

Oberlin employees to return to on-campus work

June 12, 2020

This has been a time of trauma and upheaval in our country and our community. Oberlin College's faculty and staff have been exemplary, supporting students on and off campus, each other, and the institution itself.

Many of you have been able to do this good work remotely, while those deemed essential to the College have diligently come to work and supported our students, even while keeping yourselves safe.

Since the President recently announced the campus reopening plan for students, it is now time to turn our attention to reopening the campus for our faculty and staff in a measured and responsible way that keeps our campus community safe.

I am writing with details on a three-phased approach that will allow us to reopen the campus this summer and be prepared for students' return in the fall. All of our plans are consistent with guidelines from Governor Mike DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health.

It is important to note that throughout these phases and during the academic year, the College will provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as reusable masks to meet the unique needs of different employment groups. You must wear a mask when you are on campus, unless you are working alone or are unable to wear one for health reasons. When outside, you should wear a mask when you are within 6 feet of others.

Oberlin will require visitors to wear masks while on campus, unless they are outside and can maintain social distancing.

We have secured reusable masks for all students, faculty and staff. Beginning June 15, we will distribute masks from 9 a.m. to noon each Monday in the Root Room. Faculty and staff will need to show their Oberlin College ID and will receive a complement of masks, based upon their job duties. Students will receive five masks each upon arrival on campus, largely during Phase II.

Please remember that before coming to campus, you should take your temperature to make sure you do not have a fever above 100.4 degrees. Please determine that you also are free from other symptoms. While on campus, remember to practice social distancing, wash your hands frequently, use hand sanitizer and maintain other best practices that have helped keep us safe during the pandemic. (For details on new policies meant to keep our community safe, see below.)

Phase 1: June 15 – July 12

During this phase, faculty and staff may **voluntarily return to campus for work**. If you have a shared office space or a cubical, please communicate with your supervisor and co-workers when you

plan to return to your space. If you have a closed office, it is always a good idea to communicate to personnel around your office that you are returning.

Remember to check and make sure you are free of COVID-19 symptoms and agree to follow our best practices such as wearing your mask and washing your hands to keep our community safe.

You may notice tour groups starting to return to campus. Tours for Arts & Sciences Admissions will start on June 23. Initially, these will be exterior tours and will be limited to one family per group, only entering the [Peter B. Lewis Gateway Center](#) until other facilities open to the public. For the protection of our staff, visitors will be required to wear face coverings at all times.

Phase II: July 13 – August 30

Faculty and staff may return on a staggered or rotational basis in shared workspaces where engineered solutions cannot be implemented to maintain social distancing.

By this time, you will see signs going up all over campus and some work spaces will have been reconfigured with Plexiglass or other safety precautions to keep us all healthy and minimize the spread of the virus. This will be an ongoing process throughout reopening the campus.

Our recent experience has taught us that some people can be efficient while performing their jobs remotely. Those who can remain off campus and still do their jobs well may discuss with their supervisor the possibility that they continue to work remotely. By working off campus, you help keep all of us safe.

We want to address the needs of those in high risk groups such as those over 65 and people with compromised immune systems. People in those groups who wish to work remotely will be allowed to do so after making the appropriate arrangements with their supervisor and Human Resources.

Our athletic facilities will open to faculty and staff on August 3, and will require people to practice social distancing and follow the College's guidance for wearing masks, applying hand sanitizer and other best practices for good hygiene.

The libraries will reopen August 24 with Plexiglass installed. You will see other adjustments such as the removal of furniture and other measures to protect faculty, staff and students.

The Allen Memorial Art Museum (AMAM) will open on August 25, and, as with other campus buildings, its staff and visitors will follow safety protocols.

Phase III: August 31, classes resume

When classes begin again, our faculty and staff will be firmly ensconced in a rhythm of staggered and rotational shifts that will help people remain safe and minimize the spread of COVID-19.

Office hours will be held remotely unless in-person is required. We all will practice social distancing during classes and in dining and common areas. Faculty, staff and students will disinfect equipment and instruments after each use.

Here is a further breakdown of best health practices:

1. Avoid in-person meetings. Use online conferencing, email or the phone when possible, even when people are in the same building. Keep in-person meetings to as few people as possible and maintain social distance.
2. Eliminate unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone nonessential meetings, gatherings, workshops and training sessions. Do not conduct business travel outside of Lorain County.
3. Do not congregate in work rooms, kitchens, copier rooms or other areas where people socialize.
4. Maintain a limit of one person per elevator lift.
5. Eat at your desk or in locations that allow you to maintain a 6-foot distance from others; avoid common areas during workplace breaks.
6. Limit recreational or other leisure classes, meetings, activities, etc., where close contact with others is likely.

Additional information can be found here. <https://www.oberlin.edu/human-resources>

You may also reference the following frequently asked questions (FAQ) document that is related to the reopening: https://www.oberlin.edu/sites/default/files/content/faqs_for_reopening_oberlin-1.pdf

If we are careful and follow the best practices of social distancing, we will be able to return to campus this summer and be prepared for students in the fall.

Thank you.

Joe Vitale
Chief Human Resources Officer