



**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** North Carolina A&T State University Employees

**From:** Harold L. Martin Sr., Chancellor

**Date:** May 22, 2020

**Re:** Returning to Work

As Gov. Roy Cooper announced Wednesday, the state of North Carolina will move into Phase 2 of its reopening plan at close of business today (Friday, May 22). This will be a more cautious, “Safer at Home” Phase 2 than originally planned, as the number of coronavirus infections continues to climb across the state. That is explained in part by more widespread testing and balanced somewhat by a flattening of COVID-19 hospitalizations and a decrease in the number of individuals presenting at emergency rooms with COVID-19 symptoms. In other words, progress, but we are not out of the woods yet.

As I shared with you recently, we are making careful preparations to return to campus operations and some level of in-person instruction in August, with our Fall 2020 Planning Committee overseeing the work necessary to make that transition as safe and healthy as possible. Earlier this week, we released the revised Fall 2020 academic calendar, with key dates established for the first half of the coming school year. We are engaged in a thoughtful and phased approach to returning our staff and faculty to campus, informed by the data related to COVID-19, and in alignment with the State of North Carolina’s Phased Reopening Plan and UNC System guidelines.

In anticipation of the gradual reopening of the university, effective June 1, our immediate focus will be to begin preparation of our campus for the return of the first group of employees. Facilities Operations, as well as maintenance and grounds crews, will start the work necessary to ensure our buildings and work spaces are ready to be safely occupied. Once campus has been properly prepared by our excellent Facilities staff, a small number of offices will open with limited staff and administrators on or around June 22. Each division leader has finalized plans for the reopening of these offices and will communicate these plans to their team members shortly. As offices reopen, particularly in the first part of our gradual reopening, business will continue to be primarily conducted virtually, where possible, to maintain a healthy environment.

We do not undertake these plans or preparations lightly. They are contingent upon North Carolina’s continued progress in reducing the number of coronavirus infections and deaths and avoiding any widespread spike in cases or reversal of infection trends. Our Facilities staff and other personnel will not only ensure that our campus is ready for a gradual opening on or around June 22, but will maintain a high level of sanitization going forward.

We realize that individuals with health conditions that make them especially vulnerable to coronavirus infection and individuals with childcare or caregiver responsibilities may need to work from home. We will continue to support these individuals, and in some areas will undertake staggered approaches to on-campus staffing and continue to make provisions for teleworking. In all of our discussions and planning, our top priority will continue to be to protect the health and wellbeing of our staff, faculty and students.

You will receive additional communication from the university providing more details on our campus reopening plans. For now, I encourage you to read [COVID-19: Guidelines for Returning to the Workplace](#), which provides specific guidance for actions that we all should take in preparation for coming back and while on campus. Should you have questions or concerns about any part of our planning, I encourage you to surface them with your supervisor, the [Fall 2020 Planning Committee](#) or, if appropriate, the Division of Human Resources.

I appreciate everyone who has been involved in our Fall 2020 Planning and their attention to the critical details of this work. I have every confidence that by continuing to work together, we will get through this. I am counting on your commitment and our community's collective dedication to meeting these challenges and believe that we will rise to the occasion as a university. Thank you for what you have already done to get us this far and thank you in advance for the contributions each of you will make to see us emerge from this difficult period better and stronger than we have ever been before.