

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SENATE ASSEMBLY
FINANCIAL AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FAAC)
Advisory to Kevin Hegarty, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members:

- Doug Richstone (Chair), Professor, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
- Kevin Hegarty, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer**
- Adam Matzger, Professor, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
- Daniel Rife, Director, Facilities and Operations
- Elizabeth Devlin, Faculty Governance Coordinator, Faculty Senate Office
- Erhan Bayraktar, Professor, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts**
- Erik Marshall, Lecturer II, College of Arts, Sciences and Letters-UM Dearborn
- Erik Nielsen, Associate Professor, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
- Ivo Dinov, Professor, SACUA Liaison, Nursing
- Jessica Pasquale, Senior Associate Librarian, Michigan Law
- John Mansfield, Undergraduate Student, Business
- Keith Riles, Professor, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
- Michael Byers, Associate Professor, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts**
- Nancy Allee, Director, University Library
- Nicholas Reed Dunnick, Professor, Medical School**
- Vincent Alessi, Graduate Student, Computational Medicine and Bioinformatics
- Jane Jakeway, Staff Support, Executive Assistant to the EVPCFO

** Absent

Guests:

- Krista Farmer, LS&A Finance Director
- Rich Holcomb, Associate Vice President for Human Resources
- Brian Smith, Associate Vice President for Finance

Chair Richstone convened the meeting at 11 am. Chair Richstone introduced today's discussion topic: WISE (Workplace Innovation & Staff Experience) committee recommendations. Today's guests are: Krista Farmer, Rich Holcomb and Brian Smith. The WISE committee, chaired by Pam Gabel, executive director of the shared services center; Bobby Hewlett, controller, UMHS; and Krista Farmer, LSA finance director was formed to provide short and long-term recommendations to the President and Executive Officers addressing expectations and requirements for staff members to sustain their work during the pandemic and post-pandemic. Recommendations should recognize the unique aspects of staff based on their roles and areas of work across the university. This applies to all regular staff (does not include bargained for staff).

Ms. Farmer stated 110 recommendations are included in the WISE recommendations and the top-ten are listed below:

1. Endorse, enable, and support the continuance of flexible work arrangement and schedules. Create best practices & templates for building flexible and alternative work schedules.

2. Perform a job needs assessment at the institutional level. Recommend to departments which classification of staff should be eligible for remote/hybrid work options.
3. Develop a “remote work” IT package for staff including U-M managed laptop with softphone, one set peripherals (mouse, keyboard, monitors, docking station, headset).
4. Develop comprehensive training program, community of practice and toolkit for supervisors to effectively manage multi-modal work teams.
5. Develop training for standard remote setup instructions. Gather all relevant remote work resources for staff, comms, etc. in a single location.
6. Create a culture that empowers staff to prioritize time in their work day (remote or on-site) to engage in self-care.
7. Create a simplified flexible array of parking permit options that meets the needs of staff members that are fully remote, hybrid and full time.
8. Develop a consistent strategy for stipends such as: cell phone/internet/hotspot or other necessary supplies
9. Ease access to UM mental health services by increasing the number of counselors to decrease wait time for appointments and securing additional office space around UM, including Flint and Dearborn.
10. Explore innovative benefits package that include: assistance with student loan debt, preventative health care, expanded parental benefits, family care alternatives, and stipends for childcare related expenses.

Ms. Farmer stated it was important to remember that the outcomes were not about remote work rather about innovation and changes to how we do our business. There was a common theme throughout all of the recommendations that was also shared by the staff survey: flexibility, social care, personal care and accountability. These recommendations were put forward in December 2020 to the executive officers.

AVPF Brian Smith and AVPHR Rich Holcomb shared the outcome of the cross-functional Future Workplace Response working group comprised of HR and finance staff from Business and Finance, colleges and schools, student life and Michigan Medicine. AVPF Smith stated they looked at three areas for interim guidance:

- Office equipment: provide for primary worksite only - either onsite or offsite. It is important to prioritize use of existing equipment. Purchases permitted if deemed essential. Units are responsible for approving, tracking equipment and making sure equipment is returned.
- Office Supplies: if possible, employees should utilize their department’s current supply/stock. This may require visits to campus to collect supplies; off-hour pickups and/or coordinated office visits are recommended due to social distancing requirements.
- Tech stipends: should not be used to cover internet. Departments should refrain from reimbursing for internet unless the dean or executive officer approves for exceptional circumstances.

