



## The University of Texas at Austin College of Natural Sciences

---

Dear CNS Colleagues,

We have reached a time of year when many of us are taking stock of what has worked well over the last year, as well as how the next year can be even better when we welcome back our students. Our mission of achieving excellence in education, research and service remains unchanged, but we also have an opportunity to look at how we worked together efficiently and effectively and learned over the last year.

As we think about the closer to normal academic year ahead, we will be returning to the residential student life and full lab capacity that's at the core of many parts of our UT and College of Natural Sciences experience. This return to in-person work will allow for the interpersonal interactions between students, faculty and staff that we have been missing during our remote work. Still as we return to work on campus, we have a chance now to notice where flexible work arrangements (FWAs) can play a continuing role in our carrying out the college mission.

The College of Natural Sciences, with leadership from human resources, business services and our Assistant Dean for Strategy and Equity Initiatives Melissa Taylor, has created an initial resource to help address questions you may have about FWAs. At the center of our approach, we aim to preserve and build on core values of excellence, learning, community, diversity, integrity, respect and responsibility; deliver world-class education and research; ensure equitable, transparent and fair processes; comply with university policies and state and federal law; and empower local decisions by supervisors and members of their teams.

The **CNS Return-to-Campus Working Guidelines\*** has sections for employees and for supervisors. It includes:

1. initial resources for approaching questions of **eligibility, necessary approvals and terminology** for FWAs here in CNS;
2. **frequently asked questions** related to returning to campus after having worked remotely; and
3. an **overview of our process and timing**.

We'll continue to improve on this resource this month with your feedback, as every page has a link to a form where you can provide input.

Our gradual return to campus through the end of August makes room for teams' and individuals' plans for FWAs. Specifically:

- **In June**, we are encouraging review of and feedback on our online resource, reflection between supervisors and employees and review of CNS Guidelines.
- **By July 2**, we will finalize our online resources and provide the CNS Flexible Work Arrangement Request Proposal document, communicating how supervisors and employees can use them. We also will begin to provide recommendations for units as they return to campus.
- **By August 2**, all CNS FWA Request Proposals will need to be submitted. By August 16, unit workspaces will be able to accommodate full capacity.

As we prepare for fall, there is a lot to look forward to. I hope this new college resource helps you to take advantage of all of the opportunities this time offers and to plan for a year when we will restore more in-person connections and welcome our community of College of Natural Sciences students and researchers back for a near-normal year.

Best,



David Vanden Bout | Interim Dean

*\* Please note that our online resource is set up as a UT wiki page. If you get a message about your wiki account being disabled, you should contact the UT service desk at (512) 475-9400 to trouble-shoot.*

---

This communication is from College of Natural Sciences – Official.

View this email [online](#).

The University of Texas at Austin | Austin, TX | 78712 US