

Resolution

Whereas Collin College faculty, administrators and staff have joined together in a collaborative process of shared governance to translate the Board of Trustees' vision and strategic goals into a working plan of action,

And

Whereas it is essential that Collin employees actively participate in planning and other strategic initiatives,

And

Whereas Collin College encourages and values the active participation of its faculty and staff,

The Faculty Council therefore makes the following recommendations:

- 1) Administration and faculty participate in shared governance in regards to significant changes to district-wide teaching modalities
- 2) We strongly recommend moving courses, when possible, to a fully online modality. This will help ensure the health of our students and faculty and will provide enough time to reach the pedagogical excellence that Collin College strives to achieve
- 3) If a fully online modality is not possible, the following should be implemented:
 - a) Any faculty member who requests to teach online should be given the option
 - b) Require the use of masks by faculty, students and staff
 - c) Require social distancing in classrooms
 - d) Provide adequate PPE, including sanitizers, gloves, masks, etc., for faculty teaching in the classrooms
 - e) Develop a detailed plan, within the guidelines of shared governance, regarding instances where students and faculty have tested positive for Covid-19. The plan should address quarantine procedures, academic continuity, enacting FMLA and workers' compensation

Collin College and Concerns about Re-opening in Fall 2020 during the COVID Pandemic: Discussion and Proposals

Over the last two weeks, Collin faculty have been made aware of the College's plan to adopt a pilot schedule structure for Fall 2020 classes. This structure appears to be a combination of online and face-to-face learning with modalities including hybrid, blended, and/or alternating student group attendance within a class.

Assumptions underlying reopening with a hybrid or in-person model:

1. That the reported numbers of those currently infected with COVID-19 A) are accurate, even considering pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic people and B) are holding steady or trending downward, representing a lower risk than we faced in Spring 2020
 - As of June 2020, Texas is reporting record-breaking numbers of COVID-19 hospitalizations (**not** positive tests, which can be interpreted in various ways)¹
 - See charts below from the TDHS: positive cases, hospitalizations, and fatalities continue on a steep upward trend with no signs of abating²

2. That moving student desks six feet apart and having some people wear masks is adequate to protect all parties from exposure to the virus
 - According to infectious disease experts, we can think about risks for contracting COVID-19 in terms of [diversity, distance, and duration](#). **Diversity** (number of households people are in contact with), **distance** (especially if indoors, especially less than 6 feet), and **duration** (time spent in the same air space as others).
 - In a classroom where (for example) 15 students are seated at distanced intervals, diversity is HIGH; distance is LOW (but only if they never get up from their desks, walk close to anyone, approach the professor, or touch common doorknobs, papers, chairs, keyboards, phones, or desks); and duration is HIGH, especially for faculty.
 - The risk of infection is more than 18 times higher **indoors** compared to outdoors³
 - Exposure to small amounts of the virus over time can be as dangerous as high-level one-time exposure⁴ (faculty will have highest duration of exposure as they are required to meet every student group even as students' attendance is reduced)

¹ KERA News: [Texas Reports Record-Breaking COVID-19 Hospitalizations As State Reopens](#)

² Texas Department of Health and Human Services (TDHS): [Texas COVID-19 Data](#)

³ The risk of infection is more than 18 times higher indoors compared to outdoors
[Title: Closed environments facilitate secondary transmission of coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Running title: Closed enviro](#) (Japan study)

⁴ Exposure to small amounts of the virus over time can be as dangerous as high-level one-time exposure
NYTimes: [These Coronavirus Exposures Might Be the Most Dangerous](#)

