How a Team May Develop a "Return to Campus" Plan

Team Phoenix includes one manager and three staff members. They interact with a variety of community members on a regular basis but also have a fair amount of independent work that can be accomplished out of the office. One team member also works very closely with a second team (Team Dragon).

Part 1. What steps did the team take to develop their plan?

The Unit Leader met with the team, led them in a discussion about the team goals and shared college objectives.

Team members took some individual time to reflect on their work, how they want to engage with the Olin community, and their individual needs/preferences for flexibility. Included in this discussion was brainstorming ideas for activities that would foster more engagement with students and help team members connect more with the Olin curriculum.

The team met as a group to discuss their individual ideas and develop a tentative plan. Included in this discussion was brainstorming ideas for activities that would foster more engagement with students and help team members connect more with the Olin curriculum. They also evaluated the plan against Olin's three key priorities:

- We successfully meet our team goals and accomplish our work well
- We engage with each other and our whole community
- We respect each other as whole people who have agency and flexibility

Finally, the team reviewed the plan with an eye towards equity. They asked themselves several questions and made adjustments until they were satisfied with the answers:
- Are the various plans for flexibility set up to enable the work of our team?
- Do our plans allow an equitable distribution of flexibility based on individual roles and responsibilities?
- Are we equitably caring for one another as we accomplish our mission?

In follow-up, the team manager met with team members individually and learned...
- One team member was worried that someone else was taking advantage of the opportunity and asking for a level of flexibility that would negatively impact the team's work.
- One team member works closely with Team Dragon and wanted to engage with those colleagues to ensure that the flexible schedule they were planning aligned with their shared work goals.
- One team member felt too shy in the meeting to say what they wanted, but after a one-on-one discussion with the manager, felt confident enough to include their ask.
- One team member asked about one-off needs, i.e. a plumber can only come on a day that they are supposed to work on campus. The manager confirmed that is totally OK (assuming there is back-up, if needed) and the person can continue to work from home as normal on their regular WFH day.

The team then reconvened a second time to update the plan to incorporate new updates. And, again they reviewed the plan to ensure it provided an equitable approach to flexibility.

Part 2. Here's the Plan 'Team Phoenix' developed….

Team Phoenix shares a common love of cooking and want to use that as a basis to engage with more members of the community, including students. They plan to host a monthly community recipe-sharing get together. All faculty, staff and students will be invited to a coffee hour (BYOC or tea!) to connect on all things food (what to make, how to make it, favorite kitchen tools, etc). They have a goal to create and share a community recipe book annually. In addition, they all commit to visit one class per year, as part of the Course Visitation program.

The group decided that all team members will be on campus for Tuesdays for their weekly team meeting and will also host their community gatherings on Tuesdays.
- Betty prefers to start her days at home to avoid her long morning commute. She'll work from home from 7a - 10a and then will be on campus from 11a -4:30pm.
- Celeste often has a lot of work that requires focused attention and quiet. She will work from home on Mondays and Wednesdays to prioritize this work in a more focused way. She will still be available for zoom calls and hybrid meetings, as needed. She also prefers to start her day a bit later than typical. Her normal hours will be 10:30a – 7pm.
- Dennis has school-aged children and plans to work from home in the afternoons on certain days. His partner also has a flexible schedule. Dennis plans to work from home on Mondays, and on Wednesdays and Thursdays he'll be at Olin from 9a - 2pm each day and then working from home and available for hybrid meetings from 3p-6:30p.
- Team Manager Eleanor also found the quiet of working from home to be productive for certain parts of her job while also valuing the impromptu chats and connections that being on campus provides. She will work from home on Thursdays and Wednesday mornings (coming to Olin at 1pm).

Team Member	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Betty	WFH 7 - 10a @ Olin 11a-430p	WFH 7 - 10a @ Olin 11a-430p	WFH 7 - 10a @ Olin 11a-430p	WFH 7 - 10a @ Olin 11a-430p	WFH 7 - 10a @ Olin 11a-430p
Celeste	WFH	@ Olin 10:30a – 7pm	WFH	@ Olin 10:30a – 7pm	@ Olin 10:30a – 7pm
Dennis	WFH	@Olin	@ Olin 8a-2p WFH 3-5:30p	@ Olin 8a-2p WFH 3-5:30p	@ Olin
Eleanor	@ Olin	@ Olin	WFH 8a-12n @ Olin 1-4:30p	WFH	@ Olin

Part 3. Here's the General Process
Now that we have shared a version of what an imagined team might do … let's plan for how we will implement this for real.

