

March 16th, 2020

RE: Letter to Chancellor Judy Miner and FHDA Board of Trustees Regarding Response to COVID-19 Crisis

Dear Chancellor Judy Miner and FHDA Board of Trustees,

Given the increasing COVID-19 crisis across Santa Clara County, we are writing to you because, as the student representatives of De Anza College, we believe that despite the best intentions of the college, outreach to students and faculty has fallen short. The administration is failing to let students know about their rights on how to address their academic hardships due to inconsistent information. This is especially problematic as De Anza, a community college, welcomes people from diverse backgrounds, and so slow response and ineffective communication from the administration may cause a possible outbreak among De Anza's community, which will affect public safety and health.

As student representatives, we believe the administration should adopt the following actions to increase outreach to students:

- Adopt and publicize a specific timeline of how the district administration would effectively tackle the COVID-19 issue, as this would greatly increase transparency between the administration, faculty, and students. A specific timeline, complete with specific goals and groups involved for those specific dates would keep students, faculty, and the Administration informed and involved in the process.
 - An example of what we would like to see in the future is similar to the work-plan placed by the Office of Communications which had an extensive, and detailed plan of the step processes on the mascot change.
- Publicize an explicit list of resources available for international students provided both on and off-campus, including but not limited to healthcare, legal and immigration advice, and on-campus jobs, as international students make up almost 10% of the student population of De Anza College. This list should also include what international students should do in the event that a class is canceled mid-quarter, and are in need of units to retain F-1 visa status.
 - In a foreign country with minimal support, and seeing the administration's slow response in handling the situation, a number of international students are considering leaving the US for safety. When Katie went to ISP on Friday, March 13th, when it should be opened, she was told that there are no counselors in office. Until now, no email has been sent out by ISP to inform students of how to reach their counselors. ISP should be functioning as usual as it is De Anza's image and middle man to international students.
- Maintain consistent and concise communication regarding resources that can reach students across multiple social media platforms. Emails should not contain repetitive messages, as it buries new information amongst old information. Said actions mentioned above shall not replace but instead complement methods of communication the administration has employed, such as regular updates through the De Anza website's homepage, emails, and text messages.

- An example of an effective means of communication is the DASB Senate Instagram page which had a story and post by the Student Trustee, Genevieve Kolar, of what resources are available for students. This post introduced information widely unknown by our student body about health insurance, on-campus jobs, and resources available for housing, food, and transportation insecure students. Our social media accounts have also been re-sharing informative posts and updates on COVID-19 made by Santa Clara County, WHO, CDC and the California Governor to keep students updated. We recommend the administration to look at how Foothill's administration reached out to and collaborated with ASFC's marketing committee to disperse information, and update and involve student groups, such as, but not limited to, DASB Senate and La Voz in De Anza administration's future decisions.
- The March 13th email sent out to all students did not inform students of any new information, except for the buried second-to-last paragraph informing of the prolonged Spring break.
- Students are unaware of who to reach out to in such times of crisis since there is no one point of contact for crisis communication. Students are directed to reach out to faculty, Deans, Office of College Life, counsellors, administration, President, and Chancellor, but without a clear point of contact, this lack of effective direction causes unnecessary added stress for students.
- Update faculty regularly about the college's decisions as this information enables professors to update students about coursework and exams.
 - Uncertainty about the college's decisions may cause instructors to cancel Winter classes at the end of the quarter, such as History 53x class by Crystal Hupp.
 - Uncertainty about the college's decision for the Spring quarter classes, especially for those requiring labs, studios and other campus facilities may result in even more class cancellations. The administration must enforce direct communication about Spring quarter as soon as possible to students and faculty, as class cancellation endangers the F-1 visa status for international students.

Furthermore, it is evident that these failures in communication are symptomatic of overall systemic issues present in the college. The delayed action from the college on regular updates about COVID-19 and lack of district-level instructions point to the fact that the district has no emergency contingency plans established. The college has been waiting for a case to be confirmed on campus before wanting to take further action. This is moving *reactively* and is the exact approach we *do not* support. Especially during times of crisis, we urge De Anza College to take a *proactive approach* by taking the necessary action to lower risk while also reassuring students through informative guidance procedures.

Therefore, as student representatives, we believe the administration should adopt the following actions to solve the systemic problems:

- Take proactive measures.

action), while the prolonged Spring break so that faculty has another week to prepare/be trained for Spring quarter shows otherwise. This is testament to the fact that there is lack of an emergency plan or even a structure in place to quickly assemble a plan to mitigate the situation.

- Policies regarding moving classes online were not clear. There was too much grey area -- instructions were given in a way that is open to interpretation to faculty. Face-to-face classes should have been defined earlier by whole academic departments and specific departments that are continuing to meet on campus (physics, biology, etc.) should have been listed out. Admin must clear that students are not required to come to campus and may make arrangements with their professor to accommodate their situation.
- The current method of communication style is “trickle down” Trickle-down communication gets less clear as the information travels. “Go through the appropriate channels.” The administration needs to be clear in their instructions to instructors so there is no room for interpretation. “Trickle down” communication also disperses information slowly, leaving students uninformed for a prolonged period of time.

Students must be informed for the upcoming spring quarter and this can be done through all of the measures mentioned above.

With Concern,

DASB Senate