DIRECTOR’S LETTER
TO THE STANFORD COMMUNITY

Dear Campus Community,

"Are we there yet?"

The perennial question of car trips, and evidently pandemics as well. The challenges of the past three years have been unlike any other. Since day one of the pandemic, I have been incredibly proud of the dedication, creativity, and resilience of EH&S and our campus partners. Their efforts helped to create a safe environment for students to return to in person learning, and allow the important research our institution conducts to continue.

Today, the campus has the highest level of in-person activities in more than two years. Though the work of supporting COVID response continues, the conclusion of the COVID-19 Incident Command Structure and the formation of a permanent Public Health Steering Committee marked a return to more normal operations and decision making processes. This committee sets a strong foundation for the future public health and safety of our campus.

I’m impressed and amazed at the level of innovation and ability to expand support to campus in several important areas. We introduced on-site physical therapy into therapeutic offerings at the Occupational Health Center. This has been valuable for employees at every level, but especially important for those whose job, or life circumstances, makes accessing healthcare particularly difficult. The campus Wildfire Management efforts improved dramatically this year, a collaboration with LBRE and other partners, and we now have a dedicated program to support the campus emergency responder radio communication systems. Research Safety has continued to adapt to an increasingly complex and expanding research environment, while strengthening partnership agreements and enhancing communication efforts. Within EH&S, we are addressing opportunities to improve our efficiency, and service delivery. As a department we are embracing the university’s dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion through participation in the IDEAL Learning Journey. This effort has been a valuable part of our department’s growth.

Though our circumstances are not as dire, looking to the future brings to mind a passage from President Abraham Lincoln’s 1862 State of the Union address:

“The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty & we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, we must think anew & act anew.”

We currently face a host of challenges: navigating the world of hybrid work, scaling our services to accommodate the needs of our campus, and a high likelihood of another winter wave of COVID infections. But, we are fortunate to have the opportunity to reinvent our work and explore new ways of thinking, in a field where the work we do has great meaning. This freedom is granted to us through the support and trust of our campus community and university leadership.

I am grateful for our staff’s resilience and dedication to health and safety. I also want to extend my thanks and appreciation to our partners across campus for their support as we navigate our changing landscape together.

In Good Health,

Russell Furr, MPH, CIH
Associate Vice Provost for Environmental Health & Safety
Stanford University
Environmental Health & Safety
2021-2022 Year at a Glance

COVID-19 Case
Surge
After winter closures, the campus experienced a surge of COVID-19 cases. The number of cases peaked in April, when there were 125 cases, and then decreased in the following months.

COVID Policy
Alignment
The campus COVID-19 policies are in line with guidance from health officials and are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure safety.

Laboratory
Ventilation
Plan
A comprehensive plan to improve ventilation in laboratories has been implemented to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Mudd Chemistry
Decon
Chemistry
A decontamination system has been installed to quickly decontaminate the lab spaces and ensure a safe working environment.

Worldwide IT
Vulnerability
Declaration
A global vulnerability assessment was conducted to identify potential security threats and to develop plans to mitigate them.

Restricted
Chemicals
Program
Access to restricted chemicals is strictly controlled, and proper safety practices are enforced to prevent accidents.

AALAC
Accreditation
AALAC accreditation is maintained, ensuring the highest standards of animal care and use are upheld.

Wildlife Surveys
A wildlife survey was conducted to assess the impact of the pandemic on wildlife populations and to ensure their well-being.

Field Safety
Program
Measures were implemented to ensure the safety of field researchers, including health screenings and virus precautions.

Power Outage
Preparedness
Procedures were developed to ensure continuity of operations during power outages.

Student
Dorm Renovations
Dorms were renovated to ensure safety, including improved heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems.

Architectural
Counters
To prevent coronavirus transmission, physical barriers and distancing measures were implemented in public spaces.

Physical Therapy
Services
Services were provided to assist individuals in maintaining their health and well-being.

Joint Commission
Review
The hospital has been actively working to ensure compliance with all Joint Commission standards.

Digital
Modernization
of EHS
Modules
A new system was implemented to improve data management and ensure compliance with EHS regulations.

Process
Mapping
A systematic approach was developed to optimize workflow and improve efficiency.

Commencement
COVID-19
Precautions
Proper
Sanitation
Procedures
were followed to ensure a safe commencement ceremony.

EH&S OPERATIONS

Timeline Key
COVID-19 RESPONSE

EH&S OPERATIONS