Restarting Entrepreneurial Activity at The Cove

UCI Beall Applied Innovation (BAI) brings campus-based discoveries together with Orange County’s vibrant business community to support job creation and economic growth. To make this happen, UCI Beall Applied Innovation facilitates connections between UCI and industry, including: entrepreneurs seeking access to university inventions and talent, large corporations looking to tap the school’s research capabilities and investors wanting to financially support promising new companies.

The hub for UCI’s innovation ecosystem is called the Cove and is located at the UCI Research Park, in a building managed by the Irvine Company. The facility covers two and half floors and includes a prototyping lab, event space and a variety of rentable units including open work stations, shared offices and individual offices.

With over 55 subtenants, the Cove operates as a research and entrepreneurial office/lab space rather than as an academic unit. Cove subtenants would like to return to their offices and lab benches, and limited BAI staff will be needed onsite to support these subtenants.

In preparing for the reopening of the Cove, UCI Beall Applied Innovation submitted its worksite plan for review by UCI’s Risk Services, Environmental Health & Safety and Campus Counsel offices to ensure that the plans comply with state and local directives, including the California Resilience Roadmap. The Irvine Company also has provided a detailed worksite plan for all of its managed commercial office space. ([https://www.comebackwithconfidence.com/resource-center/](https://www.comebackwithconfidence.com/resource-center/)).

UCI Beall Applied Innovation has completed a detailed worksite assessment and created a specific worksite recovery plan, which includes:
- One way directional ingress, egress and hallway traffic flow, in line with distancing protocols.
- Digital and posted messaging promoting health and safety protocols throughout the building.
- Furniture in common areas has been reconfigured and marked to accommodate distancing protocols.
- Installation of Plexiglas for front desk and touchless entry, where applicable.
- Individual workstations and cubicles now have extended walls to promote distancing. Shared offices have desks facing one direction with barriers separating each desk.
- Conference rooms and elevators have new reduced capacity.
- Increased cleaning of restrooms, common areas and high-touch surfaces. Hand sanitizer products will be located throughout the building.
- All kitchen utensils have been removed and kitchen sink faucets have been replaced with touchless faucets.

Further control measures include requiring subtenants and staff to complete a daily symptom check confirming that they are symptom-free before entering the building and required completion of a training video that explains what COVID-19 is, how it is believed to be transmitted, and precautions that individuals can and should take to lower the risk of transmitting the virus. Each subtenant also will complete an individual worksite assessment and checklist, modeled on the assessment and checklist that UCI principal investigators complete to reopen their research labs, and sign a lease amendment that includes assumption of risk, compliance with building rules, waiver and indemnification & hold harmless provisions. Finally, all people (employees, subtenants and guests) must comply with campus rules -- including the face-covering directive -- while in the building.

The plans of Beall Applied Innovation and each subtenant’s assessment will include steps to quickly scale up or down the number of people onsite in response to changing circumstances.