

Plan for Bringing Employees Back on Campus

Introduction

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in March 2020, the University moved to remote work for the majority of its main campus employees and to online learning for students. It is recognized that the University currently has some employees working on campus who never left, some who have returned during the recent weeks, and some who are utilizing staggered work schedules so that offices are staffed throughout the workday. This plan addresses the process of bringing the campus (defined as an employee's primary place of work) back to normal operations. Planning for the return of employees to campus presents challenges but can be accomplished over a reasonable time frame and with a detailed approach. The primary objectives of this process are the following:

- To protect the health of our employees, students, and extended campus community by providing a safe environment
- To develop a mechanism to allow the campus to be ready for the return of students for the Fall 2020 Semester

The intent of this plan is to outline the steps necessary for that process, with those primary objectives in mind.

The University Committee for Reopening Campus (the "Committee") continues to monitor the impact of the pandemic on our region. Following federal, state, and local guidelines, it is the responsibility of the Committee to determine the appropriate date to begin returning employees to their campus work locations who are currently working remotely for all or part of their assignments.

This plan is presented with the belief that herd immunity will not exist, and access to a vaccine will not be available in the near term. As such, a four-phased approach to returning employees will be utilized. The approach focuses on protecting the physical and emotional well-being of our employees and outlines a plan that enables the business continuity of the University. The four phases are defined below:

Phase 1 Current situation with all non-essential employees off campus

Phase 2 Gradual return of employees to campus as determined by need and health/safety concerns. It is anticipated that Phase 2 will likely require staggered work schedules as necessary for proper social distancing and based on specific unit safety considerations. During this phase, remote work may continue to be the primary mode for many campus units. All units should be prepared to return to remote work (Phase 1) if conditions warrant as determined by the Committee. While the target date for the beginning of Phase 2 will be determined by the Committee, it is anticipated that not all units will necessarily be able to begin Phase 2 by that specific date.

Phase 3 Full return of employees to campus with exceptions for those in high-risk categories or those caring for persons in high-risk categories as identified in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act for whom reasonable accommodations are not identified which would allow return to on-site work. During this phase, all units should be prepared to return to remote work (as defined in Phase 1 or Phase 2) if conditions warrant as determined by the Committee. The target date for Phase 3 will be determined at a later date, depending on the progress of Phase 2.

Phase 4 - All restrictions lifted and campus returns to normal operations. During this phase, all units should be prepared to return to remote work (as defined in Phases 1, 2 or 3) if conditions warrant as determined by the Committee.

This plan primarily addresses Phases 2 and 3 related to the return of employees to campus. All campus units should currently be assessing the needs of their respective departments and developing a return-to-campus plan that follows the basic protocols outlined in this plan, adapted for each unit. Upon determination by and notification from the Committee, campus units should initiate these plans and begin to bring back to campus non-essential and essential employees who have been working remotely, with the ultimate goal of reaching a Phase 4 (normal operations) level.

The Committee has identified a number of key elements that should be included in all subcommittee plans. These key elements are included in this plan, as appropriate, and are defined as follows:

- Social distancing and density reduction will serve as cornerstones for all plans.
- Masks/face coverings will be required for faculty, staff, students, vendors, contractors, and other members of the University community, with limited exceptions.
- A screening process for faculty, staff, and students returning to campus will be developed and implemented.
- Health/safety education will be required of all faculty, staff, students, and other members of the University community.
- Temperature monitoring may be used when necessary.
- A COVID-19 testing regimen/protocol will be developed and implemented.
- A mechanism for contact tracing will be developed and implemented.
- Hand-sanitization stations and cleaning supplies will be available in ample quantities across campus. Strategies for cleaning/sanitizing rooms, offices, and common areas will be developed and implemented.
- Greater quantities of flu vaccines will be available than in prior years, and inoculations will be strongly encouraged.
- A maximum size for gatherings will be determined, based on guidance from public-health authorities, and enforced across all divisions.

