

Assembly Higher Education Committee

Fall 2021: COVID-19 Update

1) Return to Campus

- a) Statewide Guidance for the Fall – In the summer of 2020, Governor Newsom released industry guidelines for [Institutions of Higher Education](#) (IHE). As of August 2021, the above guidance has been repealed and replaced with:
 - i) Encouraging the vaccination of all eligible students, faculty, and staff.
 - ii) California Department of Public Health’s – [Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#).
 - iii) [California’s COVID -19 Prevention Emergency Temporary standards for employers](#).
- b) Are there additional guidelines for IHE to follow? As of July 15, 2021, the California Department of Public Health [has identified additional resources for IHE](#) during the continuation of the pandemic; including the [CDC Recommendations for Colleges, University, and Higher Learning](#).
- c) Will IHE be offering virtual or in-person instruction in the fall?
 - i) California State University (CSU) – The majority of campuses are open for in-person instruction and require students, faculty, and staff to either be vaccinated or tested regularly. Each Campus of the CSU is endowed with the authority to delay the beginning of the semester or transition to online learning due to an increase in COVID-19 cases; for example, Stanislaus State University delayed the start of hybrid and in-person classes from August 23 to October 1 due to a rise in COVID-19 cases within the county.
 - ii) University of California (UC) – All 10 campuses of the UC are open for in-person instruction and require students, faculty, and staff to either be vaccinated or tested regularly.
 - iii) California Community Colleges (CCC) – Unlike their higher education counterparts, the CCC is not endowed with the authority to mandate vaccines. Instead each CCC district has authorized whether students may return to campus and whether vaccines are mandatory. As of September 2, 2021, 41 of the 75 community college districts are not requiring students to be vaccinated as a condition to returning to

campus. Some CCC districts have elected to continue online learning until January 2022. The Committee does note in the 2021-2022 budget trailer bill, there is language emphasizing the importance of in-person instruction and requiring districts to report on the percentage of in-person instruction they are offering in Fall 2021, their plans for increasing in-person instruction in Spring 2022, and how they are responding to student demand for in-person or online instruction.

iv) Independent Universities:

- (1) Universities returning to in-person learning with vaccine mandates for faculty, staff, and students - Stanford, University of Southern California, Pepperdine University, California Institute of Technology, and Claremont McKenna College.
- (2) Universities returning to in-person learning without vaccine mandates, but require weekly testing - Azusa Pacific University, Biola University, and William Jessup University.

2) Students

- a) Are any IHE permitting students to live on campus?
 - i) CCC – All 11 CCC campuses which have student housing on campus are open.
 - ii) CSU – All 23 campuses will be offering on-campus housing in some capacity for students for the fall 2021 term. Some campuses such as San Jose State University have suspended requirements to live on campus and others such as CSU Pomona have reduced housing capacity to 75%.
 - iii) UC – All 9 campuses will be offering on-campus housing in some capacity for students for the fall 2021 term.
 - iv) Independent Colleges and Universities – Housing is available at private non-profit universities for the fall 2021 term.
- b) With campuses opening are Student Services available in person or will they be provided remotely?
 - i) Health Centers and Mental Health Services –

- (1) Health Center and Mental Health services continue to be available to students either remotely or by appointment in-person depending on the campus regulations and the patient/doctor comfort.
- (2) The 2021-2022 Budget included funding for student basic needs and mental health services including:
 - (a) UC - \$15 million in ongoing funds to support mental health services and the technology needs associated with mental health services.
 - (b) CSU - \$15 million in ongoing funds to support mental health services and the technology needs associated with mental health services and \$15 million ongoing to support student basic needs.
 - (c) CCC - \$30 million in ongoing funds to support student basic needs centers; \$30 million in ongoing funds to support mental health services and the technology needs associated with mental health services; and \$100 million in one-time funding to support student basic needs.
- ii) CalFresh Benefits – Students are able to apply for CalFresh benefits online through either their campus website or directly on the CalFresh webpage. In October 2021, CalFresh benefactors will see an increase in their benefits by about 25% due to federal increase in funding. [The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021](#), temporarily expanded student eligibility from January 16, 2021 until the end of the public health emergency; which expands CalFresh eligibility for students who participate in a state or federally financed work study program during the regular school year or have an expected family contribution of zero when applying for financial aid. As of September 29, 2021, the public health emergency has not been lifted and the temporary expansion in student eligibility for CalFresh remains in effect.
- iii) Technology Resources Available to Students:
 - (1) [CSU](#) – For the fall 2021 term, the CSU launched the California State University Connective Contributing to Equity and Student Success or CSUCCESS; which is an initiative to enhance student achievement and create equitable opportunities for

