DIVISION OF RESEARCH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT RETURN TO CAMPUS PLAN
June 1, 2021

Staff in REDE adapted to the work challenges caused by the pandemic, demonstrating a tremendous degree of resiliency. Overall, the Division adapted well, with only minor disruptions in operations. The forced experience demonstrated that we can function remotely, and for some staff working remotely has increased their productivity and enhanced their quality of life. In contrast, some functions of the University can only be accomplished onsite, and campus will fully re-open for onsite academic and co-curricular activities in Fall 2021. All units are needed to reestablish a dynamic physical campus environment. Accordingly, the Division of Research, Economic Development and Engagement (REDE) will return to campus operations in a phased plan that provides for each unit to have a sustained physical presence on campus while minimizing the spread of COVID and maintaining flexibility and productivity gains realized in the past 16 months through telework arrangements.

All REDE staff should plan to resume normal operations, including reporting to their assigned duty station on campus, starting July 12th unless an approved flexible work arrangement is in place.

Physical Presence
Operations for REDE are centralized in 209 East 5th Street offices and the Willis Building, with satellite offices on East Campus in Bate and Rivers buildings and on West Campus at the Brody School of Medicine. Staff in all locations have teleworked since Spring 2020. Most staff are assigned to private offices although there are several shared working spaces in all buildings. Most staff are scheduled Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., though there are a few with staggered start times beginning at 7:30, 8:30 or 9:00 each morning. We anticipate there is enough variation in arrival and departure times to mitigate clustering at building entryways and exits.

Student employees are primarily employed through Economic and Community Engagement programs. Throughout summer 2021, most student employees in these areas are working in primarily virtual environments. Beginning in Fall 2021, student employees will resume face-to-face and campus-based work assignments. These students will occupy shared working spaces in the Willis Building and will be required to follow the same operational plan as other employees in the Division.

Customer needs
Both drop-in and set appointments with students, faculty and others are standard practices for units across REDE and need to be accommodated as staff return to campus. In both the Willis Building and 209 East 5th Street offices, a staff person will be assigned to monitor walk-in visitor traffic. In other locations, offices should be staffed and configured in a manner that serves drop-in visitors. On the occasion that a visitor requests a previously unscheduled meeting, the person should be directed to a designated waiting area, such as a lobby, until the employee they seek, or a suitable alternative, can be contacted by the receptionist or other staff person.
Phone coverage will be handled by the staff for each unit. An employee working offsite should forward their office phone to an alternate home or mobile phone, or to an administrative assistant if the employee is out of the campus or remote office.

**Unit Operations**

Functions led by offices across the division vary widely. For example, it is common for Economic and Community Engagement staff to split time between on- and off-campus activities. Thus, a hybrid approach to staffing REDE offices has long been the practice and will continue as ECU returns to face-to-face and campus operations.

Staff will be required to attend meetings both on-campus and in a virtual setting at the request of their direct supervisor, unit director, or divisional leadership. The department will provide employees with at least a 48-hour notice for planned meetings. Unless an approved flexible work arrangement is already in place or if the meeting is scheduled via Teams for all employees, the expectation will be that each person will attend planned meetings on-campus.

**Flexible Work Arrangements and Remote Work**

This divisional policy is aligned with University and System level policy. As defined in Section 300.8.6[R] of the UNC Policy Manual, flexible work arrangements and remote work are defined as follows:

- **A. Flexible Work Schedules.** Flexibility in the scheduling of hours worked, such as alternative work schedules (e.g., flex time and compressed workweeks) and arrangements regarding shift and break schedules;
- **B. Flexible Work Hours.** Flexibility in the number of hours worked, such as part-time work and job shares; and/or
- **C. Flexible Work Locations.** Flexibility in the place of work, such as remote work from home or a designated satellite location.

REDE will facilitate flexible work arrangements where practicable while preserving the dynamic and collegial environment of the university campus and ensuring all operational needs of the Division are met. While the Division may provide flexible work arrangements for any type of employee, the establishment of a flexible work arrangement policy does not create a guarantee, right, or entitlement to such an arrangement by any employee or group of employees.

Flexible work arrangements and remote work plans must be approved by an employee’s supervisor, the assistant vice chancellor with unit oversight, and divisional business officer. The vice chancellor for REDE will be an additional approver for any flexible work arrangement equal to or greater than 3 days per week, or 60 percent of an employee’s scheduled work hours. This will ensure flexible work arrangements are consistent with divisional practice and policy and are equitable across the division. These arrangements will follow the flexible work arrangement and remote work policy for the university and system.

