April 2, 2020

TIPS FOR WORKING AT HOME
Resources for mental health wellness
Working from home presents a variety of challenges, including maintaining our own health and well-being. Staff should not hesitate to utilize the University's mental health resources, including assistance from the Center for Work and Family Life, tips for coping with stress, and guidance on self-care.

Technology
- While the majority of what most Price employees work on does not require Remote Desktop, for those who need a lot of computing power, they should use Remote Desktop to access their office computer. Our office computers are quite powerful and able to handle large files and datasets. Remoting into your office computer is still the best option in terms of raw computing power when dealing with large files. Otherwise, working on laptops or home computers should be sufficient for typical tasks.
- Given the increased activity on Cloud-based services like Dropbox, Google Drive, Zoom, Box, Skype, etc. there may be some interruptions or decreased speed. Most of these services have been remarkably good at ramping up their systems to meet the demand, but there may be glitches along the way. Similarly, the University had to ramp up its VPN system in order to accommodate increased usage.
- If you seem to be having trouble during a Remote Desktop session it could be due to others in the house using the Wifi. It may help to have people take a break from using online services for a while (video streaming services are particularly draining). You could also check with your internet provider to see if there is anything they can do to improve your home internet speed.

Home office
Many of us may not have the same workstation setup at home that we have at the office. It is important to set up your workstation as best you can to be safe and healthy. There are a few simple changes using things you already have at home:

- If you don't have an office chair at home, use a sturdy, comfortable chair and add pillows for back/leg support.
- Support your feet on a book, step stool, etc., if they don't firmly touch the ground while sitting.
- Raise your monitor using books, boxes, etc. If you are working on a laptop, you can raise the laptop and then use a separate keyboard. The top of the monitor should be at or slightly below eye level, shoulders relaxed with the elbows around 90 degrees.
- It may sound comfortable to sit on the sofa with your laptop and a cup of coffee, but it is better to work at a table or desk. Try to take regular breaks to get up and stretch your legs; even mini-breaks to throw in a load of laundry or make lunch will help.

PRICE EMPLOYEE FAQs

What is the distinction between an essential worker and non-essential worker?
The language of essential vs. non-essential is a designation that organizations, including USC, use as part of business continuity planning. It goes without saying, however, that this terminology does not indicate the value of employees' contributions to the University or the Price School. During challenging times like the one we are in with the COVID-19 situation, USC asks units to identify those roles that are essential in

the sense that they provide services that <u>must</u> be performed in the place of work rather than at home (e.g., housing services, medical care, mail delivery, etc.). For the purposes of business continuity planning, employees who are required to continue working in the office are considered essential workers. Those employees who can perform their work from home are classified as non-essential, which is the vast majority of USC employees.

Why is the university implementing work from home for non-essential workers?
It is a measure of social responsibility to follow the guidance of medical professionals to limit unnecessary gathering. Therefore, only employees whose work can only be done on campus, will continue to work on campus.

What is the purpose of completing the Remote Work Plan, Labor Costs, and COVID-19 estimated costs report?
The University will be seeking reimbursement from a variety of sources, including insurance and FEMA, and needs to ensure proper documentation to account for the impact of COVID-19. FEMA requires an unusual amount of backup documentation to demonstrate that hours worked were actually spent on COVID-related tasks and activities. The general guidance they give is to demonstrate "who, what, where, when, why." This is why the University encourages payroll departments and administrators to track this like billable hours – using daily time sheets – for both exempt and non-exempt employees. If FEMA is unsatisfied with our level of documentation, they will simply refuse our claims and the costs will revert back to departments, so it is definitely in our interest to document in detail any costs related to COVID-19. Any reimbursement will help relieve the pressure of revenue losses.

How much detail do I need to put on the weekly Remote Work Plan?
Given the many tasks that a staff member completes on a given day, it is not necessary to go overboard on detailing every activity in the plan. Exempt and non-exempt staff should separate out routine administrative or research project work they do on a regular basis from the work they are doing for COVID-related activities. Think of it as those activities you would have done anyway and those activities that you are now doing because of COVID-19. Use general categories when possible (e.g., answered email, submitted reimbursements, advised students, edited documents, etc.), but be more detailed when describing COVID-related activities. Listing work in hour increments is fine. And just as staff have regular breaks at work – planned and unplanned (e.g., coffee break with co-worker or dropping into the dean's office for donuts) – so will there be breaks in work from home.

