

**DEEP SPRINGS**  
DEEP SPRINGS COLLEGE, CALIFORNIA  
*Founded 1917*

David Neidorf, *President*

March 26, 2020

Dear Board Members,

I'm writing to convey my recommendation for a second TDS resolution to supplement the one passed almost two weeks ago. I write "my recommendation" because in the time available, the college community has not yet been able to fully discuss all of the relevant issues and reach conclusions about them. Accordingly, I have recommended an updated and continuing version of the resolution you already passed.

I realize that many of us are struggling with decision fatigue, and that many others crave the refuge of definite plans. But it seems to me that conceding to these desires is neither necessary, dignified, or within the spirit of the educational program at Deep Springs. We are all living through a period of social disruption, social and personal stress, and, most of all, uncertainty. We all want at least to put some uncertainty behind us. But an honest consideration of the world shows that certainty isn't on offer in the current moment. It will soon enough.

One issue that came up in our discussion is the possibility of having our off-campus students return in stages, 4-5 students at a time, the number calibrated to how many we can comfortably quarantine for two weeks after their return. It seems to me that some such staged return to normal operations is very likely the way we proceed sooner or later, whether or not that process begins during the current academic term (which ends April 30). For that reason, we will begin confronting the nuts and bolts of such a procedure now; at the very least this will allow us collectively to think through the uncertainties and responsibilities we have been gifted with shouldering over the next weeks.

I'm not really joking about this problem being a gift. One of the interesting things about Deep Springs is that there is almost no community problem that isn't part of an education in the terms and virtues of shared and adult responsibility for some part of the world—i.e. democratic service to humanity. The current pandemic is no different. It is painful and disruptive, yes, but seen in another light it's one of the richest educational opportunities our students and staff could ask for. Each difficult and inconclusive discussion about the best response embodies and continues this work, and over the next few weeks I hope to focus increasing attention on the learning opportunity that our practical problems present.

For these reasons I am also grateful to the board for facilitating the educational program by permitting the students of the college time to consult fully on decisions that bear so directly on

their experience. I am happy to discuss this recommendation with the board at any convenient time.

Respectfully submitted,



David Neidorf

**Prior TDS Resolution of March 13, 2020:**

“Students who are not currently on campus will be asked to stay away from campus for two weeks while national trends and resource availability are clarified (we hope). Exceptions will naturally be made for students with nowhere else to go, or for whom a return home would constitute a hardship. Such students may petition to return to campus, and in these cases a staffulty committee will decide what students may remain on campus. Students currently on campus may choose to stay or leave, with the understanding that those who leave may be unable to return this term. Firm restrictions will be placed on visitors from outside the valley. Arrangements will be made for students who are away from campus to collect their personal possessions. No one will be required to stay on campus if they prefer to leave. After a one-week delay, classes will resume using remote instruction, and all students will have the opportunity to complete the academic work of the term, or to have one-half credit for their current courses recorded on their transcript.”

**Recommended TDS Continuing Resolution, March 26, 2020:**

Students who are not currently on campus will be asked to stay away from campus indefinitely until national trends and resource availability are clarified enough to make a collective institutional recommendation and governing board decision that it is appropriate to resume normal operations. Exceptions have been made for students with nowhere else to go, or for whom a return home would constitute a hardship. Other students may petition to return to campus on these grounds, and in these cases a staffulty committee will decide what students may remain on campus. Students currently on campus may choose to stay or leave, with the understanding that those who leave may be unable to return this term. Firm restrictions will be placed on visitors from outside the valley. Arrangements will be made for students who are away from campus to collect their personal possessions. No one is required to stay on campus if they prefer to leave. The students, faculty, and staff will begin work on planning for a further recommendation about what conditions and at what pace we will be able to welcome back the students who are away from Deep Springs.

[Note: The Trustees of Deep Springs passed this resolution by unanimous vote on 3/27/2020.]