**HR Lunch and Learn Q & A’s and Information**

**Tuesday, July 13, 2021**

***Information is subject to change***

**Opening Remarks**

**Adam Lorio - Manager, Counseling, Health and Wellness Special Programs and current Operations and Section Deputy Chief for IMS, COVID Support Manager**

**Holly Diaz – Manager, CHW and COVID Response**

* This is a significant transitional time for all
* Moving away from the Incident Command structure, the COVID support team is involved with recommendations and questions for Fall as we navigate through the challenges.
* Vaccine policy revised
* Student procedures revised
	+ More info. to follow this week
	+ How to report COVID vaccine status will remain the same.  Will not need to re-report per the new policy.  If Students voluntarily reported already, they are in compliance.
* HR taking the lead on various employee groups and procedures
* Will know a lot more as far as vaccinations go closer to Fall
* Given the Governor’s new guidance as of July 1, with review of the Dept. of Health’s guidance for higher ed as well as input from several groups, we have submitted recommendation requests to the President’s Council for review. Once these recommendations have been updated, we will be able to send out the information to campus.

**FYI:**

* HR is giving the option to do vaccination confirmations virtually. Please email HR@wwu.edu for appointments requests.

**Q & A**

**COVID vaccine and exemptions**

When will HR be distributing information regarding exemptions to staff members?

Currently in discussion with classified union re: that policy. Hoping we will soon be able to share what the form will look like with all employees. Hopefully within the next 2-3 weeks. Exemptions are such as religious, personal and medical categories. For medical there may be other steps in addition to the form. More info. to follow!

Is there an opportunity to find out for Fall the percentage of employees and students who are vaccinated vs. the exemptions?

We will continue to provide this information to the campus community similar to what we have in place now. This info. is posted via Western Today and shows the percentage of employees reported. Right now we are at 55% employees vaccinated, but hope to see more now that we have opened up the option to provide vaccination proof virtually.

When might we hear information about the new guidance on current rules/policies? Some of us Site Supervisors have very busy departments right now and need to who what rules to follow ASAP.

Updated guidance is currently being reviewed by the President’s Cabinet. Hoping to update campus as soon as we have this info. in the next week or so.

If someone contracted COVID does that immunity count towards the vaccination requirement?

No, as Western follows all CDC guidelines, prior infection does not count as the equivalent to being vaccinated.

For those with exemptions, how is the school going to not discriminate against them?

As we are offering individuals the opportunity to request an exemption for those three main reasons (Medical, Religious, Personal), Western is committed to supporting a safe working environment for all. There will likely be some requirements for the unvaccinated such as continuing to wear masks, social distancing etc. There will still be many people who are vaccinated who will continue to wear masks as well. There have been really clear discussions regarding guidance and understanding all of the current CDC guidance requirements in some form differentiation of vaccinated and not vaccinated to protect those unable to get a vaccine. Considerations will be included in recommendations that come out soon.

If a vaccinated person tests positive for COVID, if they don’t wear a mask is there a potential that they are asymptomatic spreaders?

It is possible for someone who’s been vaccinated to get COVID, the likelihood is significantly reduced if they are vaccinated. That’s why vaccinated individuals do not need to wear a mask at this time. For Western there is still a mask mandate in place.

What about people who get vaccinated but still wear masks due to social pressure?

One of the biggest challenge as we move forward. We have a once in a lifetime learning opportunity. Will see a lot of behavior change on this.

Will attestations continue throughout 2021-2022?

We expect the attestation system and procedure to change with updated guidance.

**Remote Work**

Campus Lobby’s or busy areas on campus that are staffed mainly by students – as we re-open will there be additional guidance for busy areas regarding spacing and social distancing? Not really clear on the current social distancing recommendations (3ft or 6 ft distancing?).

Updated safety practice and protocol will include social distancing guidelines.

Can you please provide some information on guidance regarding Telework agreements for Fall/Winter?

In a typical environment for remote work – we first look at the position, then the duties and responsibilities and what’s required for that position. Based on that position purpose, we then identify if remote work is an option giving those duties and responsibilities. From there the supervisor can look at this information to determine if remote work is an option. When you throw a pandemic into the mix, COVID has trumped the individual review of each position. As we look forward to Fall, re-calibrating and re-ordering what we look at, and taking a look at the position duties and responsibilities and having that information drive the options available given the work and purpose for that particular position. We will need to take what we have learned from what we were doing previously to use as a tool for going forward. Telework agreement form will be for both classified and pro staff.

Would you say that we can use Fall as an opportunity to inform for Winter and moving forward?

Yes, that’s exactly right. There’s a lot we don’t know yet…how have expectations changed over the past year? There may be continued requirements that employees remain available virtually to students, so they have the option to meet virtually opposed to in-person. Trial and error and additional learning to figure out what things look like as we move forward. Supervisors and employees need to set a plan, plug in a re-evaluation date to discuss what worked well and what did not work well.

Any updates about the work from home esign form process for Fall?

In progress, more information coming soon.

I was told that the remote work esign form will be needed to ANY type/amount of remote work for any staff.

There are still safety rules in place for reporting etc.

The form is being worked on now, more information and updates forthcoming.

Will we be able to have a hybrid schedule Winter quarter and beyond if approved by our supervisor?

We encourage employees to work with their supervisors to determine what is best for the employee and department.

If I am planning on working remotely in the Fall, is a remote work request/approval required?

There is a telework agreement to be put in place by the end of July, the deadline for completion of the form is September 16th 2021. More information to follow soon.

If one had a telework agreement in place before the pandemic, will that agreement still stand if all parties agree? Meaning no new agreement?

Agreements will need to be revisited between the employee and supervisor, but yes the same agreement can stay in place if it continues to be accurate.

How individualized will the process be to the offices requesting hybrid schedules?

The process will be individualized to the tasks of the position. Process will be similar, but answer will be unique to that position.

How will Western work with caregivers to continue remote work as childcare/eldercare looks different for everyone?

Expect quite a few positions where remote work will continue to be an option on a hybrid basis. We want to utilize remote work as a tool to help employees. There is still work to be done, which is a concern but remote/hybrid options are a value to many employees who have that flexibility.

In a past lunch and learn, it was discussed that there was a remote work committee that was coming together. Has that group been meeting and is it representative of all staff groups on campus?

That committee is still meeting – more of a logistical committee at this point. Focusing on remote work agreement, tools provided on webpage, taking a look at our remote work guidelines, do we need a policy things of that nature – looking to get feedback from stakeholders so we make sure there are conversations with the employees groups.

**Misc. questions**

Will room capacity be based on ventilation in the future?

Not determined at this time. Primary driver is to get vaccinated and all other things pale in comparison. Right now, that is not in the plans.

Will the meeting trainings start to cover hybrid meeting facilitation? There has been a lot of talk about that.

Yes, definitely. Dennis Dashiell is happy to be of assistance for these trainings.

Will WWU continue with Zoom beyond the pandemic?

Zoom and Teams are definitely part of our future – they are beneficial in some instances, for some students, faculty and staff virtual meetings are more effective and more convenient.

Are we able, if concerned for our health, that we can keep all of our meeting virtual? Even if physically on campus?

Yes.

Is it a discrimination problem if we decline face to face meetings with people who aren’t vaccinated?

As guidance comes out, we will have more information.

If you have any comments/questions specifically for future sessions, please send along to your HR consultant.

***Join us for the next lunch and learn session on Tuesday, August 10th!***