

## SOCCCD Message - 2022 COVID Update from Chancellor Burke

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Sun 1/2/2022 1:19 PM  
To: SOCCCD Communications

Greetings Faculty and Staff:

I hope that you found some time to rest and recuperate over the last two weeks after a long year of ups and downs—highs and lows. The 2021 year definitely presented its fair share of challenges, and despite our optimism about COVID becoming a distant memory, we worked together the entire year to address COVID masks, testing, vaccines, and variants in the workplace. We also learned how to work in the office with new safety measures, host hybrid in-person/virtual board meetings, and continued to offer excellent services to students and the greater SOCCCD community.

As with 2021, the new year is shaping up to be another one that will require our flexibility, durability, and willingness to work together and support each other. With that being said—with the support of the Board of Trustees, vice chancellors, and college presidents—**I am delaying the in-person return-to-work for many until February 7, 2022.**

The Omicron and Delta variants of COVID have contributed to high transmission rates in Orange County. Bringing all employees back to work now could increase the number of positive cases on our campuses and worsen the public health crisis challenging our community. Furthermore, our understanding about the transmissibility and severity of the Omicron variant is still evolving; thus, I believe this delay is a prudent decision.

We will continue to monitor the transmission rates from the [Orange County Health Care Agency](#) and work with them to return safely with continued sound practices in place for vaccinations, testing, and indoor masking.

Please note that some employees may be required to continue to work onsite if the function of their role cannot be conducted remotely, including courses where student learning outcomes require in-person meetings and to provide in-person student support services, ongoing facilities care and maintenance, campus safety, and some District Services operations.

The spring semester will still begin on January 18, 2022, with some in-person classes and many virtual learning opportunities. The goal of this decision is to reduce the number of students and employees on our campuses, not to eliminate all in-person learning and services.

Those employees working in positions required for the essential operation of our campuses or District Services, including our Health and Wellness Centers, Facilities and Maintenance Operations, Information Technology, Police, and the Warehouse, should report to work as scheduled on January 4.

Those who may be supporting laboratory or activity classes or who provide student support services or District services should watch for communication from their supervisors.

Employees whose return to onsite work is delayed, should plan on working remotely during normal hours of operation beginning on January 4. For questions about working remotely or other COVID-related concerns, please refer to the guidelines linked below:

[Return to Work Guidelines](#) – *Please note that these guidelines will be updated shortly to reflect recent changes made by Cal-OSHA. A communication will be sent to all employees once the guidelines have been updated.*

[Community Resource Guide for Employees](#)

In addition, please continue to communicate directly with your supervisor on work-related matters, including if your assignment requires onsite or remote work through February 7, 2022.

Happy New Year. We continue to hope to see you in-person at our colleges early in 2022.

Chancellor Kathleen F. Burke, Ed.D.