

UNLV



COVID-19 Differential Impacts Task Force: Lessons Learned

Janet S. Dufek, Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs
April 15, 2021

UNLV—

COVID-19 Differential Impacts Task Force

- Faculty and Staff COVID-19 Impact Survey
 - Disseminated January 19, 2021
 - Responses through Feb 19, 2021
- My charge today – present results

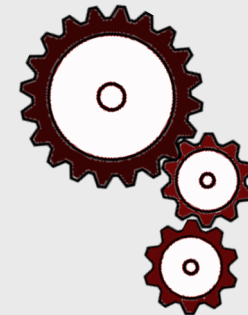
Task Force Co-Chairs: Kimberly Kendricks, Debra Coleman

Virtual Town Hall Panelists

- President: *Keith Whitfield*
- Executive Vice President & Provost: *Chris Heavey*
- Vice President for Integrated Marketing and Branding: *Vince Alberta*
- Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer: *Ericka Smith*
- Faculty Senate Chair: *Vicki Rosser*
 - Task Force Co-Chairs: *Debra Coleman* and *Kimberly Kendricks*
 - Working Group Committee Chairs: *Emma Bloomfield*, *Debra Coleman*, *Kimberly Kendricks*, *Allison Sahl*, *David Schwartz*

Five Working Groups

- Annual Evaluations
- Campus Survey
- Focus Groups
- Tenure & Promotion
- Work/Life Balance



Task Force Co-Chairs: Kimberly Kendricks, Debra Coleman

Annual Evaluations Working Group: Charge

Encourage all faculty and staff members to prepare a COVID-19 impact statement as part of the 2020 annual evaluation

Purpose: Review what went well; Identify challenges

* Develop appropriate plans for the upcoming calendar year

*Team Members: Allison Sahl (Chair), Kimberly Kendricks,
LaToya Burdiss*

Annual Evaluations Working Group: Major Activities

Developed COVID-19 impact statement *framework* as part of the 2020 annual review process for faculty and staff (optional)

- Academic faculty:
A new question was added as a self-reporting field in UNLV Folio
- Administrative faculty:
The 'Related Factors' section of the self-reporting form was designated for reporting the impact statement
- Classified staff:
A separate document (not part of the staff member's formal evaluation) was created for reporting the impact statement

Annual Evaluations Working Group: Major Activities

Developed two documents:

- Guidance for faculty and staff on how to write a COVID-19 impact statement
- Guidance for supervisors on how to review and respond to COVID-19 impact statements to better support employees

Information broadly disseminated – OFA & HR websites & UNLV Folio trainings

Annual Evaluations Working Group: Recommendations

Continue to recognize that 2020 was a difficult year for all employees

- Adjustments made during 2020 may likely have a cumulative effect on future work performance and workflow
- Continue option of including a COVID-19 impact statement for the 2021 annual review cycle

Campus Survey Working Group: Charge

Develop and distribute a survey for all faculty and staff to learn more about the spectrum of COVID-19 effects on UNLV employees

Purpose: Gain a better understanding of the scope of COVID-19 impacts on faculty and staff well-being and productivity

- Develop plans to better support employees during *and after* the pandemic

Team Members: Allison Sahl (Co-Chair), Kimberly Kendricks (Co-Chair), Dak Kopec

Campus Survey Working Group: Additional Information

1. Survey was open Jan 19, 2021 – Feb 19, 2021
2. Respondents:
 - * 42% Administrative
 - * 38% Academic
 - * 18% Classified
 - * 2% Other

Campus Survey Working Group: Major Themes

Four major themes emerged (from over 1500 responses):

1. Impact on job performance
2. Impact on well-being
3. Attitudes toward university actions
4. Future impacts

Campus Survey Working Group: Major Themes (multiple choice questions)

Impact on job performance

- Jobs were more difficult
- Scope of work changed
- Academic faculty: ability to teach effectively, conduct research, and conduct service was negatively impacted

Campus Survey Working Group: Major Themes

Impact on well-being

Overall, employees reported a *moderate* level of stress during the pandemic:

