Merced College Colleagues,

Effective immediately, all Merced College facilities (Merced Campus, Los Banos Campus, and the Business Resource Center) are closed until further notice. This is in direct response to the order issued California-wide by Governor Gavin Newsom to stay-at-home. The essential work of educating our students continues, however. Throughout the past week, Merced College has taken actions to ensure students and employees are aware of this new guidance around the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak as well as put measures in place to allow for instructional and support services continuity.

Employees will continue to work-from-home (as appropriate and under the direction of the immediate supervisor), and we will continue to offer academic and student support services to our students remotely. Essential staff may be directed to report to campus on an as needed basis. Your immediate supervisor will provide direction if your attendance is required. Additionally, Merced College leadership and human resources staff will continue to support our personnel and programs.

We understand there are questions/concerns surrounding pay related to the closure. Please be assured all permanent employees will continue to be paid during this time. For more information about pay and other concerns, please read the attached FAQs.

All planned workshops, trainings, and meetings scheduled for tomorrow (Friday, March 20, 2020) are cancelled. Employees are permitted to briefly visit (less than 15 minutes) their offices/work stations to gather any personal belongings and/or essential work materials to work from home. We ask that you do not return unless approved by your supervisor or until the order to stay-at-home is lifted.

The Merced College ITS Department is still working on technology needs for instructors and employees. Please continue to work through the established processes/procedures to request technology (i.e. go through your immediate supervisor). Early next week (or sooner, if possible), ITS will communicate directly with each requester to schedule a pick-up for all approved technology requests.

All remaining scheduled face-to-face lab classes will be temporarily suspended until further notice. You should plan for these classes to be suspended at least through the end of next week, Friday, March 27, 2020. More information re: scheduled face-to-face lab classes will be forthcoming from the Office of Instruction.

Thank you for your continued patience and cooperation during this unprecedented pandemic. Merced College administration will continue to monitor this situation closely and provide more information as it becomes available.

Regards,

Chris Vitelli, Ed.D.
Superintendent/President

*Next page(s): FAQs for Employees*
MEMORANDUM

To: MCCD Employees

From: Kelly Underwood, Associate Vice President of Human Resources

Date: March 20, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 FAQs for Employees

**Given Governor Newsom’s Executive Order to stay at home, is the College closed?**
While all College facilities are closed, the essential work of educating our students continues. Employees will continue to work-from-home (as appropriate and under the direction of the immediate supervisor), and we will continue to offer academic and student support services to our students remotely. Essential staff may be directed to report to campus on an as needed basis. Your immediate supervisor will provide direction if your attendance is required. Additionally, Merced College leadership and human resources staff will continue to support our personnel and programs.

Please refer to President Vitelli’s email directive dated March 19, 2020 for additional information.

**How will we know if there are cases of COVID-19 connected to Merced College?**
Merced College leadership is disseminating information to the campus community on a daily basis via email, the [COVID-19 webpage](#), and social media. Any confirmed case of COVID-19 connected to the College that may have increased the risk of exposure will be reported via these resources.

**Will I still be paid when the College is closed?**
Permanent employees will continue to be paid their current salary for the position to which they are assigned. Overtime and new stipends and overload assignments must still be approved in advance.

Part-time faculty whose classes have not been canceled will be paid per their notice of assignment.
Part-time faculty, short-term employees, and substitute workers who are no longer scheduled to work or whose hours have been reduced may be eligible for unemployment benefits by contacting the Employment Development Department (EDD).

What should I do if I am not feeling well?
If you are ill and your symptoms are mild, stay home. If needed, contact a healthcare provider if you are demonstrating respiratory symptoms consistent with those described by the CDC below:

The following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.*
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately. Emergency warning signs include*:
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

What if I am tested for COVID-19?
If you become ill and are quarantined and tested for COVID-19 (whether the test is positive or negative), the District will place you on paid administrative leave for the period time during which you are isolated and/or in recovery. Please follow medical advice for isolation and do not come to any College site. Please also ensure you maintain proof of testing (physician’s note is adequate); this document should not contain a diagnosis.

