



Office of the President

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Date: April 28, 2020

To: NMSU-Las Cruces Faculty and Staff

From: Dan Arvizu, Chancellor

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John Floros, President

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Subject: Planning for Fall 2020

Thank you for all the work you have undertaken over the past seven weeks as we adapted our operations to deal with the coronavirus pandemic. Collectively, we have continued our land grant mission and protected the health, safety and wellbeing of the Aggie community. In the past seven weeks, we learned that we can be nimble and we can quickly adjust to changing circumstances. It is time for us to do that again.

Now, every employee of New Mexico State University needs to think about how to operate their part of NMSU under conditions where protecting the health of our community is as important of a priority as our Land-Grant University mission. By this memo, we are requesting that everybody on campus work with colleagues and supervisors to plan how to bring your unit back to campus, in phases, and in a way that ensures that your unit is fully functional. Plans need to have input from all staff and should be approved through your supervisory lines to deans, vice presidents, or equivalent. By May 15, we must have a plan nearly complete to prepare for our incoming and returning students.

As you think about these plans, consider how you will use tools to protect our community from Covid-19. Most important among these tools are social distancing to prevent transmission, testing to document infection, and tracing to understand the extent of possible spread. We need to re-think how we can socially distance in classrooms, labs, and workspaces. We must know who is present in our work and learning spaces, so we can trace contacts as needed. Also, for now, let's assume that testing will be available.

We have already gained some useful knowledge. For example, in the past two months we have seen that social distancing works to lessen transmission. We also have some time to plan and time to test those plans. Our experience in March taught us that we can quickly adapt to a different environment. And every day, we learn more about this virus and how to defeat it. We are very proud of our NMSU experts that have contributed to this knowledge.

In your discussion, we ask that you consider the following:

- What functions must absolutely take place on campus to support our mission? These are the functions that need to come back first.
- Alternatively, what functions need not take place on campus? People involved in these equally important functions, who can effectively support our mission from home, may continue doing so, to lower the density of people on campus.

- Flexibility is key: we should plan for reopening under social distancing protocols, but we must be ready to adapt as conditions change.
- Plan to change as we learn. If we try something and it does not work, we need to be willing to reconsider.

We acknowledge that there is much uncertainty regarding what we will face in the Fall of 2020. However, even if uncertainty is part of our new reality, we still need to be a fully functioning university. Planning ahead in an uncertain reality, with room for flexibility, adaptation and change, will be our best defense in the difficult budgetary environment ahead. If you have any questions, please plan on stopping by Thursday's Town Hall meeting. You can submit questions at <https://president.nmsu.edu/>.

Again, thank you for all the work you do at New Mexico State University.