Chair Richstone reminded everyone that the university is trying to mitigate risks of spreading Covid19 by not having employees come to campus and the importance of social distancing. AVPF Smith agreed and encouraged individuals to coordinate contactless pick up during “off hours” of necessary supplies and equipment.

AVPHR Holcomb reminded everyone of the university’s decentralized nature and there is not a one-size fits all solution to flexible work schedules. How do we operationalize and socialize the principles of flexible work schedules across campus? How do we tackle this issue with different needs across the business, research and medical enterprise? AVPHR Holcomb informed the committee that Pam Gabel, executive director of the shared services center, and James Hilton, dean of the university libraries are forming a committee to advise on next steps and common principles of the recommendations of the WISE committee.

AVPHR Holcomb asked everyone to think about the new way we will be working, what will the future of the educational mission look like? What does the staff experience look like? What do you envision the future of work look like in your unit?

Professor Nielsen stated there is value added with in-person experience and he is hopeful for flexible schedules when staff are able to return to campus. Chair Richstone agreed noting it was difficult for students to have lab experiences remotely. Professor Matzger noted the second semester (fall) was more difficult as there was never a time for in-person classes and it was more difficult to connect with his students. Both in-person for social interaction and the ability to work from home make employees happier.

AVPHR Holcomb thanked everyone for their thoughtful feedback and stated they surveyed 12,000 staff and had a 65% response rate. Of the 65% that responded, 87% would like a hybrid model (ability to work remotely and on campus)

It was noted by the members present that some business functions/areas on campus work well remotely while others are more productive to have in person.

Chair Richstone thanked Ms. Farmer, AVPHR Holcomb and AVPF Smith for attending today’s discussion and for their hard work during the pandemic. Meeting adjourned at 12 pm.

WISE COMMITTEE

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

A proposal for a path to a modern workplace of the future

Organizations face a choice between returning to a post-COVID world that is simply an enhanced version of yesterday or building one that is a sustainable version of tomorrow.

The risk is more than that of falling behind—it's the possibility of never catching up at all.

(Deloitte Insights)

WISE TOP 10 RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Endorse, enable, and support the continuance of flexible work arrangements and schedules. Create best practices & templates for building flexible and alternative work schedules.

2

Perform a job needs assessment at the institutional level. Recommend to departments which classification of staff should be eligible for remote/hybrid work options.

3

Develop a "remote work" IT package for staff including: U-M managed laptop with a softphone, one set of peripherals (mouse, keyboard, monitors, docking station, headset).

4

Develop comprehensive training program, community of practice and toolkit for Supervisors to effectively manage multi-modal work teams.

5

Develop training for standard remote setup instructions. Gather all relevant remote work resources for staff, comms, etc. in a single location.

6

Create a culture that empowers staff to prioritize time in their work day (remote or on-site) to engage in self-care.

7

Create a simplified flexible array of parking permit options that meets the needs of staff members that are fully remote, hybrid and full time.

8

Develop a consistent strategy for stipends such as: cell phone / internet / hotspot, or other necessary supplies.

9

Ease access to U-M mental health services by increasing the number of counselors to decrease wait time for appointments and securing additional office space around the U-M, including Dearborn and Flint.

10

Explore innovative benefits package that include: assistance with student loan debt, preventative health care, expanded parental benefits, family-care alternatives, and stipends for childcare related expenses.

HOW DOES U-M PLAN TO REMAIN “LEADERS AND BEST” AND DELIVER ON THE CORE UNIVERSITY MISSION IN THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES WHEN FUTURE DISRUPTION IS INEVITABLE?

It is crucial to develop a resilient strategy that addresses the workplace shifts that will persist beyond the pandemic. We have proven that remote and hybrid work options do not only benefit staff, but also the university, in that they allow work to continue without a physical presence. Although the physical workplace, in some capacity, remains essential to building culture and fueling innovation, at this time, U-M must reassess and modify strategy. We must be decisive, swift and committed to developing and implementing a diversified workplace location strategy. Specifically, one that stresses new physical work locations while delivering the institutional missions and the individual needs of the current and future workforce. Fluidity and flexibility are keys to fostering a culture of productivity, innovation, empowerment and, ultimately, resilience.

SO HOW DO WE GET THERE?

