

President's Report August 2021

Covid-19

In June we reported no Covid cases and plans to ease on class size restrictions put in place to mitigate the spread on Covid with our return of Face-to-Face courses. That decision was placed on hold in early July due to an uptick in positive Covid cases in our region. As you are well aware, the spread of covid has grown exponentially. As of August, the 11th, the steepness of the positive covid cases shows no sign of plateauing. In addition, positivity rates have remained above 20% for several weeks now. Positivity rates above 5% correlate with increase concerns and those escalate at rates above 10%.

CDC recommended prevention strategies that reduce spread

- Offering and promoting vaccines – we are doing
- Consistent and correct use of mask – we continue to educate and disseminate information
- Physical distancing – classroom capacity limited to maintain proper distancing
- Handwashing & respiratory etiquette – we have posters placed at every restroom
- Contact tracing in combination with isolation & quarantine – we are doing this, following CDC guidance
- Testing for COVID-19 – we are evaluating this strategy
- Maintain health environments (increased ventilation and cleaning) – we have placed air scrubbers in every classroom, main office areas, and in process of adding to individual offices
- Maintaining healthy operations (communications, supportive policies and health equity) – we continue to disseminate information to students and employees

As you can see, we are employing a multi-layered strategy to maintain a safe environment for our students and employees. Key to this multi-layered strategy is the ability to require masking when there is a substantial & high level of community spread (which we are in presently). As of today, per Governor's Executive Order – 38, we are prohibited from requiring mask. Several counties and ISDs have filed lawsuits exerting their local duties to protect the health and safety of their communities. We feel confident that with our multi-layered approach in addition to requiring masks at this time, we will be able to maintain in person classes, therefore, we ask the board for the authority to require mask as per the item in the board agenda.

We have been promoting vaccinations of our students through vaccine drives on each campus. During the first round we administered:

- UV 16
- DR 46
- EP 176
- CC 63

The next round of vaccines is scheduled on 8/17-25 and students can still receive their first shot at any of these events. In an effort to encourage student vaccinations we are incentivizing them by awarding a full fall scholarship to winner drawn from all fully vaccinated students on each campus.

Fall Semester

Enrollment in our fall semester is showing signs of gaining strength. We currently have 34% of students enrolled selecting a face-to-face course section. (UV 65 %, DR 42 %, EP 30 %, and CC 22 %). We are still offering courses via Zoom and online. Should the need arise we have the flexibility to move more students in Zoom sections as well as afford students the ability to transfer from face-to-face to Zoom.

On August 10th we have approximately 80 dorm applications. Our intent was to open dorms at full capacity, but we have adjusted in order to help keep our students safe. We will cap our dorm capacity at a single student per room and two students per suite. In addition, we will have wing in reserve in case we need to quarantine any dorm students.

We have developed the Covid protocol checklist that will be provided to students via Canvas and Syllabus.

CARES/HEERF Funding

We have received the following:

Students Funds	\$11,055,590
Awarded	<u>\$4,575,507</u>
Remaining to be awarded	\$6,480,083
Institutional	\$15,089,054
Expended	\$4,410,183
Lost Revenue Recapture	\$4,006,183
Encumbered	<u>\$ 618,867</u>
Remaining	\$6,053,722
<u>Projected</u>	
Witt Building HVAC	\$1,000,000
Student A/R Balances	\$450,000
I.T. Programming	\$130,000
Professional Development	\$ 20,000
Modular Building	\$1,000,000
La Forge Hall HVAC	\$ 750,000
Semi-Trucks	\$ 340,000
PPE	<u>\$ 10,340</u>
Total	\$3,702,340

Hispanic Serving Institution

Awarded	\$1,421,504
Expended	<u>\$ 672,613</u>
Remaining	\$ 748,891

Partnerships

- Met with representative of Union Pacific Railroad to discuss opportunity for a grant to expand technical offerings in Eagle Pass – in process of developing a proposal
- Eagle Pass Economic Development – met to discuss the possibility of a joint regional training center that expands technical training opportunities (July 16)
- Eagle Pass Economic Development & Representative Morales – continued conversation on regional training center (July 19)
- Met with Mexican Consulate in Eagle Pass to accept a BECAS grant that assists Mexican nationals attend courses with SWTJC (July 21)
- Met with Congressman Tony Gonzales to discuss pertinent issues in our area and impacts to higher education (August 2)

Grants

- City of Eagle Pass has awarded us a grant of \$249,913 that provides tuition assistance for Eagle Pass students attending our RN, LVN, and CNA programs in addition to RN nursing stipends.
- The Texas Workforce Commission has awarded us a Jobs & Education for Texans (JET) grant to fund equipment enhancement to our Diesel Program in the amount of \$312,162
- U.S. Department of Education has awarded us an Institutional Resilience and Expanded Postsecondary Opportunity (IREPO) grant in the amount of \$1,508,958 to expand remote course offerings to dual credit, develop a completely online associate degree, redesign our remote/online courses and expand the use of open educational resources (in lieu of textbooks)
- In partnership Sul Ross State University – were awarded a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant of \$1,333,429 to fund the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program which provides scholarships, stipends, and programmatic support to recruit and prepare talented STEM students, graduates and professionals to serve as stem teachers in high-need districts along the border.
- U.S. Department of Education has awarded us an additional \$745,180 from HEERF III – American Rescue Plan – Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)

Upcoming Meeting/Events

- 8/12 Meeting with local leaders regarding Covid community impact and response
- 8/18 Dorms open for Fall – limited capacity
- 8/18 TACC College Finance Committee Meeting
- 8/19 General Faculty Meeting
- 8/19 August Board Meeting
- 8/23 Fall – first day classes
- 8/25 Middle Rio Grande Annual Meeting
- 9/8 TACC College Finance Committee Meeting
- 9/10 Sul Ross/SWTJC announcement of Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship recipients
- 9/16 September Board Meeting