

Dear CSCU Community,

Over the past several days, my team and I have been in constant discussion with college and university leaders, and the Board of Regents. In consultation with them, I have made the difficult but necessary decision to continue our move to all-online education for the remainder of the semester at all 17 CSCU institutions. I understand that this is a new direction for faculty and students alike, but it has become clear that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to affect our state well beyond April 5. We must do everything in our power not just to keep our students, faculty, and staff healthy and safe, but also to slow the spread of the virus.

To that end, all physical campuses will be closed to the public through at least the remainder of the semester. All faculty and staff except those designated by their individual institution as Level 1 – and that number will be extremely limited – will continue to work from home.

Unfortunately, this also means that all in-person spring commencement activities will be canceled. I know how hard students and faculty have worked to get to this point, and we are looking at all options to ensure they receive the recognition they deserve in addition to the diploma they have earned.

By the end of the week, the president or CEO of your institution will reach out with information and details on the move to distance learning and which courses can be moved fully online, the logistics of the transition to telework, and the orderly coordination of safely helping students collect their belongings from residence halls. We recognize that a number of our university students may not have a place to go if forced to vacate their lodging, and our university leaders will of course ensure they have necessary accommodations. Finally, our university leaders will communicate with resident students to outline a process and timeline for issuing refunds for room and board payments.

I understand this is a stressful time for all of us, and as I indicated yesterday, self-care remains essential. Social distancing is critically important to the state's public health efforts to slow the spread of the virus, but it does not mean shutting our lives down – so remember to check in (virtually) on your friends and family, look for online yoga or exercise classes, and take a minute to relax and breathe deeply.

Sincerely,

Mark E. Ojakian