Phase 3 Reopening Plan (Faculty Offices & Classrooms)

On Thursday, July 23rd and Monday, July 27th, meetings were held with the following individuals to discuss a planned reopening of all faculty offices on both campuses, as well as to prepare classrooms for in person classes at the beginning of the Fall semester. The individuals who attended these meetings were as follows:

1. Fred Cratty, Chief Human Resources Officer
2. Missy Alexander, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs
3. Luigi Marcone, Chief Facilities Officer & Associate Vice President for Campus Planning
4. Rebecca Woodward, Digital Innovation Officer
5. Mike Spremulli, Director of Facilities Operations & Project Management
6. David Serino, Director of Environmental Health & Safety
7. Michelle Brown, Dean of the Macricostas School of Arts & Sciences
8. Brian Vernon, Dean of Visual & Performing Arts
9. David Martin, Dean of the Business School
10. Joan Palladino, Interim Dean of Professional Studies
11. Department Chairs
12. Associate Department Chairs
13. Rotua Lumbantobing, President, WCSU-AAUP Chapter
14. Manoj Misra, CSU-AAUP Council Member
15. Dan Weltmann, Vice President, WCSU-AAUP Chapter
16. Katy Wiss, Grievance Officer, WCSU-AAUP Chapter
17. Tricia Stewart, Contract Manager, WCSU-AAUP Chapter
18. Howell Williams, CSU-AAUP Council Member
19. Joan Vecchia, CSU-AAUP Council Member
20. Michael Lewis, CSU-AAUP Council Member
21. Michele Ganon, Academic Freedom Officer, WCSU-AAUP Chapter
22. Jay Brower, Associate Grievance Officer, WCSU-AAUP Chapter
23. Oluwole Owoye, Secretary/Treasurer, WCSU-AAUP Chapter
24. Michael Crotty, WCSU-AAUP Member Services Coordinator

In total, the meetings lasted approximately 2.5 hours and at the conclusion of them we agreed to follow the below parameters with respect to safely reopening faculty offices, effective Wednesday, August 5th, and teaching in person in designated classrooms at the beginning of the Fall semester:

1. Follow the guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Reopen Connecticut Plan, specifically for business offices.

2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):
   o Face masks
     • Individuals will always be required to wear them in the buildings when in public areas. When individuals are within their personal offices or are alone in shared spaces, their masks can be removed. However, they must
always have their face masks on their persons in case they encounter someone.

• Per the Governor’s Executive Order, individuals with medical issues are not required to wear a face mask and no documentation is required of the individual.

• Roger confirmed that a law enforcement piece is in place if necessary. However, he does not suggest that this be handled as a police enforcement issue, but more of a Human Resources issue. Fred stated that this will need to be handled on a case by case basis via Human Resources.

• The group stated that if individuals would be required to wear them all day, that this can be a difficult thing for many to do.

  o Gloves
    • Gloves will be provided by the University should individuals wish to wear them. The Health & Safety Office can demonstrate the proper use and removal of gloves for all employees returning.
    • Gloves should not be worn all day as doing so will contribute to spreading germs to everything the individual touches.

  o Hand sanitizer
    • The University will provide hand sanitizers for each office. Also, the Health & Safety Office can refill personal bottles if needed.

3. The buildings should continue to be closed to the public until there is a need for us to be open in the Fall. The basis for this is that since classes for the Summer are being held online, then we should only handle in-person issue from the public only when needed and by appointment only.

4. Daily Health Check - Ask employees resuming on-premise work to confirm they have not experienced COVID-19 CDC-defined symptoms and to monitor their own symptoms, including cough, shortness of breath, or any two of the following symptoms:

  o Fever or chills
  o Cough
  o Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  o Fatigue
  o Muscle or body aches
  o Headache
  o New loss of taste or smell
  o Sore throat
  o Congestion or runny nose
  o Nausea or vomiting
  o Diarrhea

5. Report via the University website tool if an individual is diagnosed with COVID-19

6. Testing & contact tracing
   o Need to identify if this will be required and how this will work.
7. Common area appliances (e.g., refrigerators & microwave ovens)
   o These common areas will be provided with the proper sanitizing products to cleaning these appliances before and after each use. The expectation will be for the user to wipe down touched areas, such as handles and buttons.
   o The requirement is for individuals to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds following their use of appliances and wiping down of them.

8. Bathrooms
   o Make sure that individuals do not use them for cleaning food containers or for brushing teeth. They should only be used for going to the bathroom and for washing hands.
   o They will be cleaned daily in accordance with the CDC guidelines
   o Proper cleaning products will be left in each bathroom for individuals to use upon their entrance and exit.
   o The requirement is for individuals to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds prior to exiting the bathroom.
   o Individuals are always required to wear their facemasks when using the bathroom.

9. Rotation of staff
   o Have a mixture of employees working in the office and teleworking, whatever works best for the department. The office capacity will be limited to no more than 50% of its total staff at any time.
   o IT&I said that they will have challenges with the number of employees that have university issued laptops or access to personal devices at home. Some employees brought home desktop computers, which is not a practical solution when they are splitting their time between the office and teleworking. Also, using personal devices is not good due to not having proper virus protection etc. The overall goal is to provide a laptop for each individual so they can have the flexibility to work in the office or remotely. However, it is a matter of adequate funding available to support this initiative.
   o IT&I will provide laptops on a first come first served basis for employees that volunteer to return to working in a building.

