Palomar College COVID-19 Recovery Plan

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COVID-19 Planning Assumptions

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has dramatically shifted Palomar College operations and instruction in a short time. The goal of the Palomar College COVID-19 Recovery Plan is to prepare for a phased transition from widespread COVID-19 transmission to a steady state of low-level or no transmission and includes recommendations for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters.

On April 14, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom shared six critical indicators the state will consider before modifying the stay-at-home order.

The 6 indicators include:

1. The ability to monitor and protect our communities through testing, contact tracing, isolating and supporting those who are positive or exposed;
2. The ability to prevent infection in people who are at risk for more severe COVID-19;
3. The ability of the hospital and health systems to handle surges;
4. The ability to develop therapeutics to meet the demand;
5. The ability for businesses, schools, and childcare facilities to support physical distancing; and
6. The ability to determine when to reinstitute certain measures, such as the stay-at-home orders, if necessary.

On August 28, 2020, Governor Newsom announced California's new reopening plan: The Blueprint for a Safer Economy (the Blueprint). The Blueprint is the most significant change to the state's reopening plans and will guide the re-opening plans for the College.

Palomar College has proactively aligned its onsite and offsite operations with guidelines published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), California Department of Public Health, San Diego County Department of Public Health, and the Chancellor's Office. These health and safety guidelines will continue to shape our return to on site work and future configurations of the College until the COVID-19 pandemic has ended. It is necessary for Palomar College and other higher education institutions to create contingency plans based on the following assumptions.

1. **It will be safe for Palomar College to return to physical campus(es) in accordance with the following:**
   a. The California Stay-at-Home Order has been lifted and/or amended for colleges and universities.
   b. County of San Diego Public Health Order, including physical distancing guidelines for institutes of higher education, has been lifted or amended.
   c. Guidance issued for colleges and universities to reopen from the California Governor, Chancellor's Office, public health officials, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

2. **Transmission of SARS Co-V-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19, will continue until a vaccine is developed and used widely.**
   a. There are no anti-viral drugs or vaccines proven to treat or prevent COVID-19 although there are global widespread efforts to develop one.
   b. A vaccine is not likely to be widely available for 9-24 months.
   c. A second wave of infections is expected, possibly coinciding with the traditional flu season.

d. Short-term closure of some or all Palomar College locations will remain a possibility until a vaccine is widely used.
e. Staff and students in high risk categories will continue to be especially vulnerable and deaths are possible.
f. Proper hygiene, social distancing and avoidance of large gatherings will continue to be important strategies in slowing the spread of COVID-19.
g. The widespread use of flu vaccinations may prevent some hospitalizations, and this will reduce stress on the hospital systems.
h. Frequent cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces will be needed throughout this period.

3. **Conditions are unlikely to improve quickly enough to allow the College to fully resume on-campus operations and a phased return to campus will occur.**
   a. When the Stay-at-Home Order is lifted, limits on group sizes may still be necessary and may change as we move through phases.
   b. The commencement ceremony may continue to be held in a virtual format.
   c. There may be a limited number of classes and/or services that will be offered in person if determined essential, following social distancing guidelines, with sufficient personal protection equipment (PPE), and ability of the College to provide enhanced cleaning.
   d. The Early Childhood Education Lab School (ECELS) will follow state childcare facility guidelines, CDC guidelines for childcare, and local health official regulations using PPE, enhanced cleaning, and other safety protocols.
   e. When working at the College, it may also be necessary for employees to rotate work shifts and if possible, work remotely during this time period.
   f. Utilizing the Risk Evaluation Matrix the Policy team will determine the immediate consideration of pausing or reducing face-to-face instruction if there are three simultaneous high risk cases within a program or area of operation.