- **Shared airspace** is a far higher risk for transmitting the virus than touching objects⁵, and remaining six feet apart does not protect against aerosolized virus, the **dominant** route of infection with COVID⁶
 - Simply talking without a mask can expel aerosolized virus droplets that linger in the air for up to 14 minutes⁷
 - Are HVAC systems in [classrooms rated to filter](#) the virus out of the air?⁸ If not, do the HVAC systems blow air from one room into the next?
 - Hallways and restrooms, where social distancing is impossible to enforce, also feed into the HVAC system
 - From ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers): “infectious aerosols emitted from a primary host shrink rapidly to become droplet nuclei, and these dormant yet infectious pathogens remain suspended in the air and are capable of traveling great distances.”⁹
 - ASHRAE Position Document on Infectious Aerosols recommends specific HVAC strategies for businesses that are not health-care facilities (see footnote)
3. That all parties involved will follow strict “personal responsibility” model of health, safety, and hygiene, if such a standard is even possible
- Students are less likely than faculty or staff to take proper precautions, mainly due to age differences. Risk-taking behavior peaks in people ages 20-24 around the world¹⁰
 - Incidence of COVID-19 among people ages 0-19 and 20-39 has doubled from 20% to 40% of all cases, showing a steep increase in infection in younger people^{11, 12}
 - Faculty have no authority to monitor student health behavior or request student behavioral changes such as wearing a mask, even though everyone wearing a mask is the single most effective preventive measure we have^{13, 14}
 - How will social distancing be maintained when people enter or exit classrooms, especially classrooms with a single door?

⁵ Shared airspace is a far higher risk for transmitting the virus than touching objects
[Coronavirus Disease Outbreak in Call Center, South Korea](#) (South Korea study)
[Indoor transmission of SARS-CoV-2](#) (Hong Kong study)

⁶ PNAS: [Identifying airborne transmission as the dominant route for the spread of COVID-19](#)

⁷ PNAS: [The airborne lifetime of small speech droplets and their potential importance in SARS-CoV-2 transmission](#)

⁸ CDC.gov: [COVID-19 Outbreak Associated with Air Conditioning in Restaurant, Guangzhou, China, 2020](#)

⁹ [ASHRAE Position Document on Infectious Aerosols](#)

¹⁰ Risk-taking behavior peaks in people ages 20-24 around the world:

NYTimes: [Expecting Students to Play It Safe if Colleges Reopen Is a Fantasy](#)

¹¹ [COVID-19 Confirmed Case Incidence Age Shift to Young Persons Age 0-19 and 20-39 Years Over Time](#) (US study)

¹² Majority of case clusters of infection among people aged 20-39 who were asymptomatic or presymptomatic at time of infection
[Clusters of Coronavirus Disease in Communities](#) (Japan study)

¹³ [Visualizing Speech-Generated Oral Fluid Droplets with Laser Light Scattering](#) (US study
 from the New England Journal of Medicine)

¹⁴ The science of mask-wearing (lay person version): [Masks for all? The science says yes.](#)

- How will social distancing be maintained when students want to talk one-on-one with faculty (e.g. a FERPA-protected topic)? Almost no faculty offices are large enough to permit social distancing
 - How will social distancing be maintained in public restrooms, hallways, and narrow stairwells?
4. That faculty can reasonably increase their workload by 1.5 to 2 times without harmful effects
- New teaching models require dramatic increase in work hours and productive energy, which will take its toll on faculty physical health and immunity¹⁵
 - Extra work has no plan to be compensated beyond normal salary
 - Increased duration of exposure to students increases risk to faculty's physical health
 - Psychological stressors, including overcommitment at work and anxiety over workplace safety, are directly tied to reduced immune function¹⁶
5. That asking people who feel sick to not come to campus is an adequate preventive measure
- Nearly **half** of patients who get COVID-19 are infected by people who are not yet coughing or sneezing ("pre-symptomatic")¹⁷
 - 30-50% of people infected with COVID-19 are asymptomatic,^{18, 19} meaning they do not feel ill over the course of the infection, but can still carry and spread the infection through respiratory and other secretions
 - Pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic carriers will not feel sick or have a fever, and therefore temperature checks and self-monitoring symptoms are very limited in preventing spread of the virus
 - Many people ignore or rationalize symptoms because they perceive the cost of missing work or important content to be too great
 - Symptoms of COVID-19 are still extremely variable and not entirely known by health experts (e.g. skin lesions, eye discharge, loss of appetite)²⁰
 - Faculty asking students who appear ill to leave the classroom may be violating disability or privacy rights
 - What about those who come to campus infected and do not disclose their status?

