

Minot State Community,

Greetings from the beautiful MSU campus – it always looks wonderful this time of year. Many gorgeous spaces we have all across our campus thanks to Mother Nature and our terrific Facilities crew!

Last week, two significant activities occurred impacting our potential to more broadly reopen the campus. First, on the state's new, color-coded health guidance system with five levels of risk (Critical, High, Moderate, Low, and New Normal), Governor Burgum announced on May 29 that ND has dropped from the Moderate Risk level to the Low Risk level. Within this Low Risk for exposure or transmission category, the guidance states, "...schools and businesses can reopen, and much of normal life can begin to resume. However, some physical distancing measures and limitations on gatherings will still be recommended to prevent transmission from accelerating again." The Governor also mentioned state agencies could begin reopening as of June 1. More information of last Friday's news is available here: <https://www.governor.nd.gov/news/burgum-announces-move-next-phase-nd-smart-restart-plan>

Additionally last week, the State Board of Higher Education met on May 29 and passed a resolution supporting the NDUS campuses in our efforts to resume in-person activities for Fall 2020 as well as, to the extent possible, Summer 2020. The resolution is attached. We have been and will continue working on plans regarding the Fall: President's Staff, Academic Chairs, and many other groups have been working through fall plans, and a NDUS systemwide Smart Re-Start committee has been formed and begun meeting. Regarding this Summer, you know that all Summer classes were previously moved online in a decision made over a month ago. Likewise, camps and other large gatherings of students/participants have been canceled or postponed until at least the July/August timeframe. As we move ahead now and prepare for the more immediate general re-opening of campus, please read below for the current plan of action.

1. **Beginning Wednesday, June 10, most of the MSU campus buildings and offices will be moving back to our normal summer work environment.** The expectation will be for all areas across campus to reopen and resume operations in the on-campus environment. The exception will be NDCPD where many employees will continue working at-a-distance throughout June. Several areas have already reopened on campus (and many never really closed physically), including the Business Office, Financial Aid, Enrollment Services, Facilities, Safety & Security, the Wellness Center, the Testing Center, Housing, Athletics, Student Health Clinic, Mail Room, Printing Services, the President's and each of the Vice-President's Offices, etc.
2. Within a number of departments we have been making (and will continue making) physical modifications to the office areas, especially those that potentially have more contact from the outside public, to minimize the risk or potential of infection and/or the spread of COVID-19. This has included such elements as new signage, marking/lining on the floor, plexiglass installation, and additional sanitizing protocols. **If you have concerns/thoughts/suggestions about your individual workspace area, please visit with your supervisor who will work with the appropriate VP to develop solutions further ensuring a safer workplace for all of us.** A big word of thanks to Melissa Fettig who has been instrumental in offering thoughts and suggestions in these areas, and will continue helping do so.
3. **Please review the attached poster carefully** and encourage any visitors to do so as well; it will be posted on the door of every campus entry.

4. Wherever possible, you certainly have the option to **work with external visitors to conduct business by phone, email, or online**, and also utilize a strict appointment routine to minimize the number of visitors in your area at any time.
5. It is absolutely paramount that every one of us respect the rights, privacy, and expectations of our fellow employees, and a key way of doing this is ensuring we adhere to the 6-foot physical distancing guideline. **If you are working near another employee(s) and cannot maintain this distance, all parties involved must wear a mask.** More information about masks is available here, and MSU will provide a mask for you if needed:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html> We have plenty of room and space on our campus (especially during the summer months), and there are lots of spaces where small group meetings can be held with plenty of space to spread out (including outdoors!). Our President's Staff meetings, for example, have been held for a number of weeks in the Fisher Room....we have plenty of space for the six of us to spread out and still hold a perfectly functional face-to-face meeting. **Physical distancing is repeatedly mentioned by all health experts to be the single most important factor we can use in combatting the spread of the virus, and we must mandate its expectation on campus as we re-open.**
6. Our plans will remain fluid and flexible as necessary, depending on environmental changes and/or if guidelines shift.
7. **Any employee who is at a higher risk for severe illness such as COVID-19 should inform their supervisor and/or HR** so accommodations can be considered. More information here:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>
8. Disposable wipes will be provided so you can regularly wipe down commonly touched surfaces such as door handles, keyboards, telephones, and other items in your workspace. Gloves and masks will also be provided as necessary.
9. These are the hallmarks we all must maintain as we reopen the campus:
  - a. Practice physical distancing of at least 6 feet
  - b. Wear a mask if that distancing is not possible
  - c. Stay home if you are sick (and remind others to do the same if necessary)
  - d. Practice good handwashing for at least 20 seconds with soap and water (especially after coughing or sneezing) and sanitize surfaces regularly
  - e. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
10. The ND Smart Restart protocols remain a great source of further information:  
<https://ndresponse.gov/covid-19-resources/covid-19-business-and-employer-resources/nd-smart-restart/nd-smart-restart-protocols>

Thanks for your many efforts and patience as we have navigated our way through these unusual times. The health and safety of every MSU employee and student, as well as members of the general public who visit campus, remains our highest priority throughout the reopening phase. With proper procedures in place and adherence to the guidelines noted above, we are confident in our ability to more broadly reopen campus and continue fulfilling our mission to serve and educate our students.

I look forward to seeing you back on campus as we move into this next phase.

Thanks again,  
Steve

***Steven W. Shirley, PhD***  
***President***

***Minot State University***  
***701-858-3300***

**[www.minotstateu.edu](http://www.minotstateu.edu)**

**Go Beavers!**