Dear colleagues:

On Monday I met with faculty at an Academic Senate-sponsored open forum, and this message will recap the topics discussed and information shared.

We held Monday's meeting amid a national outpouring of grief and rage at George Floyd’s senseless death, sentiments that have only intensified with the passing days and the compounding brutalities and injustices they've brought.

At a time like this, I'm more grateful than ever to serve a community committed to educational equity and social justice, and for the incredible people I work with in support of that mission. I’m sure I’m not alone in thinking anew this week about “Relevant Education” and what it can and should mean in our world today. The rallying cry for the protests that launched the College of Ethnic Studies 50 years ago framed a vision of a university that both combats institutional and structural racism and prepares students to create different paradigms. In widely-documented police brutality that devalues black lives, in a Federal administration that fans the flames of racism, and in the increasingly disparate impacts of COVID-19 on our communities of color, the problems that our visionary students identified 50 years ago come into ever sharper focus and only grow in urgency.

As we all seek ways to channel grief and outrage into direct action and change, I want to call your attention to several channels:

1. In response to the brutal and violent events affecting members of our community here and across the country, and with specific regard to our Black students, faculty and staff, the Academic Senate has created a forum for comments, feedback, and suggestions for further action the Senate and university could consider taking. You can also find it by using your browser, navigating to the Senate website and signing into the forum link on the right using your SF State login credentials.

2. This summer CEETL is offering faculty the opportunity of 2- to 3- day engagement bursts with colleagues on topics such as trauma-informed pedagogy and equity and inclusion in online environments, with stipends for participants. Registration is now open for these Pedagogies for Inclusive Excellence (PIE) Intensives.

3. With specific concern for the retention and support of faculty of color, the Office of Faculty Affairs has received a small grant to support chairs in mentoring workshops and a learning community designed to foster inclusive environments in departments, schools, and programs across all six colleges and the library. The “Equitable and Inclusive Departmental Cultures” initiative is in development and will launch in the fall, with stipends available to participants.

This month, as we bid farewell to students in a graduation like no other and send them into an uncertain world, the need for relevant education is stronger than ever. Clearly, we are the university that our world needs now.
We are also a university facing daunting challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic that we must meet if we're to maintain our commitment as local, regional, and national leaders in relevant education. These challenges were the subject of the open forum on June 1. The topics we discussed drew on questions that participants submitted in advance. It was ably moderated by Senate Chair Teddy Albinak and Senate Vice Chair Jackson Wilson, and made possible by Mirna Vasquez in the Senate office.

The questions and discussion fell into four themes, which this recap will address in this order:
- Fall 2020 planning
- Access to offices or facilities for research and creative activities
- Support for faculty and students around remote instruction
- Budget

**Fall 2020 planning**

As you know from previous updates, the campus aims to offer the large majority of teaching in the fall through remote modalities, and to maintain a healthy and safe environment for our students, staff, faculty, and communities by keeping campus activity to an absolute minimum. We also plan to allow for limited exceptions to remote coursework; while some courses and programs feature experiential elements that are optimally delivered face to face, we need to limit exceptions to those that are necessary to student degree progress and cannot be taught remotely or delayed. This spring our chairs and deans reviewed proposals for courses that might be offered face to face, and we put forward only a small number, which are now being reviewed by a university-level planning group that is estimating costs and logistics.

Our final list of face to face exceptions must be approved by the Chancellor's Office. We anticipate that approval by July 1, at which stage students and faculty will be notified through their colleges and chairs.

Like instruction, on-campus operations will be kept to the minimum needed to support those limited academic activities. Housing will prioritize students who are taking face to face classes, as well as most vulnerable students (such as Guardian Scholars, students who can't get home or those whose home is unsafe). Housing capacity will be dramatically reduced by the need for physical distancing and enhanced cleaning. We also expect on-campus staff to be limited to only those needed to deliver restricted operations; everyone else will be expected to work remotely, at least through the fall. Understandably, many of our staff have questions about how they will be affected by these plans: the Provost’s Office is hosting an open forum especially for Academic Affairs staff on June 8, which will feature Human Resources AVP Ingrid Williams and President Mahoney. [All Academic Affairs staff are invited to register.](#)

**Access to Facilities**

*Offices*
Many faculty and staff would like to have access to their offices in order to pick up materials, equipment or furniture to support their work from home. In order to create a safe and orderly environment for this one-time access, building openings will be coordinated on a schedule; a sign-up will be sent out to faculty and staff within the week. Note that this is one-time access only: we can’t support regular access to offices at this time.

Facilities for research, scholarship, and creative activities

Many faculty and students are also seeking access to campus facilities for research, scholarship, and creative activities. The faculty members of the Academic Senate’s University Research Council, along with AVP of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and Dean of Graduate Studies Sophie Clavier, have prepared a survey that faculty will receive within the next week to enable requests. The requests will be reviewed by the URC and college and university administrators in order to establish a coordinated plan for controlled access.

CSU guidelines limit access to facilities for research, scholarship, and creative activities to 35% of campus capacity. The review of requests will prioritize research involving students, graduate students whose research is essential to finishing their degrees, grant-funded activities with timelines, and other research that is seasonal or time restricted. Field work and off-campus research will open more extensively, subject to risk management.

By the fall we hope to be able to open more facilities in coordination with the face to face course schedule; however, some buildings, or floors in buildings, will remain closed for the semester. Again, regular access to faculty offices will not be available. However, facilities managers are investigating possibilities for reserving some private rooms for faculty who need to sign up for occasional use.

