



Office of the President

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

Dear SDSU Community,

Our San Diego State University community continues to do everything possible so that our students can successfully finish the academic year. We also fully support the efforts of public health officials across the state and nation, and the California State University system in reducing the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) while we prepare for the summer and 2020-21 academic year.

Teams across campus have spent nearly two months implementing changes and adding resources and other support meant to serve as a safety net given the uncertainty associated with COVID-19. We are sharing new information regarding grade change options, financial assistance, and resources available through the cultural centers. All are offered to help broaden the safety net for our students to mitigate problematic academic and financial circumstances.

Financial Assistance

As we have shared in earlier communications, student housing and meal plan prorated reimbursements have been offered to students who have to leave campus early. The university is also offering prorated reimbursements for student permit parking and employee payroll deductions for parking, upon request to Parking Services, if they are not on campus.

SDSU remains open, and both critical and mission-specific efforts are ongoing. We will continue to offer courses virtually, with complementing tutoring and advising support online. We will continue to house and care for students living in on campus residence. We will continue to conduct critical research.

We will also continue to identify funds needed to support students experiencing emergencies. Those on and off campus have donated nearly \$70,000 to the Economic Crisis Response Team (ECRT) in support of students in crisis since we launched a fundraising campaign last month. We have exceeded our goal, and donations are continuing. This funding directly supports students who need food, housing, technology

and other assistance, and students can continue to request support via the online ECRT form.

Additional financial support for students is on the horizon, as SDSU will receive relief funds through the Coronavirus, Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Details will be shared at a later time.

Grade Change Options

We have and will continue to identify financial, academic, psychological, and other assistance to ensure that every single student has an option should they experience any challenges. Most recently, the University Senate approved additional temporary changes to provide further academic flexibility to students.

Through University Senate approval, the withdrawal process will be simplified. Students will have a flexible withdrawal option through May 7. This will allow a student to withdraw from one or more classes of their choice, with approval from the dean in the college in which the course is offered. Students will need to initiate the withdrawal request process, and more information about the process will be shared at a later time. Once approved, a “W” will appear on the student’s transcript for the specific course. For the majority of students, this change will have no negative impacts on student financial aid.

Also, the option to change a course grade to credit/no credit will be extended through May 1 in those classes that currently offer the option. The university has identified 3,535 courses that currently qualify for credit/no credit.

Students need to seek guidance from their academic and financial aid advisors before choosing to withdraw from a course or choosing to change their grading status in a course. Withdrawals or grade changes may have negative consequences for a student, depending on accreditation or licensing requirements of their academic program or their financial aid status.

More information will be provided regarding specific guidance, FAQs around financial aid, and the process students may use to request a change in a future communication. Further, additional conversations are underway to identify any other policy changes and assistance that may be offered to students.

Together, these efforts are meant to directly support students who may be experiencing unanticipated challenges that are impacting their academic performance, ability to secure or maintain jobs, or care for themselves and their families.

A Culture of Support

We recently learned of a Zoom bombing that occurred during a student organizational meeting, in which hateful and xenophobic statements were made against members of the Asian and Asian-Pacific Islander communities. We are deeply opposed to any actions motivated by racism or that serve to marginalize individuals or groups based on their social identities. Further, we fully support our Asian and Asian-Pacific Islander communities students. We remind our community that such incidents may be reported via Inclusive SDSU.

Also, SDSU's cultural centers continue to create a sense of belonging for students through virtual engagement. We urge students to remain connected with the centers, which provides opportunities for students to develop community, seek mentorship, and participate in identity-specific programs. More information on how to do so is on the Division of Diversity and Innovation site. The centers include the Black Resource Center, The Center for Intercultural Relations, Center for Transformative Justice, Latinx Resource Center, Native Resource Center, The Pride Center and Women's Resource Center.

Also, the Professors of Equity have created a video on Graduate School During Uncertain Times, and are holding continuing conversations with graduate students weekly.

In Closing

Also, California Gov. Gavin Newsom this week outlined a structure that would allow our state to reopen its economy. Several teams across the campus are already devising plans for how we would repopulate campus when the stay home order is lifted. Those plans will be shared at a later time, and will be contingent upon state and federal public health guidance. Our aim is to provide the maximum amount of flexibility and support possible, as we are not in full control over the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to share timely updates and, as always, thank you for continued efforts at this time.

Adela de la Torre
San Diego State University President

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University Senate Chair

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Associated Student President