



Adam Steinbaugh <adam@thefire.org>

**Fw: Faculty Resolution, Balancing Different Perspectives,
Expectations for Continued Professionalism**

1 message



From: Neil Matkin <nmatkin@collin.edu>

Date: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 at 3:25 PM

Subject: Faculty Resolution, Balancing Different Perspectives, Expectations for Continued Professionalism

Dear Faculty,

Attached please find a formal resolution from the Faculty Council and the administration's response. I have heard from so many of you during this exceptionally difficult time and your thoughts and comments have run the gamut of fully supportive of the college's direction all the way to being diametrically opposed to various points. To start, let me say here that I am truly appreciative for all of your comments and the faith that has been shown in the administration of the college. What faith? The faith that you can speak openly and disagree without fear of recourse. Whether we agree or not, we must continue to operate in a manner where everyone is welcome to express their heartfelt perspectives. That said, it

is absolutely critical that we work within the processes and policies of our college.

When this situation first befell us, we all worked hard to transition to online and preserve salaries for all - including our part-time faculty, staff, and student employees. We went fully online and no one asked to be consulted and no one objected. At that time, we knew very little about we were facing. We acted quickly and the Board met in an emergency meeting empowering the college administration with authorities relative to moving through this crisis. In every decision, we have worked to think through consequences - intended and unintended - as well as preserving the ability to react to this crisis as it unfolded. Some feel they have not been appropriately included in decision making and it centers largely around opposition to teaching face-to-face classes and allowing faculty to choose for themselves whether to teach online or on site. Another concerning issue that is arising is that other faculty, who desire to teach face-to-face, have questioned whether they are adequately represented by the Faculty Council.

Ideally, the faculty members elected to the Faculty Council should strive to represent the faculty of their respective campuses. Part of the current difficulty is with timing. The majority of full-time faculty were off for the summer shortly following the onset of this crisis. But, earlier this week I received a strongly worded complaint expressing concerns that some were not appropriately represented by their Faculty Council members. I decided to dig a little deeper. Yesterday, 20 faculty were polled at the new Technical Campus. To a person, ALL desired face-to-face courses to start up in the Fall. Enrollments for this new facility resulted in many full sections with waiting lists. I find it ironic that some of the chief proponents of closing our campuses and going fully online failed to speak to the faculty they were charged to represent. We will explore this further together as time goes on.

This past weekend, I spent a great deal of time looking at the number of current and recovered cases, hospitalizations, and deaths resulting from the Coronavirus. I looked at the largest counties in Texas along with Collin. I reviewed CDC and Texas Coordinating Board information anew and visited multiple college and university websites. I believe with every fiber of my being that we can open successfully following state guidelines and best practices. Some of you believe the exact opposite. If we are commanded by our elected leaders to take a different course, we will adjust and take advantage of the flexibility we have worked to build into

the schedule. There is a reason some sections were changed to blended rather than hybrid. We may have to go fully online again. That notwithstanding, we will continue to move forward to the best of our ability with the recommended safeguards in place.

Human Resources will send out further information on requests for accommodations to work with folks who may have underlying conditions or be at higher risk for infection. Supervisors will not have access to confidential medical information - this will reside within HR only. Many other steps are being taken along with those that are detailed in the answer to the resolution below. I have advised academic administration to do everything in our power to grant accommodations for those who qualify for them - this is why I have asked that we carefully assign overloads until I know that we can provide adequate accommodations. We are also exploring mechanisms to keep part-time faculty whole in the event of illness. More on that when I have additional information to share after the August 4 Board meeting.

Friends, this is not about academic freedom or shared governance. This is about responding to a crisis in the best way possible focusing on the safety and wellbeing of all. There are detailed plans for how we will handle instances that arise. Some of this is included in the response to the resolution below and more information is coming as we move forward.

I will continue to do the very best that I am able throughout this situation while maintaining absolute integrity. I have heard today from faculty who are teaching face-to-face in the second summer session. The reports I am hearing are that faculty and students are excited to be back in class and are practicing social distancing, wearing face coverings, and doing everything possible to move forward safely. Please remember, we are closely monitoring the situation and will adjust as needed or as we receive further guidance from the Governor and the Coordinating Board. We are still working with our K-12 schools to determine how we will serve our dual credit students. Please stay tuned.

