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**University of Colorado Denver – Lynx Together**

**Staff Return to Campus Planning Tool**

CU Denver is planning to be back in-person this fall semester with full operations to the extent possible. We know that in-person learning is best for many students and for certain subjects, and we are committed to offering a rich and engaging educational experience that is on campus and complemented by digital and hybrid experiences.

Starting June 1, colleges, schools, and administrative units will commence a “soft return” to the office, with staff coming back about one or two days a week. This will allow employees to slowly transition into new routines, while providing time to make arrangements for transportation, childcare, and other aspects of daily life. The vision is that staff will increase their on-campus presence to about two or three days per week during July, so our units can ramp up to their “next normal” states in August as we begin the fall semester.

This is a framework that can be used by units to guide the summer transition and begin visioning the “next normal” for operations. Deans/Vice Chancellors/Associate Vice Chancellors and other senior leaders will be setting the tone for their units. Before beginning your returning planning, please contact your senior leaders to understand expectations. For further information, the Lynx Together website will continue to add to its Frequently Asked Questions.

**Lynx Together – Staff Return**

Plan for bringing employees back into the “next normal”



**Mission First**

**Support the Safety, Health, and Well-Being of our Campus Community**

**Learning from**

**Positive Disruptions**

**Commitment to Equity and Inclusivity at the Forefront**

Outline your Unit Mission and any guidelines or expectations from your Dean/Vice Chancellor. Utilize the guiding principles of mission first, supporting the health/safety/wellness of the campus community, commitment to equity and learning from positive disruptions to frame unit return planning. Your unit return plan must be reviewed and approved by your Dean/Vice Chancellor before becoming operational. Recognize this will be a year of learning and change, and plans may be adjusted for employees through the year as we learn what the campus needs are to support students and our mission. Creating a successful plan should be an opportunity to check-in with employees and have an open dialogue. Consider a collaborative approach that creates an inclusive, empowering and trustworthy process. Engage team members in planning, solicit concerns, feedback, ideas, and solutions. Support employees by mitigating fear and anxiety related to return, while promoting a culture of transparency while prioritizing the safety and continuity of business operations.

Define your mission, vision, and values:

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Outline unit guidelines or expectations:

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| 1. **Mission First**
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| **Once you have identified your unit’s mission, guidelines and expectations develop a plan that aligns with that mission and the broader institutional mission. Focus on the customer experience first and create a plan to address those needs. Consider work activities that must take place physically on campus to maintain business continuity and ensure a positive constituent experience. Consider functions that underwent positive disruptions and learn from the innovations you implemented in response to those disruptions. Consider the items below when creating a unit return plan.**  |
| Identify your customers and other cross-functional units you interact with |  |
| Describe the nature of the unit work and the common activities performed by the unit |  |
| Focus on your ability to deliver high-quality customer service and consider “peak” service times |  |
| Consider how to create equitable staffing plans that would provide adequate coverage for functions.  |  |
| Consider the impact of the plan on productivity, individually and for your unit |  |
| Identify risks or obstacles  |  |

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| 1. **Workforce Return**
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| **Identify who must be physically present to complete work and who may be able to continue working in a hybrid environment. Focus on optimal service delivery but understand this will be a transition period. Keep in mind the current public health guidelines including distancing guidelines when preparing staffing schedules. As of April 23, 2021, person-to-person distancing guidance remains at 6 feet. (Look for additional information in the future on changes to distancing guidance that will affect you unit return plan)**  |
| What work activities should be performed physically on campus? Consider “who” does the work and “how” to support this work |  |
| How is the work completed and what is the ideal service delivery? Consider in person delivery or electronic. |  |
| How often is the unit or staff person required to be on-campus to perform the work?  |  |
| Support employees who were hired during the pandemic and may not be familiar with campus |  |
| Identify if individuals have the proper equipment to carry out the work assigned to them |  |
| Consider new or alternative ways to deliver service including service hours |  |
| Recognize employee and student concerns related to returning to campus |  |
| Have discussions with individuals to determine who may require an accommodation because of disability or otherwise (consult office of Human Resources) |  |
| Think about flexible scheduling for service |  |
| Consider employee and team performance and each of their abilities to remain productive while working independently  |  |
| Think about the Unit leader and/or supervisor’s ability to supervise/evaluate performance based upon results or outcomes |  |

