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**From:** President of CSU Maritime Academy  
**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2020 8:04 PM  
**Subject:** President's Message: COVID-19 Update



May 4, 2020

Dear Faculty, Staff, and Cadets –

Welcome to the first full week of May. Normally, the campus would be recovering from all of the various Commencement activities --- the Academy's largest and most celebrated event of the year for our graduating cadets and their families --- and the TSGB would have begun its voyage for its annual summer training cruise. Unfortunately, COVID-19 prohibits us from coming together and marking this extremely important day. It's disappointing that we find ourselves wrestling with the challenges that COVID-19 has inflicted across the globe; however, as challenging as it is, the strength of our campus is in its ability to navigate these challenges and emerge better and stronger than ever.

I write today to report on a couple of important decisions the campus leadership made with respect to Commencement and Summer Cruise 2020 and to provide an update on F2F. All of which were originally shared in my [May 2 video](#).

**Commencement:** We are making plans to hold a virtual, online celebration on Saturday May 30<sup>th</sup> at 1: 00 PM (PDT). Over the past several weeks, our cadet, faculty, and staff leaders have been working together to ensure this event will be a fitting and meaningful celebration of and for the Class of 2020. We appreciate the great ideas and suggestions from our graduating seniors and we aim to provide a celebration that will be interactive to the fullest extent possible. Commencement leaders will share specific details with your graduates later this week.

**Summer Cruise 2020:** I know that many families have been waiting for a decision on the summer training cruise. As I have shared in [previous messages](#), our planning has been based upon facts, science and COVID-19 conditions. After careful deliberation with federal, state and local leadership, health experts and maritime professionals, we have reached the conclusion that it is not prudent to go forward with our training cruise this summer. While diligent planning efforts were able to limit much of the risk, there are far too many variables that we cannot control, including the projected availability of resources to test everyone before and during the cruise. I know for many, this will come as a great disappointment. It is one I share – though I am confident that we are making the right decision for the health and safety of our cadets, faculty and staff.

Our faculty department chairs and deans are already working on an array of options on how to proceed to make up for the loss of this year's training cruise. I look forward to sharing the way ahead as the faculty plans unfold. I want to assure everyone that they are exploring a full range of options so that every cadet receives the high quality training that is our professional standard at Cal Maritime.

I recognize that there is also a good deal of concern regarding commercial cruise for Summer 2020. The faculty department chairs and deans are addressing this as well. This decision rests on academic program amendments, industry sponsorship of cadet billets and COVID-19 conditions in the US sailing fleet – all in states of flux. Additionally, we must coordinate license program revisions through the US Coast Guard and the US Maritime Administration --- adding

additional layers of coordination. We are doing all of this. It will just take more time and I am grateful for continued patience. We are at the end of the whip on this one, so hang on.

We continue to work through our campus-wide planning process for a return to face-to-face instruction. As you know, this has been a moving target based on health projections and changing shelter-in-place orders from local county health officials, guidance from the Governor's office, emerging federal guidelines and the persistence of the COVID-19 virus. While we have remained in close contact with these entities – and at the same time have rewritten and reworked our plans numerous times - we have not yet reached a decision on a hard re-start date as health and safety conditions remain uncertain. I know this causes more uncertainty for you and your families. I wish it were easier but it's not. We are committed to moving forward once our faculty is confident that all our preparations have been completed and we have all of the necessary equipment and supplies on hand. While I understand everyone is eager to know dates, our principles require us to be guided by safe conditions and not calendars. I am cautiously optimistic that based on improving COVID-19 trends in Northern California that we will be able to make a decision for the return to face-to-face instruction soon.

**Long Range Planning Group:** And finally, I have asked Dean Neto and Dean Maier to bring together faculty and staff from across the campus and lead the development and organizational structure of a Long-Range Planning Group. This group is charged with developing curricular plans over the next sixteen months to help students stay on-track or get back on-track to a timely graduation. These curricular plans will have a focus on training cruise(s), commercial cruise, Co-Ops, and internships. All planning efforts of this group will operate in parallel with safety and contractual protocols developed by other campus groups, and campus updates will be provided by Dean Neto and Dean Maier.

The important decisions we will be making in the coming days will, of course, be based on what we know, when we know it. We continue to closely monitor the current COVID-19 situation and adjust - and re-adjust our plans. We remain committed to ensuring the health and safety of our Keelhauler family and to taking whatever steps are required for delivering high-quality instruction. I will continue to provide you with updates as new information becomes available.

In the meantime, please join me in congratulating the class of 2020 for their wonderful accomplishments and the grit they have demonstrated throughout multiple disruptions this academic year. As always, you may refer to our academy website for the latest information.

Thank you Keelhauler family. You have stayed strong amidst incredible challenges and this kind of strength is what we needed this year – and it is what we'll need in the year ahead. Stay safe, take care of one another, and thank you for your unbroken spirit and remarkable resilience.

In service, TC



Thomas A. Cropper  
President  
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