

May 28, 2020

Dear San Jacinto College Employees,

I would like to thank you again for your commitment to San Jacinto College during these recent months. I cannot say it enough: we have a great team of employees who have demonstrated the values and dedication that are the foundation of this institution.

Now that the Spring semester has ended, our immediate focus is on the summer and fall semesters. While we still find ourselves in unprecedented times, your resiliency in the face of this pandemic is what has helped our students get through the Spring semester. Please know that we care about your well-being and that of our entire San Jacinto College community and will continue to keep you updated as the College responds to this ongoing situation.

As you know, the May Mini term, Summer I, and Summer II all academic courses are being offered entirely online and most technical courses are a hybrid model with the hands-on component scheduled in Summer II. Last week in my May 21st update, I announced a phased-in approach to employees beginning to return to campuses Monday, June 1st. This email will cover more information in detail. **There is a great deal of information in this communication, so please take the time to read the entire message.** We will formulate FAQs and will send them out early next week.

As we resume on-site operations, our top priority is to protect the safety and health of our employees and students. With that goal in mind, we have taken and will continue to take steps to make our campuses safe. We outlined a flexible, multi-phase return to campus plan designed to meet our operational needs while protecting and remaining responsive to the needs of our employees and students.

It is apparent that how we function and operate will be different moving forward. As public health information concerning COVID-19 continues to evolve, it is likely we will need to continue to adjust how we operate. The following is a general framework based on input from San Jacinto College employees, public health officials, and data-based public health protocols regarding the control of infectious diseases.

Phased Return to Campus Operations

San Jacinto College plans to resume in-person campus operations in three phases this summer. In each phase, the College will consider changes in our region and guidance from our governmental agencies. The transition from one phase to another is also dependent on the successful implementation of the prior phase. **Therefore, the dates below are tentative.**

June 1st (Phase 2 – Scheduled Activity) – The remainder of the students enrolled in Spring 2020 technical courses are scheduled for completion of the hands-on requirements. We also anticipate students in non-credit and contract courses will be transitioning to on-campus training. Most of the employees needed to support these activities have already been contacted, but we are finalizing the schedule and may reach out, on a limited basis, for others to assist. We are also planning for the remainder of the facilities and maintenance employees to be on

site, along with ITS campus support and others in select operational support areas. Additionally, we anticipate that the North and Central Campus Children's Centers will begin phasing in their reopening processes.

June 8th (Phase 2 – Expanding Scheduled Activity) – We are planning for select student services employees to return in the records management office, financial aid processing center, testing centers, and welcome desks. Additional employees will be providing advising and financial aid support on site at Generation Park in a temporary building. Other employees will be needed on site to initiate essential functions related to resuming in-person work. These employees will be notified no later than June 1st.

Early July (Phase 3 – Moderate Activity) - We are anticipating moving to Phase 3 – Moderate Activity in early July. **All employees should be prepared to return to on-site operations during this phase.** Employees should anticipate at least 50% of their time will be spent working on site, rather than remotely. Tentative specific dates for expanding on-site operations will be determined based on health and safety guidance. In this phase, we are planning for all instructional, student services, and operational areas to have an in-person presence. During this phase, employees on site at the same time will be limited based on social distancing protocols. We anticipate staggered shifts and rotating schedules in some areas. As this phase progresses successfully, we anticipate increasing the number of employees on site in order to provide an expanded selection of on-campus services for students.

Leaders will recommend the positions to be included in each phase based upon the College's student and operational needs. Once identified, the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) will review the recommendations. Positions will be prioritized based solely upon the student and operational needs of the College.

Once the list of positions to return to campus has been approved, leaders will notify those employees directly. Employees asked to work on site who have health concerns and want more information about FMLA, should contact HR Benefits. Please note that leaders will not determine accommodations and will not ask employees about personal health or medical information. All conversations will take place between the specific employee and HR Benefits in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Leaders will have the flexibility in each phase to develop schedules that meet the College's student and operational needs. Each leader will work with their leadership chain and employees to determine a schedule that recognizes social distancing and addresses the needs of the College. Departments may also consider staggering reporting and departure times by 30 minutes to reduce traffic in common areas.

FFCRA and Underlying Health Conditions:

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides FMLA for employees who have difficulty finding childcare. The FFCRA allows for up to 12 weeks of leave for employees at 2/3 pay when employees cannot return to on-site operations due to the unavailability of childcare. You must provide documentation from your provider and have FMLA time available in order to qualify.

Employees should contact HR Benefits to discuss their concerns if they have an underlying health condition. The attending physician will need to complete documentation to state the employee cannot return to on-site operations due to the current health condition. The employee may be eligible for FMLA and could use available leave time.