Best regards,

Neil

H. Neil Matkin, Ed.D.
District President



 **Faculty Resolution Response July 14 2020 (002).pdf**
293K



July 14, 2020

Locations

Collin Higher
Education Center
McKinney, Texas

Courtyard Center
Plano, Texas

Frisco Campus

McKinney Campus

Plano Campus

Public Safety
Training Center
McKinney, Texas

Rockwall Center

Technical Campus
Allen, Texas

Wylie Campus

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Ms. Kat Balch
Faculty Council President
Collin College, Frisco Campus

RE: Administration Response to the June 30, 2020, Faculty Council Resolution

Dear President Balch:

In the matter of the Faculty Council resolution received June 30, 2020, the resolution has been considered and is accepted in part, as outlined herein. I am pleased to address any follow up questions brought forward by the Faculty Council as we continue to move forward through the current challenges.

There will continue to be information refined and shared as we move forward. The recommendations and responses follow:

Recommendation 1: Administration and faculty participate in shared governance in regard to significant changes to district-wide teaching modalities.

Response: *Collin College has a long-standing history of valuing shared governance. As outlined in its statement at <https://www.collin.edu/leadership/pdf/2016SharedGovernance.pdf>, the following are responsibilities of shared governance.*

- *Serve as a steward of academic integrity and excellence*
- *Recognize and be accountable to Collin's strategic goals, as identified by the Board of Trustees*
- *Be informed on issues confronting higher education and, specifically, Collin College*
- *Share information appropriately and provide timely, constructive feedback*
- *Identify and bring forward issues impacting the ability of the College to accomplish its mission through appropriate avenues*
- *Distinguish and understand the roles and responsibilities of various units and individuals within the organizational structure of the College*
- *Interact with members of the College community in a manner consistent with Collin's Core Values*

Faculty members serve the College in academic, governance, and strategic planning matters through membership and involvement in, but not limited to, College-recognized committees and task forces [Board Policy BGC(Local)].

Among the key responsibilities of faculty, as outlined in the faculty job description, include:

- *Teach assigned courses in accordance with the course syllabus and College policy.*
- *Continue to update and revise course content and teaching methodology in order to maintain currency and relevance.*
- *Maintain familiarity with current texts, materials, teaching aids and techniques relative to courses within the discipline and recommend their adoption when appropriate.*
- *Actively seek ways to improve instruction.*

As part of shared governance, faculty members have responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum. [SACSCOC 10.4] The College requires a significant amount of faculty members to support the mission and goals of the institution. [SACSCOC 6.1]. The current pandemic has not changed the mission and vision of the College. In fact, the current pandemic has reinforced the needs of our community and our resolve to provide a brighter future for our students and communities, at this, the most critical of times.

At this point, there are no new recommended teaching modalities. Courses will be taught in one of the currently available modalities, face-to-face, online, or hybrid/blended format. Decisions regarding the application of these modalities will be made based on the needs of the program, the students, and on protecting the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff.

Recommendation 2: We strongly recommend moving courses, when possible, to a fully online modality. This will help ensure the health of our students and faculty and will provide enough time to reach the pedagogical excellence that Collin College strives to achieve.

Response: *Additional online sections have been added for the fall session and many others have been converted to a blended/hybrid format. However, as discussed in the research provided in the backup to this resolution:*

- *many students report they do not learn effectively in an online format;*
- *not all students have appropriate technology resources to be able to participate in an online format, despite the College's efforts to address those deficiencies; and*
- *not all courses can be taught effectively online.*

For classes remaining in a fully or in a blended/hybrid mode, the College has taken and will continue to take appropriate precautions to protect the health and safety of the students, faculty, and staff while the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt normal operations.

