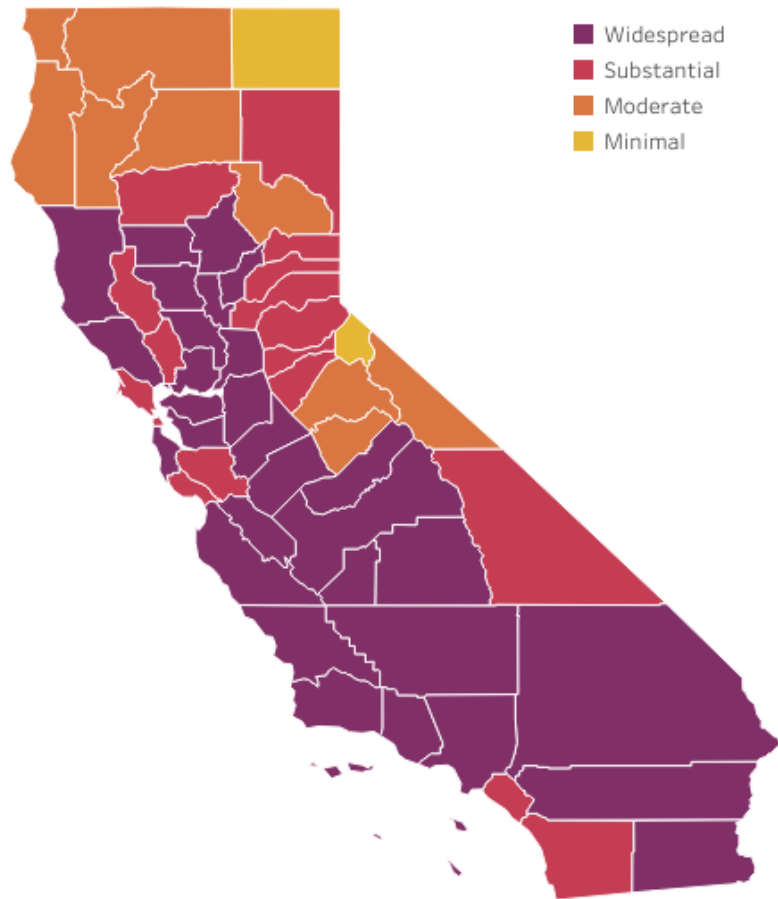
## Statewide Metrics

**7.7**

New COVID-19 positive cases per day per 100K

**4.2%**

Positivity rate



Data shown is for 9/15 tier assignments

### ***State map of California's COVID-19 monitoring tiers***

Data is updated weekly every Tuesday on the California COVID-19 website. Tier assignment is based on results from week ending September 5, 2020. Learn more at California Blueprint Data Chart.

We know in San Diego County that Labor Day weekend presented significantly large volumes of activity with people crowding and not observing health protocols. Those case numbers, which are now being confirmed as test results become available, will contribute to the county's overall totals and potential push into the Purple Tier.

### **In Closing**

We strongly believe that now is the best time to implement the new testing requirement and surveillancing model.

Our testing priorities, new testing requirements, and also our surveillance testing model are important tools that are part of our ongoing efforts. Many of these were initiated prior to the start of the fall semester. It is critical to take [everyday actions and change our behaviors](#) to protect ourselves and others in our community.

We know that wearing a facial covering, washing our hands frequently, physically distancing and avoiding large gatherings is the best we can do to minimize the risk of infection and transmission. This is true whether you are on campus, at the grocery store, exercising in a public setting, or visiting a restaurant for takeout.

We thank you, and we deeply appreciate everything you are doing in support of your own health and the health of our community.

Adela de la Torre, Ph.D.  
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