

HR Lunch & Learn Q & A's and Information Tuesday, September 14, 2021 ~ Noon-1 pm

Meeting Notes

Panel

Business & Financial Affairs Division

- Lea Aune, Associate Director for HR
- Dennis Dashiell, Assistant Director-Organizational & Professional Development, HR
- John Furman, Director, Facilities Management
- Jackson Johnson, Management Analyst, Student Business Office (Parking questions)
- Kathy Thompson, Assistant Director-Benefits & Operations, HR
- Chyerl Wolfe-Lee, **Moderator** / Assistant Vice President for HR

Enrollment & Student Services Division

- Clara Capron, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment & Student Services
- Sislena Ledbetter, Associate Vice President for Counseling, Health & Wellness
- Barbara Luton, Assistant Director, Student Employment

Opening Comments

Chyerl Wolfe Lee welcomed everyone and introduced the following poll:

Do you want the Lunch & Learn meetings recorded?

96% answered Yes.

Sislena Ledbetter

As of September 14th:

- We have 14,579 students, and Enrollment Management believe we are going to top that 15,000 mark. Of those students, we are looking at a 97-98% vaccination rate.
- We have 12,828 that are compliant; 12,529 that have submitted their vaccine cards; and 299 are on approved waivers (2.33% of student population).
- On campus housing approximately 3,900.
- Whatcom County has 65% of population has initiated (at least one dose) of vaccine. Whatcom County fully vaccinated is at 58.9%.
- Within Bellingham School District boundaries is at 73.2%.

There are many things we are preparing for and excited for this fall. Enrollment numbers have exceeded projections. We have two new-to-college student classes arriving. We are excited to have them back on campus and we are doing everything that we can to make sure that they know that we have been thinking about their experience.

- We are upgrading our spaces in both the Student Health Center and the Counseling Center. The Counseling Center and Prevention and Wellness Services have merged to create a more seamless experience for students. We are reconfiguring space, adding paint, color and artwork that honors our indigenous populations.
- We've hired our first black nurse practitioner who specializes in LGBTQ+, substance abuse disorders and BIPOC students.

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- We've launched training for our gender hormone affirming therapy.
- We are hiring three to four BIPOC therapists.
- We are hiring therapists who use non-traditional ways of healing.
- We will be constructing a healing garden that will go in front of Academic West.
- We are working on an integrated care model to bring all of health under one umbrella.

Q: The upcoming Fall Preview Days from the Admissions Office is open for registration from prospective students and up to three guests. Since we are supposed to be a fully vaccinated campus, will it be a requirement for the registered participants to have a covid-19 vaccination to attend?

A: Family members visiting for the day will need to mask and obey signage. We will not require them to show their vaccination record to be on campus with their student. Dining Hall will be managed by our Aramark staff partners. The signage will be clear about masking, distancing, and hygiene.

Q: Referrals for counseling and related supports – are you using Navigate or some other referral system?

A: [Emotional Wellness at Western | Prevention and Wellness Services | Western Washington University \(www.edu\)](https://www.wvu.edu) Students should only have to make one phone call before they are linked to the person that will provide them with direct service.

Clara Capron

Financial Aid will be very busy as students return and realize they must complete their files. We are doing everything that we can to keep the hallways safe.

- Office is open 8-5.
- Will be encouraging virtual meetings w/ Financial Aid Advisors.
- Working w/ BFA to authorize disbursement of 45-50 million dollars in aid for fall.
- The FAFSA requires income from 2017 (pre-pandemic). Anyone who has been financially impacted from the pandemic may request special consideration to have their aid recalculated using an alternate year's income.
- Will be awarding more Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF). HEERF 1 allocation and HEERF 2 student allocation awarded 11.6 million.
- HEERF 3 allocation will be 16 million to be awarded on top of regular aid this year. Using data to identify students in need; more information to come.
- Work-study programs has spent more than ever which is good for students and the institution.

Q: Do we know when we will have finalized the criteria that will be used to distribute CARES to students? For those of us who work with a high number of low-income and/or BIPOC WWU students, how can we get involved and ensure our students are in the loop about accessing these funds?

A: The U.S. Department of Education has finalized criteria associated with HEERF 3 eligibility, one of which consists of the requirement that students have exceptional financial need. Also notable is that undocumented and DACA students are now clearly eligible for

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HEERF \$. As in past quarters, Financial Aid will reach out to our on-campus partners in writing to update them regarding HEERF application processes as well as reach out to all students individually in writing multiple times to invite them to apply. We will update the Financial Aid website to provide information about receiving HEERF 3 as well. In addition, Financial Aid will be working with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the Student Business Office to identify students who appear to be having difficulty paying their tuition, University Residences room/board costs, etc., as an additional indicator of exceptional financial need.

Barbara Luton

- Western's new Employment Hub live today. Point of entry for job seekers and employers. From home page, scroll to bottom and click on Jobs.
<https://www.wvu.edu/workatwestern>
- Students may work remotely, in person, or on a hybrid schedule. It is a departmental decision.
- Students do not need to fill out the Work Agreement Form.
- Western employer page has items and forms to discuss w/ student employees who want to work remotely.