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| 1. **Learning from Positive Disruptions**
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| **Identify positive disruptions that occurred during our remote work period and what new practices you can instill in your operations in the future. Evaluate the innovations you implemented and think about how you can carry those innovations forward.***Consider:** *What do we want to preserve that we have done differently, what may we need to leave behind?*
* *Think about improvement to processes and the way we work.*
* *How are business operations impacted with a mix of remote and on-campus service delivery?*
* *What processes and resources are needed to support employees?*
* *Do you need to adapt your service delivery?*
* *What has gone well in the remote environment? Revisit processes that may no longer be impactful*
* *Have your customer preferences for how they interact with your team shifted?*
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| **Written Description** |
| **Collaboration** | *Reflect on meeting practices, colloquium, etc.* |
| **New Norms & Expectations** | *Consider break room policies, food/beverage practices, etc.* |
| **Meeting Protocols** | *When discussing meeting protocols, consider whether public health guidance recommends that meetings remain virtual or how physical distancing (if applicable) in conference rooms reduces the room capacity. Strive for meeting protocols that ensure that all staff (both those working remote and on-campus) have a similar and uniform experience that is uncompromised.* |

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| 1. **Commitment to Equity and Inclusivity at the Forefront**
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| **Pause to consider your plan through an equity lens. Recognize that the last year has been difficult for everyone and returning will not be easy. Practice equity and transparency in the decision-making process and consider whether all team members have the same opportunities. Identify potential barriers for your team and solutions to overcome them.** |
| Take the pulse of your unit- how is morale and what are their expectations? |  |
| Consider your unit culture, and promote practices of inclusion and belonging |  |
| Does your unit plan foster connections amongst workers in a hybrid model? |  |
| Engage, train, and build trust among individuals and your team |  |
| Be adaptable and flexible as we develop the “next normal” |  |

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| 1. **Support the Safety, Health, and Well-Being of our Campus Community**
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| **Campus guidance will be updated periodically to reflect the most up to date public health guidance, check the CU Denver Lynx Together website for the latest information. Please refer to the Campus Protocols for additional information related to social distancing that may impact staffing plans.** Establish: * What modifications to operations and/or space are necessary to align with current guidance?
	+ Physical Distancing, Face Coverings, Cleaning and Hygiene, Health Monitoring & Tracing and Protecting the Vulnerable Community
	+ What considerations have been given to employee mental, physical and emotional well-being?
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| **Emergency Procedures** |  |
| **Visitor Management Strategies** | *In alignment with campus protocols, how will visitors be managed within your unit?* |
| **Staff Well-being** | *What policies, processes and considerations have been made to encourage staff well-being and self-care? Consider promotion of appropriate time off, flexible lunch breaks, encourage usage of campus wellness resources.* |

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| 1. **Workplace Modeling**
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| **Please consider the following space planning guidance for various work environments when assessing how your unit will function in your space. It may be helpful to create a work schedule or work plan to ensure compliance with campus distancing guidance on any given day.** **Private Office**Private offices are defined as a room occupied by one person which is completely enclosed from floor to ceiling. The following guidance is provided:* Masks are not required in private offices unless another individual is present.
* Staff are allowed to have meetings in offices are long as current distancing protocols are observed and all participants are wearing a mask.
* Aside from meetings there are no distancing considerations for private offices even when the door is open.

