



*California State University Employees Union (CSUEU), SEIU 2579/CSEA*

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June 29, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor of California  
The State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Need for CSU COVID-19 Policy**

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of CSUEU, we appreciate your efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, and the many statewide guidelines you have instituted to protect our health. The caution you have exhibited demonstrates your heartfelt concern for the well-being of each of us.

Unfortunately, the CSU has not initiated similar systemwide guidance. In fact, many of the decisions surrounding COVID-19 are being left to individual campus administrations, which have resulted in inconsistent – or non-existing – safety measures. The Chancellor's Office has been reluctant to create systemwide policies to protect the health of employees and students, and has claimed falsely that it doesn't have this authority.

Our union is being forced to negotiate campus-by-campus to develop policies that would allow employees to safely return to campus this fall. We are concerned that negotiating with 23 separate campuses will likely result in a patchwork of inconsistent guidelines. The COVID-19 pandemic was declared in mid-March, yet three months later there are still no comprehensive CSU systemwide guidelines in place.

Custodians and grounds workers – our lowest-paid and most frontline workers – are being returned to campuses prior to the development of campus repopulation plans. Many custodians have also remained on campuses despite overall evacuations, working under safety procedures limited to bringing a mask and washing their hands.

Numerous campuses also directed custodians to use CSU-provided cleaning supplies that were later determined to be toxic, but these employees received no notice of the dangers, nor prior training or personal protective equipment. Even though we were able to discontinue the use of these cleaning supplies at one campus, other campuses were later found to be using similar toxic solvents, and the lack of a uniform policy by the Chancellor's Office places CSU workers in danger.

We are seeking your active intervention and assistance, and the engagement of legislative leaders responsible for providing oversight of CSU's operations. Before employees are forced to return to their jobs at CSU campuses – where some cases of COVID-19 infections are being reported – we need to establish

systemwide guidelines that are subject to modest variances that can adapt to local health officer recommendations.

I am available to meet or speak with you or your staff should you have any questions. Please contact our executive director, Jim Philliou, at [jphilliou@csueu.org](mailto:jphilliou@csueu.org) or via his cell phone at (916) 396-7433.

The CSU must be held accountable, and we are relying on your efforts and the efforts of those copied on this letter to ensure this occurs.

We would appreciate your prompt attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil H. Jacklin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Neil" and last name "Jacklin" clearly distinguishable.

Neil Jacklin  
President

*The CSU Employees Union (CSUEU, SEIU Local 2579) represents nearly 16,000 employees who support and oversee the academics and operations of the California State University, including information technology, healthcare, clerical, administrative and academic support, campus operations, grounds and custodial.*

cc: Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis  
Senate pro Tempore Toni Atkins  
Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon  
Senator Holly Mitchell, Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee  
Assemblymember Phil Ting, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee  
Senator Connie Leyva, Chair, Senate Education Committee  
Assemblymember Jose Medina, Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee  
Jim Philliou, Executive Director, CSUEU  
David Balla-Hawkins, Legislative Director, CSUEU

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