Note – The intent of this plan is to follow CDC guidelines to establish methods for the return of employees to campus and to outline procedures for employees who become sick after such return. This plan was developed with the intent to address and include the following:

1. Employees self-monitoring and reporting symptoms beyond recurring or chronic symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, rhinorrhea, loss of sense of taste or smell, sore throat, myalgias, unusually severe headache, and/or diarrhea) while at work should immediately be sent home by their supervisors. Supervisors will be responsible for informing the Office of Human Resources.
2. Local health officials, through USA Health, will be notified by Human Resources, as well as (if feasible) individuals in close contact with the employee, of a possible case while maintaining confidentiality consistent

with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable federal and state privacy laws.

3. If an employee becomes symptomatic and is sent home, the supervisor should close off areas used by the symptomatic employee until after it has been cleaned and disinfected. The supervisor should notify Facilities Management to request cleaning and disinfecting. Facilities Management should wait 24 hours from notification by the supervisor to clean and disinfect the area. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, Facilities Management should wait as long as possible before cleaning and disinfecting. If the symptomatic employee is diagnosed as COVID-19 positive, it is the responsibility of the USA Health contact tracer to inform the other employees in the office that someone with whom they have had close contact has received a positive COVID-19 diagnosis. (The identity of the diagnosed individual will not be revealed.)
4. If an employee comes into close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 ("close contact" defined as coming within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more during the 2 days before his/her initial symptoms began), the employee will be required to notify the Office of Human Resources which will in turn report this to the University contact tracing staff. The contact tracing staff will work with USA Health physicians to determine how exposed employees should proceed before being allowed to return to work (e.g. isolation, further screening, and/or testing). Employees who have had close contact should be tested 5-7 days after their last exposure to the affected individual and should be monitored daily for symptoms for 14 days. If exposed employees become symptomatic, they should self-isolate and contact the USA COVID Testing Center for a telehealth evaluation and testing (or retesting). Unless otherwise instructed by University contact tracing staff, exposed employees who are asymptomatic may remain at work as long as social distancing, sanitation and University masking policies are followed.
5. Employees with mild to moderate disease who are not immunocompromised may return to work when at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared and at least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved. In addition, their return to work should be certified by their primary-care provider. Employees who test positive for COVID-19 should participate in any surveillance or contact tracing processes designed to decrease the risk of infection in the University.

Factors to consider and intake process/requirements for employees to return

- The University should notify all employees that those in high-risk categories or caring for persons in high-risk categories should reach out to the Office of Human Resources to discuss whether a reasonable accommodation is needed prior to a potential return to campus. Medical documentation of the need for accommodation will be required, and upon approval, Human Resources will work with the employee and the employee's supervisor to identify a reasonable accommodation, such as a prolonged period of remote work, provided that the supervisor has deemed remote work to be feasible. High-risk categories are identified by the Centers for Disease Control on its website and currently include chronic lung disease, moderate-to-severe asthma, hypertension, severe heart conditions, weakened immunity, severe obesity, diabetes, liver disease, and chronic kidney disease that requires dialysis.
- Protocols will be developed for the deep cleaning and disinfecting of public spaces and common areas in buildings. This will be implemented prior to the return of all employees in coordination with the University's Facilities Management department.
- Offices with reception desks will be required to implement social distancing measures such as floor distancing markings, face coverings, physical barriers, etc.
- Unless social distancing can be ensured, common areas (break rooms, kitchens) will remain closed during the duration of Phase 2. If they are able to remain open, such areas will be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis.
- Visitors not on University business will not be allowed in University buildings, to the extent enforceable, during Phase 2.
- Employees will be required to answer screening questions as recommended by the Committee related to the current status of their health. Such questions are intended to address the current health of employees and their potential exposure to COVID-19 prior to their return.
- After returning to work, employees will be required to report to their supervisors any symptoms or new risk factors associated with COVID-19.
- When the Committee determines that employees are allowed to return to campus, each dean, department head or division head will implement the plan for his or her unit. Depending on the size and configuration of the office, the return may be accomplished at one time or over a period

of several weeks, with the goal of having staff back on campus prior to the beginning of Fall Semester. Each unit is encouraged to continue to expand innovative work practices developed during the early stages of the onset of this pandemic.