The WISE committee was charged with proposing a series of recommendations for providing an innovative and safe workplace for U-M staff, whether that is on-site, in a hybrid manner, or remotely. The short-term WISE recommendations addressed the necessary staff communications and logistics to support the large number of staff working remotely in Fall 2020 (to ultimately assist U-M in reducing campus density.) For the long-term, the WISE committee recommends that U-M leadership embrace and support that work has shifted radically from its pre-pandemic state. While it someday will be safe to return to pre-pandemic work conditions, recruiting, hiring, and retaining the “Leaders and Best” requires us to seize the lessons learned from this crisis and re-envision where and how staff work. Rather than slipping back into the legacy view that staff work is generally best performed 40 hours a week, on-site, and in person, we challenge U-M leadership to consider and support a bold new vision. This vision focuses on empowering managers and staff to collaborate and innovate to create a modern workplace culture of flexibility and adaptability.

**U-M MUST ADOPT
A DIVERSIFIED
WORKPLACE
LOCATION
STRATEGY**

STAFF NEED AND EXPECT U-M LEADERSHIP TO TAKE DECISIVE ACTION AND PUT FORTH A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE.

What are the details of this “bold new vision?”

- Based on agreement that other roles can be performed in a hybrid/remote manner, and allows supervisors and staff to determine how this can be done successfully within the teaching, learning, research, or clinical mission.
- Reinforces our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives by opening up a broader and potentially more diverse candidate pool for positions that can accommodate remote or hybrid work options. It challenges Deans and Directors to approach the idea of hybrid and remote work options with increased open-mindedness, but it also permits them control over the work options that best fit their unit culture.
- Incorporates staff feedback to build solutions that are embraced and accepted.
- Develops a toolkit of on-site/hybrid/remote work resources which can be adopted and adapted at the unit level, to fit unique use cases.
- Explores how to adapt critical facilities, financial, human resources, information technology, and other business functions to serve all employees, regardless of where, when, or how they perform their work.
- Built with the understanding that implementation of hybrid and remote work will require transparency, flexibility, and engagement across campus, within units, and between individual supervisors and staff.
- Acknowledges that remote work will require different ways of setting performance goals, creating accountability, measuring success, and establishing trust.
- Celebrates all staff contributions, regardless of where, when, and how employees contribute, deeply and meaningfully, to the greater U-M mission.
- Involves developing policies that enable, as opposed to discourage, different types of work arrangements based on both staff and unit needs.

WHY WAS THE WISE COMMITTEE CONVENED?

As a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, U-M has been required to take extraordinary measures to successfully meet its missions and obligations. These measures have impacted every aspect of the university, and have dramatically affected where staff work, how they work, and what tools are required to do their jobs. Staff have adjusted, innovated and met the many challenges presented during this time. The Workplace Innovation & Staff Experience (WISE) Committee was envisioned by Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer, Kevin Hegarty to address the unique and common needs of U-M staff.

- Short-term WISE recommendations were designed to provide Executive Officers with a list of immediate needs and suggestions for staff working remotely during the pandemic.
- Long-term WISE recommendations are designed to provide ideas of how we might re- envision both remote and on-site staff work, with the recognition that the pandemic has driven changes that will alter the workplace forever.

The WISE committee also provides dedicated focus on the ongoing resources needed during this global crisis, by U-M's ~19,000 administrative staff members, as they seek to serve our students, support our faculty, compete athletically, and sustain the institution financially.

WHAT WORK HAS THE WISE COMMITTEE DONE TO DATE?

The WISE committee was convened in July and delivered short-term recommendations to the Executive Officers on August 6, 2020. Following the presentation of the short-term recommendations, the team separated into four sub-committees focusing on:

- the employee lifecycle
- manager/employee relationships
- campus/remote site considerations
- information technology resources & support

Sub-committees included additional campus collaborators and research, and each sub-committee developed individual reports which were refined into long-term recommendations (this report).

**Employees are
the ones who
carry out the
mission of an
institution**
*(Chronicle of
Higher
Education)*

WHICH SHORT-TERM WISE RECOMMENDATIONS HAVE BEEN ENACTED TO DATE?

