



PHASED REOPENING PLAN

Dear Empire College Community –

One of the greatest strengths of our College is our sense of community – specifically, the relationships that develop among classmates in our learning environment. As we plan for the future, we are prioritizing the health and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff while simultaneously recognizing the importance of what defines us.

In order to minimize the risks related to the COVID-19 virus, it is highly likely that colleges across California and the nation will look different. While we hope to be back on campus for all aspects of in-person classes, the College has created a phased approach, which contemplates a variety of possibilities.

Based on instructions from the governor of California, as well as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), we have also made adjustments to our routines and protocols to mitigate the risks for students, faculty, and staff members, as well as the wider community, as we face COVID-19 together.

Our approach is a multi-layered “Safeguard” defense, but please know that even as we do our best to mitigate risks of transmission on our campuses, COVID-19 is an extremely infectious virus that could result in severe illness and/or death. At this time, there is no way to guarantee that these safeguards will eliminate the risk entirely. All safeguards have been developed carefully using public health guidance and are being clearly communicated to all community members in advance.

The Colleges’ phased reopening plan includes:

- Alternate delivery learning modality.
- Hybrid learning modality:
A combination of in-person learning (while practicing social distancing) and alternate delivery.
- A return to in-person classes while continuing to practice social distancing.

HERE ARE SOME ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON EACH PHASE:

Phase One: Alternate Delivery

This is the phase we have been in for more than two months, where our entire College community has been utilizing alternate delivery to continue with synchronous remote learning, using Zoom. So, we have already been in Phase One for the last many weeks.

This phase would re-occur if the pandemic brings with it a second wave that is so serious that the alternate delivery option is the only safe way to educate our students. Even under virtual conditions, the College will strive to ensure that all of the hallmarks of our education, including supportive instructor/professor-student relationships, robust academics, and student support services, will continue during alternate delivery.

Ideally, this phase would not re-occur unless absolutely necessary due to a second wave of the pandemic.

Phase Two: Hybrid Learning

Next is the hybrid learning phase. In this phase, there will be both in-person and alternate delivery occurring simultaneously.

Students will rotate on and off campus, engaging in a blended approach, while still utilizing alternate delivery learning each week, using Zoom.

This phase will have multiple variations with a high level of flexibility for rapid changes in response to health conditions and the need to accommodate students and/or instructors/professors who are unable to attend class in person.

The primary focus in this phase will be on labs and clinical skills.

With both in-person and alternate delivery learning taking place simultaneously, some classes will be prioritized for in-person or alternate delivery instruction based on size, content, or other class characteristics.

Phase Three: In-Person Classes

In this phase, assuming that all students, faculty, and staff are permitted to safely be on campus together while practicing social distancing, the College will maintain the reconfiguration of classrooms, as well as the other safeguards below as appropriate.

All individuals on campus will be expected to follow any new or additional College guidelines and safeguards for wellness testing, wear appropriate face coverings, and adhere to any additional protocols deemed necessary.

***Please note that this plan and the phases listed above will be changed and/or modified as appropriate.**

REQUIRED CAMPUS SAFETY PROTOCOLS & SAFEGUARDS

The College has identified health and safety protocols based on the current recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and other regulatory agencies. To lower the risk of possible transmission to students, faculty, and staff, you can expect some changes as you return to campus, which are outlined below.

The College is now deploying six safeguards to help keep everyone safe while on campus. These safeguards include:



We have reconfigured campus facilities to promote social distancing. This includes changes to classrooms and other campus spaces; large gathering spaces will be closed or subject to capacity limits.



The campus will undergo enhanced cleaning and sanitizing processes. Protocols will include additional hand sanitizing stations and cleaning throughout the day as provided by the College's staff and contracted cleaning company.



We are requiring all students, faculty, and staff to wear a face covering while on campus, which covers the nose and mouth. You should bring your own face covering, and we also have face coverings available if needed by those entering the campus.



The College is continuing to build a stockpile of sanitizing supplies, hand sanitizers, and disinfecting wipes, which are now available on campus.



We are placing physical distancing signs throughout the campus. In addition, we are also marking hallway "lanes" and lobby directional signs so students, faculty, and staff will enter, move through, and exit the building in an organized fashion. These signs will help physical distancing in all of our hallways.



All students, faculty, and staff will be subject to daily health questions and temperature checks upon entry, as well as anyone visiting the campus. The College will be identifying anyone with symptoms and will immediately send them home.

With these six safeguards, we hope you will feel safe and confident once we all start returning to our campus.