

Second CCSF campus closes due to seismic safety concerns

Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez, San Francisco Examiner, 1-30-15

The student shuffle continues at City College of San Francisco.

The Gough Street campus will now close due to seismic safety concerns, school officials told faculty Thursday. This follows the announcement three weeks ago that CCSF's Civic Center campus on Eddy Street would close because it too is seismically unsafe.

Students and faculty were relocated to the Gough Street campus.

When the first move was announced, faculty blasted administration for the last-minute change, as they were told only one business day before classes were scheduled to begin. Now the school is partway into the semester, and classes will be moved yet again.

"It's not ideal; it's highly disruptive to our students and faculty. We're sorry about that," school spokesman Jeff Hamilton told The San Francisco Examiner. "The chancellor has apologized for that."

The classes being shuffled are primarily English as a Second Language, which are often taken by recent immigrants. This has prompted particular concern from faculty, as they fear miscommunication could happen.

"You can imagine people were upset, angry and frustrated about what was going on," said Tim Killikelly, president of the faculty union. "You really feel like enough is enough."

But the college has a plan. CCSF said it will allow students to take classes at numerous campuses and even possibly offer taxi vouchers and buses to transport people where they need to go.

The college provided translators at the Gough and Civic Center campuses to help guide students to new class locations. Spanish, Vietnamese and Chinese dialects are the most used languages by students, Hamilton said, but a special challenge exists in the sheer volume of different languages spoken by students.

"Our staff and faculty can't cover all of those languages," Hamilton said.

Student translators will be asked to aid in communicating with affected students.

The discovery that the Gough campus was seismically unsound came from faculty questions, Hamilton said. Faculty demanded documentation from administration when the Civic Center campus was closed, and in that process administrators found documents showing Gough was unsafe too.

"The bigger picture is we have a facilities management issue," Hamilton said. "We kicked the can down the road over and over again. We're in the position of making choices that should've been made a decade ago."

While students seek out new class locations, administrators will seek out another temporary space for the classes – but it is experiencing a challenge familiar to many San Franciscans.

"That area is now sky-high rent land with the nearby tech sector," Hamilton said.