WISE recognizes that a number of the short-term recommendations that the committee (and other campus leaders) suggested have already been enacted. These include:

- Compile COVID and other resources onto key “hub” websites: [Maize and Blueprint](#) and the [COVID Resources site](#).
- Increase the overall [communications](#) cadence between executives and staff such as the President’s weekly updates and town-halls.
- Reinforce the importance of the safety protocols. Acknowledge that success during this crisis is a shared responsibility across U-M.
- Communicate to staff that U-M will continue to operate in a “pandemic hybrid operations” model. Set the [expectation](#) that staff will continue to work remotely to keep campus density low and assist in supporting a public-health informed on campus fall semester.
- Provide strong [public health and community](#) resources.
- Clearly provide a [method for reporting](#) non-compliance with safety protocols.
- Provide [guidelines](#) on how to handle staff that contract COVID-19.
- Develop guidance on how unit plans are created, reviewed, published, communicated, and followed.
- Communicate policies around COVID-19 [training requirements](#).
- Share [building closures and other community notices](#).
- Provide resources for staff on [Working Remotely](#).
- Offer specific guidance for those who supervise bargained-for staff.

WISE RECOMMENDATIONS THAT AREAS ACROSS U-M HAVE EMBRACED

- Support more flexible scheduling options for remote staff who may have childcare, family, health, or other challenges at this time. Empower staff to advocate for appropriate work/life balance.
- Consider how to support staff who may wish to return to work early due to unsafe home conditions or home environments not conducive to work.
- Develop back-up plans for staff illness, cross-training for key duties, etc.
- Permit all remote staff members to bring home their U-M computer, monitors, mouse, keyboard, docking station, office chair, and/or other necessary IT peripherals.

ADDITIONAL SHORT-TERM WISE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS THAT MAY STILL WARRANT EXECUTIVE OFFICER EVALUATION

- Encouragement that all managers complete the [MHealthy's "Leaders Creating A Culture At Its Best"](#) workshop.
- Develop "Words That Work" training to support communication skills for de-escalating situations that could arise around mask-wearing and other safety protocols.
- Develop key messages at the Executive Officer level that can be cascaded across units, departments, and teams for consistent language, expectations, policies, and standards.

WHAT HAS U-M LEARNED FROM THE PANDEMIC?

WISE committee members identified some of the most significant lessons learned by leadership, management, and staff during the pandemic. These lessons included:

- The U-M community can do just about anything – our resilience is phenomenal.
- U-M Staff adapted quickly to remote work, and many of the historical assumptions about where, when, and how work can be completed proved to be inaccurate.
- Decentralization means that lots of leaders and committees are working on the same problems and challenges in isolation.
- Staff across our academic, athletic, and medical campuses have similar needs, but the policies, processes, and systems to address these needs can be very different.
- Collaboration can open up new opportunities to learn from one another.
- The U-M community is going through unprecedented levels of change. Therefore, dedicated time, energy, and effort (such as the WISE committee) must be given to capturing lessons learned.
- Faculty, staff, and students benefit from in-person contact with one another.
- The community is developing greater appreciation for our colleagues and the extraordinary individual talents each one brings to the team.
- Leadership, management, and staff must prioritize taking care themselves, their families, and one another. There is power in showing flexibility, compassion, and grace.
- U-M continues to learn how to build community and create opportunities for meaningful connections in this virtual world. People are still learning how to be engaged while working apart from one another.

SCOPE AND OVER-ARCHING ASSUMPTIONS

The WISE committee is applying the following scope, assumptions, and understanding to our recommendations:

Definition of staff. Regular staff can be defined as Ann Arbor, Dearborn, Flint, and Michigan Medicine campus staff (excluding: professorial faculty, research faculty, clinical faculty and bargained-for employees.)

Note: Although the WISE committee does not have faculty, clinical faculty, or bargained-for staff in its scope, some recommendations may be relevant to these groups.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Employment research shows that to attract and retain the widest array of talented staff, from a variety of locations and generations, employers need to support DEI activities. The WISE committee presumes that providing staff options for on-site, remote, and hybrid work increases equity for staff.

Remote work isn't appropriate for every role, unit, circumstance or person. Some jobs cannot be performed remotely or in a hybrid arrangement, and those arrangements are not always in the best interests of the individual.

Better together & the residential experience. Just because some jobs *could* be accomplished remotely does not mean they *should* be accomplished remotely long-term. In addition, remote work is not *desirable* to every staff member. U-M has a philosophy that we are a residential institution, which relies on face-to-face interactions with students and patients. And, that our community is stronger when we are working together on campus and in clinical settings. There are student and patient-facing roles as well as academic/research/clinical supporting roles that are best performed through direct contact. We also understand the magic of chance encounters and that technology will never fully recreate the in-person experience.