- Sharon W shares supporting tools and documents with Unit Leaders (often a VP or Dean). These Unit Leaders will then work appropriately with team managers and team members within their area using these tools.
- Units and/or teams collaboratively develop their "Return to Olin" plans by utilizing the tools and resources and engaging in
    o Individual thinking
    o Group conversations
    o 1:1 conversations
    o Taking time to review, reflect, iterate
- Unit Leaders share their plans with Sharon Woodward
- Sharon reviews all plans with an eye for equity. She'll be looking for:
    o Outliers – are their folks who appear to have much more or much less flexibility than similar peers?
    o Group themes – does the plan appear to align with the work expectations of the team?
    o Overall, does it appear that all the plans have considered things similarly (e.g., is there equity across teams/units as well as within them?)
- Ongoing Unit / Team Reviews
    o We suggest that units/ teams connect on a regular basis (perhaps quarterly or at least each semester) to review how it's going. Discuss needs for tweaks, pivots, enhancements, etc! Or congratulate yourselves on how well you developed the plan!
    o Plans will also need to be reviewed as new team members are recruited and onboarded and as team members depart.

Part 4. Brainstorming Ideas for Team Plans

An important element of our "Return to Work" plans will also need to reflect our renewed commitment to participating in and building community. How will we all embrace the idea of everyone is a learner and educator?

As you think about how you and your team members want to engage more with the community, we are sharing these ideas as brainstorming starters!

Community/Learner examples:

"We will hold a monthly coffee and donut event in our area and invite students",

"We will, several times a year, host a small drinks gathering and invite 10 random people from the community to join us",

"We will each try in the next year to take part in one opportunity to participate in the curriculum",

"We will each try to run or participate in a co-curricular sometime in the next two years",

"We will all be physically on campus on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, so that we can connect with each other and the rest of the community in person"

"We will host a monthly Fiber Arts community hour"

"We will have lunch the Dining Hall monthly with a placard inviting students to join us to ask us about our team"

As you consider ways to build flexibility into your team schedules, here are some examples for your brainstorming.

Flexibility examples:

"Person A and Person B need to meet their kids most days when they come home from school. They will work remotely those afternoons/early evenings, will be available for hybrid meetings during those times."

"Person Y has found that they prefer to work earlier hours and plan to shift their schedule accordingly."

"We need to have at least two people from our group physically on campus 10a-4p every day in order to get our job done and to be physically available to community members. At the same time much of what we do can be accomplished remotely, and a number of us would like to work from home one or two days a week. So we're going to build a schedule that meets these goals..."

Part 5. Suggestions for sharing your on-campus / off-campus availability

Communicating schedules to others will be a key part of making these changes successful. Below are some examples of ways to do that.

- Update your Outlook e-mail signature with your on/off campus availability, such as the below:

  Eleanor F. Olin | Manager, Team Phoenix
  She/Her/Hers
  Olin College of Engineering
  I am on-campus Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursday afternoons, and Fridays
  I work from home on Wednesdays and Thursday Mornings and am available for Zoom/Teams meetings

- You can add a note outside your office or on your door alerting visitors to your on-/off-campus availability:

  Looking for Eleanor? If it's a Wednesday or Thursday morning, you'll find me on Zoom/Teams working from home.

- Update your Outlook calendar by marking your WFH days/times with the "working elsewhere" label so colleagues know they can meet with you via Zoom/Teams:
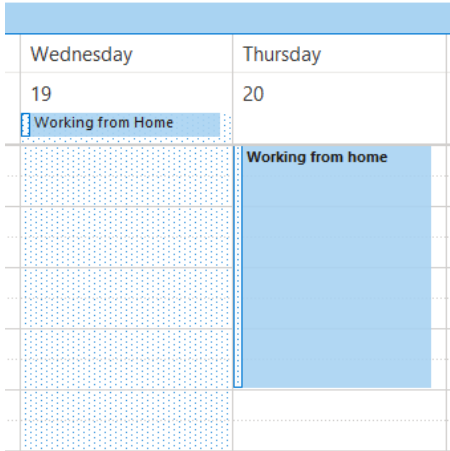
- You can update your status on Microsoft Teams: