

5 May 2020

Colleagues~

It's week 11 in the old ante-viral calendar and week 6 since we migrated online.

My primary message continues to be expressing appreciation for so much that so many are doing: faculty, staff, students, and administrators—you have all exhibited enormous grace under fire. I also want to share some updates on planning, teacher appreciation week, and a note about the challenges ahead.

Planning for What's Ahead

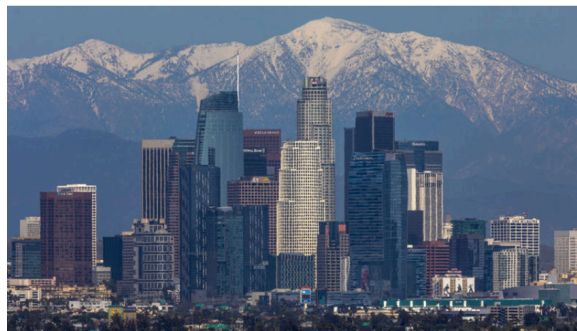
March did indeed come in like a lion, and by the end of the month, we were all working from home. April showers have now given way to 90° days in LA as we take stock of the new normal.

We don't know what's ahead. I trust by now that most faculty are aware that the great majority of the college's course offerings will remain online in summer and fall—and that we are working to allow a *few* courses that *cannot* be offered online to be offered by faculty wishing to return to campus this summer. This is work based on hope, the guidance of public health experts, and planning to make the few campus spaces that will open as safe and hygienic as possible. I know faculty, chairs, deans, as well as our staff colleagues in campus safety, facilities, and risk management are working together to sustain access for students. We need each other more than ever.

CORONAVIRUS LIVE UPDATES

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Predicted To Fall Nearly 8% — Largest Decrease Ever

Global energy demand, particularly for coal, is falling sharply this year, the International Energy Agency says. The drop is caused by weather patterns and COVID-19 shutdowns.



David McNew/Getty Images

There are some bright sides. Los Angeles air is clean in ways many of us have never seen. This screen shot from a National Public Radio news story suggests a positive effect of everyone staying home. Mt. SAC's Climate Commitment should prompt us to look for ways to continue to ease our impact on the environment as we navigate our new normal.

I also hope all of us are thinking about what kind of world we want to emerge into. California community colleges are founded on the promise of opportunity for all and a deep faith in the potential of education to

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lead to human transformation. We want the world we are creating in a pandemic to continue to hold opportunity and promise for our students.

Mt. SAC leaders of every stripe continue to pay close attention to the guidance provided by Governor Newsom, Chancellor Oakley, and LA County Health authorities. At times it feels a bit absurd to be planning for four months in the future when we can barely plan for next week, but if we don't plan now, we will be even more constrained when the summer and fall arrive.

Planning & PIE: We already know that next year's budgets will be constrained so investing a lot of time in planning for new fiscal resources is time better spent elsewhere. Michelle Sampat, Pedro Suarez and the PIE Ninja team have worked to simplify this year's PIE process so that we gather only the information we need. I have attached a summary of what this year's process will look like, and we will be meeting with department chairs and others on campus to learn how we can make this process as painless as possible.

Appreciating Teachers

This week—May 4-8—is teacher appreciation week, and today as I write this (Cinco de Mayo) is Teacher Appreciation Day. It is suggested* that advocacy for Teacher Appreciation week began in 1953 and became a reality in 1980. Our students have more reasons than ever to appreciate Mt. SAC's deeply committed teachers. And, many Mountie families now have homeschool teachers—as many faculty are teaching their *own* children between building online classes, answering student email, and Zooming class lectures.



We will never know how much so many Mounties gave to sustain educational opportunity for students and so we will never know how much we have to be grateful for—but we know it's a lot. My own youngest child is in his twenties, so I am sobered at how much so many faculty members are doing to meet the needs of infants, toddlers, tweens, and adolescents, even as they work to continue to meet the needs of the Mt. SAC students. I know there are other challenges facing many of us, but this one is more acute this week.

The Challenges Ahead

Even as we plan for a partial on-campus schedule in the fall, we know that most instruction will remain online. We know that all of us are social creatures and that social isolation will take a toll on students, but also on us. We need to identify both ways that maximize the safety of students, faculty, and staff who return to campus, but also ways to meet the need for social interaction of ourselves and our students in an online environment. It is not just expertise that makes a faculty member an effective teacher, but the relationships they build with students in the classroom. Technology-mediated instruction and student support is not the *same*, but it need not be a pale imitation of the traditional classroom, counseling office, or support center. Online instruction is different from face-to-face instruction, but it can continue to include many of the

interpersonal elements that make effective teaching in a classroom. I hope all of us are reflecting on how we can slowly enhance the humane elements in classes and services. We are likely to be here for a while and the more we can do to make the online classroom a rich interpersonal classroom, the happier and healthier we will all be and the better learning we will support.

New Faculty Humor

I have always been a slow learner of student's names, and with ~1400 faculty at Mt. SAC, I knew it would be a challenge to learn those names. I'm beginning with full timers though I would like to get to know as many part-time faculty as possible—if students shouldn't see a difference between their teachers based on their employment status, neither should I. I have met with this year's New Faculty Seminar a few times both to encourage and reinforce my slow memory for names. I stopped by briefly last Friday and soon afterward received the following meme from 1st year Sign Language instructor Ann Adamiak. I share it with her permission. It's encouraging to see colleagues responding to a difficult challenge with a gallows sense of humor. Our circumstances are not funny, but the ability to laugh will keep us healthier longer than the alternatives.



I continue to be deeply impressed at the way so many people have adapted in a trying and often exhausting moment. We need each other as never before and will continue to need to be inspired and given hope by one another.

One final note: I'd like to announce that I will begin holding open office hours biweekly, on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month. Please look for an email announcement from Laura Martinez with the date/time and Zoom link. My appreciation to Chisa and Senate officers for the suggestion.

* The History Behind Teachers Appreciation Week:

<https://blog.schoolspecialty.com/history-behind-teacher-appreciation-week/>