10. Returning to the office at this time will be strictly voluntary.

11. Continue to hold meetings via Teams or WebEx, even with individuals who are in the same building.

12. Provide protective physical barriers at reception desk areas.

13. Need to have a drop box at the front of the office suite where individuals can leave items instead of handing them directly to staff in the office. Also, there was a suggestion to have scanners in the office where individuals can use to scan and email their items directly to the staff.
   o Individuals who share computers and areas need to clean the keyboard, mouse, etc. before they leave for the day. IT&I is looking for purchasing keyboard covers that will be issued to individuals that they will take with them at the end of each workday.
   o Six (6) Feet Social Distancing
   o Put markers on the floor in certain areas (e.g., outside the windows for offices such as the Registrar, Cashiers, Financial Aid & Student Employment).
   o Designate hallways as one-way traffic. Mark this with signage and arrows.

15. Rearranging Office Furniture
   o This may not be necessary at this time as by limiting the number of staff in the office to 50% at one time, this should not be an issue.

16. Ventilation in the buildings
   o Adjust the HVAC systems to take further precautions for individuals.
   o Determine how to handle areas where individuals do not have ventilation in areas where they work

17. Control access to office suites
   o Always keep the office suite door locked and have a phone number posted on the door for individuals to call before being able to gain access.

18. All elevators in the buildings will be restricted to a maximum capacity of two (2) individuals at a time. Individuals will be required to wear a face mask when in the elevator and signs will be posted outside of the elevator listing these requirements.

19. For individuals who will need to wear a face mask for a good portion of their day due to not having a private office, they are encouraged to take breaks outside when needed in order to get some relief and fresh air.

20. The Academic Deans, via their Administrative Assistants, will coordinate the scheduling of the reoccupying of faculty offices in conjunction with the department secretaries, in order to make sure that the 50% office suite occupancy requirements are adhered to.

21. Employees with underlying health conditions or who are 65 and older are encouraged not to return to working in the buildings at this time. However, if someone in either of these categories voluntarily wants to return, they should be permitted to do so if they are aware of the risks and follow the prescribed protocols.

22. Childcare issues due to schools/camps/daycares being closed. Employees have access to the following:
   o Public Act 5-248a (14 calendar days of paid leave)
   o Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)
23. Student Employees
   - Some of the offices heavily rely on the student employees for their departments. The feeling is that we should rotate student employees in the offices as we will do with full-time employees. However, we should only do this when the student employee’s work cannot be performed via telework.

24. Report any issues/concerns to the department head/Human Resources immediately so we can address the issues. Do not wait or complain about issues to others who are not able to address them appropriately.

25. Meet with the directors of each department to review protocols and address any issues/concerns prior to meeting with the department staffs.

26. Hold informational sessions via WebEx with all offices prior to returning in order to review protocols and answer any questions and to address concerns.

Classroom Specific Items

1. Faculty members will be provided with their own microphones to be used when teaching in the designated classrooms on campus. This will assist them in projecting their voices to their students while wearing a face mask.

2. Face masks will be required to be worn at all times when in the classroom by both the faculty and the students. If there are any medical accommodations that need to be made, the faculty member will be referred to the Human Resources department and the student will be referred to the Access Ability Services office.

3. Proper social distancing of six (6) feet or more must be adhered to at all times.

4. The designated classrooms where on-campus classes will take place have been reconfigured in order to account for the proper social distancing.

5. One-way flow of traffic in designated hallways when necessary.

6. Leave classroom doors open during the day so students can enter their classes upon arrival instead of congregating in the hallway outside of the classroom while they await the arrival of their professor to unlock the door.

7. University coordinated COVID-19 signage will be posted in appropriate locations within each building on campus.

8. Classes should be dismissed at least 10 -15 minutes early to account for proper passing in the hallways.
9. Sanitizing spray and paper towels will be provided for everyone to use as they wish in each classroom. Students should be encouraged to use these items clean their workspace prior to the beginning of each class.

10. Disposable face masks will be provided for faculty members to have on hand for instances where students may have forgotten to bring their mask to class. These masks will be provided to each department secretary who will be responsible for coordinating the distribution to the faculty members.

11. Faculty can come and use a demo classroom on campus in order to get comfortable with the setup.

12. Gloves will be supplied in each classroom for faculty and students to use if they so choose.

13. Sneeze guards will be provided in classrooms where requested. The request should be initiated by the faculty member(s) who will be teaching in the designated classroom.

14. IT&I will provide additional software and hardware that is requested by faculty members via their respective dean.

15. Faculty offices should not have any other occupants other than the faculty member. If in very limited situations a faculty member needs to meet with a student in person, they can do so via one of the available conference rooms in their respective building.

16. Face masks are to be worn in all areas of a building (i.e.: hallways, shared offices, etc.) at all times. In situations where an individual is in an area by themselves, they are permitted to remove their face mask, however once they come upon another individual, they must put their face mask on again. Basically, everyone is required to have a face mask in their possession at all times.

17. If you come upon another individual in a building who is not wearing their face mask, don’t get into a confrontation with them. Instead, if it is an employee, let the Human Resources department know so they can follow up with the individual to make sure that, so it doesn’t happen again. If it is a student, inform the Office of Judicial Affairs. Do not feel that you need to approach and confront them, just walk the other way and don’t put yourself in a potentially unsafe situation.