Support for remote instruction

Funding from the CARES 2 Act was earmarked for remote instruction, and last week the University Budget Council recommended an allocation of $3 Million to support CEETL’s summer programming in faculty development. Registration is now open for a range of opportunities tailored to meet faculty development needs and create community around teaching and learning in remote and flexible modalities. Many carry stipends, along with certificates of completion and digital badges. Faculty and instructors at all levels are invited to check out their offerings and sign up for as many as meet their needs.

An additional $1.9 Million of CARES 2 funding was allocated to underwrite technology in support of remote instruction for academic programs, individual faculty, and students. The Offices of Academic Technology and Information Technology Services are collaborating to determine needs and identify opportunities for meeting them. A wide-scale survey was sent out in the spring, and hundreds of responses helped establish general priorities. Academic Technology has been working with departments and programs to determine key recurring needs and opportunities for central, coordinated responses: for example, a cloud service will give students access to discipline-specific software that would be otherwise restricted to computer labs. Online packages and tools are also being evaluated, such as
digital labs, student-to-instructor engagement systems, and other specialized technology that can support remote instruction in ways specific to the programs’ distinct curricular needs.

We are also building our stock of laptops for check-out. In the spring nearly 75 laptops were distributed to instructors, along with equipment like webcams, headsets, and writing pads, and around 200 laptops were distributed to students. This fall Academic Technology is preparing to distribute 200 additional laptops to tenured and tenure-track faculty through the faculty refresh program, and it is establishing an expanded laptop loan pool for faculty, with special attention to the needs of lecturers and GTAs who are instructors of record.

Internet connectivity is another issue. In the spring we acquired 90 hotspots for students, instructors, and staff, and we plan to order 100 more for the fall. The CSU Chancellor’s Office is coordinating best-practice approaches among campuses and exploring possibilities for extending Internet Providers’ system-level discounts for students and faculty through the fall semester. The campus will regularly update support resources for faculty and students through the Instructional Continuity website.

Many courses that are taught through remote or hybrid modalities would benefit from specialized materials, whether equipment for check-out or supply kits to be sent to students for their safe use at home. A process to accommodate possible access to and distribution of these materials will be established once the campus plan for fall 2020 instruction has received Chancellor’s Office approval.

**Budget**

Given the substantial human and financial costs of the COVID-19 crisis, our campus joins every other in anticipating a period of challenge ahead. At San Francisco State, the spring brought enormous costs; looking ahead to next year, the Governor has warned the CSU to expect a 10% reduction in its annual allocation, which the CSU anticipates to be the first of successive cuts. This is because there is commonly a lag between an event like we are experiencing and its financial consequences--those who were here in 2008 might recall that the deepest cuts came in 2009-10.

The projected cut in our state allocation comes on top of revenue losses from tuition, which accounts for half of our funding. While we have seen strong enrollment in the summer and encouraging enrollments among returning students and graduate students in the fall, registrations of first-time freshmen and transfer students, who make up a large proportion of our overall enrollment, have dropped for next year--a trend that other campuses are seeing as well. This will affect our fall schedule, as programs adjust to offer fewer courses than previous years, as well as our expected tuition revenue.

While the state budget and won’t be finalized until the early fall, when final enrollments will be known, all signs indicate the need to plan our own budget with extreme caution and care. During this summer’s budget cycle, the President’s cabinet areas have been asked to
plan for reductions, and I have asked each college and academic division to build scenarios that project different levels of possible reductions, which the Academic Affairs Council will review this summer in order to balance local and short-term reductions with the use of carryforwards and salary savings from suspended searches in order to meet our share of the campus budget reduction.

At the same time, Academic Affairs is also preparing to undertake a longer-term, strategic budget planning process that will set us up for recovery. Transparency and shared governance play critical roles in this process. I have asked incoming Senate Chair Teddy Albinik to convene the Academic Senate’s Executive Committee as a Summer Senate to meet regularly with the Academic Affairs Council, which consists of our deans, associate vice presidents, and other academic leadership, in order to undertake what I envision to be a three-stage process that will:

1. Analyze our financial data to determine how our funds are currently distributed;
2. Assess best practices around academic cost savings from peer institutions;

When the university reconvenes for fall semester, I expect these guidelines and recommendations to be ready to share for broad comment and feedback.

At the University Level, the University Budget Committee has been redesigned to be a deliberative and action-driven body, committed to integrated planning with a cross-campus perspective, transparent communication to the campus, and financial literacy and broad understanding about our shared financial circumstances.

As UBC Co-Chairs, Vice President Jeff Wilson and I will prepare regular reports that we will share broadly in the spirit of the mission-driven public university that we are, and stewards of public funds for the public good.

Over the summer you may hear about how budget cuts are hitting other colleges and universities, including campuses that will be permanently shut. We know that San Francisco State will survive this. As we head into a future with many uncertainties, I want to affirm my commitment to shared governance and transparent decision-making. While this doesn’t mean that the decisions ahead won’t be hard, it does mean that you will know why they were made, what tradeoffs were considered, and what results are expected.

To close, I want to thank you for all that you do to support our remarkable students and our critical mission. San Francisco State is great because of you, and you have my deep and sincere appreciation. I am so very proud to have the honor of supporting you and our university.

May the summer ahead bring some measure of rest and rejuvenation to you and your loved ones.

Best wishes,

Jennifer
Jennifer Summit
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
San Francisco State University