Any time entered under COVID-19 Activities on the Remote Work Plan may simply be copied to the Labor Expense Tracking template and sent in weekly (the numbers would be the same).

Should faculty complete the Remote Work Plan?
No, however, those faculty with activities directly in response to the COVID crisis should record those on the Labor Expense Tracking template. For instance, the process of cancelling international labs had a direct impact on the time of faculty members involved in administrating and teaching those labs, so those hours should be recorded.

The University didn't initiate working from home until March 16th, so do I need to record work prior to that on the Remote Work Plan?
For most employees, starting with March 16th is appropriate. There are some staff members who began doing COVID-related tasks prior to that date, and are encouraged to record those as part of the University's Labor Expense Tracking effort.

If I do not have any COVID-19 activities or expenses, do I still need to submit the Labor Expense Tracking template or the COVID-19 Estimated and Anticipated Expenses template?
No, if you do not have COVID-19 activities or expenses, you do not need to submit these templates.

If I have children at home who need help with their school work or other care during the day, how should I handle the Remote Work Plan in light of the impact on my schedule?
The University encourages supervisors to be especially flexible during this period. In some cases, employees may want to consider requesting a more flexible schedule to be able to manage their various responsibilities, and if the work allows for it, then it should be approved. In cases where staff feel their work is being negatively impacted, conversations with supervisors are key – talking together about how to move forward. It may turn out that interruptions are no greater than the typical interruptions the employee would have experienced while working on campus (e.g., How was your day?; What are you doing for lunch?; etc.), and in that case, interruptions might not be an issue at all. If there are deadlines at risk, managers may shift priorities or agree on flexible hours so that the work can be timed around new home responsibilities. If needed, Gail Uyeda can help with those conversations. If it is truly impacting the employee's work, with either the quality or timeliness being affected, then there might be other options that should be considered in partnership with Gail as well.

If an employee is not able to work due to having to care for children during school closures, they may take time off under FMLA's relaxed standards for the COVID-19 situation. As a reminder, FMLA is for time off only, not wage replacement.

As the period of working from home continues, I'm concerned that my workload will taper off. What should I do?
Much of what we do is related to the regular business of the University and, therefore, as the disruption continues, it may negatively impact our workload. For some positions at the Price School, this is not unexpected. There are some helpful things supervisors and staff members can keep in mind:

- Rainy day projects – projects that have been on your "to do" list but you haven't had the time to get to them. Take advantage of the extra time to work on those projects you've been putting off; things like long term strategic planning, inventories, research, electronic filing, and "spring cleaning."

- Education and training – additional training that could benefit your role. Many of us would like to strengthen particular skills that are relevant to our job, but have not had the time in our regular schedule to do that. Use extra time for education like training on Excel, Powerpoint, Adobe, or other software. In addition, there may be professional training options that you could explore. Staff should feel free to utilize TrojanLearn, Lynda.com, or other resources. If there is a cost involved, please clear that with your supervisor before proceeding.

- Availability – being available and accessible is an important aspect of working from home. Staff who are regularly checking in with colleagues, answering email, and checking voicemail are at work and time spent on those activities can be recorded as administrative duties.

How is administrative leave to be used?
COVID-19 Administrative Leave is only for employees who are unable to work from home and are not on any other type of leave. Employees who can work from home should track their time as usual. If they cannot work due to illness, then that time should be coded as sick time. If they are taking a day off and not working from home, then that time off should be coded as vacation, etc.

There are some jobs that must be done primarily in the office, although some tasks in the position can be done remotely (e.g., receptionists, IT, facilities). Such staff members can use Administrative Leave hourly in increments. For example, an employee on a 6-hour schedule could do 2 hours of work from home (e.g., submitting reimbursements) and then use Administrative Leave for the other 4 hours of the day. The University has allowed staff to utilize administrative leave for 20 days through April 12, and this will be re-evaluated as the situation continues to evolve.