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

**Tuesday, August 31, 2021 ~ Noon-1 pm**

**Topic: Remote Work**

**Remote Work Panel Discussion Team**

* Lea Aune, Associate Director, Human Resources
* Rick Benner, University Architect / Sr. Director, Capital Planning and Development
* John Farquhar, Director, Academic Technology and User Services
* John Furman, Director, Facilities Management
* Jack Herring, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs
* Andrea Rodger, Associate Director, Business Services
* Shelby Zimmerman, Transportation Services Manager
* Chyerl Wolfe-Lee, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources / Moderator

**Opening**

Chyerl Wolfe Lee welcomed everyone and introduced the panel. The panel introduced themselves and briefly described their role at Western.

**Question & Answer**

**Facilities Management**

**We continue to receive lots of questions on ventilation at the University. Could you address?**

We receive many questions regarding ventilation. We can’t answer them all, so we are trying to triage by looking at labs and classrooms as their primary points. Next in the hierarchy would be areas with heavy traffic, and finally personal offices. Overall, we are increasing the amount of outdoor air coming into every building to improve ventilation, monitoring with C02 sensors, increasing airflow where we can, and increasing the size of the filters or rating of the filters where we can that don’t interfere with the pumps pushing air through the systems.

Link to ventilator facts: <https://www.fm.wwu.edu/ventilation-faqs/>

**How do we know where the C02 sensors are? Is there a list?**

Yes, we are working on a list. The location of the sensors matters more to the people operating the system and more of a visual for those who don’t. You can’t look at the sensors as they are in the duct work, but you can look at that data. Access to all the data will become available, but unless you know what you’re looking at it will not be beneficial.

**32nd Street already had air ventilation problems so is anyone looking at off campus sites?**

When FM hears of ventilation issues, we consult with EHS to confirm it actually exists and what is the nature of the issue. Some of them are legacy opinions, not necessary the operation of the system.

**Should we expect elevator occupancy to be at 100%?**

We are not imposing occupancy mandates in any locations, including elevators. It is up to the individual’s personal discretion if they are comfortable getting into an elevator.

**What are the dates when the buildings will be openand unlocked?**

We are in the process of unlocking all the internal rooms that were locked during the pandemic. Buildings will open on September 13, 2021​.

**Business Services/Procurement**

**Why are sneeze guards not being supported for reimbursement of PPE purchase?**

See attached document regarding plexiglass.

**Will N-95 or otherwise higher quality masks be purchased for those working on site with students/the public without the privilege of social distancing or open windows in offices/ workspaces?**

Non-N-95 masks will be available in all classrooms and building entrances. You can also contact Procurement.

**Parking Services**

**Will there be more parking options available for hybrid schedules for individuals working 2-3 days per week, or half days?**

The daily pay-by-day rate will continue to be available for employees who sign up for it, but not for the C and 6V lots. The pay-by-day option returns to the normal rate structure of $3.25 per day on 9/16/21.

**What is the timeline for requesting a parking permit for winter quarter?**

December 10, 2021

**If you don't reactivate a parking permit in the Fall, do you lose your seniority?**

Seniority was held to what it was prior to the pandemic. If you qualified for a certain lot, you are still qualified for that lot through winter quarter. If you do not renew your permit in the fall, you would need to reapply for a permit through the waitlist. You would still have your prior seniority and would likely be near the top of the waitlist; however, you would have to wait for space to open up in the lot to get your permit back.

**Does zone parking end September 15?**

Yes, zone parking will end on September 15. Information will be sent via email to the campus on September 1 from Parking Services.

**When does the $2.00 pay-by-day rate for lots go away?**

The daily pay-by-day rate will continue to be available for employees who sign up for it at the rate of $3.25/day. The C and 6V lots will no longer have the reduced cost daily rate, and the permit rates will return to the normal rate structure with available hourly and daily permits.

**ATUS (Academic Technology and User Services)**

**The most common question ATUS receives is on technology to support a hybrid work environment.**

Please visit the HR website for information on remote work at Western: <https://hr.wwu.edu/remote-work-western>

**What about phones for common areas? Who is the contact for the project?**

The Enterprise Application Services’ Project Management office is managing the Teams voice project adoption. Part of that project is to identify where common area phones and other specialized phones might be located. Deborah Frost is leading the project. The project team is actively meeting with the individuals who hold offices within buildings and discussing options and opportunities for locating new common area phones. Please feel free to reach out to Deborah Frost, who will answer common area phone questions individually.

