

USC Staff Assembly
Resolution SA19/20-03

**Staff Working from Home Accommodations and
Recommendations**

Situation

The COVID-19 pandemic sent USC staff members home on March 13, 2020. Almost 15,000 have executed their job functions from home. Some staff members were issued equipment and had time to gather items that were needed to close out the semester. With the expectation that many staff members will continue to work from home (WFH) throughout the summer and into the fall semester, we must take the time now to ensure that they have the tools and resources for sustained productivity, efficiency, and safety. It is acknowledged that HR is currently in the process of drafting WFH Policies, with the expectation that many staff members will continue to work from home. The Staff Assembly recommendations are intended to support the effort of the University in developing policies that ensure the safety and wellbeing of University employees.

Findings

Staff Assembly has received reports that:

1. Some staff members do not always have access to equipment at home.
 - a. They are sharing computers with spouses and children.
 - b. They are using outdated equipment and operating systems that are not supported or cannot access USC systems.
 - c. They are working on kitchen tables, coffee tables, countertops, folding tables and sitting on dining room chairs, couches and reclining chairs.
 - i. The health implications of which are sore backs and carpal tunnel syndrome, headaches from poor monitor positioning, and decreased productivity, among others.
 - d. Some staff members are using mobile devices to complete their work.
 - e. Some faculty have loaned their personal laptops to staff members.
 - f. Some staff may have issues with home internet services and may need to upgrade if available.
2. Documents and reference materials are needed to perform tasks and remain on campus.
 - a. Some staff members are not allowed to return to their offices.
 - b. Documents that must be destroyed securely are potentially just being thrown into the general trash due to lack of equipment or software that allows for paperless work. Access to Adobe Acrobat and/or an environment to store documents with electronic signatures that would be compliant with federal regulations applicable for some tasks is needed.
 - c. Some staff may not have printers and/or supplies to print documents that need to be printed and brought back to campus later for filing.
3. Faculty needs have been accommodated in this regard.
 - a. Staff members have facilitated the ordering of computer equipment, office supplies, and more for faculty members. (Staff understand that there was an immediate need to support remote learning, but the situation is now stabilized.)

4. Outdated equipment and disorganized home-work spaces increase the time it takes to complete tasks.
5. Staff members are purchasing, at their own expense, office supplies and equipment to complete work tasks.
6. There are vast inconsistencies in the WFH policies being implemented by the schools and divisions across the university.
7. There are no current standard “WFH hygiene recommendations” (e.g. 50 minutes work, 10 minutes break for a physical activity, etc. Such a schedule can help to keep focus on work and decrease staff burnout.)

Recommendations

USC Staff Assembly recommends the following:

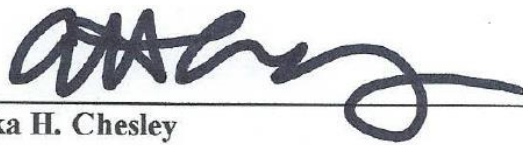
1. Create a standard Telework Policy that is used campus-wide.¹
2. An immediate assessment of all staff members who will continue to WFH throughout the summer and fall to determine equipment and resource needs. Central HR will issue the assessment to ensure that collected data is housed in a central location and parsed to the HR partners at schools, divisions, departments, and centers.
3. Department and building managers will develop a plan to allow staff members an opportunity to retrieve equipment (including ergonomic desk chairs and other portable ergonomic devices) for WFH using an online appointment system (similar to the students’ Housing move-out plan). The appointments should be designed to limit the number of people at each building each day. Staff members should be subject to a MOU for all University equipment and telework.
4. Implement an appropriate electronic documents storage system that abides by specific Federal and USC requirements.
5. USC Staff Assembly would like to host WFH “Best Practices” sessions for employees. The technology Zoom sessions will be led by an analyst from ITS who will review best practices on how to set up equipment, ways to boost internet signal, internet speeds, where to go for help from ITS, review the free software that is available to staff, and more. Additionally, Zoom sessions led by Occupational Therapists could focus on setting up an ergonomic work space, time management, stress management, setting up an ideal WFH schedule, etc. Leverage TrojanLearn options.

BE IT RESOLVED that this resolution be delivered to President Carol L. Folt, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Charles F. Zukoski, Chairman of the Board of Trustees Rick Caruso, Senior Vice President for Human Resources Felicia A. Washington, Senior Vice President and Chief Communications Officer Glenn Osaki, Senior Vice President, Finance and Chief Financial Officer James M. Staten, Senior Vice President, Administration David W. Wright, Chief Information Officer Douglas Shook, and Associate Dean, Chair and Mrs. T.H. Chan Professor of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy Grace Baranek, Vice President of Student Affairs, Winston Crisp, within two weeks of being passed by the USC Staff Assembly.

¹ [University of Washington Telework Policy](#)

² USC Business Services [website](#)

³ Surplus Sales [Instagram](#)

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Erika H. Chesley
President
USC Staff Assembly

Date 7/27/2020

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