¹⁵ 2016 meta-study [A systematic review and meta-analysis of the effort-reward imbalance model of workplace stress with indicators of immune function](#)

¹⁶ 2015 study: [Current Directions in Stress and Human Immune Function](#)

¹⁷ Nearly half of patients who get COVID-19 are infected by people who are not coughing or sneezing yet [Temporal dynamics in viral shedding and transmissibility of COVID-19](#) (Nature Medicine Journal) [The contribution of pre-symptomatic...](#) (Centre for Mathematical Modeling of Infectious Diseases) [Estimating the generation interval for COVID-19 based on symptom onset data](#) (European Research Council, awaiting peer review)

¹⁸ [Prevalence of Asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 Infection: A Narrative Review: Annals of Internal Medicine: Vol 0, No 0](#)

¹⁹ Asymptomatic prevalence among those infected in Iceland: [Spread of SARS-CoV-2 in the Icelandic Population | NEJM](#)

²⁰ Mayo Clinic: [Unusual coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms: What are they?](#)

6. That there's a realistic and effective way to keep track of who may be sick
 - The variety of people and the households they've been in contact with (called "diversity" by epidemiologists) is impossible to control, even in a hybrid model
 - Factors such as students going to the restroom, hugging or touching other people, leaving campus, interacting with friends and family, going home, and coming back are all uncontrollable for tracing the virus
 - How will college employees have the ability to protect themselves from exposure to pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic people, or to those who have been exposed to infected people?
 - What is the plan for not if, but **when**, a student tests positive for the virus? Will all of the student's classmates and professors in every class have to be quarantined for 14 days?
 - What is the plan in case a faculty member tests positive for the virus? How will faculty meet classes if they have to quarantine or are too sick to work?

7. That the lack of access to personal computers and stable internet, especially among rural and lower socio-economic students, will be addressed by a hybrid model of learning
 - A hybrid or blended model still requires students to use their own technology a significant portion of the time
 - Asking students to use computers on campus (such as in classrooms or computer labs) exposes them to extra risk by using high-touch surfaces that require constant cleaning and disinfection²¹

8. That the unique and rich experience of classroom teaching will mostly be maintained despite all the changes to seating, scheduling, and logistics
 - Removing small group work undermines ability to share ideas and interact on a human level
 - If professor remains at podium for safety, this reduces all classroom learning to a passive lecture model, severely limiting teaching methods, and may not be appropriate for many courses or instructors
 - It is not feasible for students to use the podium, computer keyboard, or other presentation tools since the objects would have to be cleaned between each use (cleaning staff will already be overtaxed with new requirements for classrooms and high-touch areas)
 - Even in-class work on paper is risky, as virus can remain on paper from a few hours up to a few days²²
 - Cost of lapel mics and other ameliorating technology could instead be used to buy laptops that students can check out if they lack proper access for distance learning

²¹ CDC.gov: [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)

²² [How long can the coronavirus live on various surfaces? Curious Texas investigates](#)

- Climate of anxiety in the classroom - data show the least successful learning is done in a stressful or fearful environment, and ethically students should not have to feel unsafe in the classroom
 - In the U.S. 31% of college students already meet requirements for “moderate” or “severe” anxiety²³
 - What about students who need accommodations?
 - Those who are hard of hearing cannot lip-read a masked person
 - Masks muffle speech and decrease volume by 3-4 decibels, adding challenges for those listening²⁴
 - Support staff are at increased risk of exposure (e.g. interpreters, note-takers)
 - Students who normally need to sit up front now have distance from the professor to consider
9. That most students’ expectations for a quality education will be met with the pilot program of hybrid, blended, 8-8, and other mitigating models
- Faculty were informed on June 11 that Collin students had been surveyed about their preferences for Fall 2020, and that overall the majority said they wanted to have classes in person.
 - How and when were students surveyed?
 - When asked if they wanted to attend in-person classes for Fall, was it made clear to students that it would look very different than it did in previous semesters?
 - How many students responded to the survey?
 - Are faculty able to see the survey that was administered?
 - Despite this information, online enrollment at Collin is currently surging, with face-to-face class enrollment declining
 - Will students who indicated a preference for face-to-face learning have the option to join classes with F2F components? Will those who prefer online learning have the choice to take online classes? If not, what is the method and rationale for matching student preference with actual class enrollment?
 - If the college waits until mid August or later to announce major schedule changes, such as a move back to mostly online, is it acceptable to have students’ semesters disrupted again?

