



OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

March 26, 2021

Dear LACCD Colleagues,

We have reached several key milestones regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and I want to take this opportunity to share some important updates about what may lie ahead for our District.

The situation continues to be very fluid and positive changes are occurring, including that the District is now planning for a Fall 2021 semester, which may have many more opportunities for in-person learning, student support services and administrative functions back at our colleges.

First, Let's Remember Our Loved Ones

One year ago, our world turned upside down as the COVID-19 coronavirus raced around the planet causing disruption, illness and death the likes of which we have not experienced in more than a century. The response to this public health crisis is perhaps the single greatest challenge of our lifetime.

The District's actions to maintain academic and business continuity since the emergency began in March 2020 have been remarkable, measured and deliberate. Since the pandemic began, more than 400 LACCD personnel have worked in the District's Emergency Operations Center and the colleges' nine Incident Command Centers LACCD to keep the [health and safety](#) of our students, faculty and staff as the top priority. We owe them our sincere thanks for helping to maintain an outstanding safety record. During the past year, there have been only 535 self-reported positive cases within our LACCD community of about 250,000 students, faculty and staff—and almost all of these cases were unrelated to District or college operations.

Sadly and tragically, however, we know this relentless virus has claimed the lives of three members of our LACCD family—two students and one staff member. Many of us have also lost other family members and friends. Please join me in remembering them at this one-year juncture with love, grace and humility.

Our Current Circumstances

With your support and professional dedication, our nine colleges never closed during the pandemic and remain open. I want to thank you for helping to advance our core mission of educating students. You have done so with intention, with a positive disposition and with a resilient spirit!

We continue to closely monitor the [state](#) and [county](#) for reopening protocols. Several of our colleges are hosting a variety of testing and vaccination clinics to benefit the communities we serve. Our colleges also continue to regularly distribute food, emergency aid and supplies to our students. Most importantly, we continue to follow the safety measures [for facial coverings](#), [social distancing](#) and other [steps to help curb](#) the spread of COVID-19.

Health officials tell us that currently about 40 percent of the 8.3 million adults in Los Angeles County have already [received at least one dose of vaccine](#). This is a critical milestone in the fight against COVID-19 that is meeting federal and state goals to defeat the pandemic. If you have not done so already, I encourage you to [get vaccinated](#) as soon as possible.

Looking Ahead, What to Expect

Health officials are very optimistic about the situation and the path for recovery. County [Health orders](#) and [protocols for Institutes of Higher Education](#) are being modified to allow for a greater return to in-person instruction and in-person services. For now, we expect the remainder of the Spring 2021 Semester to operate in the current environment, even though the County has moved from the Purple to Red Tier.

The good news is that County health officials anticipate Los Angeles County will move into the Orange Tier sometime during the week of April 5. If case numbers and other metrics continue to move downward as vaccination rates increase, health officials are also estimating that the County could be in the Yellow Tier sometime before June. As a result, we may see some additional movement to more in-person environments in a variety of areas throughout the County as early as this summer.

Based on the projections by the County, the District's planning assumption for the Fall 2021 Semester is that we will operate in the Yellow Tier.

The District's [Re-Engagement Grid](#)—consistent with the [State's color-coded plans](#)—will be used to help guide our nine colleges in local decisions that make sense for their unique circumstances corresponding with these anticipated re-opening changes. Updates to the Re-Engagement Grid are being completed now and will be available soon.

The District, meanwhile, is engaged in collegial consultation with our employee groups about the working conditions of returning safely and efficiently to our colleges and work sites.

It is important to note there is no federal or state law making vaccines mandatory as a condition of workplace safety. However, we do have state laws that require us to continue monitoring for COVID-19 cases and any outbreaks during the next three years. As part of these efforts, it is critical that we all continue to adhere to our safety procedures as a core component of returning safely to in-person activities.

LACCD Proud!

The last 12 months have been a long haul and I miss seeing you all in-person. None of this has been easy, but we are in a time of hopeful transition. Working together has been the hallmark of how this District operates, and the Board of Trustees and I have never been more proud during the past year, as we have worked to overcome the coronavirus pandemic and maintain our core mission of serving students and our communities. Our personal and organizational strength, resolve and resourcefulness has shined beautifully.

With admiration and respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop that starts at the top left, curves around to the right, then down and back up to the left, ending with a small horizontal stroke pointing to the right.

Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D.
Chancellor
Los Angeles Community College District