



SUPERINTENDENT / PRESIDENT
DR. DAVID VIAR

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Sevan Benlian • Yvette Vartanian Davis • Dr. Armine Hacopian • Desireé Portillo Rabinov • Ann H. Ransford

April 19, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Spring break has ended and we move into the final eight weeks of the spring 2021 semester. As we do so, the question everyone has is “when will we return to in-person, on-campus, life at GCC?” Although the headlines declare the Governor says California will re-open on June 15, 2021, the missing detail, buried in the news articles, is “subject to CalOSHA requirements, local county guidelines, and the level of COVID-19 cases and vaccinations.” Therefore, based on that note, GCC leaders continue to plan for several scenarios:

1. Stringent social distancing requirements, limited room capacity use, and other massive safety protocols that must be in place;
2. Reduction of social distancing requirements but other significant safety protocols in place;
3. No social distancing, no room capacity limits, but other safety protocols in place.

A CEO colleague of mine, Susan Lamb, President of Diablo Valley College, recently noted that we need to think of the answer to the question of open or closed in a different way. She suggested we think of the light switch. “We keep trying to make the decision of whether or not the light switch should be on or off. But we need to think of things more in line with a dimmer switch.” At GCC all our planning is based on that gradual approach - one where the educational access and success of our students and the safety of our students, employees, and community members remain top priorities. Therefore, we will continue primarily in a remote learning and work environment through the fall 2021 semester while engaged in a gradual transition of on-site course offerings and student services that meet all health and safety protocols and assure full student access.

College administrators, division chairs, faculty leaders of the Senate and Guild, and classified staff have been working to address the scenarios identified above and the gradual transition approach noted. MOUs with the Guild and CSEA are in place, and continue to be amended as things change. Plans for a safe and viable return to the college will be presented and questions addressed on April 30, from 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., at a Zoom town hall, hosted by the Guild and Associated Students. The town hall is open to all employees and students. Meanwhile, CSEA is planning a follow-up town hall later in May.

In spite of the uncertainty, what continues to be certain is the ability, dedication, creativity, and perseverance shown by the GCC faculty, classified staff, and administrators in serving our students and fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. As evidence of these efforts, the results of the second survey of students regarding the impact of COVID-19 indicates that GCC is addressing effectively students’ educational needs in the remote learning environment.

As we work together, identifying the gradual and thoughtful ways to return within an environment of uncertainty, I know we remain focused on student access and success. Throughout this past year we have learned of new ways to meet our students’ needs and to fulfill our work responsibilities, and it is essential, as we adjust the “dimmer switch,” that we return in a way that offers our students and employees more choices.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and me, thanks for proving that no matter the crisis, GCC is ready and able and learning how to be better.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David Viar'.

David Viar