**Shared Office**Shared office is defined as a completely enclosed room that is shared by 2 or more persons either through staggered work hours or by individuals occupying the room at the same time. The following guidance is provided:* If more than one person is occupying the room, all occupants should be wearing a mask and distancing protocols should be observed.
* Refer to the latest campus guidance on cleaning and disinfecting when considering how to manage desks that are shared within a shared office.

**Open Workstation-Dedicated**An open workstation-dedicated is defined as a workspace without floor to ceiling walls (also referred to as a modular workstation or cubicle) that is used exclusively by one person. The following guidance is provided:* Open workstation occupants should wear masks at all times.
* Consider campus distancing guidance when figuring out which workstations will and should be occupied on any give workday. (Understanding the wide variety of panel heights in workstations across campus, the general assumption is being made that modular panels do not provide enough vertical separation to replace campus distancing protocols).
* Workstations are not typically assigned room numbers. If you are creating a work schedule or work plan, consider assigning a number to each workstation and labeling the workstation with that number.

**Open Workstation- Rotating Occupants** An open workstation-rotating occupant is defined as a workspace without floor to ceiling walls (also referred to as a modular workstation or cubicle) that is assigned to several persons depending on day or time of day, but not occupied by two or more people at one time. The following guidance is provided:* Open workstation occupants should wear masks at all times.
* Consider campus distancing guidance when figuring out which workstations will and should be occupied on any give workday. (Understanding the wide variety of panel heights in workstations across campus, the general assumption is being made that modular panels do not provide enough vertical separation to replace campus distancing protocols).
* Workstations are not typically assigned room numbers. If you are creating a work schedule or work plan, consider assigning a number to each workstation and labeling the workstation with that number.
* Refer to the latest campus guidance on cleaning and disinfecting when considering how to manage workstations that are shared by more than one person.

**Reception Desk**A reception desk is defined as a workspace that serves as a welcome or entry point or at which a transaction or exchange of information is occurring with great frequency. The following guidance is provided:* Consider providing signage and/or floor prompts to ensure that the person who is seated at the reception deck is adequately distanced as indicated by campus guidance.
* If distancing is difficult, consider installing plexiglass.
* As with other open workspaces, ensure that proper distancing (as indicated by campus guidance) is observed when considering whether adjacent spaces should be occupied.
* If the reception area is shared, refer to the latest campus guidance on cleaning and disinfecting.

**Break Room** A break room is defined as a social gathering space which sometimes includes seating but typically includes a sink and common kitchen appliances. It is typically used for social gathering, and storing, preparing and eating food. The following guidance is provided: * Follow campus guidance on offering shared foods and using shared beverage machines.
* Follow campus guidance on distancing when considering if un-masked eating will be allowed in the break room. If it is allowed, consider campus guidance when deciding how many seats, if any, should be made available in the break room.
* When not eating, masks should be worn in the break room.
* Passing interactions in the break room are ok, but consider advising unit members to avoid contact that violates campus guidance for prolonged periods of time.
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| 1. **Unit Communications Plan**
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| **Consider developing a unit communications plan, as we transition back to campus and to the “next normal.” The transition to remote work was abrupt and we adapted to our new environment quickly, consider the challenges ahead as we slowly come back to campus. A remote and hybrid environment may benefit from frequent and open communication among teams.** The return to campus will require the same, if not more open dialogue. Begin your conversations regarding unit return soon, and involve your entire team to the extent possible. Share important guidelines, protocols, and policies that may impact your return. Ensure employees are informed by discussing any required training and emphasize the support available through transparent discussion. Keep in mind that the soft return to campus during the summer could look different than the full operating return to campus for the academic year.You can use this framework to outline a proposed communication plan for employees and any additional communications necessary to inform your stakeholders.**Messages to consider:*** Your Unit’s Return to Campus Plan, including the timeline and expectations for employees
* Welcome message and communicating positive stories
* New and evolving operational procedures for your customers and stakeholders
* Proactive sharing of guidelines and procedures
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| **Date** | **From** | **To (Audience)** | **Key Messages** |
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