

SMC Coronavirus Response | Most Classes to Move Online

Kathryn Jeffery Wed 3/11/2020 5:54 PM

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Dear SMC Colleagues and Students:

I am writing to provide a comprehensive update on Santa Monica College's preparedness efforts, preventive measures and actions due to COVID-19, the "2019 novel coronavirus." This is a time of uncertainty and anxiety for many in the college community and beyond; we take this seriously. There are currently **no confirmed cases of coronavirus at SMC**. Today, the LA County Department of Public Health announced six additional cases of COVID-19—for a total of 27 (which includes three reported cases in Long Beach)—and the death of an older adult.

In order to limit the *potential* transmission of COVID-19, and out of an abundance of caution and care for the health and wellbeing of SMC's students, faculty, and staff, the college has taken specific actions that will influence how we provide education and services in the immediate future. **The changes listed below are in effect until further notice** and additional changes may be made at a later date in response to information gained from public health officials.

Most Classes Will Temporarily Move to Remote Instruction

Effective Wednesday, March 18, SMC will transition as many in-person classes as possible to temporary remote instruction modalities such as Canvas, Zoom, and other platforms. Student Services, computer labs, the library, and other resources will remain open. Select courses that require in-person instruction—for example, *some* (but not all) performing arts, lab, and physical education courses—will continue to meet on campus as scheduled. The college has administered a survey to students today to assess their technology and support needs. Many students lack technology resources and SMC seeks to ensure that no students are left behind during this transition. **Classes will be canceled Friday, March 13 through Tuesday, March 17** to provide time for faculty members, staff, and students to prepare for the transition to remote teaching and learning modalities. **The college remains open for business and most college operations will continue during this time.**

Students, you will receive a follow-up communication about the modality of your course.

Faculty, your department chair will reach out to you with further information.

Suspension of In-Person Classes and Activities at SMC Emeritus

In keeping with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding older adults being at high risk from COVID-19, Santa Monica College has temporarily suspended all classes at SMC Emeritus, the college's program for older adults. This includes the suspension of all Emeritus-sponsored in-person activities both on- and off-campus. There will be no in-person classes until further notice; the SMC Emeritus office remains open for employees and is accessible for Emeritus students via telephone and email. Some classes will resume instruction via remote methods. More information will be forthcoming to Emeritus students by end-of-day Friday, March 13.

Cancelation of Spring Study-Abroad Trips

SMC canceled study-abroad trips to Costa Rica, Helsinki, and Tallin, in keeping with guidance from the CDC's advisory on student foreign travel to higher educational institutions.

Cancelation of Non-Essential Travel, Large Gatherings & Extra-Curricular Activities

Based on March 7 guidance from the California Department of Public Health to higher education institutions, the college has, effective today, canceled all large gatherings and extra-curricular activities through the end of the Spring 2020 semester or until further notice. **Athletic events will be conducted wherever possible without spectators.** SMC sponsored and sanctioned non-essential travel has been canceled until further notice.

Infectious Disease Outbreak Plan (COVID-19 specific)

SMC has developed [a COVID-19 specific Infectious Disease Outbreak Plan](#) to guide the college's response and activities around COVID-19 prevention and preparedness, in keeping with guidance from LA County Public Health and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Please note that the college is currently in Scenario II (page 7) in which we have implemented measures based on information from the local public health department that there are two or more community transmission cases of COVID-19, but no staff or students have tested positive. Please note, also, that this plan is dynamic and flexible. It will be revised and provisions will be made for administrative actions that may not be outlined in a given scenario in keeping with the needs of the college's diverse student and employee population.

Enhanced Cleaning, Preventive Measures, and Education

SMC's facilities and custodial teams have been ensuring on a continual basis that surfaces are disinfected and cleaned, and that soap and hand sanitizer stations remain filled. Flyers that remind SMC community members of basic and most effective preventive measures—hand washing and “cover your cough”—have been posted in all restrooms and elevators. A [dedicated COVID-19 webpage](#) was launched a couple weeks ago; students, faculty, and staff may access more information, preventive measures, frequently asked questions covering what measures to take when sick, resources for physical and mental/emotional health available at SMC, and Human Resources policies for employees regarding absences, among many other topics. **Remember that Public Health officials advise that hand washing and staying home when sick are the best precautions against the flu and COVID-19.**

Please know that SMC is monitoring this situation constantly, and appreciate your patience as the college takes steps to address the needs of our diverse students and employees. The college must carefully weigh a vast set of considerations, in keeping with our institutional values of equity and open access. This dynamic situation comes with a very particular set of challenges, and has required that campus leaders adapt swiftly to protect the health and wellbeing of the SMC community, while also upholding our educational mission. We deeply appreciate your flexibility and understanding during these challenging times.

The college will be sending further updates as the need arises. Please monitor your SMC email, the dedicated [SMC COVID-19 webpage](#); and follow SMC on Twitter ([@SMC_edu](#)) for the latest information.

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Superintendent/President