- Academic faculty: Top stressor - transitioning to online teaching
- Administrative faculty and staff: Top stressor - avoiding the virus
- Faculty of color: Top stressor - avoiding the virus
- Parents/caregivers: Top stressor - balancing the demands of family and work

Campus Survey Working Group: Major Themes

Attitudes toward university actions

- Overall, employees reported that UNLV's response to the pandemic was generally helpful
- Most helpful across all job categories:
 - * Flexible workload agreements
 - * Telecommuting policy
- Among employees required to work on campus, COVID-19 protocols were followed
 - * Valued as non-remote workers

Campus Survey Working Group: Major Themes

Future Impacts

- Employees seek flexibility in their work lives moving forward
- Top employee recommendations post-pandemic:
 - * Continue to work remotely
 - * Continue to meet remotely
- Other items highly ranked by group post-pandemic:
 - * Academic Faculty - reduced class sizes
 - * Caregivers - More future online course options

Campus Survey Working Group: Major Themes

Open-ended questions

- What went well?
- What was most challenging?
- What are proposed solutions?

A fourth question was asked of parents/caregivers:

- How have your parenting/caregiving responsibilities changed and what impacts have they had on your work?

Campus Survey Working Group: Major Themes (Open-ended Questions)

What went well?

1. Flexible work schedule and working remotely
2. Support and communication from supervisors, administration, and colleagues
3. Technology support, Online Education support, online workshops
4. COVID-19 safety initiatives

Campus Survey Working Group: Major Themes (Open-ended Questions)

What was most challenging?

1. Balancing work and life
2. Balancing childcare/adult care, schooling
3. Lack of socialization
4. Teaching remotely
5. Work creep (including changing job duties/ expectations)
6. Mental and physical health (fear, stress, anxiety, sickness, injury)

Campus Survey Working Group: Major Themes (Open-ended Questions)

What are potential solutions?

- Flexible work schedules
- Greater access to the vaccine

Campus Survey Working Group: Recommendations

Continue to provide flexibility in the workplace

- Institutionalize a remote work/flex-work policy that is inclusive of all employees
- Continue to hold meetings remotely

Campus Survey Working Group: Recommendations

Lasting Impacts

- Recognize that work performance during 2020 will have lasting effects for all workers, especially for academic faculty
- Reduce expectations that things will be exactly as they were pre-pandemic

Focus Groups Working Group: Charge

Hold focus group meetings with campus leaders to gain a better understanding of concerns regarding their ability to promote equity and success for all faculty and staff

Team Members: Emma Bloomfield (Chair), Debra Coleman, Kimberly Kendricks, David G. Schwartz, LaToya Burdiss

Focus Groups Working Group: Participants

- Total: n = 59
 - 8 Deans
 - 4 Upper Administration
 - 11 Academic Chairs / Directors
 - 30 Administrative Supervisors
 - 6 Classified Staff Leaders
- Additional 21 survey responses from campus community

Focus Groups Working Group: Major Themes

1. Employees are stressed and overextended
2. Flexibility saved us; more flexibility is needed
3. The pandemic is exacerbating divisions within UNLV
4. More resources are needed for equitable care of employees
5. Consistent and transparent communication is essential

Focus Groups Working Group: Recommendations

More guidance and communication needed, specifically:

- How to support employees with challenging work conditions
- Increase opportunities to share concerns with campus leadership

Focus Groups Working Group: Recommendations

Policies and resources:

- A remote work/flex-work policy that includes employees who originally were not eligible
- Additional resources and support to Online Education and the Office of Information Technology
- Tenure extension policies that are considerate of salary impacts
- More teaching lines and technology resources for teaching

Focus Groups Working Group: Recommendations

Mental health support:

- Facilitators for conversations on mental health and inequities
- Increase support for mental health emergencies
- Increase opportunities for social interaction

Tenure & Promotion Working Group: Charge

1. Provide training and guidance to academic leaders and review committees on how to be more equitable in their deliberations and decisions
2. Revise language in letters to external reviewers
3. Address tenure/promotion supports and constraints

