



USC University of Southern California

August 12, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for sharing your “concerns regarding the recent decision by USC leadership to require ‘student-community-facing staff’ to return to on-campus work, five days per week starting August 16.” USC leadership did not take lightly the decision to resume in-person operations and to bring many employees back full-time.

Our community’s well-being and safety has always been our top priority and has guided every decision we have made. We appreciate the care and compassion you’re bringing to this discussion, and the important concerns that you are raising. It is important to keep in mind that the university continues to follow health and safety guidelines, including those from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, L.A. County Department of Public Health, the state Division of Occupational Safety and Health, and USC’s team of medical professionals.

While each school and administrative unit was able to determine how best to meet their workforce needs, in the end, a holistic view of all the academic unit restart plans left campus too sparsely populated to service the community. We will continue to assess schools’ and units’ needs throughout the semester and may make adjustments as we progress and learn more once we have had the opportunity to return to campus. Please know that USC leadership is open to feedback from our community. As questions or concerns are raised, we will continue to consult external guidance and seek best practices to enable our safe return.

Over the past 18 months, as our students continued their studies online, our faculty and staff’s hard work, dedication, and flexibility ensured they received the best experience possible. Now that our students are returning to campus, it’s critical that we are present and ready to support them. As mentioned in the [welcome back guidance and update](#), we are welcoming 44,000 students to campus, including two classes that will be on campus for the first time. We are also welcoming new faculty and staff hired throughout the pandemic.

Teams across the university have worked tirelessly, beginning this past spring, to prepare our campuses for a safe return. If we follow safety protocols, and take care in our interactions with others, we will be safer on campus than we would be at the grocery store, in the gym, or at any indoor social gathering.

In terms of the specific safety measures, we want to point you to the [message](#) referenced earlier and the [message](#) from last week, both of which outlined many of the steps we are taking. We also invite you to review the [information](#) posted on our USC Environmental Health & Safety Covid-19 Resource Center.

Finally, we invite you to raise any additional health and safety concerns at our upcoming webinar, which, the university will host today, August 12 at 1:00 p.m. You can register at [this link](#) and submit any additional questions or concerns you may have in the form.

Sincerely,

Charles F. Zukoski
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Felicia A. Washington
Senior Vice President of Human Resources