Recommendation 3: If a fully online modality is not possible, the following should be implemented:

- a) Any faculty member who requests to teach online should be given the option
- b) Require the use of masks by faculty, students, and staff
- c) Require social distancing in classrooms
- d) Provide adequate PPE, including sanitizers, gloves, masks, etc. for faculty who teach in the classrooms.
- e) Develop a detailed plan, within the guidelines of shared governance, regarding instances where students and faculty have tested positive for COVID-19. The plan should address quarantine procedures, academic continuity, enacting FMLA, and workers' compensation.

Response: *Each of the recommendations are addressed below.*

- a) Any faculty member who requests to teach online should be given the option

Response: *To the extent that online class sections are available, faculty will be provided a preference consistent with the standards of teaching excellence that the College has used in the past. Any faculty member seeking accommodations to teach online in the fall are requested to complete the Human Resources Request for Accommodations form at (website).*

In addition to accommodations that have been made in the past, accommodations related to the COVID-19 pandemic may be made by any faculty member who is considered to be at higher risk. This includes individuals who are 65 or older, individuals with compromised immune systems or underlying conditions such as diabetes, or individuals whose household includes family members who are 65 or older or who have underlying conditions or have compromised immune systems.

The first priority will be to ensure that all full-time faculty are assigned a base full-time teaching load. Overload assignments may have to be adjusted. Faculty members who do not qualify for accommodations and who do not elect to teach an assigned face-to-face or blended/hybrid section may not have a full-time load as a result. An incomplete teaching load could result in a reduction in pay or reassignment.

- b) Require the use of masks by faculty, students, and staff

Response: *Agreed. This was enacted, effective Monday, June 29, 2020, a week prior to Governor Abbott requiring masks for everyone. The Fall 2020 Restart Plan indicates that masks will be required in the following areas:*

- All classrooms and labs on campus;
- Locations that provide student enrollment services, academic advising, counseling, career services, libraries;
- Hallways, elevators, stairwells and common areas where physical distancing is not feasible;
- Other areas as determined by the VP/Provost, Dean, Associate Dean, Director, or other applicable senior leadership for that specific location. These areas will have proper posting of any requirement and will provide advance notice when appropriate.

If any employee requires accommodation (including documented limitations based on the face covering), please contact the HR/Benefits manager via benefits@collin.edu.

- c) Require social distancing in classrooms

Response: *Agreed. Planning for social distancing in classrooms began at the College well before minimum standards for reopening were announced by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in early May 2020. Dr. Jenkins and the VP/Provosts have been working diligently to outline various scheduling configurations, classroom seating, and other technological resources to help maintain social distancing in a variety of unique classroom settings.*

- d) Provide adequate PPE, including sanitizers, gloves, masks, etc. for faculty who teach in the classrooms.

Response: *Over \$500,000 in PPE has been authorized for purchase to include sanitizers, gloves, masks, etc. Those of you who are familiar with CARES Act funding requests know that the College is considering a number of purchases for PPE and other “contact-less” equipment that will be necessary for the return of students to campus. Employees and students are expected to provide their own personal cloth face masks or coverings for daily use, but some disposable masks will be available at the Information Centers on campuses in the event a student or employee forgets their own.*

Additional infrastructure-related protective measures are being pursued for implementation as soon as practical. The Board authorized an engineering study to recommend air cleaning technology that can be incorporated into the College's existing air duct systems. It will consist of either Ultraviolet (UV) type light technology installed in the air handler or Bi-Polar Ionizers (BPI) installed downstream or upstream of the air handler that can destroy airborne contaminants and viruses, like the systems used in many hospitals and medical facilities. In the course of the study, it has been determined that bi-polar ionization is already in place at the new Technical Campus and that Merv-13 filters are being used at the new Wylie Campus. These filters screen out particles up to .3 microns and are considered to be highly effective in eliminating or significantly reducing airborne particles. A complete inventory of all air systems is underway through the engineering study. Merv-13 filters will be used where possible without restricting airflow. Merv-11 filters will be used otherwise. These filters reduce or eliminate particles up to 1 micron. These measures are in addition to the UV and BPI methodologies currently being planned for implementation.

