



TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

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March 6, 2020

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TO: Texas Institutions of Higher Education
FROM: Harrison Keller, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Higher Education
SUBJECT: Coronavirus Update for Higher Education

As campus leaders, you are on the front lines of evaluating circumstances and making decisions regarding the safety and wellbeing of your students, faculty and staff. The Coordinating Board is monitoring state and national information about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and will provide you with information and links to resources, so that you may effectively address growing concerns.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) established a webpage specifically to [provide guidance to institutions of higher education](#). The CDC also provided guidance recommending that institutions [consider postponing or cancelling](#) student foreign exchange programs. Additionally, the American College Health Association (ACHA) [published guidance](#) aimed at helping student health services and other campus stakeholders prepare for and respond to a potential coronavirus infection. I encourage you to review the recommendations and resources available at these sites.

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has the latest information about COVID-19 in Texas [on its website](#). Beginning Monday, March 9, DSHS will host daily calls at 4:00 pm CST for counties, school districts, and higher education to update stakeholders on COVID-19 and to answer questions. Use the following to join the call:

Conference call number: 888-207-0293
Passcode: 152545

While the risk of the virus remains low, it is critical that you as campus leaders have maximum flexibility to respond to COVID-19 in the most appropriate manner for your students. The U.S. Department of Education announced it will provide [as much flexibility as possible](#) in accommodating students and campuses disrupted by coronavirus.

I have designated Deputy Commissioner Ray Martinez to serve as the Coordinating Board point of contact for COVID-19-related issues. Commissioner Martinez and agency staff are fully engaged in the twice-weekly meetings of the Texas

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Emergency Management Council and are closely working with officials at DSHS and the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) to ensure that we receive and disseminate the latest information on COVID-19 to Texas institutions of higher education.

If you have any questions or the Coordinating Board can assist your institution regarding COVID-19, please contact Mary Smith at 512-427-6213 or mary.smith@thehb.state.tx.us.

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