U-M Leaders will need to define the scope of remote work in their units. We are stronger for our decentralized nature and unique unit cultures. Each Dean or Director may have their own perspective on how much remote work is appropriate for their unit and which roles can have greater choice and control over where, when, and how they work. The WISE committee acknowledges that one set of policies, procedures, or tools will not fit every unit or role. Because each unit mission varies, remote work will need to vary accordingly. However, some centrally applied guardrails, supported by U-M leadership, will accelerate forward thinking by Deans and Directors, with regard to workplace innovation.

SCOPE AND OVER-ARCHING ASSUMPTIONS

Remote work tools require remote supervisory and leadership tools. For many supervisors, accountability has historically been tied to staff performing 40 hours of work, on-site during business hours. If we shift to more remote work, our supervisors need training on how to modify the current ways they supervise, hold staff accountable, and measure productivity.

Build a toolkit not a cookie cutter. The WISE committee recommends that a toolkit of resources be developed to draw upon when implementing remote work in the future. Ideally, the resources would help enable staff working remotely during the pandemic to continue to do so successfully. The resources would also allow units to hire and onboard new remote employees more smoothly. Finally, the toolkit would provide best practices built across the organization so that each unit is not re-inventing the wheel independently. At the same time, it would be critical to communicate that the recommendations are not appropriate for every unit, role, or mission. It would be essential to emphasize a message of flexibility across our 19 schools and colleges, 75 administrative units, three campuses and Michigan Medicine.

Celebrate all staff contributions. As WISE committee recommendations move forward, it is essential to recognize the deep and meaningful contributions that every staff member makes to the greater U-M mission. It's important that work, done on-site, remotely, or in a hybrid manner, is equitably valued and celebrated. It's also essential that all staff, whether on-site or remote, do not see long-term remote work opportunities, as perks or punitive but rather as a U-M commitment to be flexible and innovative where we are able.



of talent professionals agree that work **flexibility** (which includes remote work options) will be very important for the future of HR and recruiting. (*LinkedIn*)

WHY DO THE WISE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS MATTER?

The pandemic has changed the world of work radically. In order for U-M to recruit, attract, and retain staff who embody the “leaders and best” spirit, we need to consider what we have learned and how we can grow. Beyond positioning U-M as an innovative and flexible employer to employees, additional benefits to staff and U-M might also include:

BENEFITS TO STAFF

- Addressing “employee experience” challenges such as: disengagement, burnout, and staff turnover.
- Accommodating employees who may have long-term fears about on site work, crowded offices, or may have long-term family or health care challenges that make it difficult to return to a legacy work model.
- Supporting, enhancing and advancing inclusion and equity between all categories of staff, faculty, and students.
- Reducing some work-related costs for staff (e.g., gas, car maintenance, meals on campus, etc.)
- Increasing work-life balance, flexibility and engagement for many due to reduced commute time.
- Reducing staff stress due to lengthy commutes.

BENEFITS TO THE UNIVERSITY

- Potential for expanding the diversity of our local/regional U-M workforce to include employees across the state, nation, and world.
- Advancing our environmental & sustainability (carbon neutrality) presidential initiative, due to reduced energy consumption, staff commuting, and travel.
- Reducing U-M real estate costs for off-campus rental properties.
- Reducing U-M supply and incidental costs (e.g., printer paper, pens, coffee, etc.)
- Reducing parking challenges for faculty, staff, students and patients.
- Re-allocating savings to U-M teaching, learning, research, and patient care missions.
- Ensuring that our higher education institution does not fall behind our peers by being a late adapter to a new work paradigm

IS THERE RISK TO NOT TAKING ACTION?

Conversely, a failure to take decisive action and embrace a new world of work, as well as lessons learned from the pandemic may significantly hinder U-M in competing for talented employees. Returning to traditional, pre-pandemic norms, with limited choices on where, when, or how work is performed, could decrease job satisfaction, increase burnout, and could hurt retention. Additional risks from not taking decisive action may include:

- Staff disengagement, burnout, or retention challenges as flexibility is removed.
- Slowed progress on diversity, equity and inclusion goals for staff, faculty, and students.
- Unrealized environmental & sustainability gains.
- Continued real estate costs.
- A return to pre-pandemic supply and incidental costs.
- Unrealized parking and transportation benefits.
- A return to pre-pandemic commute, travel, and parking costs for staff and units.
- Inability to achieve savings that can be reallocated to U-M teaching, learning, research, and patient care missions.
- Potential need to increase tuition to both cover existing U-M costs and additional COVID-related costs.

