



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty and Staff  
California State University, Fresno

FROM: Timothy P. White  
Chancellor

DATE: April 30, 2020

SUBJECT: A Message from the Chancellor to all CSU Employees

Dear CSU employees,

I write today with hope, with thanks, and with some thoughts about the pathway ahead.

First, I hope that you and the ones you love and care for are navigating this moment of great disruption and risk as well as possible. I trust you and yours are managing to maintain good spirits – despite all the life changes and associated hardships – and staying out of harm’s way.

Second, I thank you. I am grateful for you and the work you do for the CSU, and thus for our students and the state of California’s present and future. Despite the exhausting pace of the past two months, we have engaged in an inspired, university-wide effort to pivot to our new reality – which is not yet close to our next new normal.

The pivot was designed to help our students not only to maintain their progress to degree completion, but to thrive in their academic programs, with the richest and safest possible college experience we can provide during these unprecedented times.

I couldn’t be prouder or more grateful to you – our faculty, staff, and campus and university leaders – for your brilliant and selfless efforts to date and to come, and for the hard work you’ve put forth for the success of our students.

I am also proud of our students and their remarkable capacity to adapt to change. Our students have been the ones to feel most acutely the very real challenges of this moment as they press forward in pursuit of their dreams and the fulfillment of their human potential.

We shall never lose sight of this: our students are our raison d'être. We are blessed with 480,000 of them – determined, resilient and brave, yet worried and apprehensive of all that is to come with the university and with their lives. And, yes, saddened – particularly those whose dreams of celebrating with family and friends at commencement have been put on hold, and whose job prospects have temporarily dimmed.

This pandemic is of historic proportions and will change forever the way of life for us and our beloved university. We know the road before us remains a long and challenging one. And when we finally pass through the crisis aspects of this pandemic – which promise sadly to linger for quite a while – our responsibility will then be to reestablish safe and vibrant places for learning, creativity and discovery.

We will be able to refine and incorporate many of the new, efficient and effective practices in both our academic and business operations – innovations enabled by ingenuity, technology, need, courage, optimism, patience and brilliance – and toss aside the ones that didn't work as well.

We are guided and buoyed during this moment by our steadfast commitment to ensuring the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff, coupled with our core values of student achievement and success – indeed, inclusive excellence. I am inspired by the care, compassion, community and common sense that is imbedded within the DNA of the CSU.

Working together, we will co-create solutions to the challenges – known and emerging, big and small – that confront the university. I am heartened and glad that we continue this journey together.

I suspect you may wonder what this journey might look like over the next several months.

With our eyes wide open, we have learned into a unique planning moment – one in which we must plan for a large range of possible scenarios for the next academic year, each with multiple moving parts that today are not fully known:

- What will the course of the pandemic be?
- What governmental and public health requirements will be in place in the summer and fall regarding gathering size (e.g., number of students in classrooms, studios, labs, residence halls or at athletic events), physical distancing or personal protective equipment?
- Will restrictions vary across the regions of our state, with different impacts on our campuses?
- Will instruction be fully virtual, face to face, or a blended or hybrid model?
- Will we gain or lose student enrollment – on a given campus or across the system?
- What will our costs and revenues be next year?

Said plainly – for both the state of California and for the California State University – revenues are down, and costs are up, and we believe the situation will only worsen in the fiscal year ahead. Thankfully, we have reserves to help offset some of our one-time expenses. But belt tightening remains inevitable.

Campuses and the Chancellor's Office have been discussing a wide range of possible scenarios for a reimagined, thriving, high-quality university. As the variables and uncertainties noted above become known, we will be ready to act accordingly.

We can't afford to wait until summer to begin planning and training for the fall. Many of these important discussions are already and appropriately happening in open and collegial virtual townhall meetings or in other broad-based, consultative settings. However, our transparency about the

emerging issues we're facing has regrettably led some in the media to report "ideas under discussion" misleadingly as "decisions already made."

So, in closing, I encourage you to rely on campus and CO leadership's commitment to work together with bargaining unit leadership, academic senates, student leaders and the Board of Trustees as we move from the wide range of possibilities that we need to be prepared for, to actual decisions and implementation. Stay connected to your supervisors, academic chairs, deans, provosts and presidents for accurate and timely information.

Stay safe and well, and, as mentioned above, I am glad that we continue this journey together. Because together we will bridge the whitewater that confronts us today and emerge as a highly regarded and vital building block that will power California's post-COVID-19 economy, society and environment of tomorrow.

Kind regards,

Timothy P. White  
Chancellor