students by providing every new first-year and transfer students an opportunity to register for a new iPad bundle (iPad Air, Pencil, and smart keyboard folio) at eight participating campuses: Bakersfield, Channel Island, Fresno, Humboldt, Los Angeles, Maritime Academy, Northridge, and San Marcos.

c) Updates regarding tuition refunds for the 2019 – 2020 and the 2020-2021 school year?

- i) As previously mentioned, when the first lockdown occurred in March 2020 and institutions of higher education closed their campuses, the UC and the CSU refunded students for housing, food plans associated with housing, and parking.
- ii) On April 27, 2020, the CSU and the UC were sued by students demanding refunds of campus fees since the pandemic closed schools and forced learning online. These students asserted that campus fees are relegated to services that are no longer being provided to them since the campuses are closed. The CSU and UC have contended that campuses have transitioned to offering services online that are provided by portions of the student services fees. Both cases were dismissed by the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California Western Division and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California Oakland Division.
- iii) Various Independent Universities have received similar class action lawsuits asking for repayment of tuition and other costs due to COVID-19 related campus closures. On June 21, 2021, a federal judge dismissed a lawsuit brought against Harvard over the University's refusal to partially refund tuition as classes moved online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3) Classified Employees

- a) Are classified employees required to show proof of vaccination or submit to regular COVID – 19 testing to return to work?
 - i) CSU – All classified staff are required to either provide proof of vaccination or submit to regular testing if they are exempt for religious or medical reasons.
 - ii) UC – All classified staff are required to either provide proof of vaccination or submit to regular testing if they are exempt for religious or medical reasons.

- iii) CCC – At this time there is not a statewide mandate for classified staff to be vaccinated at the CCC; however, in the districts, where students are required to be vaccinated to return to campus, classified employees are also required to be vaccinated.
- b) *For classified staff who were furloughed during the COVID – 19 pandemic have the staff been brought back?*
 - i) CSU – During the pandemic, there were no furloughs to the Committee’s knowledge.
 - ii) UC – The UC did conduct furloughs during the COVID – 19 pandemic; and to the Committee’s knowledge the furloughs were temporary until the campuses reopened.
 - iii) CCC – During the pandemic, there were no furloughs to the Committee’s knowledge.

4) Faculty

- a) Are faculty required to be vaccinated to return to campus?
 - i) CSU – All faculty are required to either provide proof of vaccination or submit to regular testing if they are exempt for religious or medical reasons.
 - ii) UC – All faculty are required to either provide proof of vaccination or submit to regular testing if they are exempt for religious or medical reasons.
 - iii) CCC – At this time there is not a statewide mandate for faculty to be vaccinated at the CCC; however, in the districts, where students are required to be vaccinated to return to campus, faculty are also required to be vaccinated.

5) Financial Aid

- a) Federal Student Loans – On August 6, 2021, the U.S. Department of Education extended the student loan payment pause until January 31, 2022. The student loan payment pause provides relief to those with federal loans by suspending all loan payments, providing a 0% interest rate, and stopped the collection on defaulted loans.
- b) Public Service Loan Forgiveness Limited Waiver Opportunity – On October 6, 2021 the U.S. Department of Education announced until October 31, 2022 any prior payments

will count as qualifying payments regardless of loan type, repayment plan, or whether the payment as in full or on time. The Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF), established by President Bush stipulated a student with a federal student loan could have their federal student loan forgiven if the student worked for 10 years for either a government agency, or qualifying not-for-profit organization and made 120 qualifying payments. The PSLF has been under scrutiny in recent years due to the difficulty expressed by participants in navigating the program and the lack of eligibility despite continual participation.

