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COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

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September 11, 2020

Re: **ADVISORY FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

To Whom It May Concern:

On August 7, 2020, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued COVID-19 Industry Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) in an effort to help IHE plan and prepare to resume in-person instruction.<sup>1</sup> Please note that COVID-19 Industry Guidance issued by the CDPH constitutes a public health directive. By law, State Public Health directives **must be obeyed** by **all** California residents.<sup>2</sup> **Furthermore, please be advised that under current State law, indoor lectures at IHE, including community college districts, in the County of Riverside, are not permitted, as described below.**

Most recently, on August 28, 2020, the State introduced its Blueprint for a Safer Economy<sup>3</sup>, which created a tiered system of COVID-19 restrictions that all Counties in California must follow. The Blueprint includes four tiers: 1) Tier One (Purple), under which many non-essential indoor business operations must remain closed; 2) Tier Two (Red), under which some non-essential indoor business operations must remain closed; 3) Tier Three (Orange), under which some indoor business operations may open with modifications; and 4) Tier Four (Yellow), under which most indoor business operations may open with modifications. For each progressive tier, this framework will permit a broader range of reopening guided by risk-based criteria.

At a minimum, counties must remain in a tier for at least three weeks before moving forward. Data is reviewed weekly and tiers are updated on Tuesdays. To move forward, a county must meet the next tier's criteria for two consecutive weeks. If a county's metrics worsen for two consecutive weeks, it will be assigned a more restrictive tier.

**Tier 1 (Purple):**

Riverside County is currently in Tier One (Purple) and will stay there until the State moves the County into Tier Two (Red). The most restrictive rules apply to Tier One (Purple), including a **prohibition on indoor lectures and student gatherings at IHE**. However, courses offered in specialized indoor settings (e.g., labs, studio arts) whose design imposes substantial physical

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<sup>1</sup> COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Institutions of Higher Education:

<https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-higher-education--en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Executive Order N-60-20: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/5.4.20-EO-N-60-20.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Blueprint for a Safer Economy: <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/>

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distancing on participants based on the nature of work performed in the space, are permitted.<sup>4</sup>

### **Tier 2 (Red):**

Once the County moves to Tier 2 (Red), the capacity for indoor lectures and student gatherings will be limited to **25% or 100 people, whichever is less**. In addition, courses conducted in certain indoor settings, like labs and studio arts, may continue to operate at regular capacity. However, student activities should be conducted virtually when possible.

### **Tier 3 (Orange):**

Once the County moves to Tier 3 (Orange), the capacity for indoor lectures and student gatherings will be limited to **50% or 200 people, whichever is less**. In addition, courses conducted in certain indoor settings, like labs and studio arts, may continue to operate at regular capacity. However, student activities should be conducted virtually when possible.

### **Tier 4 (Yellow):**

Once the County moves to Tier 4 (Yellow), the capacity for indoor lectures and student gatherings will be limited to **50%**. In addition, courses conducted in certain indoor settings, like labs and studio arts, may continue to operate at regular capacity. However, student activities should be conducted virtually when possible.

Please note, the CDPH's Industry Guidance provides direction on various issues that IHE may encounter as re-opening occurs, including 1) establishing a written, campus-specific COVID-19 prevention plan; 2) forming general measures for communicating with local and State authorities to determine current disease levels and control measures in IHE communities; 3) the promotion of healthy hygiene practices; 4) cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation; 5) implementation of social distancing; 6) discouraging sharing items that are difficult to clean or disinfect; 7) housing for students and faculty; 8) effective training for faculty, staff, and students on preventing COVID-19; 9) how to check for signs and symptoms of COVID-19; 10) preparing a plan for when a staff member, student, or visitor becomes sick; 11) maintaining healthy operations; and 12) considerations for partial or total closures.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the CDPH continues to encourage the use of face coverings with certain exemptions.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Industry Guidance to Reduce Risk: <https://covid19.ca.gov/industry-guidance/#higher-education>

<sup>5</sup> COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Institutions of Higher Education: <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-higher-education--en.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings: [https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Guidance-for-Face-Coverings\\_06-18-2020.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Guidance-for-Face-Coverings_06-18-2020.pdf)

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For further information on the operation of IHE's, we encourage you to refer to the COVID-19 Industry Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education, California's Blueprint for a Safer Economy, and all other documents referenced throughout this advisory letter. Should you have any questions, please contact Kelly Moran, Supervising Deputy County Counsel, at [kmoran@rivco.org](mailto:kmoran@rivco.org), for assistance.

Sincerely,

*Gregory P. Priamos*

GREGORY P. PRIAMOS  
County Counsel