4. **The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will have significant and lasting impacts on higher education.**
   a. State tax revenues will fall well below those of previous years with reductions in higher education and K-12 very likely.
   b. Job layoffs and business closures will result in higher levels of unemployment which may mean more demand for community college programs for individuals seeking to change and/or improve career skills.
   c. Students, faculty and staff with COVID-19, and those who are directly exposed, may miss two or more weeks of classes or work.
   d. Food, nutrition and other basic needs services may be needed more by students. The College must also consider that some students may not be able to afford laptops, internet access and other technology for remote and online learning. For these students, the Palomar College Foundation is accepting Emergency Grant Applications, so that technology needs are met, and students are able to continue their education.

General Considerations

1. **Carefully consider when to fully return college to normal operations.**

The College should weigh the potential risks and benefits of returning to full operations.

a. Many students, faculty and staff will resist the idea that is it safe to return to face-to-face classes while COVID-19 is still in circulation or conversely, many will want to return as soon as possible.
b. Thorough preparation is needed to offer any face-to-face courses and working on physical campuses on a large scale.
c. The District will need to prepare for increased requests for accommodations from students and employees.
d. Temperature and symptom monitoring of students and employees will likely need to be expanded.

There are many logistical issues that will need to be addressed with employees returning to campus.

e. Employees must be prepared to return to onsite work. The District must identify concerns and be prepared with responses.
f. Information Services (IS) will determine what equipment must be returned or replaced in order to support on-campus instruction/operations.
g. Ergonomic equipment and office supplies will be returned, working with managers and referencing the [Equipment Removal Form](.).
h. When possible and appropriate, work with employees in high-risk groups to identify roles and environments where social distancing can be maintained.
i. Workspaces and service areas may need added protective barriers or furniture/layout reconfigurations.
j. Sufficient supplies must be maintained for heightened prevention measures (e.g. hand sanitizer, soap and cleaning/disinfection products). Supplies will need to be replaced (e.g. donation of PPE to local hospitals).
k. Ongoing strategies for employees to promote behaviors such as use of facial coverings, washing hands, avoiding touching their face, practicing good respiratory etiquette, individual distancing, isolating at home if sick, and utilizing the [COVID-19 Reporting form](.) to identify themselves, students or co-workers as a contact of a confirmed case or an exposure to a confirmed case when appropriate.

2. **Reassess employee telework from emergency timeframe to a period of six months or more.**

With a shift to long-term telework, there are logistical issues that should be re-assessed and changed if needed.

a. The district will need to provide equipment needed such as computers, internet access, and other technology. Employees can [make an appointment](.) with Information Services to borrow equipment or receive technical support that cannot be addressed remotely. An approved [Equipment Removal Form](.) is required to complete the process of borrowing equipment.
b. The District will need to support ergonomics and accommodations when employees are working from home for a long period of time. Employees are able to make an essential visit to campus to retrieve ergonomic equipment assigned to them. This [request form](.) requires VP level approval.
c. Determination of employee telework assignments: it is necessary to collaborate with bargaining units when developing plans that impact the working conditions of their

members.

3. Create plans to address Hard-to-Convert Courses and/or courses requiring face-to-face instruction until full operations are resumed.

The COVID-19 state of emergency has forced colleges to suspend in person face-to-face courses and convert to alternative methods of instructional delivery. Although most courses have been offered remote or online, some courses have been cancelled or delayed.

    a. Identify all courses that cannot be offered in a remote format and provide resources and support to convert as many classes or parts of classes as possible (i.e. public safety, healthcare, workforce apprenticeship, science labs, applied arts, etc.) to reduce the number of students on campuses and allow students to complete courses and programs.

    b. Provide faculty training in online teaching, Canvas, and other technology. For specialized classes, instructional design and accessibility support should be provided. It may be necessary to provide faculty with stipends to build model online courses.

    c. Prioritize in-person offerings by essential workforce needs, accreditation requirements, or pedagogical challenges when planning to resume face-to-face courses. Determine which classes can be held face-to-face based on capacity of the College to support social distancing, PPE, and enhanced cleaning.

    d. Classrooms may need to be reconfigured with COVID-19 still in circulation.
- Compile list of large-capacity classrooms.
- Utilizing guidance from the San Diego County Department of Public Health Services, determine number of students that can be in classrooms while adhering to social distancing.
- Consider cross-contamination of rooms when scheduling courses but also consolidating instruction to fewer number of buildings for cleaning/disinfecting.

    e. Considerations for hourly sign language interpreting professionals will be needed for those assigned to interpret in classes offered onsite.

