

July 29, 2020

SUBJECT LINE: EMPLOYEE RETURN TO CAMPUS SCHEDULE

Colleagues -

We are excited to be just a few short weeks away from welcoming students back to campus for the first day of classes! While this year will be different in some ways due to the pandemic protocols we are all now so familiar with, it will not be different in other very important ways. Lipscomb University will continue to be a place where the lives of our students are transformed. Even during these times of a global pandemic, we are committed to investing holistically in our students so they can grow into the person God desires them to be.

Since March, the entire Lipscomb community has worked diligently to serve our students with remote courses and services while being scattered across Middle Tennessee but united in our common mission. All the while a team of your colleagues has been hard at work planning for a safe return to campus this fall. In developing and implementing this plan, we are following local, state and federal guidelines to create a safe campus environment for students, employees and guests. Guidelines we are following as we plan include:

- Mayor John Cooper's [Roadmap to Reopening Nashville](#),
- Gov. Bill Lee's [Tennessee Pledge: Reopening Tennessee Responsibly Plan](#),
- Tennessee's [Access Guidelines for Higher Education](#),
- American College Health Association Guidelines: [Considerations for Reopening Institutions of Higher Education in the COVID-19 Era](#), and
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

In earlier communications, we have communicated with the Senior Leadership Team members and deans about options and conditions for remote work. You can read more about these options at the end of this email. While remote work will still be continuing in some approved formats, **we are ready to move to Stage IV of our Return to Campus plan for all remaining faculty and staff during the week of August 3**. We recognize that many of you need to return to campus to begin preparing for students to return this fall and to begin adapting the recommended COVID-19 protocols for health and wellness to your workplaces as well.

As you return to campus, you will notice new disinfecting protocols in place as well as other measures to make the campus as healthy as possible for everyone. When you return to your office area you and your supervisor will work together to refine work space habits using physical distancing strategies, consider office furniture layout and flow of traffic to create natural physical distance opportunities, develop possible staggered work schedules in areas where physical distancing is difficult, use remote meeting options when possible, use personal protection equipment like masks and face coverings and other protective measures.

We have already had employees and students who required self-isolation over the summer months and we can expect that will continue into the fall. **Employees who take a COVID-19 test or who are in self-isolation are required to report their situation using the [Report an Illness](#) link.** Additionally, **an employee who has taken a COVID-19 test or who is in isolation cannot return to work until cleared by human resources staff.** These measures are in place to help us monitor the extent of the virus and exposure to the virus on our campus and to protect our other employees from someone returning to the workplace too soon. We are asking for your cooperation and assistance to follow these new procedures in any event that an employee takes a COVID-19 test or is in self-isolation.

We are very much looking forward to your return to campus and the return of our students for the fall semester. Thank you for your patience as we have implemented this phased process.

We look forward to seeing you again soon on campus!

The Incident Management Team

Kim Chaudoin, Kevin Eidson, Susan Galbreath, Kathy Hargis, Carol Lusk and Al Sturgeon

Remote Work Policy

Lipscomb University is a residential campus where we house about 1,600 students and serve over 4,500 university students and over 1,100 academy students. And at both the University and the Academy we hear over and over that one of our best attributes is the relational feel of our campus community. This feeling comes from the vibrancy of our employees interacting with students and with each other in our campus environment.

Lipscomb has long recognized that there may be circumstances when it would be beneficial or necessary for certain employees to work from home, either on a permanent or short-term basis. The policy for any work from home situation is outlined in the Employee Handbook and requires approval from the Office of Human Resources. While a work from home arrangement is not available to all employees, in this current COVID-19 environment we recognize that there are additional factors that will be important new considerations as well.

As employees begin to return to campus to fulfill their work duties, please use the following as a guide to determine any continued remote work situations.

1. **Accommodation.** Employees who have a health condition that may require an accommodation should contact the Office of Human Resources by emailing hr@lipscomb.edu or contacting **Lynn Chappin** at 615-966-7015. In the event an accommodation is approved, a human resources staff member will work with the supervisor and employee to create a viable work plan.
2. **Shared Offices.** Supervisors of employees whose daily work takes place in a shared office, e.g., two employees in one office, may offer a staggered on-campus work schedule in order to share the workspace with the other employees. Work hours may be

staggered by either alternating mornings/afternoons (such as work mornings on campus and afternoons remotely or vice versa), alternating work days (such as work Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays on campus and Wednesdays and Thursdays remotely), or some combination of these options.

3. **Congested Work Space.** We recognize that some suites or other work space areas are more congested than others and when fully occupied present challenges to remain physically distanced in hallways, lobbies, and other work areas. In these situations, supervisors may also use a staggered on-campus work schedule in order to lessen the congestion and allow for physical distancing to occur more easily.
4. **Employee Cohorting.** Even as we take every precaution with enhanced cleaning methods, wearing face masks, maintaining physical distancing and meeting virtually when possible, there is no way to guarantee a COVID-19 free environment. As we have already seen on campus over the summer months, as personnel numbers increased on campus, so did the number of COVID-19 instances. As the full university returns to campus, this will be an even more difficult situation to navigate especially for small offices and offices whose presence on campus to serve students is of utmost importance. To help limit a situation where a whole office is isolated to remote work due to exposure to COVID-19, every manager should assess his/her office area and create an appropriate remote-staggered work schedule that would help to protect workers and maintain a healthy workforce to be present in the office. Under the remote-staggered work schedule, the manager would designate a rotating schedule of 1-3 office staff a week who would work remotely for the week as “the remote worker safety net.” This way if a COVID-19 case is present in the office during the week and those in the office must go into a self-isolation protocol, the 1-3 workers who were working remotely would still be able to come into the office to assist students and others as needed.

Supervisors recommending any form of work-from-home schedule for any employee as soon as possible must request approval through the Office of Human Resources.

Supervisors should make requests by emailing hr@lipscomb.edu. In your request, please include the employee’s name and position, the reason for the work-from-home request, the expected time period for the remote work situation and the expected work schedule for remote and on-campus work. Unless a work-from-arrangement is approved by the Office of Human Resources, all employees are expected to report to work on campus as normally scheduled.