**Human Resources**

**Will employees with younger children, who anticipate probable short-term school closures or class closures due to outbreaks, still need to complete a remote work agreement? In other words, if one might need to work from home due to pandemic-related issues, but are otherwise planning to work on site, are the forms required? My labor rep said the agreements need to be filled out regardless.**

All staff working a hybrid or remote during Fall quarter need to fill out the agreement by October 18, 2021. HR will follow-up with more specific guidance within the next day or two to clarify when an individual would need to complete a Remote Work Agreement and Remote Work Feasibility Worksheet. In terms of transparency, the documents were created with the thought it was a long-term arrangement, long-term meaning more than a couple of weeks. Again, we will follow-up to clarify when an individual would need to complete a Remote Work Agreement and Remote Work Feasibility Worksheet.

**If a Remote Work Agreement is needed/intended for long-term needs, then why does it need more review and discussion?**

Agreements are available for all circumstances.

**Do you need a Remote Work Agreement if you only work remote occasionally?**

If there is a set remote work/hybrid schedule you will need to fill out the Remote Work Agreement by October 18, 2021.

**Do we need to process a Remote Work Agreement for student employees who might be fully remote?**

HR will follow-up with Student Services and provide updates.

**Does the Remote Work Agreement need to be filled out each quarter?**

Because we are still in transition related to the pandemic, we are primarily looking at Fall quarter arrangements. Looking at the rest of the academic year, we may have a separate agreement for Winter quarter and maybe take another look at it again in the Spring. As we continue to evolve our sophistication as it relates remote work, we will not need to do this every quarter. Because of the unpredictable nature of the pandemic, many individuals are trying out remote work. With a great student presence on campus, setting limited periods of time to test the effectiveness of remote work is necessary. Adjustments may need to be made for the next quarters.

**With the Remote Work Agreements being due by 10/18/21, does this mean we have to wait until mid-October to begin our remote work schedule, even if approved by supervisor/dean's office prior?**

No, you can begin remote work at any time. You do not need to wait for the October 18 deadline.

**Is remote work still the default or does it have to be justified?**

During COVID operations, we had a state mandate in place requiring us to be off-site during COVID operations unless you met one of the exceptions to be on-site. That has changed and so that default of remote work no longer exists. Moving forward, you should be using position duties and responsibilities to evaluate remote and hybrid schedules.

**If we filled out the old form, do we need to redo the worksheet feasibility?**

No. The old form was very similar, so you do not need to fill it out again.

**Are we still using the on-site essential staff data provided early in the pandemic?**

No, this was used during the pandemic operation to manage staff coming on campus during the pandemic and is no longer needed.

**If we have our mask off in our office, do we need to keep our office door closed?**

Having your office closed makes it a private space. If you are unable to keep in private, you should keep your mask on, especially if others are present.

**Does everyone need vaccination verification before starting Fall quarter?**

Yes. We are working with our classified unions around the details of the information that came out last week, but we all saw the state has an October 18 deadline. We are still working out the details with our union partners. We will likely request documentation before October 18, so we have buffer time to work with employees prior to the state deadline.

**Are discussions happening that would change the course for Fall to be remote as we are attempting to already meet many aggressive demands to support the highly flexible in-person vs. remote arrangements?**

We cannot predict the future, but we do look at all kinds of things daily, such as talking with the Health Department, looking at the local hospital rate, our vaccination rate, community spread, etc. Many factors are being monitored and there is no single thing that is going to prompt a particular action that we know short of Governor Inslee’s ldirection. We have regular conversations with health experts on what is the right thing to do today.

**If a staff member is exposed to COVID while working and contract tracing verifies this, will they be able to claim workers' compensation to cover medical/hospital bills?**

You can file a claim. Each one will be evaluated individually. There is no assumed approval except for certain high-risk occupations.

**What if we don't want to work in the building where the testing site will be located?**

Please contact your HR consultant.

**How does the testing requirement work for off-site employees?**

For any off-site employees, we ask that you reach out to your HR consultant to discuss finding an appropriate location.

**I have been participating in the voluntary testing through Northwest Labs. How long can we anticipate this to continue?**

Link to Testing Program Information: <https://hr.wwu.edu/employee-testing-program>

**Faculty**

**With faculty given the option to change modality at any time, what support will be offered to staff in managing the communications with upset students and families?**

We have asked faculty to make those decisions, if at all possible, by August 1, so students are informed. The MOU being negotiated with faculty will give them the option to switch modality should a tenuous circumstance arise. Jack Herring is available to offer his support if someone needs a backup to communicate with upset students and families. We are trying to mitigate this very issue right now in the early start program, Viking Launch, where a faculty member has determined he cannot teach face-to-face. The class is meeting in person with the TA and the faculty member is teaching remotely. There are various strategies that can be used, but it is really case by case.

**Is remote work an option for faculty during Winter quarter?**

Currently we are operating under a waiver that allows faculty to teach remotely without having to go through the academic review process. That has not been extended to Winter quarter at this time.