An employee who is concerned about returning to work because they provide daily care for a family member will need to contact HR Benefits and provide documentation from the family member's physician. The employee may take FMLA, if applicable, and use available leave time.

Health and Safety Guidance

When the College returns to on-site operations, employees and students will notice a variety of changes designed to create a safe and healthy environment.

Social Distancing: Maintaining space from others is one of the most effective tools in slowing the spread of COVID-19. Public health officials recommend that individuals always remain at least six feet apart, do not gather in large groups, and avoid mass gatherings. To support this effort, department leadership should work with employees to determine the best possible seating and work arrangements to encourage social distancing. According to our established guidelines and protocols, when an employee is in the same general area as another (employee, student, or visitor), face coverings must be worn. This guidance does not change for cubicle spaces. Employees working in shared cubicles should work with their leaders to develop an alternating schedule that limits overlap. There is also an option that an employee could be moved to another space if one is available.

Enhanced Cleaning Protocols: San Jacinto College facilities staff has been working closely with custodial vendors to conduct enhanced cleaning protocols in accordance with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. Custodial services will conduct additional cleanings in high traffic areas. In addition to these disinfection procedures, employees should take additional care to wipe down commonly-used surfaces in their personal workspace. Employees will be provided a PPE kit that includes disinfectant and a microfiber cloth to be used for this purpose.

Face Coverings: Employees working on campus will be required to wear a face covering when in the presence of others. Appropriate use of face coverings is essential to minimize risks to others near you, though it is not a substitute for social distancing. I hope that most employees will bring their own face coverings for use during work hours. However, to facilitate the use of face coverings on campus, the College will provide each employee with two cloth face coverings as part of their PPE kit.

Please note the following recommendations for proper use and care of face coverings:

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer prior to handling the face cover.
- Ensure the face cover fits over the nose and mouth.
- Avoid touching the front of the face cover.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth when removing the face cover and wash your hands immediately after removing.

- Cloth face coverings should be properly laundered with regular clothing detergent and should be replaced immediately if soiled, damaged, or contaminated.
- Disposable masks should not be used for more than one day and should be placed in the trash immediately if soiled, damaged, or contaminated.

Hand Sanitizer/Wash Stations: San Jacinto College will install hand sanitizer/wash stations in the common areas and hallways of every campus facility, as well as in close proximity to the entrances to every classroom or lab, for use by employees and students. Additional bottles of hand sanitizer will be available for employee use throughout the facilities.

Restrooms: Use of restrooms should be limited based on size to ensure at least a six-foot distance between individuals. Use a paper towel when touching door handles upon exit of the restroom. Employees and students should wash their hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds to reduce the potential transmission of any viruses and germs. Restrooms will be cleaned as necessary during normal business hours with enhanced spot cleaning in the late morning and mid evening. Detailed cleaning and disinfection activities will occur nightly.

Elevators: Elevator occupancy should be limited to no more than two individuals at once. Where possible, occupants should practice social distancing and use face coverings while in an elevator with others. Employees should avoid touching the elevator buttons with exposed fingers, if possible, and should clean their hands with hand sanitizer upon exiting the elevator.

Travel: To safeguard our campus community, San Jacinto College will continue to limit official travel to that deemed essential by the appropriate SLT member.

Use of Facilities: San Jacinto College will not host events for external organizations this summer. This includes meetings, banquets, luncheons, performances, and other gatherings. The College will not host in-person summer camps, campus tours, or recruiting visits for groups on any of its campuses. However, these recruiting and enrollment activities and services are being provided online virtually through our student services department. We will evaluate these types of events as we get closer to the Fall semester to determine the best course of action for San Jacinto College and our community.

Testing Positive for COVID-19: As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the College has processes in place in the event a San Jacinto College employee or student tests positive for the virus. Those testing positive for the COVID-19 virus will be directed to receive the appropriate treatment from a physician and place themselves in self-isolation as dictated by evidence-based public health protocols for the control of infectious disease.

Students who test positive for COVID-19 may return to classes and activities after recovering and their return has been cleared by their health care provider or in accordance with the most recent local public health and medical guidance.

Faculty and staff who test positive for COVID-19 will need to contact HR Benefits. They will take sick leave in accordance with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). These individuals will place themselves in self-isolation as determined by local health

officials at the time of testing, returning to the College only after being cleared to return by their health care provider or in accordance with the most recent local public health and medical guidance.

