

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Board of Trustees Grants Emergency Authority to Chancellor

The College of the Canyons Board of Trustees held a special meeting on Thursday, March 18 to discuss the rapid developments in the college's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The board reviewed the steps taken so far, which include stopping all in-person classes from meeting and closing college offices to the public and students, with plans to move instruction and services online by Monday, March 23.

"I am appreciative and proud of the work our faculty, staff, and administrators have done to care for our students and preserve their ability to complete their classes and achieve their goals in these ever-changing and uncertain times," College of the Canyons Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook said.

In a unanimous vote, the Board declared emergency conditions throughout the Santa Clarita Community College District and granted Dr. Van Hook emergency authority to respond effectively and immediately to changes that affect the college in the growing pandemic.

Chancellor Dr. Van Hook has the authority to take any and all actions necessary to ensure the continuation of public education, and protect the health and safety of the students and staff. In addition, the Chancellor is now authorized to call for the immediate closure of all district sites in response to future county, state, or federal orders deemed necessary to stop further spread of coronavirus.

Any actions taken by the Chancellor in accordance with the Board's resolution will not be subject to ratification by the Board except where legally required.

"Granting Chancellor Dr. Van Hook emergency authority is imperative to effectively addressing this rapidly changing situation, which requires timely and decisive action in order to reflect the District's commitment to protect the safety and well-being of students, faculty, and staff," said Michele Jenkins, board president.

The Board also determined that the District may enter into any contract necessary (subject to California Public Contract Code section 20654), without advertising or inviting bids, and without prior Board approval to respond to the District's emergency needs.

The Board's resolution will remain in effect until rescinded by majority vote.

In observance of social distancing standards recommended by public health officials, members of the Board of Trustees and community members participated remotely via Zoom videoconferencing.

Members of the public wishing to comment on an agenda item or another topic within the jurisdiction of the Board of Trustees were given the opportunity to ask questions via Zoom.

On March 12, Governor Newsom signed Executive Order N-25-20, which authorizes local bodies to hold public meetings via teleconference and waives some of the requirements of the Brown Act.

As part of its emergency operations plan, College of the Canyons will continue to provide regular updates to the public and college employees about its response to the coronavirus online at www.canyons.edu/news.