4. Create plans to restore operations in phases.

Returning to full operations will require careful identification of the activities needed for return and the order in which they should be implemented.

    a. College operational divisions should create timelines and communication plans to support each phase ranging from remote work, a hybrid model, and full operations.

    b. Restoration plans should include phases for reduced transmission as well as adjustments needed in response to possible additional outbreaks. Utilizing the [Risk Evaluation Matrix](#) the Policy team will determine the immediate consideration of pausing or reducing face-to-face instruction if there are three simultaneous high risk cases within a program or area of operation.

5. Create plans to hold commencement when it is safe to do so.

Commencement ceremony will be held in a virtual format until limits on large gatherings are no longer in place.

Recommendations for Fall 2020

2. **Plan for limited on-campus and remote options for courses, services, and other work. As we get closer to the start of the Fall 2020 semester, we will make final determinations depending on the status of COVID-19.**
    a. Offer completely online classes via Canvas or other remote formats.
    b. Review opportunities and resources that can be used for hard-to-convert classes.
    c. Explore different schedule formats including fast-track 8-week classes or hybrid classes with fewer meetings on campus.
    d. Some Public Safety, Allied Health, Science Laboratories, and other classes may be allowed to access the campus following the approval of an On-site Operations and Safety Plan in alignment with health and safety protocols based on State and County public health orders.
    e. The way in which competitive athletics and training programs may be offered will be reliant upon guidance from the California Community College Athletics Association, and State and County public health orders.
    f. Other on-campus activity will occur only with guidance from public health officials and careful planning for health and safety.
    g. Be prepared in advance to provide all courses from a distance should it be necessary. Utilizing the Risk Evaluation Matrix the Policy team will determine the immediate consideration of pausing or reducing face-to-face instruction if there are three simultaneous high risk cases within a program or area of operation.

3. **If on-campus courses, services or other work is authorized, it will be necessary to carefully plan and track in-person activities so that the College can determine capacity to ensure the health and safety of all students, faculty and staff.**
    a. Determine which courses have a high need for face-to-face instruction and/or hybrid formats with VPI, Deans and Chairs, and prioritize offerings. Requested in-person classes must have justification and receive an approved health and safety plan.
    b. Develop an On-Site Operations and Safety Plan utilizing the approved planning form. The form addresses physical distancing, student waivers, temperature and symptom monitoring, enhanced cleaning/disinfecting and other practices recommended by the governor, CDC, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and San Diego County Public Health officials.
    c. The On-Site Operations and Safety Plan requires the identification of appropriate locations for classes, services and work, including buildings, classrooms and ancillary areas (e.g. restrooms, bookstore, dining services, vending machines, etc.) to determine effective social and physical distancing, PPE, enhanced cleaning and other required support.
    d. Increase essential staff for Custodial/Facilities, Information Services, Campus Police and others to support health and safety with increased physical campus usage.
    e. Continue to track access to the physical campus and carefully review new requests for individuals, courses, services and others.

