



## Oberlin employees update: Return to on-campus work, Phase II

July 14, 2020

In June, we outlined the College's plans for a three-phase approach for our faculty and staff to return to campus. We enter the second phase tomorrow, July 15.

Oberlin College's faculty and staff have been exemplary in recent months, supporting students, each other, and the institution itself. We all have adhered to guidelines from Governor Mike DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health.

Since the launch of Phase I on June 15, some faculty and staff volunteered to return to campus for work. Offices across campus began to organize work rotations, especially for those with shared office spaces or cubicles. Those who returned diligently continued to check and make sure they were free of COVID-19 symptoms and agreed to follow best practices for public health such as wearing masks and washing hands.

As we move forward to reopen campus, I am writing to remind everyone of the steps involved with Phase II and to update you on our efforts to keep the campus safe when students return next month.

- Tomorrow, the College will send to students and their families information that will help them make their enrollment decision. Included in the email will be course descriptions, the Community Agreement, which students will be required to sign, defining safe

behavior while on campus, and the launch of ObieSafe, our communications and marketing effort to educate, inform and encourage safe behavior. We will share this communication with faculty and staff tomorrow as well.

- To help address questions from students, faculty and staff, we will host a webinar with Cleveland Clinic public health experts on July 28. These experts have reviewed and approved our layered strategy for minimizing the spread of COVID-19. Look for more details and a link in future communications.
- As we enter Phase II, starting July 15, we remind everyone that before coming to campus, you should:
  - take your temperature to make sure you do not have a fever above 100.4 degrees and determine that you also are free from other COVID-related symptoms;
  - while on campus, remember to practice physical distancing;
  - wash your hands frequently;
  - use hand sanitizer; and
  - maintain other best practices that have helped keep us safe during the pandemic.
- The College continues to provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as reusable masks to meet the unique needs of different employment groups and we continue to remind everyone that they must wear a mask when on campus, unless working alone or are unable to wear one for health reasons. The distribution of masks continues each Monday from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon in the Root Room, as was communicated earlier. Students will receive five masks each upon their arrival on campus, largely during Phase II.
- We continue to reinforce the importance of wearing masks. Everyone, including visitors, must wear a mask at all times when on campus, other than when they are alone in an office or room. By wearing masks we protect each other and the larger Oberlin community.

- Phase II will run through August 30. Faculty and staff may now return on a staggered or rotational basis in shared workspaces where engineered solutions cannot be implemented to maintain physical distancing. Signs are going up across campus. Some work spaces have been reconfigured with Plexiglass or other safety precautions to minimize spread of the virus. This effort will be ongoing throughout the phased reopening of campus.
- Throughout the pandemic, we know 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.
- 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.

Please remember that Phase III will begin on August 31, when classes resume. Faculty and staff will utilize staggered and rotational shifts. Office hours will be held remotely, unless an in-person meeting is required. We all will practice physical 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 we will ask everyone to keep top-of-mind:

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 physical 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, unless otherwise approved as necessary.
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.
7. Stay home if you do not feel well.

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](https://www.oberlin.edu/sites/default/files/content/faqs_for_reopening_oberlin-1.pdf)

As a campus community, we are intent on being careful and are mindful to follow the best practices of wearing a mask, physical distancing, and frequent handwashing so we will be prepared for students in the fall.

Thank you.

Joe Vitale  
Chief Human Resources Officer