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DATE: March 9, 2020
TO: CSU Presidents
FROM: Steve Relyea, Executive Vice Chancellor and
Chief Financial Officer
SUBJECT: **COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) – Guidance To Campuses for Events and Meetings**

**ACTION: Events and Meetings -
Campus Preparedness**

Background/Purpose

The CSU Chancellor's Office provides the following guidance to assist campuses in making decisions about whether to continue, cancel or reschedule a meeting or event to be hosted by the campus. Meetings include shared governance activities central to fulfilling the CSU's academic mission. Events include, but are not limited to, athletic competitions, concerts/performances, welcome days (admitted students yield events), affinity groups, and commencement. Note that we are continuing to track developments related to the incidence and prevalence of COVID-19 on an hourly and daily basis, so this guidance may be updated as facts emerge.

At the present time, the health risk for COVID-19 to the general public in California remains low, and the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the state is still relatively low. The State is in a mitigation phase relative to the novel coronavirus pandemic; this means efforts are being directed to (1) reduce the rate of transmission, (2) minimize the impact of coronavirus infections on health care and other systems, and (3) allow for time to develop a possible vaccine or viable treatment solutions to COVID-19. Our guidelines below reflect this current context.

Guidance for Near-Term Events and Meetings

Near-term events and meetings include those that are scheduled to occur within the next 1-2 weeks. Absent any confirmed case of infection by COVID-19 within the campus community, campuses should make every effort to sustain core mission activities, including events and meetings that support the institutional mission, as much as possible and for as long as possible. Each planned event or meeting should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine whether it should continue as scheduled, be rescheduled, or be cancelled.

Consistent with [California Department of Public Health](#) (DPH) recommendations on the use of social distancing (i.e., reducing close person-to-person contact) as a strategy for reducing risk of infection, campuses should consider alternatives to hosting activities that require people to congregate, particularly large or communal events. *We strongly encourage cancelling or rescheduling events and meetings that are less essential or are not time-sensitive in nature.*

In conducting a case-by-case analysis of any given event or meeting, campuses should holistically assess the following six factors, along with any others which may be unique to the campus or context:

CSU Campuses

Bakersfield
Channel Islands
Chico
Dominguez Hills
East Bay

Fresno
Fullerton
Humboldt
Long Beach
Los Angeles
Maritime Academy

Monterey Bay
Northridge
Pomona
Sacramento
San Bernardino
San Diego

San Francisco
San José
San Luis Obispo
San Marcos
Sonoma
Stanislaus

- **Can the goals and outcomes of an event be accomplished effectively through alternative modalities of communication that do not require in-person engagement?** If so, campuses should consider utilizing these alternative modalities in place of an in-person meeting. These may include leveraging available technologies such as Zoom, or restructuring the meeting or event so that participants do not have to be in close proximity to each other. In all cases, use of alternative modalities should involve consultation with disability accommodations professionals on the campus to ensure that the event or meeting is accessible.
- **Will intended audience members be traveling via air to attend the event, in particular on flights that will be of longer duration?** The process of entering airports, undergoing security screening and flying for prolonged periods of time in close proximity to others increases risk of exposure to COVID-19. Further, individuals arriving from US cities/regions or other countries with a higher prevalence of COVID-19 infections (especially individuals who have recently traveled to or from countries designated as Level 3 by the CDC) may further increase the risk of transmission. The more that an event or meeting will require travel by participants from a dispersed and/or unknown array of locations, the more the campus should err on cancelling the event/meeting or conducting the event through alternative means.
- **Will intended audience members or meeting participants be members of target populations considered to be at increased risk or susceptibility to COVID-19 infection** (e.g., individuals over age 60, individuals with compromised immune systems, individuals with severe underlying health conditions — like heart disease, lung disease and diabetes, etc.). If so, campuses should err more on cancelling the event/meeting or conducting the event through alternative means.
- **What is the current guidance from your local health department?** The guidance issued by the California DPH is certainly one resource to consult, but the epidemiology of COVID-19 has varied greatly by region, ranging from counties that still have no reported COVID-19 infections to one county that has reported its first COVID-19 fatality. As such, campuses should consult with their local health department officer when deciding on how handle any particular event or meeting.
- **What is the size of the event?** While the size of any event may be a consideration, this should not be used as the sole determining factor, as the size of an event must always be assessed in the context of a broader range of factors. Small events that incur high risk are just as concerning as larger events where other risk factors are not at issue. Similarly, the number of people involved should be considered against the size and nature of the venue for the event or meeting. Nonetheless, events that bring larger numbers of people together – particularly in a confined space – do increase the likelihood of exposure.