Monitoring and on-campus safety procedures

- The Office of Human Resources has developed protocols for handling instances of the disruption of an employee's ability to work. Refer to these protocols for each situation described in this section of the plan. The protocols can be found in Exhibit A of this plan.
- Prior to returning to campus and once offices have reopened, employees will be required to participate in a pre-return screening for indications of possible infection. Employees will also be required to self-monitor throughout the crisis and report any symptoms or concerns to their supervisors. A self-monitoring guide will be published and available to all employees to facilitate this process. If an employee reports an indication of possible infection arising from the self-monitoring process, he or she will be required to notify the Office of Human Resources for further guidance.
- If an employee becomes symptomatic at any time, he or she must not report to work. In addition, the employee will be required to contact Human Resources to be referred to USA Health for screening to determine whether COVID-19 testing is indicated.
- If an employee lives in a household in which anyone in the house has tested positive for COVID-19 within the previous month, he or she will be required to remain home and self-quarantine for 14 days after the household contact has recovered. A designated health advisor at USA Health will determine which exposed employees need to be further screened, isolated and/or tested prior to being allowed to return to work.
- Employees will be required to self-monitor and report symptoms that would indicate signs of potential infection to their supervisor. The supervisor should instruct the employee to contact Human Resources for further guidance. The Office of Human Resources, in conjunction with USA Health professionals, will develop training for supervisors related to this monitoring requirement. Such monitoring processes and protocols will be determined by the Committee and will require employees to self-monitor, periodically answer questions regarding potential exposure and

abide by other requirements established by the Committee. If the monitoring results in an outcome that, as defined by the Committee, indicates possible COVID-19 infection, the employee will be referred to USA Health for additional screening and/or testing.

- In-person gatherings within offices will be limited in number as defined by the Committee, and social distancing will be required. Zoom or other electronic meeting formats will be encouraged when at all possible. The masking policy (www.southalabama.edu/reopening) will be followed during all in-person meetings.
- Supervisors of offices which, by their nature, require frequent contact with students, other employees or outside persons, will consider the need to install flexible barriers to protect employees and those who come into the office. Such situations should be identified by the supervisor for each office and presented to the Office of Safety and Environmental Compliance to determine the best approach to create a safe environment.
- The use of face masks is required when there is any interaction among employees, students, contractors or vendors. Two face masks will be supplied by the University on a one-time basis and as long as supplies last; however, employees may elect to wear their own masks as long as they are consistent with parameters provided by the Committee. Specific guidance with respect to masking requirements can be found at www.southalabama.edu/reopening.
- A determination of whether or not all employees will be required to receive the flu vaccine will be made by the Committee and will be subject to certain accommodations as required by law.
- The use of hand sanitizer and the frequent washing of hands are strongly encouraged. In situations in which employees interact with students or other employees on a regular basis, the use of hand sanitizer between each interaction is strongly encouraged. Hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes and other supplies will be provided when available.
- Disposable containers for food and beverages should be used.
- If approved by the Committee, food and beverage service will be allowed at internal meetings as long as appropriate social distancing and other hygiene measures can be achieved.
- Until further notice, and pursuant to CDC recommendations, in-person University events will remain cancelled until such time as the CDC indicates that the community spread of COVID-19 has decreased to an

appropriate level. This applies to all social gatherings and ceremonies. This policy does not apply to classroom instruction. Necessary in-person meetings including interviews should be limited to no more than 10 people. Individuals participating in such meetings will be required to adhere to the CDC guidelines on social distancing, wearing masks and other precautionary measures. If the meeting includes food, the food should be boxed. This policy will be regularly reviewed and may be modified by the committee depending on the trajectory of the pandemic.

