

March 13, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: IFAS Administrative Council

FROM: Jack M. Payne 

SUBJECT: UF/IFAS-Specific Guidance for COVID-19 Business Operations through April 2020

UF/IFAS-specific Guidance for COVID-19 Business Operations through April 2020

On March 11, 2020 President Fuchs announced that all academic courses for the spring semester will continue but will be provided on a remote basis by Monday, March 16. Students also are being encouraged to go home and continue their semester remotely until March 30. The university's website related to COVID-19 (<http://www.ufl.edu/health-updates/>) provides continuously updated information for faculty and staff.

Our highest priority remains the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff and stakeholders even as we continue to deliver on the UF/IFAS mission. During the next few weeks, UF Human Resources, in consultation with university administration and Emergency Management, will continue to monitor the impacts of COVID-19 and communicate any future adjustments impacting the workplace.

This document will address specific concerns of the UF/IFAS community, not including instruction guidance which will come under separate cover.

UF/IFAS Travel

In addition to UF travel guidance, IFAS staff are to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Professional travel will be restricted to within the state of Florida
- Travel by airlines will not be supported
- If a student or staff person is currently travelling and prevented from returning by international or other organizational travel restrictions, UF/IFAS will support their travel and return, within normal travel policy financial guides.
- Document any impacts to sponsored project deliverables, including travel to care for plots or animals; travel for team meetings or trainings
- Communicate significant hardships to leadership so that IFAS can provide additional assistance where needed

UF travel guidance summary (as of 3/12. For the most up-to-date information, please refer to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>):

- All university-sponsored travel to China, Iran, Japan, Italy, and South Korea should be canceled. This includes any travel that is funded by external agencies administered through the Division of Sponsored Research or the UF Foundation.
- To provide additional support to university travelers after the World Health Organization's declaration of a global health emergency due to the spread of COVID-19, the following policies concerning University of Florida travel have been enacted:
 - All pre-purchased university-authorized expenses related to conferences that are canceled due to the coronavirus will be reimbursed.
 - All pre-purchased university-authorized expenses for travel to a destination in an area with numerous outbreaks will be reimbursed, regardless of whether the event is canceled, if the traveler has health concerns or is otherwise concerned with travel.
 - When canceling pre-purchased expenses such as airfare, all attempts should be made to acquire credits that can be used against future UF travel.

Meetings and Gatherings

- UF/IFAS events and gatherings scheduled through the end of April 2020 should be postponed, including workshops, celebrations and social events. Please communicate these changes as soon as possible and, if a new date is not available, note that a reschedule date is to be determined.
- Work events such as business meetings should be moved to an online platform such as Zoom.
- Previously scheduled unit reviews may proceed, but Zoom options should be considered.

For offices at county locations, please keep in close communication with your county leadership as situations may be different from one location to the next. Decisions may be made quickly—communicate with deans and directors regarding scheduling, experiment and research needs, and alternatives to continue to provide service during any unexpected location restrictions.

Alternate Work Locations

Despite changes to the mode of delivery of academic content and our student residential status, UF remains open and fully operational as of 3/12/2020. All OPS employees, including postdoctoral associates and student/graduate assistants, may continue to work as appropriate. This includes graduate teaching assistants. Should an AWL be needed, supervisors may provide working options to employees whose job duties can be performed remotely without hampering operations. UFHR has created a [modified AWL Agreement Form](#), valid from now until May 1, 2020. To expedite processing, the Unit Leader may sign on the 'Dean or Director' line to put the agreement in force.

- With supervisory review and approval, working from an alternate location has been and continues to be available for faculty and staff, including hourly and all OPS employees, when such arrangements would benefit both the organization and employees. For more information, see <https://hr.ufl.edu/covid-19/working-remotely-during-covid-19/>. This includes tips for supervisors about how to manage someone working from a remote location.

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The only difference to the standard policy would be that units could proceed without final approval from IFAS HRDI.

Quarantine

- If a UF/IFAS employee is under quarantine and unable to work, sick leave (or PTO/personal leave) must be applied to this leave.
- Leave may be advanced under certain circumstances.
- If leave without pay is used, it will not result in disciplinary action.

Taking Care of Yourself and Our Community

As with any virus, prevention is the key to protect both yourself and others by:

- Staying at home if you begin to feel unwell, even with mild symptoms such as headache and slight runny nose, until you recover
- Appropriately covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your flexed elbow
- Cleaning frequently touched surfaces daily or more often
- Washing your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer

The [CDC website](#) provides a wealth of additional information about preventing the spread of COVID-19, including guidelines for home, school and work. If you need additional assistance during this time, please contact the [Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP) at (833) 306-0103. The EAP will also be hosting a webinar, “Coping with Uncertainty about Coronavirus,” on Tuesday, March 17, from 11 a.m. to noon. To participate, you may [register online](#).

For more on COVID-19 and its prevention, please visit the [Florida Department of Health](#), the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), and the [World Health Organization](#) websites. Please remember that by taking care of yourself and by staying optimistic and calm, you are also caring for those around you.

The UF/IFAS team stretches from edge-to-edge of our beautiful state, providing service and support for all Floridians. This presents a unique challenge during emergencies, but I have every confidence that we will support each other and our communities throughout this trying time.