

16.2 – AVCFT Constituent Report

Good evening President Knudson and members of the Board of Trustees,

The Federation continues to urge the District to increase transparency and attention to safety related to COVID-19. According to the AVC website, as of 2/8/21, there were 78 total confirmed COVID-19 cases of students, employees, or community members utilizing District facilities. As of 3/3/21, there are 90 total cases.

Separate outbreaks in the AVC Nursing program and the AVC CTE Cohort have shown up on the LA County Department of Public Health list of educational settings meeting the criteria of 3 or more lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases.

It's extremely disturbing that the campus was not notified of these outbreaks, although they were listed on the LA County website.

The Federation continues to be concerned about the college's plan for summer.

A recent single-question query of faculty who are scheduled to teach this summer showed that nearly 65% of respondents preferred to teach fully online, with just over 21% wishing to teach fully face-to-face, and less than 14% wishing for a hybrid of online instruction with a few face-to-face sessions.

Many faculty respondents commented that they were reluctant to return to face-to-face instruction of any kind until vaccines were widely available to both faculty and students.

According to the US government, vaccine access for all interested adults likely won't exist until the end of May, with full immunity roughly two weeks after an individual's final shot. We are angry and frightened that AVC plans for a large-scale return to campus for mid-May at the beginning of the summer term, prior to widespread vaccine access, and with no plan for widespread testing, which is being done weekly for athletics but somehow can't be done for the wider campus community.

It's one thing to bring back essential workforce disciplines, with a focus on PPE and protocol to reduce transmission, or to allow faculty who wish to teach face-to-face to offer classes in a face-to-face or hybrid mode. It's another to force faculty to teach in this mode, regardless of vaccine availability, regardless of straightforward reporting of the numbers on campus, with no commitment to wide-spread testing.

I notice that as of tonight, those who wish to comment in person at this very board meeting need to wear a face-covering, social distance, and be temperature-screened, then only stay at the meeting to provide the comment unless space is available. The board members are masked, distanced, and behind separate shields. Are these same precautions going to be taken for faculty, staff, and students, who will be in classrooms for far longer than the length of a typical board meeting, and in closer proximity to other people?

Make no mistake, AVC Employees' and students' lives are put at risk by a premature return to face-to-face instruction.

By the way, I've heard a persistent rumor that faculty are in negotiations with the district about the upcoming return to campus. This rumor is false. The campus was notified by the President of the reopening plan on Wednesday, March 3rd. We issued our demand to bargain over the effects of this plan on Friday, March 5th. This morning we received a reply from the college's interim general counsel acknowledging our demand. We hope to schedule negotiations sessions in the very near future, but it is untrue that we are already in negotiations.

I love my job, but I'm not ready to lay down my life, or that of my family, when it seems that just a few more months of waiting for widespread vaccine availability will enable a much safer reopening. Understand that trust in the administration is one of the requirements for reopening, and the actions of this administration have done nothing to incur that trust.

Lastly, faculty are still waiting for their retro pay checks from the last contract, covering the 2018-2019 and part of the 2019-2020 academic years, which we find alarming given that the campus no longer has a VP of HR. We

have been told that these checks should arrive in either March or April. It would be collegial to have some confirmation of that.

Thank you and see you next month.