- It will be the responsibility of the primary supervisor of any office, with the approval of the appropriate dean or vice-president, to ensure that the workplace will allow for appropriate density levels of employees, as adopted by the Committee, and provide the ability to allow for appropriate social distancing of employees.
- At the discretion of the Committee, certain areas, such as the Student Center, areas within the Student Recreation Center and certain lobbies may be closed to public access. In these cases, individuals responsible for those areas will be required to block off the areas and ensure that adequate signage is present to clearly indicate that those areas are closed.
- Vendors and outside service personnel will be required to adhere to University masking, monitoring and other safety policies at all times. University employees who engage these vendors and service people will be responsible for communicating the policies to them.
- The number of individuals allowed in elevators, restrooms and other small spaces at one time will be limited based on the size of the enclosed space.
- If more than one employee is engaging in official University business and riding in a vehicle at any one time, all employees in the vehicle will be required to wear masks. University vehicles should be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis.
- If it is impossible to adequately socially distance in an office environment, the supervisor, with approval, will be required to stagger work times to allow employees to socially distance. Such staggered work times may require employees to work from home on a rotating basis or utilize alternated campus staffing. If on-campus staggered hours are required, it will be the responsibility of the departmental supervisor to ensure that building access is provided during non-traditional hours and that the University police are notified of such staggered hours. It may also be

necessary to rearrange offices such that proper social distancing can be achieved.

- The Committee, in consultation with USA Health professionals will establish guidelines for determining whether a COVID-19-related event has occurred with an employee requiring that employee to leave the workplace. Such criteria will be established by the Committee but could include the following: 1) the employee has been exposed to an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who is suspected of having the virus, 2) the employee has tested positive for COVID-19, or 3) the employee is showing symptoms of the virus and may be awaiting testing. A single point of contact (as designated by the Office of Human Resources) will be developed by the Committee which will be communicated to all University personnel.
- The Office of Human Resources has established guidelines for absences related to COVID-19, in accordance with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and other applicable laws. (See the attached.) In addition, if the University establishes an emergency sick-leave-donation program, information will be provided by the Office of Human Resources.
- Domestic travel by employees is currently non restricted but is subject to change as the situation evolves. International travel for business purposes is currently restricted. Personal international travel may require self-isolation upon return home. Employees are encourage to self-report international travel to a Level 2 or Level 3 country, as designated by the CDC or WHO. See the attached for information about quarantine following travel to areas designated by the CDC or WHO.
- Employees not adhering to monitoring and on-campus safety protocols as established may be subject to disciplinary action.

Events requiring employees to leave the campus workplace

- It will be the responsibility of the Committee to monitor the recommendations of public-health officials as well as the incidence of confirmed cases in the campus community and surrounding areas. If it is determined in the reasonable judgment of the Committee that it is in the best interests of students, faculty and staff to require the closure of campus, the Committee may recommend this action to the Executive Committee. If it is determined that such a safe workplace cannot be maintained due to infection rates, confirmed cases, or other criteria, the

Committee may recommend to the Executive Committee that employees be required to leave campus.

- If the Committee, upon consultation with medical professionals, determines that it is in the best interests of the campus community that a specific building or office be vacated, the Committee may recommend that employees of that location be required to leave campus.
- If an employee refuses to follow established office-safety criteria, that employee will be required to leave the work place and may be subject to disciplinary action. An employee may request an accommodation for the masking requirement based upon a legally protected status by contacting the Office of Human Resources.

Financial impact of the plan

- It is recognized that many of the requirements in this plan will have a financial impact on the University. It will be the responsibility of the University Business Office to provide an estimate of this impact to the University President as early as possible in order for a determination to be made as to whether or not such costs are recoverable.
- The University Business Office will develop a process and unique code for expenses incurred in connection with the pandemic crisis and communicate the appropriate use of that code to the University community.
- It will be the responsibility of persons throughout the University to assist the University Business Office with ensuring that all costs related to the implementation of this plan are identified and appropriately recorded.

This plan primarily addresses Phase 2 and Phase 3 of returning employees to campus. It is anticipated that as the University moves into Phase 4 (fully returned to campus), a number of the measures and requirements identified in the plan will continue for the foreseeable future. As we approach Phase 4, this plan will need to be revised and adapted for that purpose.