



Office of the Chancellor

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DATE: May 28, 2020

TO: NMSU Community

FROM: Dan E. Arvizu, Chancellor

John D. Floros, President

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Handwritten signature of John D. Floros in blue ink.

SUBJECT: Announcing the COVID-19 Rapid Response Team

As Aggies, we have accomplished a lot together over the past months as we responded to the coronavirus pandemic. We worked through major changes and kept our institution committed to the health and safety of our students, our employees, our communities, and our state. We are far from done, and today we write to announce progress in our preparations for the start of the next academic year in August.

We have assembled a COVID-19 Rapid Response Team to plan for the return of students, faculty, and staff to our campuses. This team consists of some of NMSU's most knowledgeable experts from across the system. They will develop solutions to challenges regarding teaching and learning, student services, residence life, and campus dining. They will address modifications needed for classrooms, research, human resource practices, safety protocols, and business operations. They will communicate regularly with the NMSU community to ensure you are up to date regarding our progress.

The COVID-19 Rapid Response Team will be led by Vice Chancellor and Strategic Chief Financial Officer Ruth Johnston. In her short time at NMSU, she has already demonstrated her ability to think carefully about both the big picture and the fine details. There is no higher priority in the NMSU System right now than ensuring that we are prepared for the fall term.

Colleges and administrative units have already developed plans for a careful, phased return to campus that will culminate in August with the start of the academic term. These plans allow some employees to continue to work from home and describe ways to reduce exposure to the coronavirus for people who will work from campus. We are currently reviewing these plans, and those that deal with more complex situations will be referred to experts for additional review.

We acknowledge that our plans will need to adapt to changing conditions. While New Mexico has made great strides in flattening the curve of COVID-19 infection, we are months away from a vaccine or a cure. All of our plans are subject to changing guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control, the New Mexico Department of Health, and the state of New Mexico.

Although the frequency of Town Hall meetings has decreased for the summer, we will continue to communicate with you regularly. We're setting up a website that will be announced shortly which will provide up-to-date information and a portal for questions. We hope you'll use this site as your go-to resource in the weeks to come.

In the meantime, please submit feedback to President.Floros@nmsu.edu or Chancellor.Arvizu@nmsu.edu.

Go Aggies!