



SADDLEBACK COLLEGE

Covid-19 Update sent via email on Thursday, March 12, 2020 at 1:40 pm

Dear Students,

Before you leave for Spring Break, please be aware that Saddleback College will implement a “soft close” starting Monday, March 23 until May 1, at which time we will reassess. This does not affect regularly scheduled classes for March 12 or 13.

During the soft close, lecture instruction will be held online, as well as some labs. Tutoring, counseling and other student support services will also be available online. Hands-on laboratory and studio instruction will continue to be held in person, and campus support services, including those offered in the Student Health Center, will still be offered in-person.

Our risk level in Orange County and on our campus remains low, with only six cases of Covid-19 in all of Orange County and none of them being community-acquired. The purpose of our soft close is to limit the population on campus so that we can increase social distancing and limit person-to-person contact that raises the risk of transmission *before* we develop community-acquired cases in our region.

You will have many questions before we resume Instruction on March 23. We are implementing a soft close plan that has been in the works for weeks, and we will be posting updates and additional information so that you will know exactly which portions of classes will be meeting in-person and which will not, and how you will gain access to online instruction and services. We will also provide information about checking out laptops or tablets for those who do not have their own. We do anticipate that the LRC and many computer labs will remain open on campus, though we will be implementing “every other” seating to increase social distancing. Please check your email regularly and visit <https://www.saddleback.edu/HealthandSafety/Coronavirus> for updates.

I know that many of you are frightened. While we can't control the Covid-19 pandemic globally, we can certainly reduce your risk and the risk level on campus by taking measured steps like these to lower risk while maintaining learning continuity. State regulators and accreditors will not simply let colleges close and give out credit for courses where seat-time requirements have not been met; so while I know that some of you are asking why can't we simply close campus, the answer is that doing so would force you to make-up “seat time” after the semester ends or lose credit, thereby putting you behind. This is true for every accredited college. We are ensuring that these learning requirements are met while risk levels are lowered. It is not one or the other. Please know that you are in good hands. We are better positioned than almost any college to move most of our instruction and student supports online. And know that your safety and health is paramount in every decision I make. You are why 1,400 Saddleback employees come to work every day. We are going to get through this, together, with as little disruption as possible to your learning.

So once again, let us keep our eyes on the ball while you keep your eyes on the prize. Have a great last day of class and a joyous staycation!

Elliot

Dr. Elliot Stern
President, Saddleback College