

## Message from Aaron Draper to his students, November 10, 2018

Dear students,

Our CSU Chico President, Gayle Hutchinson, has decided that it would be best to cancel classes next week. I support this decision 100%. The air quality is unhealthy to breathe and many students, faculty and staff members have been affected by what officials are calling the Camp Fire. It is the largest fire in the history of our state.

During this week off I don't want you to think about your homework assignments. Don't think about what will be due when you return. In fact, I don't want you expending any energy or thought on your studies at all. This might sound counterintuitive coming from your professor. When we return to school I will bear the burden of figuring out how to account for our missed time and this burden will not be passed onto you. But while our classroom learning has been paused, there is an opportunity for another type of learning.

Learn what you can do to help our neighbor. For those of you who live locally, find a way to volunteer to help those affected by the fires. If you have the means, donate anything to help with the recovery effort. (I've listed a link at the bottom of this page). Learning how to help your fellow humans is just as important as academic learning – in fact, I believe it's even more important. Let this week be a time when you can grow closer to others by serving them. Don't view this time as a vacation but view it as an opportunity to enrich your life by helping others. There is no greater way to enrich yourself than by helping someone else.

But don't text, email or send snaps. People are feeling alone and vulnerable and many don't have service or have lost everything they own (including their phones). The only way to reach them is by being with them in person. Listen to their stories. Understand what they could never convey in a text. Share their emotional burden.

If you are not local and have gone home to avoid the polluted air and danger, please spend time with your families. Many have lost their loved ones and their homes. Enjoy both of yours. And even though you are far away from the tragedy, please reach out to those you left behind. These kinds of communications will bring us all closer together.

I care about each and every one of you.

Sincerely,

Aaron.