Where can I find medical assistance if Urgent Care says they are full or if I can’t get to Urgent Care?
SISC already provides virtual healthcare through MDLive, which is available through the website or by phone at (800) 400-MDLIVE (6354).

Benefits eligible employees who are in need of mental healthcare may access the Employee Assistance Program, which is available 24/7 at (800) 999-7222 or visit anthemEAP.com.

Dignity Health is expanding access to virtual urgent care options. Starting today, Dignity Health will be offering free virtual urgent care visits with a coupon code for patients experiencing mild to moderate symptoms of COVID-19. The virtual urgent care platform – called Virtual Care Anywhere – allows for timely care delivery without putting other patients or clinicians at risk of contracting the virus.

Here’s how Virtual Care Anywhere works:
- Patients can receive a free Virtual Care Anywhere visit if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Symptoms can include low-grade fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
To access a free virtual urgent care visit, copy and paste this link www.dignityhealth.org/virtualcareanywhere, download the Virtual Care Anywhere app in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store, or call 855-356-8053 and use the coupon code COVID19.

We are encouraging anyone in our communities who may need to visit a health care provider for any purpose to consider a virtual visit as an option.

Please note that because of high demand, wait times will be longer for each of the services listed above, but virtual care is still likely to be a faster and safer option that going to the doctor’s office.

What if I need to stay home to take care of my children who are out of school/daycare?
The District recognizes that if you are on an approved Work-from-Home agreement, you may also be caring for a child/children during that time; however, employees should ensure that the assigned work is being completed. Currently, Ed Code allows for the use of accrued sick leave for care of a dependent. Employees who are taking off time from work for care of a child may use their sick leave for this purpose.

The Federal government is currently considering changes to eligibility requirements to address COVID-19 absences termed Families First Coronavirus Response Act; if legislative changes are adopted, the Office of Human Resources will disseminate that information.

I have been on FMLA protected leave. What happens now?
If your leave designation notice is currently active (i.e., you have not reached the end of your protected leave), you will remain on protected leave.

If you were on protected leave for your own health condition or that of a family member, and that leave has ended, and you stayed home last week because you are 65 or older or you have an underlying health condition that put you at risk, you were placed on paid administrative leave from March 16, 2020-March 20, 2020.

The Federal government is currently considering changes to eligibility requirements to address COVID-19 absences termed Families First Coronavirus Response Act; if legislative changes are adopted, the Office of Human Resources will disseminate that information.

How do I code my time on my attendance sheet [for classified professionals only]?
Employees will continue to access timesheets remotely via the MC4Me portal. Employees should continue to mark their timesheet pursuant to established processes and due dates. For employees working from home, that time should be designated as work time. For employees who are sick and unable to work, that time should be coded as sick time. For employees taking vacation time, that time should be coded as vacation. Holidays (Good Friday, Memorial Day, etc.) should be designated as holidays.

For employees who experience trouble accessing the timesheet electronically, your first step should be to attempt to reload MC4Me via a different web browser (ex. Firefox or Chrome). If
that does step does not resolve the issue, please contact your immediate supervisor for time approval. Your immediate supervisor will forward hours and their approval in writing to Cathy Harris in Human Resources.

**How will I receive a paycheck if I do not have direct deposit?**
Your paycheck will be mailed to the home address on file unless you contact payroll to make other arrangements in advance of payday. We strongly encourage everyone to set-up direct deposit as soon as possible to avoid delays.

**I don’t have access to the technology I need to do my job remotely. What do I do?**
If you do not have the necessary equipment or WiFi access to work at home, contact your immediate supervisor to request the necessary technology.

**Is the College still holding scheduled meetings?**
The College will continue to hold essential meetings as needed (via Zoom, telephone, or email).