



# SADDLEBACK COLLEGE

*Covid-19 Update sent via email on Wednesday, March 11, 2020*

Saddleback colleagues and valued students:

While the number of cases of Covid-19 in Orange County has climbed to five, none--not a single one--has been community-acquired. All resulted from travel or direct contact with a person later found to be positive for Covid-19. Thus, our risk in Orange County remains low by all assessments of public health officials.

UC Irvine announced plans to move most Instruction online after a student was tested for Covid-19 (the Orange County Health Care Agency has since confirmed that the student tested negative). We have had no cases of Covid-19 on our campus, and our risk level, therefore, remains low, just like for the county as a whole. The uptick in non-community-acquired cases for Orange County does not change the risk assessment for Saddleback. Thus, all classes are being held, as scheduled, for the remainder of this week, the last before Spring break.

As the number of cases in Orange County and surrounding counties rises, the probability of eventually having cases which are community-acquired goes up. When that happens, we will give consideration to moving to a "soft close," with lecture instruction moving to Canvas, as some Universities and a handful of community colleges are doing.

Saddleback is especially well suited for moving lecture instruction online, as we currently offer nearly 40% of all courses online and nearly 50 credentials completely online. Our faculty are well trained in online teaching and we have a robust support network for online education. We also track "achievement gaps" between online and on-ground classes; and thanks to robust training and an innovative peer review system, we have almost no such achievement gap for online classes at Saddleback, a rarity among colleges and universities. We are more ready than most colleges and universities to move online, and we'll be even more ready after spring break, when there's a good chance we will be moving almost all lecture instruction to online if Orange County develops community-acquired cases of Covid-19.

Our decision-making in response to Covid-19 will continue to be based on science, data and expert opinion, not fear. Our campus risk is low right now. So we will remain open, learning as usual, for the remainder of this week and reassess our situation thereafter.

We have canceled some previously authorized travel and have changed and enhanced some of our cleaning routines to focus on commonly touched surfaces. We are fully stocked with hand soap and urge everyone to wash or sanitize your hands frequently and avoid touching your face with your hands unless immediately after washing your hands. Cough into your elbow, tightly. Avoid shaking hands and direct contact with others. Stay home if you are ill. Older adults and those with medical illnesses are urged to avoid large gatherings or travel by plane or cruise ship.

We are all looking forward to wrapping up mid-terms, making it through the week and staycationing over spring break. Let's take care of each other and take precautions but not let fear get the best of us. We are Saddleback.

Elliot

Dr. Elliot Stern

President, Saddleback College