Conclusions

- The hybrid model proposed for Fall 2020 poses an **unacceptable health risk** not only for faculty, who have the highest duration and exposure of all, but for

²³ [The Healthy Minds Study](#) 2018-2019

²⁴ Hearing Review: [How Do Medical Masks Degrade Speech Reception?](#)

students, who have no way of knowing how they are being kept safe from the virus.

- The benefits of in-person teaching and learning are **severely reduced**, if not completely undermined, by the proposed (and insufficient) safety measures.
- The main challenges of the shift online in Spring 2020 were **not** due to the online medium itself, but to the inability of faculty and students to **prepare** and adequately train for the shift.
- Faculty **have not been consulted** about their willingness to teach face-to-face in the current pandemic situation with the exception of being told to contact HR if they have a documented health condition that requires accommodations.
- Faculty have been given **no authority** to require students to wear masks or to adopt specific health behaviors beyond encouraging “personal responsibility.”
- Faculty are **not “essential workers”** and have not been trained to work in high-risk health environments.
- Faculty are not expendable and should not have to choose between exposure to intolerable health risks or losing their professional career.

Proposals

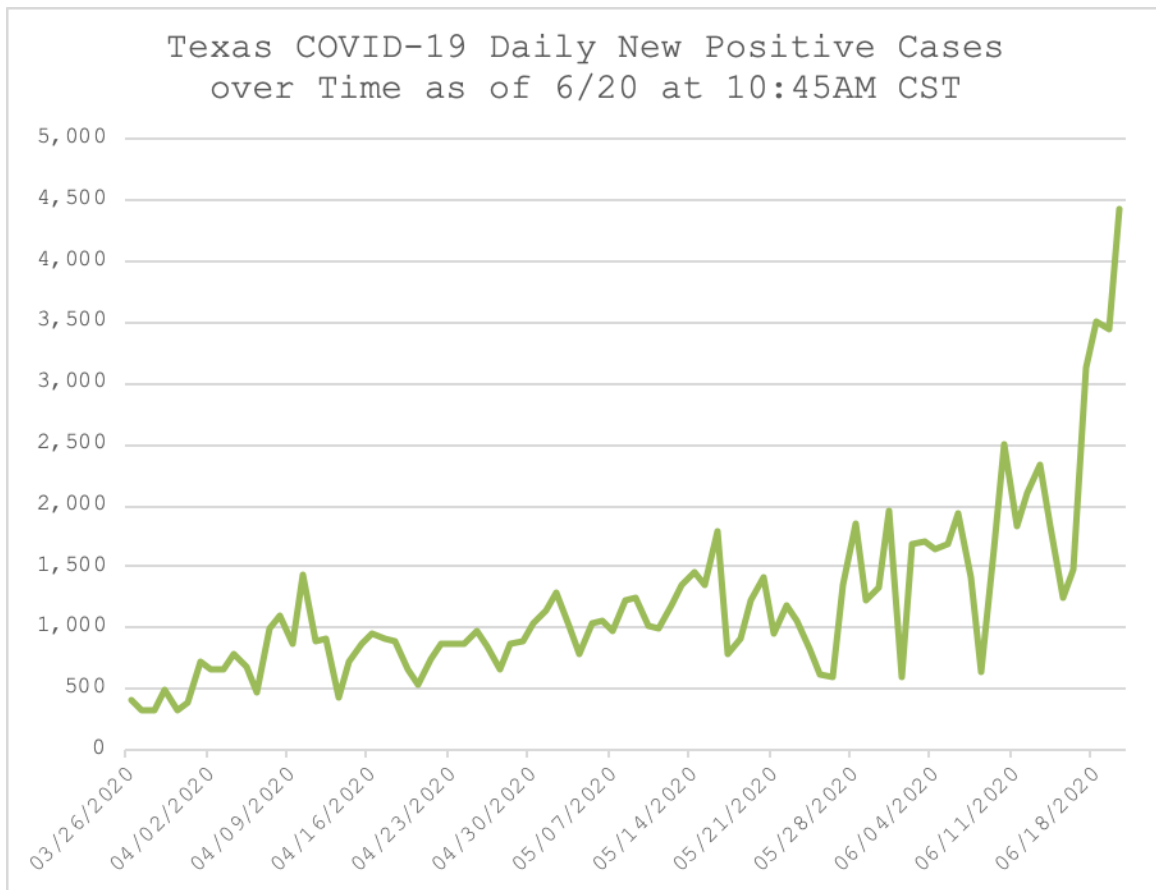
1. Collin College should adopt a stance that **prioritizes health and safety** of students, faculty, and staff
2. In doing so, the college should make the decision as soon as possible to move all courses **online** for Fall 2020 (with specific exceptions, perhaps such as science labs, which may require an in-person component)
3. If the move online is impossible, faculty should at minimum have the ability to **opt out** of teaching face-to-face if they are uncomfortable doing so. Even if they do not have a documented health condition or high-risk family member that would allow for accommodations, the unknowns about the virus combined with the fact that it is novel (mean that no one is immune) make it more important than ever that faculty’s sense of safety should be held in the highest regard.
4. Opting out of F2F teaching could reasonably require faculty to demonstrate ability to use distance learning tools and mastery of online pedagogical methods. The college could use the next ten weeks in part to offer support to faculty who wish to improve their online teaching skills.
5. The college should involve the Faculty Council and the community of employees in its decision-making about face-to-face learning during a pandemic (beyond the COVID-19 Recovery Plan, faculty should be involved in the decisions about instruction methods such as hybrid vs. online and how often they will be physically exposed to other people)
6. The college should be more **transparent** about its decisions, especially when it so dramatically affects the health of its employees. Ideally college leadership should share its plans for managing safety during COVID, as well as communication with students on a website that is accessible by employees, if not by the general public.

