

## **Ensuring Safety as We Move Forward**

It feels great to begin the Fall semester with money to spend from federal and state allocations. I can't remember the last time our District Budget Committee discussions were about how to spend the money rather than how to get by without it. And we were just getting used to going mask-less.

So much for the good news.

We weren't counting on Fall 2021 enrollment declining by 35%. And we weren't counting on a COVID-19 variant creating what President Biden has called "a pandemic of the unvaccinated."

We shouldn't have been surprised. Two weeks after the July 4th holiday weekend, COVID-19 diagnoses and hospitalizations began to increase. After watching in horror, the L.A. County Department of Health took reasonable — if understated — action by issuing a health order to MASK UP!

The Guild has itself taken an even firmer stance by passing a resolution at its July 20th Executive Board meeting. (See the details of that resolution in this issue.) It was created by our District Work Environment Committee (WEC), which was formed as the result of a decision made in Superior Court that called for the LACCD Board to take further action regarding safety and cleanliness protocols on our campuses.

The colleges are doing their part to comply with AB 685 when employees self-identify as COVID-19-positive. I have received notifications from eight of our nine campuses, with two campuses sending multiple notifications. We don't know who the employees are or if they were vaccinated. The colleges conduct contact tracing using the data from the SAFE app. The colleges won't know who to trace if we don't tell them — it's a good reason to use the SAFE app if you go on campus.

And remember to MASK UP! It's the least we can do. It may be the first step in rebuilding the progress made in the past four months to contain COVID-19. Masks, hand hygiene, physical distancing, testing, tracing, and vaccinations: six actions we must become insistent about in our personal and professional lives. The Faculty Guild continues to advocate strongly for faculty and student safety.

Stay safe. Stay well.