

Dear South Texas Community:

I am so glad that the semester is about to begin! The faculty and staff have been working all summer to prepare for this semester, and we can't wait to get started.

**If you weren't able to watch last night's Town Hall, please do so.**

**Please do not come to campus until you have watched the Town Hall.**

The link is here: <https://youtu.be/aEbVquyOnec>.

You have heard me recite the three principles that have guided all our actions:

1. Protect the health and safety of our community.
2. Maintain excellence in our education.
3. Preserve the strength of our special community.

**And our highest priority remains the first: the health and safety of all in the South Texas community.** To protect the health and safety of all, we have made many changes to our operations. We have made many modifications to our campus. And we all will be making changes to our behaviors. For everyone's safety, we have to – **we are all in this together!** Indeed, we each play a vital role in protecting the health of every member of our community — ourselves, our classmates and colleagues, and our family members and friends.

However, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. It is incumbent upon each of us, consistently, to act with integrity in this unprecedented time. South Texas has taken the steps to help ensure our campus is as safe as possible. But our ability to protect each other and to keep the campus open depends heavily on individual behavior — yours and mine.

To that end, it is imperative that we all understand the policies we have adopted to keep our community safe. **They are summarized in the attached document.** This document also links to FAQs, the Code of Conduct, and other relevant policies and documents.

With a passionate commitment to prevent COVID-19 on our campus — and with a priority on acting with kindness and humility as we care for each other — we collectively will remain our own best advocates and strongest defense against the coronavirus.

Of course, the pandemic remains a fluid situation, and we will need to adapt in real time. We will continue to monitor what happens on campus, and what happens outside of campus, and reassess each of these policies on a regular basis. Please continue to watch your emails for updates.

There are four key takeaways:

1. **When in doubt, stay home.** Do not risk the health of our community. Every student can participate in every class remotely. Any day. Any class. There is absolutely no

reason to put our community at risk. If you are ill, have symptoms, or even **may** have been exposed to the coronavirus, **stay home**. It is that simple.

2. **It is imperative that everyone read, understand, and comply with all of the policies relating to our fall semester operations.**

--- These are not arbitrary guidelines; they are **mandatory** procedures that have been designed in consultation with medical professionals for the safety of all in our community.

--- Again, it is very simple: **violations risk health and lives, and we will not tolerate them.**

--- These policies (including a new [COVID-19 Code of Conduct](#), which every student should read) are incorporated into the school's Code of Conduct and will result in disciplinary action if ignored or violated.

--- **I take these policies very seriously, and they will be enforced strictly.**

--- If there is not complete compliance with these safety protocols, we will be forced to consider closing campus. For the sake of those who need access to campus, please be vigilant.

3. **What we do off campus is as important as what we do on campus.** To protect our community, our actions when we are off campus are vitally important. Please maintain safe practices at all time – for your own protection and to protect our community.

4. **We will be safe, and we will be well -- together.** South Texas is known for its caring, supportive, and committed community, and I am confident that we will rise and meet this challenge. All of us. Together.

I appreciate your patience, flexibility, commitment, and creativity as we launch this fascinating semester.

Please read the attached for all of the details – and I will look forward to seeing you (either virtually or on campus) soon.

All the best, and be safe!

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