

To: President's Cabinet
From: Denise M. Trauth
Subject: President's Cabinet Meeting
January 13, 2022

Impact of COVID-19 (#770)

Dr. Carranco compared data for the week ending on January 9, 2022, to data for the week ending January 2, 2022.

Week-to-week comparisons revealed:

- In Texas, the average daily case counts increased from 11,957 to 42,045 cases per day, and the average daily positivity rate increased from 26.5 to 37.2 percent.
- In Williamson county, the average daily case counts increased from 268 to 1,217, and the average daily positivity rate increased from 11.2 to 29.1 percent.
- In Travis county, the average daily case counts increased from 469 to 841 cases per day, and the average daily positivity rate increased from 18.3 to 30 percent.
- In Hays county, the average daily case counts increased from 328 to 503 cases per day; and the average daily positivity rate increased from 30 to 31 percent.
- In Texas, hospitalizations increased from 6,574 to 9,872. (Fatalities have not been trending upward with hospitalizations.)

On the Texas State campuses, there were 344 positives out of 1,289 tests for a positivity rate of 26.7 percent.

COVID-19 transmission levels, as defined by the CDC, in Texas as well as Hays, Williamson, and Travis counties were "high" during the past week. Current models predict that the current surge will peak the week of January 17, 2022, followed by a downward trend toward the end of January.

Omicron is contagious and is not causing severe illness. While young college-age adults tolerate the illness quite well, unvaccinated and those with underlying conditions are at most risk for severe illness, hospitalization, and death. Further, high absenteeism is expected if mitigation strategies are not followed.

The CDC has revised its isolation guidelines. People who test positive for COVID-19 should isolate for five days and wear a mask for another five days.

Testing remains an important part of Texas State's mitigation strategy.

- On the San Marcos Campus, Curative is offering PCR tests and MD Diagnostic is offering PCR and antigen tests. Capacity is 2,000 to 2,300 tests per week.
- On the Round Rock Campus, MD Diagnostic will offer PCR and antigen tests by the week of January 17, 2022. Capacity will be 500 to 600 tests per week.

Complications related to responses time for tests results was discussed and measures to improve timely response were identified.

Students living in residence halls will be required to provide a negative COVID-19 test prior to returning this spring semester. The verification process has been automated; students will be asked to upload their test results via a portal.

Student-athletes must provide proof of a negative test result prior to their return, as well.

Mr. Coryell summarized the Sun Belt Conference's testing protocol. Fully vaccinated athletes who have yet to receive the booster are required to undergo regular testing.

The Biden Administration testing initiatives were discussed.

Traditional contact tracing may no longer be effective due to the higher number of cases anticipated, the shorter incubation period of the Omicron variant, and delays in reporting to Bobcat Trace. The local public health department no longer conducts contact tracing except in rare situations, such as a nursing home outbreak. Texas State's approach to contact tracing will be automated to manage the surge in cases. Modifications will be in place prior to the return of in-person classes. Messaging of contact tracing updates is forthcoming.

High quality face masks, such as KN95 or surgical masks, can significantly reduce the risk of becoming infected if exposed. The logistics of ordering and distributing masks were discussed. Masks can be ordered easily by departments and paid for using department funds. Ordering COVID-19 related supplies by departments/units has been a common practice during the COVID-19 epidemic.

Dr. Carranco will reconvene the health, wellness, and safety work group to discuss how Texas State can create an environment where its students, faculty, and staff can learn, live, work, and thrive with COVID-19.

2023-2029 University Plan

Guest Dr. Beth Wuest, Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, discussed with Cabinet members, the timeline for the 2023-2029 University Plan development. Cabinet members approved the timeline. The strategic planning process will commence this spring with a review of the mission statement, shared values, and goals. Community members will be invited to participate in the first phase of the planning process by providing input on Texas State's mission, values, and goals through a series of eight open-ended questions administered through a Qualtrics survey.

Cabinet members approved a fifth institutional goal focused on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access.

Provost Bourgeois announced that Texas State has received an official letter from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) reaffirming Texas State's accreditation for 10 years.

President's Update (#556)

President Trauth discussed the timeline for the search for the next President of Texas State University. The priority deadline for applicants/candidates has passed and search committee has begun reviewing materials. First round of interviews will be held February 22-23, 2022, and second round will be held March 11, 2022. In April, the Chancellor will select the sole finalist and submit his recommendation to The TSUS Board of Regents for approval.

Significant Issues (#01)

Provost Bourgeois reported that preliminary persistence data of first-time students from first to second semester is 93 percent.

Mr. Coryell shared the basketball schedule for the week and announced that student-athletes and Department of Athletics staff will be participating in the MLK march that will take place in downtown San Marcos on January 17, 2022.

Dr. Hernandez provided several updates.

- Plans are being established to strengthen student engagement.
- There are several hall director and residence assistance vacancies; and recruitment and retention strategies are being developed.
- Spring housing numbers are strong.
- Residence hall testing protocols are in place.
- Residence hall polices and procedures are being reviewed.

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Posted to web at <http://cabinet.president.txstate.edu/> on January 28, 2022.