

**Fall 2021 Planning Update**

**Chancellor Castro's Opening Remarks**

**CSU Board of Trustees Meeting**

**January 26, 2021**

Thank you, Chair Kimbell, and good morning everyone.

I want to take a moment at the onset of our meeting to provide a short update regarding our approach to fall planning. As you know, on December 9, 2020, Chancellor Emeritus White and I issued a joint statement announcing the CSU's anticipated return to delivering a majority of classes in-person for the fall 2021 term.

I want to acknowledge that many members of the CSU community – and the public at large – have questions and concerns about the state of the pandemic and whether our approach remains feasible. I want you to know I understand these questions and concerns – and I understand the associated anxiety. New considerations have emerged since our announcement, and there is much that we do not know at this moment in time... including the impact of the emerging virus variants and the extent to which new vaccine distribution strategies will overcome the fact that initial state and federal goals and projections for the roll-out have not been met.

So, facing these uncertainties, we must rely on what we do know: our twin north stars are unchanged – we will continue to protect the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff... and we will ensure that the greatest possible number of students maintain their progress to degree completion.

Our decisions will be based on science and made in consultation with medical and public health experts. To this end, I want to emphasize that we continue our close communication with state and federal agencies, providing assistance and feedback as guidance is developed to ensure that students – from K-12 to college students – are back in classrooms as soon as safely possible.

Finally, we remain committed to our December announcement to return, as a system, to a majority of in-person activities for the fall 2021 term, and we will continue to plan with that goal in mind. There will be some variation across campuses due to local circumstances.

If the course of the virus, the data, vaccine availability, and the medical and public health experts indicate that our planning approach is no longer feasible, we will adjust. And, as we have in the past, we will announce our intentions as early as possible, to give our students and their families time to plan – and to give our faculty and staff ample time to continue to incorporate all the best practices we have learned that have made the CSU virtual learning experience so robust. Virtual learning has worked, and it will continue to play an important role in the Cal State journey of learning and discovery... long after the pandemic subsides.

I will also add that the CSU encourages all who are eligible and able to participate in the important COVID-vaccine programs as they become available. By each of us doing our part, we will reach the herd immunity that will be foundational to our collective return to a new normal. We are in close touch with the Governor's Office to determine how we can collaborate on a

robust and effective public-health campaign, along with the UC and community college systems, to encourage our students, faculty and staff to participate when they are deemed eligible.

In closing, I am optimistic as we plan and strive for a return to primarily in-person activities in the fall. And I will remain optimistic no matter the circumstances we face as the year progresses... knowing with absolute confidence that we will continue to advance our mission on behalf of our students and the state of California.

Chair Kimbell, that concludes my opening remarks.

###