The State of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Texas

As of June 22, 2020, in Texas **2,192** reported people have died of COVID-19. Averaging the predictions of epidemiological forecasters at twelve major institutions shows that COVID deaths in Texas will increase by 50% to around 3,000 **in the next four weeks.**²⁵

The trend of positive tests, hospitalizations, and deaths from COVID-19 are steadily **rising**:

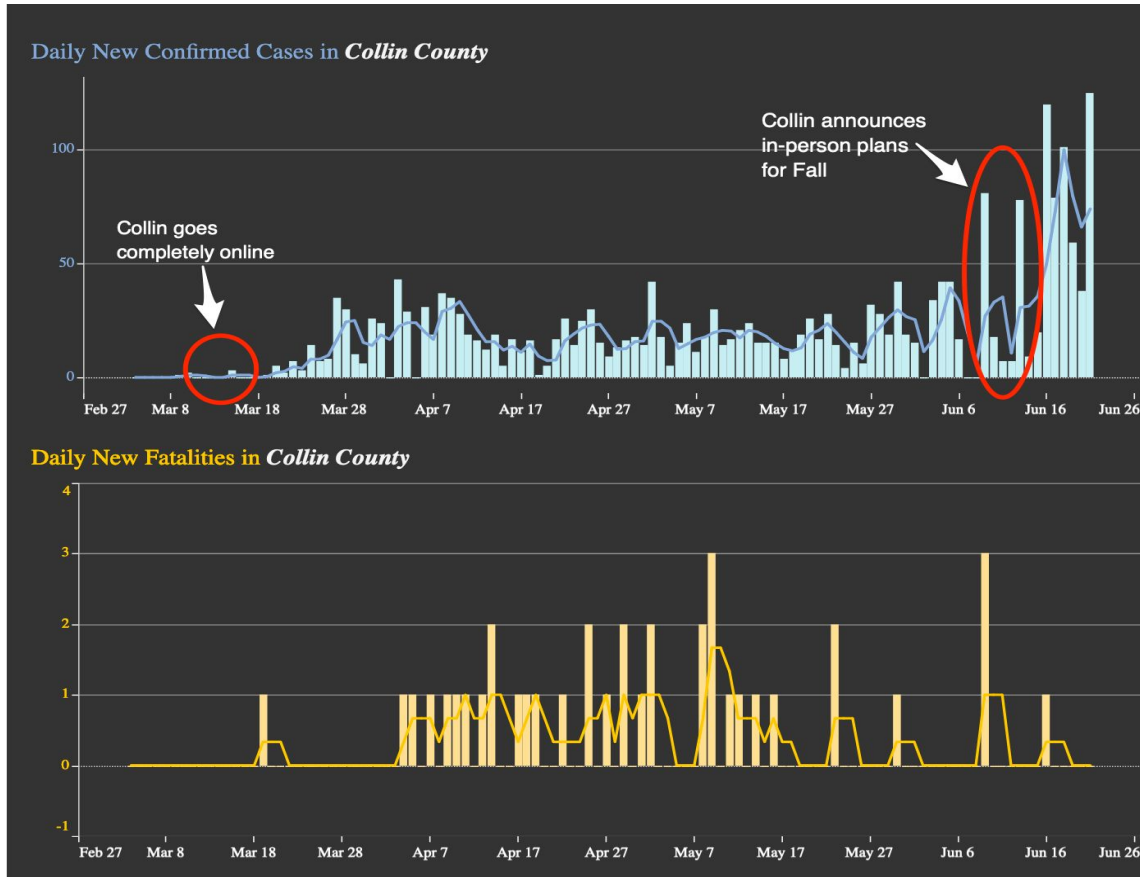
Note this is **daily new cases**, not cumulative cases.