Training: A new training course has been developed titled *SJC Your Safe Return to Work*. It is a 30-minute **required** online course that will be accessible from Cornerstone. Employees will receive a notification from Cornerstone when this course is assigned. The content covers a variety of health and safety protocols and prevention strategies in preparation for returning to campus. Employee awareness and compliance with these protocols are integral to the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 and are necessary to protect our College community.

Fiscal

As I mentioned in the Watercooler webinars, we are closely monitoring our Summer and Fall enrollment and our budget. The College has done an outstanding job through the years of being fiscally responsible, and we continue to make decisions in a judicious manner that are intended to keep the College financially resilient for years to come.

While uncertain times demonstrate the wisdom of this, I call on each of you to help by approaching every decision with an attitude of fiscal conservatism. The College's expenditures for the remainder of the summer, and also for the next fiscal year, need to be limited to only those that are absolutely mission critical.

A hiring pause has been in effect for several months and will remain in effect. We are asking leaders to examine budgets to identify activities, events, and items that can be delayed for at least one year. This conservative approach will serve the College well and help preserve our future as we navigate through next year which will be a challenging year.

Fall Semester

I know many of you have questions about the Fall semester. As we continue to overcome this challenge together, we may need to adapt our operations to correspond to and align with the circumstances.

In recognition of the Fall semester and the unique challenges ahead, College leadership will implement the following strategies:

Academics

Keeping the safety of employees and students at the forefront in our discussions and decisions, we have made preliminary decisions about Summer and Fall schedules. Summer I begins June 1st with online courses, as well as instruction to complete the applied technical courses started in the spring term. Summer II begins July 6th, and we will continue to assess how much applied instruction we will be able to offer. For general education courses we will continue fully online.

The Fall 2020 semester will begin as scheduled Monday, August 24th. A Learning Enhancement Task Force under the leadership of Dean J.R. Ragaisis and Faculty Senate President Robb Flynn are helping to evaluate and consider a variety of options for Fall 2020

with recommendations provided to the SLT in mid-June. We anticipate that we will increase from Fall 2019 the number of course offerings in online and hybrid delivery. We will also consider how many courses we might offer in 8-week terms, how we might frontload applied technical skills in course sequences, and what other strategies we can employ to create an engaged learning environment for students and keep everyone safe.

We will continue professional development for faculty focused on learning how to develop and manage online and hybrid courses. Areas of focus will be testing/assessment methodologies, technical tools that may assist student learning and facilitate instruction, in-depth use of Blackboard and all its tools, online synchronous and asynchronous course structures, and successful instructional strategies associated with online learning. Faculty already had at least a minimal presence in Blackboard before the pandemic, which provided us a good starting point when we moved to altered operations in the Spring. Currently, the Learning Enhancement Task Force is assessing faculty needs in order to make changes that will provide the improved support to faculty and students.

As long as the need for social distancing requirements are in place, we will follow local and state guidelines to ensure that classrooms host no more than one person per 36 square feet of usable space. We will expand our schedules into the weekends and afternoons to help meet student demand. Cleaning and sanitization are enhanced for all areas as previously mentioned.

We are trying to make as many decisions as we can with the information and data we have now, knowing that circumstances change. We want to allow ourselves as many options as possible before making final decisions, but every aspect of the instructional program and student services is being assessed and restructured as needed. If we need to remain fully online except for applied technical courses, we will be ready. If we can offer more face-to-face instruction, we will be ready. The ambiguity we face is one of the most difficult aspects of our work right now, but we want and must continue providing quality instruction and support in an environment that is safe for everyone.

Food Services

San Jacinto College is working through the processes and procedures on how to safely provide food services for our employees and students under CDC guidelines. As these plans become more defined, we will communicate them with the College community.

Athletics

San Jacinto College currently anticipates having athletics for the 2020-2021 season, and we continue to formulate our plans for how these programs will be structured. The NJCAA, the two-year college intercollegiate sports governing body, will announce its plans for Fall sports in mid-June. After that takes place, we will finalize plans regarding our athletic programs.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a very fluid situation. I know you may have many questions because we have never been in a situation like this. Our planning continues to evolve, and as we gather and adapt to new information, I am committed to updating you every step of the way. Our success always has relied on our ability to work as a team. We are in this together and will come out of this even stronger.

Once again, I thank each of you for your hard work and dedication to our College and our students. Your innovation and adaptability over these past few months are to be commended. As we move forward this summer and head into the Fall 2020 semester, it may look very different from previous years, but I know that with the exceptional teams we have in place, we will continue to provide outstanding service to our students and community.

I always appreciate your comments and feedback. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your leader or your SLT member if you have questions or comments as we continue to work through these different times.

Best,

BH



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