Lea clarified that remote is certainly with us for the long-term and to look at the position duties and responsibilities as the primary criteria to be evaluated when we are not talking about pandemic operations. HR is not suggesting remote work is going away Winter quarter.

**Can faculty request remote for Winter Quarter? If so, who evaluates the requests?**

Jack Herring provided…

The Academic Coordinating Commission (a committee of the Faculty Senate) makes the decisions about the method(s) of delivery approved for any specific course.  For the pandemic thus far, they have issued a blanket approval for temporary remote delivery of courses. That approval, at this point, goes through the end of the fall quarter. Obviously, those decisions are always made in close consultation with the faculty senate leadership, the Provost and the UFWW.  Any faculty member can request a temporary switch to remote delivery for their course (in case a blanket waiver is not extended). That request gets reviewed by the department, the college and then the ACC.  The requests are done in the Curriculog system, same as any request to change a course description, etc.

**Where will on-site testing be available for all employees and students?**

We have solidified this and will have on-site testing available for employees and students with approved waivers who will be required to go through the weekly testing program. Testing will be free of charge. We are currently finalizing the details and will have the information published as soon as that becomes official.

**Is there a process to encourage students to wear masks in class? Some schools let health officials visit the classes in the first and second weeks of the classes. Do we have a system set for that?**

We are working on communications with all students early and often. Signage on buildings and through other means including social media will be persistent throughout the quarter.

**Should we call UPD if a non-employee or student refuses to wear a mask?**

No, do not call UPD. UPD will not respond to individuals not wearing masks. If someone is acting dangerous and belligerent, you can encourage them to call UPD.

**How are people who don't/won't wear masks going to be dealt with? Especially in high traffic locations?**

This is a community effort, and we are all in this together. People are responsible for doing what they have to do to take care of themselves and the community.

**What resources do staff/faculty have if students without masks are encountered?  Seems like staff/faculty should be empowered to handle directly since we are commonly the first contact for situations that occur.**

Faculty have the authority to manage safety in the classrooms. If a student is not wearing a mask and refuses to leave the classroom, there is a shifting conversation going on, if additional resources are needed for faculty to ensure the student complies. The understanding as of yesterday is that if the student is acting in a dangerous and belligerent way faculty can encourage students to contact UPD and they will respond. We are also working on setting p additional resources for faculty who do not feel comfortable contacting UPD.

For staff, you are encouraged to reach out to your HR consultant or your supervisor if easier. In most situations, individuals who are out without a mask stepped out of their office and forgot.

**Will testing be free and available to all employees?**

Yes

**What are the available exemptions people can use for not getting vaccinated?**

Vaccination & Exemption Information: <https://hr.wwu.edu/covid-19-employee-vaccination-information>

**For those of us without a breakroom, how do we go about eating lunch? At the moment they are closed for food prep, I assume that would be for having your lunch also. - Lea**

**Will employees receive information about leave options if they need to quarantine due to personal exposure or because they have a caregiver and must care for someone else who is quarantined?**

The Family First Corona Virus Leave was available in 2020; however, that has expired and is no longer available. If an employee is ill what is available to them is the use of their sick or vacation leave. There is also a shared leave program available. If someone needs to quarantine, but are not ill, HR can work with the individual to try and find remote work if at all possible.

**If someone gets COVID while working, do they still need to use their own sick time for the time they are out or are there other options?**

You could file for Worker’s Compensation insurance. You can always find a claim; however, one of the criteria is whether your work has Western puts you at risk that is greater than the general population.

**Will we likely be required to submit proof of booster shots as well?**

Yes

**Is the town hall on September 9th our last chance to get questions answered by administration before the start of Fall quarter?**

No

**Public Health**

**Do we have a flowchart or process if students are experiencing symptoms or exposed for what they should do?**

If a student is experiencing symptoms or worried they have been exposed they should:

* Isolate and not participate with in-person activities:
  + - Call their primary care provider or the Student Health Center and follow instructions for next steps.
      * Check for updated information on the Whatcom County Health Department COVID Site: [https://www.whatcomcounty.us/3375/FAQs#exposure](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.whatcomcounty.us%2F3375%2FFAQs%23exposure&data=04%7C01%7Cphillips%40wwu.edu%7C5e0044275e204588f6b208d96f0af847%7Cdc46140ce26f43efb0ae00f257f478ff%7C0%7C0%7C637662915172672383%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=8tBKew2hykU5JFFox9pzHBEOajhUrtCIEUhOWyzhP6M%3D&reserved=0)

**Will the Student Health Center have any weekend hours for on campus students who need to be tested or other COVID related care?**

Weekends/After Hour Care information (and hours updates) are provided here: <https://studenthealth.wwu.edu/after-hour-care>

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