These realities will likely leave U-M out of step with our new national culture and employers of choice across the nation.



of employees, remote or on-site say that a remote work opportunity would make them feel happier at their job.

(Owl Labs)

WHAT ARE THE HIGHEST PRIORITY LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS?

Flexibility & Accountability

As the committee worked through the various recommendations, we realized that flexibility and accountability surfaced as a recurring theme, with a need to strike a balance between the two. The strongest example of this is found in the question of, how staff can benefit from increased flexibility in where/when/how they perform their work while, still being accountable for completing high-caliber work. The following recommendations address this need for balance.

FLEXIBILITY

Creating and supporting flexibility around where/when/how staff perform their work has multiple benefits, such as the ones laid out in the "Why do the WISE Committee recommendations matter" section of this report. A strong culture of flexibility (where possible) also allows U-M to be more agile in response to future challenges.

Recruiting / Talent

- Create an interactive, virtual, U-M employee recruiting tool with the goal of reaching a wider, diverse, and global talent-pool.

Onboarding and Orientation

- Leverage a current virtual/online platform for New Employee Orientation (NEO) that will house documentation, trainings, and all other required materials and information.
- Endorse, enable, and support the continuance of flexible work arrangements.
 - Build, and continue to support, resources that help to optimize the use of flexible work schedules/arrangements.
 - Craft a remote work policy that clearly states expectations.
 - Remove boundaries and resolve technology and policy issues.
 - Create appropriate leadership communications, and gain buy-in from top leadership.

Supervisor/Manager Support

- Create a comprehensive training program and community of practice (CoP) for supervisors on managing multi-mode work teams including:
 - Publish best practices for performance management with hybrid/remote teams.
 - Create accessible opportunities for team-building activities so staff can build connections in a multi-modal work environment.
 - Provide guidance on equitable solutions within units and how supervisors can make decisions and set standards that are both inclusive and equitable.
 - Encourage creativity and other flexible options for onsite roles.
 - Compile a supervisor toolkit to support the training program that includes best practices and sample templates (i.e., meeting norms, effective communication, facilitation techniques, work summaries, individual / team recognition ideas, etc.)
- Create best practices, guides, and templates to encourage and welcome creative, flexible schedules for staff.
- Encourage experimentation with new types of alternative work schedules (such as ones that might allow for increased flexibility for child or family care obligations during work hours.)
- Encourage leadership and staff to create operational norms that would support both high-quality work and healthy boundaries (such as around working hours, responding to emails, and determining what situations require an “emergency” response.
- Empower staff to hold management accountable to these norms.



Hiring from a diverse candidate pool helps employers tap into typically underutilized employee groups that can add a new perspective and talent to your staff (*flexjobs*)

Flexible Work Support

- Perform a job function assessment at the institutional level to allow for fully remote work and hybrid work models. University HR and the Michigan Medicine HR Solution Center would provide a framework to guide departments which classifications of staff should be eligible for remote work.
- Perform a job function assessment at the institutional level to allow for non-traditional work schedules. University HR and the Michigan Medicine HR Solution Center would provide a framework to guide departments on which classifications of staff should be eligible for non-traditional work schedules.
- Perform a job function assessment at the institutional level to allow/encourage departments to hire/recruit employees that continue to live out of state. University HR and the Michigan Medicine HR Solution Center would provide a framework to guide departments which classifications of staff should be eligible for working out of state.

Information Technology

- Provide staff working remotely at >50% effort with a U-M-managed laptop and one set of peripherals (e.g., monitor(s), keyboard, mouse, and headset for video conferencing) and a U-M office chair that can be used either at home or on campus. U-M managed devices ensure equitable support and minimize risk of security incidents and breaches.
- Deploy softphones (software program for making telephone calls over the Internet) for cellular or laptop computers so that remote staff are able to send/receive U-M telephone calls (without using personal resources or revealing personal identity.)
- Develop a process to deliver U-M managed devices, pre-loaded with U-M unit Windows or Mac builds, to remote employees. Minimize procurement, asset tagging, and tracking barriers to support this. Deliver online training materials to aid staff in remote setup.
- Re-engineer employee processes and IT solutions to modify paper-based (printing, faxing) work.
- Provide some U-M IT support for home internet challenges (tips, ISP/cellular hotspot contracts, equipment suggestions, etc.). Define an equitable policy around stipends to assist faculty and staff.
- Explore consistent and automated virtual private network (VPN) solutions that allow staff to easily secure remote network connections.

