Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost  
Office of Human Resources

Dear Colleagues,

As we approach the fall, and as we have been doing throughout this pandemic, we will be continuing to review and adjust our plans, including how we work at the University. As some students return to campus over the next several weeks, some employees may also need to return to campus to provide necessary support while maintaining our health and safety guidelines.

Executive Order 20-74 directed that "any worker who can work from home must do so." This order remains in place, and the University continues to comply with that directive. Over the summer, we developed and implemented a process that allowed for individuals who could not work from home to return to their work on campus, once they were approved through the voluntary return to work sunrise process. On June 12, the Board of Regents approved our plan to offer some in-person instruction; on August 24 they approved a proposal to delay the opening of the residence halls and to begin the semester with most undergraduate classes delivered at a distance. As a result, units will be assessing what employee functions will need to be performed on campus to support those students who will be returning to campus, to support distanced teaching and learning, and to continue to advance faculty research.

The Sunrise Plan process for returning to work has been updated and University leadership and supervisors will be reviewing the work that needs to be done on campus. The responsibility for requesting a return to campus will move from the individual to the department and requests will be reviewed and approved by department and unit leaders as they are most knowledgeable about the unique needs at the local level. The need for employees to return to campus must be based on their work responsibilities...
and the need for that work to be completed on campus.

In planning for return, department leaders will follow the Sunrise Plan for all non-essential employees who are asked to return to campus. On campus work could involve less than a full-time schedule, which would allow for the balance of an employee’s work to be completed remotely. There will continue to be a significant number of employees who will not be asked to return to campus at this point and who will continue to work remotely. The desire to have employees work onsite to simply convey a presence on campus is not an acceptable reason for leaders or supervisors to request an employee to return when the employee can continue to work remotely.

Any employee who is uncomfortable with a request to return to campus this fall should discuss their concerns with their supervisor or department head. Whenever possible, individuals should be offered flexibility regarding the modality in which they work, subject to compliance with the governor’s order. If individuals feel uncomfortable about being on campus, they should reach out to their supervisors; supervisors should be as flexible as possible regarding requests for remote work and are encouraged to work with their local HR to identify creative solutions to meet the unit’s needs. We also ask supervisors to be flexible with remote employees who are parents trying to balance work and family obligations, especially children who are at home needing assistance with online classes.

*The Disability Resource Center* can work with employees whose job functions need to be performed on campus to determine appropriate accommodation(s) for individuals with an underlying health condition, including pre-existing conditions that may increase their risk regarding COVID-19, while maintaining health information confidentiality. Additional resources are available from the *Office of Human Resources* and OHR employee relations consultants are available if you have concerns about returning to campus that you feel may not be addressed in your unit. *The Graduate School* is an additional resource for graduate assistants and postdoctoral students.

Retaliation in response to anyone expressing safety concerns will not be tolerated. If you feel you have experienced retaliation, you should contact your local human resources or OHR’s *employee relations consultant* for assistance in addressing this situation.
Thank you for your patience in these challenging times, and for your dedication to our students and to the University of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Rachel Croson
Executive Vice President and Provost

Ken Horstman
Interim Vice President Kenneth Horstman

This email was sent to Twin Cities faculty, staff, post-doctoral students, and graduate assistant instructors on behalf of Executive Vice President and Provost Rachel Croson and Interim Vice President Kenneth Horstman on August 25, 2020, by Office of Human Resources, 100 Donhowe Building, 319 15th Ave SE, Minneapolis, MN, 55455, USA. The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer. Read our privacy statement.