Good evening.

CMU’s guiding principle to reopening will prioritize health and safety of students, faculty and staff. This principle means CMU will follow a prudent, incremental approach. This approach will occur in conjunction with the efforts of state and local officials. Beginning Monday, April 27, new state guidance called “Safer at Home” will guide Colorado’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic moving forward, and will provide a framework for ours starting next week.

CMU faculty and staff should understand that there is minimal difference between the state’s previous “Stay at Home” public health order and the new “Safer at Home” model.

There are some slight modifications to how CMU is currently conducting business, and the new guidelines may impact individuals. Employees working from home should continue to do so. Employees who report to the worksite, or will have an emerging need to report to work in the coming days and weeks, must maximize social distancing and wear appropriate face coverings. Mesa County has applied to the state for a variance to implement a local opening plan. If approved, the university COVID-19 Task Force will update guidance based on that local plan.

**Remote Work/Telecommuting**
CMU has been largely successful in maintaining staff productivity and capacity using remote technology. However, not all jobs and tasks are equally conducive to remote work. Under “safer at home” guidance remote work/telecommuting will remain a requirement for most staff unless you have the approval of your supervisor or vice president to do otherwise. Those who can reasonably work from home should do so until modifications are made to the “Safer at Home” guidance.

The following best practices for telecommuting are encouraged:
1. If a specific reason hasn’t been identified and approved by your supervisor, you should be working remotely.
2. Departments finding the need to have staff work on-site should have less than 50% of their staff in the office at any given time. This may be accomplished with flex schedules, flex days, etc.
3. Telecommuters should maintain workplace decorum and dress code policies within reason even when working from home — you are still representing CMU.
4. Zoom and Microsoft Teams camera mode may demonstrate increased engagement and should be considered as a courtesy for your colleagues.
5. Supervisors should hold at least weekly meetings with team members and should develop work product accountability methods for tracking effectiveness and productivity.

**On-Site Work**
For essential personnel and those with supervisory permissions, the following guidance should be observed when working on-site at CMU:
1. Internal doors which can reasonably remain open, should remain open. Such doors include entries to department common and break areas.
2. Except when sitting at a desk alone, staff should wear masks when traveling from vehicles to buildings, in between buildings and during trips to restrooms or break areas.
3. Hand washing and sanitizing should occur frequently.
4. Each office area or department should have disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer available.
5. In person meetings are highly discouraged (use Zoom and Teams).
6. Respect a minimum distance of six feet and do not enter another person’s office — speak from the hall or common area.
7. Staff should, when possible, use electronic forms of payment in lieu of cash.
8. Departments that provide a medium to high volume of service should place markings on the floor denoting six-foot spacing intervals.
9. Walking throughout campus should be done individually with social distancing spacing clearly evident.
10. Proper Face Covering: It is important to remember to wear the right face covering for the right job. Most of us can wear non-medical face coverings and leave the supply of N95 medical masks for healthcare workers. Information on how to make face coverings is available at the Colorado Mask Project. The CDC also has guidance on how masks should be worn and maintained. We have ordered CMU logo masks which should arrive in the first week of May.
11. When using restrooms or public doors please limit hand touching knobs. Use an elbow when possible. If knobs are touched please wipe down surfaces contacted.
12. Essential personnel should consider decoupling office locations.

**High Risk Population Considerations**

The state of Colorado and Mesa County Health have identified groups that are at statistically higher risk of COVID-19 complications. If you fall into one of these categories, the “Stay at Home” order with prohibition of on campus work should remain in place for you. Mesa County Health also advises that, “high-risk populations should limit public interactions and stay at home as much as possible.” A list of elevated risk factors can be found here.

Beyond the lifting of Colorado’s “Stay at Home” guidance on April 27, there are several other reasons for optimism at CMU. Mesa County has among the lowest Colorado per capita infection rates of COVID-19 to date. The community has not seen an exponential spike in cases and the local curve remains flat. For this reason, the community is well positioned to be successful as Colorado embarks on a phased reopening next month. The community is also fortunate because the lack of cases has given our health system time to prepare for future a future response if needed.

CMU is coordinating with state and local officials about what the “new normal” will look like when colleges and universities reopen. We are coordinating with local officials to develop a testing protocol with fast turnaround times. We are developing social distancing protocols for campus housing and dining. We are working with health officials to incorporate distancing measures for socializing and campus events. We are not waiting to work these details out -we are working on them now.

Should future short-term impacts arise from COVID-19, CMU has gained vital experience over the past eight weeks, and is prepared to deploy response measures in response to changing conditions on the ground.

Over the last month CMU has issued housing refunds and has also issued a new COVID-19 emergency course withdraw period allowing students who may be struggling with a transition to remote learning. While efforts like this are meant to support students CMU is strongly encouraging students to complete their coursework and will explore further ways to assist them in this objective.

The CMU COVID-19 University Task Force that will continue to meet and craft guidance and protocols so that CMU is ready when campus reopens.

Best,

John Marshall
Vice President for Student Services
Colorado Mesa University