Recommendations for Spring 2021

1. **Plan for limited on-campus and remote options for courses, services, and other work. As we get closer to the start of the Spring 2021 semester, we will make final determinations depending on the status of COVID-19.**
   a. Offer completely online classes via Canvas or other remote formats.
   b. Review opportunities and resources that can be used for hard-to-convert classes.
   c. Explore different schedule formats including fast-track 4-week and 8-week classes or hybrid classes with fewer meetings on campus.
   d. Some Public Safety, Allied Health, Science Laboratories, and essential trade and industry may be allowed to access the campus following the approval of an On-site Operations and Safety Plan in alignment with health and safety protocols based on State and County public health orders.
   e. The way in which competitive athletics and training programs may be offered will be reliant upon guidance from the California Community College Athletics Association, and State and County public health orders.
   f. Other on-campus activity will occur only with guidance from public health officials and careful planning for health and safety.
   g. Be prepared in advance to provide all courses from a distance should it be necessary. Utilizing the Risk Evaluation Matrix the Policy team will determine the immediate consideration of pausing or reducing face-to-face instruction if there are three simultaneous high risk cases within a program or area of operation.

2. **If on-campus courses, services or other work is authorized, it will be necessary to carefully plan and track in-person activities so that the College can determine capacity to ensure the health and safety of all students, faculty and staff.**
   a. Determine which courses have a high need for face-to-face instruction and/or hybrid formats with VPI, Deans and Chairs, and prioritize offerings. Requested in-person classes must have justification and receive an approved health and safety plan.
   b. Develop an On-Site Operations and Safety Plan utilizing the approved planning form. The form addresses physical distancing, student waivers, temperature and symptom monitoring, enhanced cleaning/disinfecting and other practices recommended by the governor, CDC, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and San Diego County Public Health officials.
   c. The On-Site Operations and Safety Plan requires the identification of appropriate locations for classes, services and work, including buildings, classrooms and ancillary areas (e.g. restrooms, bookstore, dining services, vending machines, etc.) to determine effective social and physical distancing, PPE, enhanced cleaning and other required support.
   d. Increase essential staff for Custodial/Facilities, Information Services, Campus Police and others to support health and safety with increased physical campus usage.
   e. Continue to track access to the physical campus and carefully review new requests for individuals, courses, services and others.

Return to On-Site Work

Phased return to on-site work plans must be developed with The Blueprint for a Safer Economy (the Blueprint) in mind, and in alignment with guidelines published by the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention (CDC), California Department of Public Health, San Diego County Department of Public Health, and the Chancellor's Office. These health and safety guidelines will continue to shape our return to on site work and future configurations of the College until the COVID-19 pandemic has ended. The College will allow time to fully prepare for on-site work.

The Blueprint for a Safer Economy is data centric in design. Specifically, the data used to determine assigned tiers is the number of cases per 100,000 residents and percentage of COVID-19 tests that come back positive. The Blueprint has four tiers. Each tier permits specific levels of re-opening and contains specific guidelines for each industry. As COVID-19 case data improves in a county, so does the region's placement in a tier. The purple tier (widespread) is the most restrictive, followed by red (substantial), orange (moderate), and yellow (minimal).

San Diego County is assigned to the red tier: The College's plan for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters aligns with the restrictions and guidelines within this tier. Specifically,

- Majority of employees are working remotely.
- Rotating minimal staff in IS, Facilities, Campus Police, Warehouse, Mailroom, Fiscal Services, Student Services to address essential on-campus work that cannot be done remotely for safety, critical operations and required maintenance. All employees reporting to campus are required to follow county health guidelines and social distancing protocols.
- Limited number of face-to-face courses for public health and safety, and allied health in the Fall and an expansion to essential workforce training courses in Spring 2021. Most courses are held at San Marcos, Escondido and Santar locations. All programs are operating within their approved On-site Operations and Safety Plans.
- Early Childhood Education Lab School (ECELS) continues its services, following state childcare licensing requirements, local health orders, and CDC guidelines for childcare facilities.
- Utilizing the Risk Evaluation Matrix the Policy team will determine the immediate consideration of pausing or reducing face-to-face instruction if there are three simultaneous high risk cases within a program or area of operation.
- Approval is required for campus entry.

As case data improves in San Diego County, the assigned tier will be adjusted after a 14-day period. The College reserves the right to be more restrictive based on the current case data within the institution.

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