For all events and meetings, regardless of the size, instituting rigorous environmental cleaning before and after the event/meeting, as well as minimizing the amount of person-to-person contact, as well encouraging the practice of preventive behaviors (e.g., providing hand sanitizer, tissue, etc.), is strongly recommended.

If campuses do elect to cancel or reschedule events or meetings, we recommend collaborating with University Communications colleagues on how to best convey these changes with impacted constituents and stakeholders, as well as prepare to respond to any media inquiries if they should occur.

Guidance for Future Events and Meetings

Future events and meetings include those scheduled or anticipated to occur in the next 1-2 months or further out. Again, absent any confirmed case of infection by COVID-19 within the campus community, campuses should make every effort to sustain core mission activities. Because the facts about COVID-19, as well as its incidence and prevalence, are shifting on a daily basis, it is difficult to project with accuracy what will happen in the coming months.

Each planned event or meeting should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine whether it should continue as scheduled, be rescheduled, or be cancelled at this time – with an effort to keep events and meetings on the books for as long as possible to minimize disruption to students, staff, faculty and other participants. The six factors noted above for near-term events can be similarly applied in this evaluation. However, campuses should be developing a contingency plan for each event or meeting in the event cancelling or rescheduling is required. This may include proactively reaching out to vendors and other partners about the impacts of cancellation or rescheduling.

Where feasible, campuses should delay confirming any new major events or meetings that require the signing of contracts or making other potential financial commitments. Identifying and tracking timelines for “must decide” milestones is recommended, as well (e.g., cancellation policy is 60 days before the event).

Template Evaluation Rubric

To assist campuses in conducting their review of upcoming events and meetings, the CSU Chancellor’s Office is providing the attached template for reference. Campuses are in no way obligated to use this template as their evaluation rubric and may utilize whatever strategies or tools they believe are most useful in adapting this guidance.

Systemwide Resources

Please continue to take advantage of these CSU systemwide resources in your campus planning and preparedness efforts:

- Instructional continuity: Alison Wrynn, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Programs, Innovation and Faculty Development, at (562) 951-4672 or awrynn@calstate.edu
- Student activities, services and support: Luoluo Hong, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, at 562-951-4744 or lhong@calstate.edu
- International programs and travel: Leo Van Cleve, Assistant Vice Chancellor International and Off-Campus Programs, at (562) 951-4790 or e-mail at lvancleve@calstate.edu
- Human resources and personnel matters: Stephanie Wright, Chief of Staff, Human Resources, at 562-951-4253 or swright@calstate.edu
- Risk management, health and safety concerns: Zachary Gifford, Director of Systemwide Risk Management, at (562) 951-4580 or zgifford@calstate.edu
- Information technology: Michael Berman, Assistant Vice Chancellor and Chief Information Officer, at (562) 951-4235 or mberman@calstate.edu
- Communications and public affairs: Mark Woodland, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Communications, at (562) 951-4657 or mwoodland@calstate.edu

- Campus counsel: Campuses should consult with their designated point of contact from the Office of General Counsel.

SR/lh

Attachment: *Rubric for Evaluating Events and Meetings - Infectious Disease Pandemic Planning Tool*
(Current as of March 9, 2020)

cc: Timothy P. White, Chancellor
Loren Blanchard, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
Andy Jones, Executive Vice Chancellor and General Counsel
Garrett Ashley, Vice Chancellor for University Relations and Advancement
Evelyn Nazario, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources
Luoluo Hong, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management