Smart Restart update for UW–Madison employees

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To: Linda Zwicker <lazwicker@wisc.edu>

This message is being translated into multiple languages. Translations will be posted at https://news.wisc.edu/smart-restart-update-for-uw-madison-employees/

Dear UW-Madison Employee:

We hope this message finds you healthy and well despite a most unusual and challenging summer for all of us. We appreciate your support and patience as we have been developing plans to reopen the UW–Madison campus this fall. Many campus teams have been working hard to support our Smart Restart plan and we hope this update addresses some of your questions and concerns about the upcoming semester.

As Chancellor Blank mentioned in her June 17 message, UW–Madison academic instruction will be operating in a hybrid manner this fall. Most large classes will be offered by virtual format, as they were this spring and summer. However, many of our smaller classes and research activities will occur in-person. Modifications are also being made to many campus operations and student support services to reflect our health and safety protocols. We are working diligently to continue providing a quality education and a meaningful student experience while prioritizing your well-being.

We know many of you are interested in details about the expectations for on-site work and when and how it might resume. While the university will still have many employees working remotely, the return of students to campus means a resumption of additional on-site activity. Decisions on who is expected to return will be based on several elements, such as roles, responsibilities, work unit needs, and individual factors. Vice chancellors, deans, and directors are making those decisions as part of their unit’s resumption plans. These plans will ensure compliance with campus health and safety protocols, facility modifications, human resource policies, and other vital issues.
Employees expected to work on-site in the fall should receive clarification related to their worksite and duties from their supervisor. If you have not been notified by early August, please contact your supervisor. Some units will be scaling up on-site operations between August 10 and Sept. 2. This timeframe will provide the ability to address necessary operational changes before the majority of students move into University Housing the week of August 24 and the first day of instruction on Sept. 2.

Each of us will be responsible for helping to create a healthy and safe workplace environment for the entire campus community this fall. All employees who do return to full or partial on-site work will be expected to complete a soon to be released training on the required health protocols. We are also implementing free, campus-wide COVID-19 testing for all students, faculty, and staff. More information about locations and hours will be available soon. The Office of Human Resources and Employee Disability Resource Office have developed guidelines surrounding workplace safety, accommodations, and the reporting of COVID-19 cases. This includes a COVID-19 Workplace Safety Policy that provides employee expectations for working safely on campus. Work units will provide employees with more detailed information about these guidelines in the next few weeks.

As a part of the broader Madison and Dane County community, we continue to consult with local leaders and monitor public health protocols and metrics. There are several factors that we are watching, including the surveillance rate of infection, the ability for us to support our students and employees that might be infected, and the capacity of the healthcare system. We are working closely with Public Health Madison Dane County and with city and county officials to ensure a coordinated, consistent approach to public health.

Please be patient and wait for guidance from your supervisor to clarify your worksite, schedule, and any actions you need to take before coming back to campus. You can stay up to date with campus reopening plans via the Smart Restart website. Your dedication to UW-Madison during this challenging time is greatly appreciated. Please continue to do your part in protecting the health and safety of our community by following the most current public health guidance found at Public Health Madison and Dane County, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

On, Wisconsin!

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