...(more)

Tenure & Promotion Working Group: Charge

4. Revisit considerations of teaching evaluations
5. Consider extending the probationary period beyond one additional year

*Team Members: David G. Schwartz
(Chair), Emma Bloomfield, Dak Kopec*

Tenure & Promotion Working Group: Major Activities

- Provided written guidance to Executive Vice President and Provost about strategies for mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on tenure and promotion candidates
- Provided written guidance for all those reviewing tenure and promotion files on how to assess the impact of COVID-19 on tenure and promotion applications

Tenure & Promotion Working Group: Recommendations

- Understand that student evaluations of teaching are but a single data point in constructing a view of teaching excellence
 - Potential impact of COVID-19 related disruptions should be taken into account
- Extend deadline for requesting COVID-19 extension to June 30, 2021 (in place currently)
- Consider the impact of COVID-19 on research productivity when evaluating cases for tenure and promotion

Work/Life Working Group: Charge

Continue to emphasize themes of flexibility, understanding, and care for our community in all campus-wide messaging related to the COVID-19 pandemic

Team Members: Kimberly Kendricks (Chair), LaToya Burdiss, Kim Dawes, Jared Nitz, & Allison Sahl

Work/Life Working Group: Major Activities

1. Contributed to UNLV's new remote-work/flex-work policy
2. Contributed resources to UNLV's Faculty/Staff, Wellness, and Work/Life web pages
3. Contributed resources to UNLV's COVID-19 Campus Resources web page

...(more)

Work/Life Working Group: Major Activities

4. Enhanced access to COVID-19 resources through the Rebel Safe App
5. Promoted wellness activities offered through the Student Recreation and Wellness Center
6. Promoted mentoring and networking programs and services
7. Developed the UNLV's Managers' Forum with HR

Work/Life Working Group: Recommendations

Establish a campus-wide wellness/work-life committee to organize a university wellness program, including:

- Activities for faculty and staff
- Promotion of unit- and university-level wellness activities
- Campus communications about employee well-being
- Management of the work/life and wellness web pages

National AERA*/Spencer Foundation Survey: Voices From the Field

- Focus groups on impact of COVID-19
 - Early career faculty (< 6 yrs)
 - Doctoral students
- Summer 2020
 - 12 focus groups
 - N=58
 - 86% female
 - 69% people of color

*American Educational Research Association

UNLV

National AERA/Spencer Foundation Survey: Voices From the Field

Impacts:

- Research: Disruptions, delays, and adaptations
- Teaching: Adaptations, intentions, and inclusion
- Work/life balance: Negotiating family, professional life, home and community
- Dual pandemics: Race and COVID-19
- Institutional response and support
- Employment trajectories, uncertainties, deferments
- Lack of socialization, communities, and communication

National AERA/Spencer Foundation Survey: Voices From the Field

Recommendations:

- Provide financial support for emerging scholars
- Invest in teaching and technology resources
- Involve faculty and staff in decisions that will impact their work
- Increase mentoring services and networking opportunities
- Acknowledge inequities in policies, particularly for faculty and staff of color

Thank You Campus Partners

- Administrative Faculty Committee
- Classified Staff Council
- College of Education
- Faculty Center
- Faculty Senate
- Human Resources
- Police Services
- School of Public Health
- Student Recreation & Wellness Center
- Web & Digital Strategy
- Focus Group Facilitators & Scribes
 - Harriet Barlow
 - Savannah Baltera
 - Emma Bloomfield
 - Jim Boyer
 - Debra Coleman
 - Robert Futrell
 - Juanita Hinojosa
 - Kimberly Kendricks
 - Norma Saldivar
 - David Schwartz
 - Brigitte Sohn
 - Anne Stevens

COVID-19 Differential Impacts Task Force

Questions for the Panelists?

COVID-19 Differential Impacts Task Force

<https://www.unlv.edu/ofa/about/climate-surveys/covid-19>