Approval for flexible work arrangements will be based upon needs of the work unit as defined by departmental and divisional leadership, the nature of an employee’s work and responsibilities being
conducive to a flexible work arrangement without causing disruption to performance and/or service delivery, the Division’s ability to maintain adequate on-campus staff coverage for every unit between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, and availability of office space. In limited circumstances lasting 10 or fewer business days a supervisor may approve a temporary flexible work arrangement at the unit level. Any flexible work arrangement planned for more than 10 business days should go through the full divisional approval process.

Consideration for flexible work arrangements will be administered equitably based upon applicable factors and without regard to an employee’s race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status.

Employee performance and conduct will be considered when granting or continuing a flexible work arrangement. Flexible work arrangements may be provided on a conditional or trial basis. Employees must meet all performance expectations and conduct requirements including consistently demonstrating the ability to complete tasks and assignments in a timely manner for flexible work arrangements to be maintained. Flexible work arrangements may be changed or revoked at any time. Reasons for changing or revoking the flexible work arrangement can include but are not limited to changing business or operational needs, ineffective delivery of services, or unsatisfactory employee performance or conduct. Employees will be given a minimum of 10 working days’ notice in the event of change to or revocation of a flexible work arrangement. Recurring flexible work arrangement will be reviewed by supervisors on regular intervals as determined by the operational needs of the unit and no less frequently than twice per year by the appropriate assistant vice chancellor and director of business operations. Employees will be required to resubmit flexible work arrangement requests to extend or modify existing arrangements.

Employees who have been approved for telework work arrangements or flex schedules must provide and maintain connectivity (internet, phone) necessary to perform their job duties equal to the level they would have if working physically on campus. In addition, mechanisms must be in place for seamless, real-time communications as would be expected in a campus office. Remote work should not solely rely on email communications, but staff should be available for and responsive to requests for direct phone or teleconference conversations. Remote workstations must have videoconference capabilities, and cameras are expected to be enabled when staff actively participate in calls. During a scheduled worktime, employees working remotely should not post out-of-office messages indicating there may be a delay in their response due to working remotely.

**ECU Property and Data Security**

Each employee is assigned equipment, files, and other resources to facilitate their work. Unless prior arrangements have been made, all university-owned property that has been used to support telework arrangements since March 2020 should be returned to campus when the employee resumes a campus-based work schedule. Supervisors should maintain an equipment inventory for all employees and follow ECU property policies, procedures, and practice.

Furniture at the remote location, including computer workstations and chairs, should generally be provided by the employee with an approved telework arrangement. If equipment and software is provided by the university at the telework site, the equipment and software should be used solely by the employee and only for purposes of conducting university business. If the university provides the equipment, the employee is responsible for safe transportation and set-up of equipment. In addition,
before removing any equipment from campus, the employee must have both an approved telework arrangement and complete a property assignment form.

The security, confidentiality, and integrity of university records and information must be always protected in flexible work arrangements and comply with all information security requirements that would apply at the primary duty station. Sensitive data/information must not be processed or stored on a personally owned computer or device, but instead must be processed on institutionally owned systems, stored in approved, secure remote storage, and accessed only by secure network access technologies.

Duty Station and Reasonable Commuting Distance
The employee’s designated on-site University work site is considered their duty station. Employees who are working from an alternative location may not charge mileage for travel between their alternate work location and their assigned duty station. Employees traveling for business departing from their alternate work location will be reimbursed for mileage the distance between their on-site duty station and the work destination, consistent with existing state policies.

The institutional policy, and/or the flexible work arrangement agreement, should indicate that employees working under a flexible work arrangement are covered by workers’ compensation for job-related injuries that occur in the course and scope of employment. Workers’ compensation does not cover injuries that are not job-related, regardless of the work site.

Employees approved for flexible work locations are expected to be able to report to their on-site duty station when directed due to operational needs and/or due to changes to or revocation of their flexible work arrangements. To the greatest extent practicable, university employees are expected to reside within or in close proximity to the state of North Carolina. Limited exceptions may be provided. Factors to consider for exception requests include but are not limited to recruitment of employees with unique or scarce skills and arrival of employees during a transition period during relocation. All exceptions must be approved in writing by the employee’s supervisor, the assistant vice chancellor with unit oversight, divisional business officer, and vice chancellor for REDE.