6) California Community Colleges

- a) How much Federal relief funding did the California Community Colleges (CCC) receive during the pandemic?
 - i) As of July 2021, the California Community College received \$4.396 billion in higher education emergency relief funds from the federal government.
- b) In the 2020-2021 State Budget, the Legislature enacted \$992.2 million in deferrals for the California Community Colleges, were those deferrals paid down in the current budget?
 - i) The CCC received \$11.6 billion in funds in the 2021-2022 State Budget and the state paid down the deferrals in full in the current budget year.
- c) In the November 2020, the CCC reported a loss of enrollment due largely to the pandemic and the continuation of virtual learning; have those students returned?
 - i) In Spring 2021, the CCC reported 1,183,236 students enrolled in the system and in Spring 2020 the CCC reported 1,447,836 students enrolled in the system. The CCC continue to report a decline in enrollment.

7) California State University (CSU)

- a) How much Federal aid did the CSU receive?
 - i) As of July 2021, the CSU received \$3.058 billion in higher education emergency relief funds from the federal government.

b) In the 2020-2021 State Budget, the Legislature cut the CSU base funding by 6.9% or \$299 million, was this funding restored in the 2021-2022 budget?

- i) Yes, the Legislature restored the funding initially cut from the CSU base operation funds in the 2020-2021 budget and increased the base funding for the current fiscal year by 5%. The CSU received \$4.636 billion in ongoing funds and \$981 million in one-time funds from the state for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

8) University of California

a) How much Federal aid did the UC receive?

- i) As of July 2021, the UC received \$1.380 billion in higher education emergency relief funds from the federal government.

b) In the 2020-2021 State Budget, the Legislature cut the UC base funding by \$302 million was this funding restored in the 2021-2022 budget?

- i) Yes, the Legislature restored the funding initially cut from the UC base operation funds in the 2020-2021 budget and increased the base funding for the current fiscal year by 5%. The UC received \$4.008 billion in ongoing funds and \$746 million in one-time funds from the state for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

c) Tuition Increase – In July 2021, the UC Board of Regents approved a Tuition Stability Plan which will adjust university-wide tuition and fees for each incoming undergraduate class, but will hold those tuition and fees rates for up to six years. The first increase will occur for fall 2022 freshmen and transfers and will increase at the rate of inflation plus 2%. Each year thereafter the rate will be inflation + a percentage that is .5% less than the previous year until the rate increase flattens to just increasing for inflation.

d) UC Student Loan Relief and COVID-19 – The University has \$140 million in UC-held loans which are currently being repaid. The COVID-19 pandemic may have caused former UC students to encounter economic insecurity due to disruptions in employment; therefore, the UC has enacted the following actions beginning on April 15, 2020 until September 30, 2021:

- i) UC suspended interest accrual mirroring the federal action in the CARES Act.
- ii) UC ceased turning loans over to collection until further notice. The State Franchise Tax Board ceased tax refund garnishment on all UC loans through July 15, 2020.
- iii) UC ceased charging late fees on the same set loans in addition the UC ceased charging late fees on Health Service and Resource Association Loans.
- iv) UC will cease collection on Dream Loans, Institutional Loans, and Perkins Loans for students who request forbearance.
- v) Borrowers will be notified via email of these actions by the UC's loan servicer.
- e) [UC Reaction to National Protests against Racist Policing](#) – In August 18, 2021, UC President Michael V. Drake unveiled a plan to assist the UC in moving towards more inclusive, transparent, and equitable campus policing practices. The Plan includes incorporating accountability boards to investigate complaints against police, using data to improve public dashboards on statistics related to use of force, and providing a broader definition of campus safety to include mental health and anti-bias protection. [Details for the plan can be found on the UC webpage.](#)

9) Other Higher Education Institutions in California

- a) How much Federal aid did other Higher Education Institutions in California receive?
 - i) As of July 2021, all other institutions in California, who qualified for federal funding, received a total of \$1.354 billion from the Federal Government.

