

## COVID-19/Coronavirus Update and Changes to Instruction

Thursday, March 12, 2020

Dear Students,

Because of continuing concerns about COVID-19/Coronavirus, Cypress College will transition as many courses as possible away from in-person class meetings. It is important to note that there are no substantiated cases of COVID-19 related to our campus nor in the North Orange County Community College District, and that the change is being made to align with new direction from state officials to stem community spread. In order to facilitate this change, Cypress College will cancel classes from March 13 to March 17. Instruction will resume on Wednesday, March 18, using alternate delivery methods, including online and real-time teleconferencing. Faculty and staff will use March 16 and March 17 for planning, implementation, and staff development. Students should expect to hear specific plans from the campus and their instructors in the coming days. Events, travel, and field trips are being cancelled or postponed for the immediate future.

**The campus operations will not be closing.** Some lab classes that cannot be taught either online or through teleconferencing will still meet on campus using an abundance of caution; these courses include lab instruction for our health sciences, physical sciences, career and technical courses, athletics, and performing arts. Services will remain open for students who require assistance. In addition, limited labs will be available on campus for students who need access to use computers and WiFi.

This plan is congruent with health officials' requests for "social distancing" and Gov. Newsom's guidance today related to community gatherings. The plan ensures the continuation of all instruction for the spring semester, including those courses that must meet in person for accreditation, technical, or other required reasons. The approach also allows the college to make every effort to continue providing quality education during this public health crisis.

## FAQ

**Q: Why isn't the college moving all classes online?**

A: Some classes cannot be conducted virtually, including those in allied health professions and certain technical fields. In some cases, this is because of accreditation requirements and in others it is because the disciplines require hands-on activities.

**Q: Why now? Why didn't you do this earlier?**

A: Contingency planning to transition classes online has been in the works for about three weeks to prepare for this decision. Guidance from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office was updated on Wednesday, March 11, that facilitated the college's ability to move coursework into online and other similar modes. Prior to this state decision, only pre-approved courses could be offered online. The college met with faculty and other leaders to immediately work out an overview of the transition.

**Q: Why not start online classes immediately?**

A: Closing operations for two days provides the opportunity for faculty who don't already teach online to have time to receive training and to begin building curriculum in Canvas and/or to prepare lessons for Zoom.

**Q.: Why are some courses still going to be taught at the campus, and is that safe?**

A: Some classes simply can't be taught online, and we need to honor students' course load leading to graduation, transfer, and/or certificate attainment. By allowing for only a few classes to be taught in limited areas across the campus we can focus attention on keeping these areas sanitized and safe, and that students have enough space in the classroom to implement "social distancing" recommendations. We can also ensure all students are continuing their progress towards their degrees and certificates.

**Q: Why not just take time off, change the timing of spring break, or completely close?**

A: Each of those options carries a significant downside for students — not the least of which is the potential impact on those students who are transferring to universities in

the fall. These institutions are waiting on transcripts of completed coursework to finalize admissions. Any of the above delays results in negative consequences for a substantial portion of our students.

**Q: Isn't Coronavirus just media hype? Why can't we just keep things how they are?**

A: Health officials recommend "social distancing" — a practice of keeping people out of densely populated situations. This plan supports that health goal.

**Q: Is this going to diminish the value of my degree?**

A: No. There will be no distinction made on transcripts that indicate the delivery method of coursework.

**Q: How long will this change last?**

A: We intend to evaluate the implementation on an ongoing basis and to make a formal re-evaluation of the plan at the end of spring recess, on April 13. If you have an exam on Monday or Tuesday, you will receive an updated schedule from your instructor.

**Q: When will I have more information?**

A: We are beginning three days of intense planning. The closure at the start of next week allows all employees the opportunity to focus exclusively on the transition and on making it as successful as possible. We will likely share additional information on a daily basis between now and the resumption of classes on Wednesday, March 18, 2020.

**Q: What happens if I don't have the technology available at home?**

A: WiFi will remain available across campus and computer labs will be open in the Library/Learning Resource Center for student use. In this location, we will employ social distancing and enhanced cleaning practices.

**Q: Can I meet with a counselor or receive other help online?**

A: Counseling will be made available online through Cranium Café. This service will be available at: <https://cypress.craniumcafe.com/directory/by-department>. Tutorial services available at <https://web.cypresscollege.edu/Smarthinking>.