

Staff Senate Recommendation to the VP of Administration & Finance

Originating Body:	Staff Senate	Originator:	Vanessa Collins, SUSS Chair
Date Submitted:	1/24/2022	Requested Effective Date:	Immediately

Background: On January 3rd and 4th, 2022, the campus was closed for inclement weather. Now that telework is available to many employees, addressing the expectation of working when the campus is closed for inclement weather or any other unexpected purpose should be addressed.

At 7:11 am on Monday, January 3rd, an email was sent notifying employees that campus was closed. However, it was unclear of the expectation for non-essential employees to work remotely or not as it only indicated, “Staff should check with their supervisors regarding duty today. Those who are approved for telework may do so.” No guidance was sent to supervisors as to how to direct their staff. Many staff felt obligated to telework.

At 10:30 pm on Monday, January 3rd, a new email notification was sent to staff regarding campus closure for Tuesday, January 4th. This email contained a different message and stated to, “check with their supervisors regarding work duty for Tuesday, January 4, which may include telework, as appropriate based on operational necessity.” For staff, “operational necessity” could mean a lot of things depending on the nature of their work. Again, supervisors did not know how to advise their employees and many staff felt obligated to telework.

Supervisors have concerns that include understanding the allowability of telework. If an employee is able to work remotely but does not have a telework agreement, are they permitted to telework? If an employee has a telework agreement, should supervisors expect them to work?

There was more confusion and frustration when the email from Human Resources was sent to staff regarding recording their hours for campus closure because there was no mention of “operational necessity” or “those who are approved for telework may do so.” Rather, nonessential employees (PIN and Contingent II) were directed to record January 3rd and 4th as Administrative Leave.

Therefore, for those non-essential employees that teleworked effectively gave up two days of Administrative Leave with no benefit for them to use at a later date. As a result, non-essential staff across campus ended up in a situation where Administrative Leave was not equitably applied.


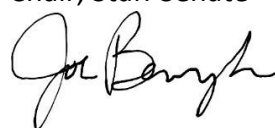
Recommendation: Communication sent to the campus community for notification of campus closure should be more informative as to the expectation of working remotely or simply using

the day as Administrative Leave. Further, to avoid future instances of inequity of Administrative Leave, a policy should be created that informs supervisors of what they are permitted to expect from their non-essential staff during a campus close. We recommend supervisors at all levels must communicate through written email exchange to each of their non-essential staff members, PIN and Contingent, exempt and non-exempt, what their expectation of teleworking is when the campus is closed for inclement weather or any other unexpected purpose. If telework is warranted or expected by the supervisor due to “operational necessity,” they must state they will honor an Administrative Leave Day to be taken at a later date. This does not change the requirement to use pre-approved leave for a full or partial day prior to the announcement of campus closure.

We are not advocating that non-essential staff should not telework during campus closures if they have a pre-approved telework agreement and have work to do that advances the department’s goals. We are advocating that if they choose to telework or are required to telework they are permitted to use Administrative Leave at a later date in the same way that essential personnel are permitted.

- Attached:**
- 1. CAMPUS WEATHER ADVISORY, 1/3/2022 @7:11 AM**
 - 2. CAMPUS WEATHER ADVISORY, 1/3/2022 @10:30 PM**
 - 3. Recording of EXEMPT Employee’s Time for Mon and Tue, Jan 3-4, 2022**
 - 4. Recording of NON-EXEMPT Employee’s Time for Mon and Tue, Jan 3-4, 2022 Date**

Approved by the Staff Senate:

	Vanessa Collins	1/24/2022
Chair, Staff Senate		Date
	Joe Benyish	1/24/2022
2nd Chair, Staff Senate		Date

Action Taken by VP of Administration & Finance

02/04/2022* **Recommendation Accepted** _____ **Recommendation Not Accepted**

_____ Recommendation returned to the Originating Body for further review (see attached)

Disposition for Approved Recommendation

_____ President	_____ VP Student Affairs
_____ Staff Senate Chair	_____ VP Admin & Finance
_____ Consortium Chair	_____ School Deans
_____ Webmaster	_____ AVP Institutional Equity

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Dr. Wormack's response:

Thank you for bringing to my attention the need to greater clarity in communications about Telework situations during weather-related and or campus closure events for our employees. We have taken proactive steps to address the issues raised. Below are my responses to the recommendations made by the Staff Senate.

Recommendation: Communication sent to the campus community for notification of campus closure should be more informative as to the expectation of working remotely or simply using the day as Administrative Leave.

Action Taken: Written communications have been updated to clarify when non-essential employees with an approved telework agreement are expected to work during a campus closure.

Recommendation: Further, to avoid future instances of inequity of Administrative Leave, a policy should be created that informs supervisors of what they are permitted to expect from their non-essential staff during a campus close.

Action Taken: It has been decided that when the decision is made to close campus, non-essential staff with approved telework agreements will not be required to work unless they have been deemed "operationally critical" by their supervisor. In these instances, supervisors will notify these employees of their requirement to work, either on campus or remotely, providing as much advance notification as possible and no later than the scheduled start of the employees' regularly scheduled shifts.

Additionally, employees deemed operationally critical will be granted administrative leave for hours worked in accordance with eligibility for their respective employment category.

Recommendation: We recommend supervisors at all levels must communicate through written email exchange to each of their non-essential staff members, PIN and Contingent, exempt and non-exempt, what their expectation of teleworking is when the campus is closed for inclement

weather or any other unexpected purpose. If telework is warranted or expected by the supervisor due to “operational necessity,” they must state they will honor an Administrative Leave Day to be taken at a later date. This does not change the requirement to use pre-approved leave for a full or partial day prior to the announcement of campus closure.

Recommendation: While communication from supervisors to employees through written email exchange is encouraged, the timing of the closure and the need to notify employees in a timely manner may not allow sufficient time for this to be an effective channel. Not all employees check their emails during non-work hours so it’s possible that employees would not see the request in advance of their regularly scheduled shift. Guidance has been provided to Supervisors that it’s expected they contact those non-essential employees who have been deemed operationally critical via phone calls, texts, and email to ensure employees are notified as soon as possible.

Note: The term “operationally critical” will be used on a situational basis for non-essential employees who must complete work during a closure in order to meet an impending deadline or who are working in support of campus activities taking place (e.g., payroll activities or student move-in). It is anticipated that this designation will fluctuate based on the date/time of campus closures and that employees deemed operationally critical during one closure will not automatically fall into that category during another closure.