Trends for Texas, March 26 through current

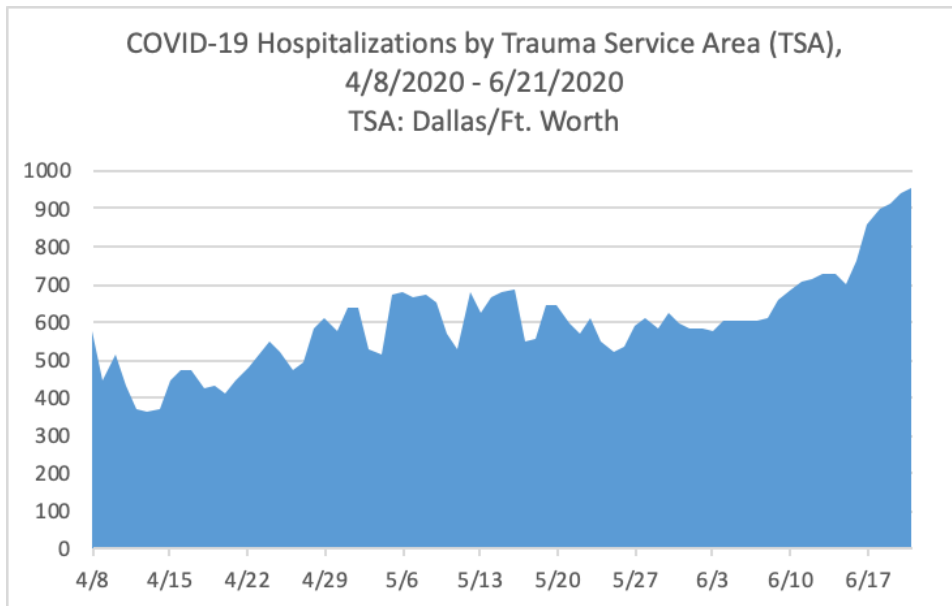
Source: [Texas Department of State Health Services](#) (DSHS), June 20, 2020

²⁵ [Where The Latest COVID-19 Models Think We're Headed — And Why They Disagree](#)



Trends in Collin County, TX

Source: [Texas Department of State Health Services](#) (DSHS) as of June 21, 2020



Source: [Texas COVID-19 Data](#) from Texas DSHS June 21, 2020

Other North Texas Institutions' COVID-19 Response and Transparency



UT Dallas

- Surveyed faculty about their needs and preferences, and how the university could help them prepare
- Guaranteed online courses for faculty who cannot or choose not to teach face-to-face in Fall 2020
- Held public virtual town hall meeting to discuss decisions
- Basing decisions on guidance from health professionals

President Richard C. Benson and Provost Inga Musselman conveyed to faculty and the faculty Senate that “an **asynchronous option will be available for all courses in case a student or faculty member cannot or chooses not to come to campus**” in Fall 2020.

