Q. Are there cases of Legionnaires’ Disease on the College of the Canyons Valencia campus?
A. Currently, there is one person with a confirmed case of Legionnaires’ Disease and one person with medical confirmation of exposure to the bacteria.

Q. How have these people been identified?
A. They have self-reported medical findings to the college. In addition, Legionnaires’ Disease is a “reportable” illness under Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. Individual doctors are required to report confirmed cases of the disease to the CDC.

Q. Are there other potential cases of the disease at the college?
A. On a campus with a faculty, staff and student population exceeding 25,000, there are continually reports of upper respiratory ailments. Many are simply colds and flu.

Early symptoms of the illness are much like the flu. After a short time (in some cases a day or two), more severe pneumonia-like symptoms may appear. Not all individuals with Legionnaires’ disease experience the same symptoms. Some may have only flu-like symptoms, but to others the disease can be serious and even fatal.

Early flu-like symptoms:
- slight fever
- headache
- aching joints and muscles
- lack of energy, tired feeling
- loss of appetite

Common pneumonia-like symptoms:
- high fever (102° to 105°F, or 39° to 41°C)
- cough (dry at first, later producing phlegm)
- difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath
- chills
- chest pains

If a faculty or staff member has have a suspicion that he/she might have the disease, we are encouraging them to seek medical attention and suggest blood testing for the bacteria from their care provider. If Legionnaires’ Disease is confirmed, they should immediately report it to the college’s Human Resources
Office. Students may visit the Student Health Center for guidance. If students have confirmed cases, they should report it to the Student Health Center.

Q. How does a person get Legionnaires’ disease?
A. A person must be exposed to water contaminated with Legionella bacteria. This exposure may happen by inhaling or drinking water contaminated with the Legionella bacteria. For example, inhaling contaminated water mist from a cooling tower, a humidifier, or even a shower or sink can cause the disease.

Q. Where do the affected people work?
A. Both individuals work on the third floor of Seco Canyon Hall, a large building housing faculty offices, some student services offices, the college’s MIS offices and a few classrooms. Seco Canyon Hall is a 23,526-square-foot building constructed in 1975.

Q. When were these cases confirmed?
A. The first person with a confirmed case reported test results to the Human Resources office on March 27, 2010.

Q. What actions did the college take after this case was reported?
A. • Legionnaires’ Disease can be contracted from almost anywhere and there was no indication that the college was the “source” of the bacteria.
• However, the college contracted Forensic Analytical Consulting Services to conduct a Level-One Legionella risk assessment of the most likely areas where bacteria could be.
• The company was contacted on March 29 and testing occurred on March 30, 2010. The assessment consisted of testing all water systems within Seco Canyon Hall’s third floor kitchen, and adjacent spaces including plumbing and HVAC systems, and other water reservoirs.
• Preliminary results were provided on April 7 and the tested areas fell into the “low risk” category.
• Final results were received on April 13. Nine out of ten water samples had no detected colonies of legionella bacteria. One sample from an exterior hose bib on the second floor had detectable bacteria but at a level considered “normal” for such areas (4 CFU/ml). It was also a strain of legionella not normally associated with legionnaires’ disease.

Q. When was the second case reported?
A. A second individual who had been experiencing flu-like symptoms received blood work results on April 23 and reported the findings to Human resources on April 26. Those results confirmed exposure to Legionella bacteria by the individual, but the results were not sufficient to confirm an actual case of the disease.
Q. Specifically, what is the college doing?
A. First and foremost, the college is taking this situation very seriously. The health and welfare of our faculty, staff, students and visitors is our most important concern. If there is a source of Legionella bacterial in the building, we will do our very best to find it. We are following the guidelines outlined in the federal OSHA Technical Manual - Section III: Chapter VII: Legionnaires’ Disease. With one confirmed case and one possible additional case, we are moving to the next level of investigation. We have asked Forensic Analytical Consulting Services to return and conduct a more thorough investigation - a Level-Two Investigation under the OSHA standards. A Level-Two investigation requires a more thorough investigation of the site, additional testing and more in-depth assessment of potential additional cases.

Specifically:
1. A medical assessment of all employees currently on sick leave will take place to identify any new cases.
2. An awareness training program for faculty, staff and students will be conducted to minimize employee concerns and aid in early recognition of new cases.
3. Additional collection and testing of water and other samples will take place.
4. Additional assessment and testing of HVAC and air circulation systems will occur.
5. The area of testing will expand to the building’s roof to assess potential leaks that could lead to “standing water” locations.
6. Since the two individuals are located on the third floor of Seco Canyon Hall, all offices on that floor will be relocated until the situation is resolved. Currently, 35 people have offices on that floor.
7. The third floor of Seco will be “closed” to all individuals until the investigation is complete and any required mitigation steps are completed.
8. We will respond aggressively and appropriately to changes in the situation.

Q. What does an awareness program entail?
A. The program is designed to inform everyone on campus about the potential health issue and educate them about the specifics of the disease. It will likely consist of frequent communications and informational materials with basic information about the disease and actions being taken to deal with the situation. The more everyone understands the symptoms and realities of the disease, the better the college will be able to act quickly and effectively.
Q. What is the college doing to clean the area and prevent future contamination?
A. 1. If a source of Legionella bacteria is found, we will follow the recommendations of authorities on what methods and materials to use to clean the area and remove the contamination.
   2. Now and into the future, the college will be more aware of the conditions that promote the presence and growth of the Legionella bacteria and respond accordingly when those conditions are identified. Legionella bacteria are widely distributed in water systems and are not eradicated by the chlorination used to purify domestic water systems. Low and even non-detectable levels of the organism can colonize a water source and grow to high concentrations under the right conditions. Water conditions that tend to promote the growth of Legionella include:
   • stagnation
   • temperatures between 68 and 122 degrees Fahrenheit
   • pH between 5.0 and 8.5
   • sediment that tends to promote growth of the microflora
   • the presence of micro-organisms that supply essential nutrients for growth of Legionella or harbor the organism

Q. What are the names of the individuals who contracted Legionnaires’ Disease?
A. Medical information is a privacy issue and the college will not disclose the names of those involved.