Jackson Johnson

- Employee bus passes available now.
- Parking permits are getting set back up. If you had a parking permit prior to going remote, you can reinstate it by sending an email to Transportation@wwu.edu.
- Pay-by-day permits continue through the year.
- Zone parking ends on the 16th w/ the start of fall quarter permits.
- Move-in this week; some parking lots have limited availability.

Q: What is WTA doing to address the crowded, sardine-like bus situation?

A: WTA is also concerned about the packed sardine situation on the Western runs. They don't have any extra buses to put on WWU runs, though they will add the regular shuttles that have run in past years. They have agreed to schedule additional trailer busses and apply those to any routes that needs it. Please keep in mind that WTA is also experiencing staffing issues due to COVID. <http://www.ridewta.com/covid>

Q: Where should we direct NTT faculty who need to park on campus once/week.

A: Pay-by-day would be the best option. Email Transportation@wwu.edu. **The specific lot that any employee is assigned is determined by their previously assigned lot.** If the employee did not previously have a permit, they would be assigned lot 12G.

Q: Is the Pay-by-day permit different than the Commuter Coupons? How does that work with the app?

A: The Pay-by-day is an all-levels improvement of the Commuter Coupons. Different from Commuter Coupons, Pay-by-day does not require purchasing packages of ten and you do not need to go to the pay station to activate. Pay-by-day is available for all lots, not just those w/

pay stations. Commuter coupons do not use the app, Pay-by-day does. Both are currently valid but Pay-by-day will most likely be the long-term solution.

Lea Aune

- Announcement last week streamlined version of Remote Work Agreement. <https://hr.wvu.edu/remote-work-western>
- If you have completed the previous version of the agreement or Workforce Feasibility Worksheet, you do not have to redo it.
- Remote work will be available beyond fall quarter. That conversation will be driven by the duties of the position.
- Over 90% of permanent employees have reported vaccinated. The overall number is mid to high 80s; numbers are changing as we transition from summer to fall quarter.
- HR is reaching out to individual employees to see if assistance is needed.
- Still working through the details of the Covid Leave; will share more information soon. As of October 1st, full-time employees will have 40 hours available for anything covid-related: illness, symptoms, vaccine side effects, quarantine, care of family, etc. Good while state of emergency is in effect for the state of Washington.
- Covid Shared Leave Program available. This program is completely separate from regular shared leave program. Rules may be slightly different, working on that & more information to come soon.
- Moving forward with weekly testing option for vaccinated folks through Northwest Labs; was previously available bi-weekly.
- Also looking into transportation options to get over to Northwest Labs. More details in a week or so.
- The contract at the SHC to support mandatory testing for those with exceptions has been approved.
- EAP is available to Western employees and their family members.

Q: Would sick leave need to be exhausted before accessing Covid Leave?

A: No, we are not expecting that sick leave would need to be exhausted, but we are working out how much sick leave employees could maintain in existing balances before tapping into those pools. Details will be available very soon.

Q: Northwest Labs is pretty backed up. Will they increase availability to support this additional volunteer testing?

A: HR will follow up with Northwest Labs.

Kathy Thompson

- Currently 52 requests for exemption and 26 approvals.

Q: Is it permissible to share information about the exemptions? Are they mostly medical or religious?

A: There is a mix coming through.

Q: Are you going to alert folks if they may have been exposed to someone with Covid?

A: Absolutely. HR needs to be notified of a positive test, and we will alert those that may have been around that person.

Q: Will employees whose family members have Covid be required to quarantine?

A: It depends if you have been vaccinated or not. If you are vaccinated, the CDC and Whatcom Health Dept do not require that you quarantine, however they do ask that you get tested at the 3-5 day mark after exposure, and that you wear a mask for 14 days whenever around people. If you're not vaccinated you would quarantine for 14 days depending on the ability to isolate from that family member. HR can provide more guidance if needed.

Dennis Dashiell

We are going to be increasingly on site with each other, and as a supervisor, or someone who takes responsibility for the work environment, we need to recognize it takes energy to be patient and kind, and to engage with our employees effectively not reactively. Here are some things to remember when having a tough conversation:

- Be polite and engage with the assumption that it's going to be an easy ask.
- Save face, don't call attention, don't be loud.
- You don't need to be in a position to have a debate. It's not up to us to define merits. It's just a matter of following policy.
- Remember to engage with your employees frequently – don't ignore or they may become toxically disengaged. Talk to them about what they find energizing about the work or about their space. These are emotional bank deposits, and you may pull from that for the tough conversations.

John Furman

- There is an updated link on the FM's website re: building ventilation, cleaning, and a link to live data platform that allows access to building information in relative real time. [COVID-19 FAQs \(www.edu\)](https://www.wvu.edu)
- Not always able to answer questions about specific spaces; more about the systems within a building and the spaces those systems serve.