This week UTD sent a survey to all its faculty members (survey ended June 11) with the following goals: “The survey results will provide general feedback from the faculty about their preferred format for teaching, whether in person, online, or in hybrid form. The survey also will provide information about **how the university can assist faculty in preparing for fall classes**. The survey results, in combination with information about classroom occupancy, priorities for in-person and online instruction, and the latest health guidance, will facilitate the creation of a framework for finalizing the fall schedule” (source: Provost Inga Musselman, correspondence to faculty).

[UT Dallas Presidential Town Hall, April 22, 2020](#)

[A Message from President Benson: Plans for the Fall Semester](#)

“Some of the conditions that would make a return to campus possible include the capacity for testing and contact tracing, as well as physical spacing adaptations and the ability to isolate campus residents who have tested positive for COVID-19.

It is important to emphasize, once again, that while we are focused on the reopening of the UT Dallas campus, we will only do so in a manner that can be supported by the most current scientific evidence and guidance of medical experts.”



Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD)

- Held three virtual town halls for all college community to discuss plans for managing pandemic and Fall 2020 changes

- Prioritizing health of students and employees and moving almost all classes online for Fall
- Regular public statements and Clery Act notices about any COVID cases on campuses

[General Questions About COVID-19](#)

“In the midst of this public health crisis, the **health and safety of our students and employees are the district’s primary considerations. With this in mind, operations and classes will be predominantly online for the Fall 2020 semester.**”

DCCCD **Virtual Town Halls** with Chancellor Joe May, discussing COVID-19 response and plans for Fall 2020. Town Halls were held on April 16, April 30, and June 3, 2020.

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=dcccd+town+hall



- Faculty have been asked about their preference for teaching online or face-to-face
- Well-organized website acts as a central, public resource for all information related to COVID-19 with portals for faculty/staff, students, and specific areas of concern
- Face covering protocol as of June 10 requires everyone to wear a mask in public buildings except in private offices or residences, or alone in labs
- Reusable, washable masks available for anyone who needs one

[UT Arlington Coronavirus and Fall 2020 Semester Information](#)



- Robust public website with COVID response plan, FAQs, and resources
- Masks will be required for every person on campus, in offices, or other facilities
- Faculty will receive a PPE kit, PPE available to anyone who needs it
- Everyone who comes to campus will be given health questionnaires each time they arrive

San Jacinto College: [CDC Recommendation to Wear Face Mask](#)



Blinn College

- Masks will be required for every person on campus who is “in the presence of others”
- Faculty and staff will be allowed to work remotely as much as possible if they have health or other concerns
- All employees will be provided with a washable, reusable mask
- Everyone returning to campus will fill out a self-screening questionnaire and once a week after that

Return to Campus Info: <https://www.blinn.edu/back-with-blinn/employee-information.html>



Austin Community College

- **“Most classes will remain online and most employees will continue to work remotely.”**
- Strict campus entry protocols (self-screening with an app, face masks required, temperature checks upon entry, and ID badges worn inside buildings)
- Detailed safety website with resources for students, faculty, and employees

<https://www.austincc.edu/coronavirus>

<https://www.austincc.edu/return/health-and-safety-protocols>

Purpose of this Document: These discussions and proposals are intended to bring forward sincerely held concerns by members of the Collin community. We do not wish to subvert or impugn the college leadership in any way. Rather, the purpose of this document is to create a dialogue in the hopes that the administration will consider adjusting its plans in a way that addresses the critical and urgent health concerns laid out here.

Thank you for your consideration.

Audra Heaslip
Faculty, Humanities, and Honors Director
McKinney Campus

To co-sign this document, please add your name, title/position, and campus (if applicable). Including a sentence or two in your own words will go a long way in making this more of a broad-based discussion rather than a petition. Thank you for your support!

Model:

Name	Title/Position	Campus/Location
Comments		