Other steps are also being taken, including:

- Contracted cleaning services have been enhanced to include expanded overnight cleanings in all common areas, door handles, stair rails, etc.*
 - Disinfectant spray and paper towels are provided in all classrooms for students who wish to clean their desks/tables at the beginning or end of class;*
 - Gloves, disinfecting spray, and/or wipes are available to clean keyboards, office desks or other spaces, as needed;*
 - Over 250 antibacterial handwash stations will be set up throughout the district;*
 - Furniture in common areas has been removed/rearranged to comply with social distancing recommendations.*
- e) Develop a detailed plan, within the guidelines of shared governance, regarding instances where students and faculty have tested positive for COVID-19. The plan should address quarantine procedures, academic continuity, enacting FMLA, and workers' compensation.

Response: *COVID-19 initial reporting procedures have been developed for faculty as follows:*

Student reports COVID-19 Contact

Step 1. *If a student should make initial contact with a faculty member, then direct the student to:*

- A. *Contact the Associate Dean of Students or Dean of Student and Enrollment Service, at dos@collin.edu and provide the following information:*
- *Contact information*
 - *Symptomatic (yes or no)*
 - *The approximate date that any symptom first appeared or the last contact with the High-Risk individual*
 - *Test type (PCR, antigen, or antibody)*
 - *Testing date*
 - *Testing facility*
 - *Testing results (if available)*
 - *The last date entered into any Collin College location and where*
 - *Individuals that the student may have been in close contact*
- B. *Remind the student that they are to self-isolate and are prohibited from visiting any Collin College locations per the Governor's Report to Open Texas and COVID-19 Considerations for Institutes of Higher Education (Updated May 19, 2020) and guidance from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).*
- C. *Contact the Vice President Provost's office.*

Step 2. Provide the Associate Dean of Students or Dean of Student information.

- A. *Review future assignments and configure online portions of instruction.*
- B. *Determine who the student may have been within close contact.*
- C. *Identify the classroom or laboratory that the student used.*
- D. *Only communicate with the VPP, Assist the Associate Dean of Students or Dean of Student, until otherwise advised.*

Step 3. Await further instructions.

Faculty or Staff COVID-19 Contact

Step 1. Self-monitoring. *Self-monitor for COVID-19 conditions.*

- A. *Symptomatic*

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Fever (over 100.0F)

B. Potential Exposure. Known or notified of potential high-risk exposure within the past 14 days. High-risk exposure is defined as close prolonged contact of more than fifteen (15) minutes and within six (6) feet of a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 positive person.

C. Antigen Test. Received a positive result from an antigen or RAPIDS COVID-19 test.

D. Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) viral test. Receive a positive result from a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) viral COVID-19.

Step 2. Self-Isolation. *If you have any of the above, begin self-isolation and do not visit any Collin College locations per the Governor's Report to Open Texas and COVID-19 Considerations for Institutes of Higher Education (Updated May 19, 2020, and guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC).*

Step 3. Initial Contact. *Contact the Human Resources Manager of Benefits, at Covid19answers@collin.edu and provide the following information:*

- A. Contact information*
- B. Symptomatic (yes or no)*
- C. The approximate date that any symptom first appeared or the last contact with the high-risk individual.*
- D. Test type (PCR, antigen, antibody)*
- E. Testing date*
- F. Testing facility*
- G. Testing results (if available)*
- H. The last date entered into any Collin College location and where*
- I. Individuals that you may have been in close contact*

Step 4. Feedback. *The Human Resources Manager of Benefits will contact you to provide additional information and instructions.*

Additional instructions have been developed for supervisors, human resources, the Dean of Students, and VP/Provosts. These will be posted on the College's COVID-19 website currently being enhanced.

In closing, please allow me to express my appreciation to the Faculty Council for bringing these concerns to the administration of the College. I know it has been challenging for some to maintain diplomatic composure and patience; however, from the many faculty and staff I have had the privilege of communicating with directly, I know we are all aiming for the same goal. We will continue to strive and serve our students, our communities, and one another. I respectfully request that we maintain professionalism and civility in the process.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "H. Neil Matkin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "H" and a trailing flourish.

H. Neil Matkin, Ed.D.
District President