Information Technology (continued)

- Provide at least one U-M supported, best in class, video conferencing, team chat, project/task management, whiteboard/process flow, and ticketing tool for team and remote collaboration.
- Deploy virtual solutions that can easily deliver U-M telephone calls to laptops or cellular phones to enable staff to receive U-M calls and mask their personal identity when calling from a remote location.

Physical Space

- Encourage departments to continue using Zoom or other video technology for meetings, even when working in U-M facilities. This will help ensure that communication efforts are effective while COVID mask and social distancing requirements are in place.

Parking

- Create a simplified, but more flexible, array of parking permit options that meet the needs of staff members who are fully remote, hybrid and full-time.
- Create a system for business parking passes that allows for members of a team to share the parking pass without having to come into the office or touch passes that have been handled by others.



Having technology in place with employees trained to use it may have been the difference between seamlessly shifting to remote work and lagging behind (*Zenefits*)

ACCOUNTABILITY

As we emerge from the pandemic, we must be prepared to support leaders in effectively managing staff members who are in three “working modes”: onsite, hybrid (partial onsite, partial remote), and remote work. This will challenge leadership in new ways, and they need resources and training to create and maintain an engaged, high-performing workforce. The creation of university policies that address off-site work, coupled with clear productivity expectations and a robust communication strategy, lays a solid foundation for the team, no matter where they are working.

Recruiting / Talent

- Partner with national recruiting organizations, minority business associations and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) as well as other organizations that support and promote diverse candidate pools.

Supervisor/Manager Support

- Develop clear values/behaviors/expectations in all roles consistently across the institution with the goal of creating a more consistent and agile workforce.
 - Develop mediation and conflict resolution skills, enhance knowledge of existing campus resources.
 - Use case studies, scenarios for learning and leverage practitioners across campus to do training.
 - Develop toolkits on how to assess situations – is this a process or person issue (viewing situation from multiple perspectives).
 - Develop tools for supervisors that are U-M wide that assist with skill development, cross-training, and the development of an agile workforce when workload or priorities change.
- Create and maintain a “Leading at Michigan” website that provides a “one stop” location for leadership materials that is accessible to staff across all areas of the institution.

**Employees
can't deliver
what you want
unless they
understand
what you
expect of
them.**

Information Technology

- Compile existing remote work guides, tools, policies, etc. onto a single website for ease of use.
- Develop a campus policy that U-M IT staff are not deployed to off-campus residences. Negotiate a third party contract with a vendor (e.g., Geek Squad) if off-campus support is needed.

Physical Space

- Provide additional visible security measures for buildings and parking lots.
- Create more awareness and visibility of new and improved cleaning protocols.

Training and Professional Development

- Complete implementation of Enterprise Learning Management System.
- Acknowledge and reward staff volunteer roles.

Offboarding

- Require supervisors to conduct a compassionate exit interview.
- Thoughtfully utilize exit interview feedback and incorporate into metrics-driven dashboards to make data-driven adjustments to the staff experience.
- Create a workflow that ensures that the appropriate departments are coordinating communication with the departing employee to initiate retirement plans, benefits administration and final compensation.



Now is not the time to pull back on workforce development efforts, but instead to double down on commitments to building a resilient workforce that can adapt in the face of constant change.
(Deloitte Insights)

SOCIAL CARE

The following set of recommendations are based on the recognition that the need for connections – both personal and professional and to the university’s mission are paramount to creating a positive workplace culture that fosters engagement, creativity and results in a more resilient workforce.

Onboarding and Orientation

- Develop and implement an opt-in new employee “buddy” program that pairs employees from different units.

Supervisor/Manager Support

- Develop resources for managers and supervisors to help them create accessible opportunities for team building activities so staff can build connections in a multi-mode work environment.
- Encourage staff engagement in team-building activities both virtual and in-person throughout the year.

Information Technology

- Provide at least one best in class video conferencing tool (e.g., Zoom.)
- Educate staff on video conferencing tool features & use.
- Educate staff on creating inclusive and accommodating meetings for individuals with a wide range of disabilities to maximize employee experiences.

Time Off Program/Policy

- Implement Social Activism and Volunteerism time bank.
- Expand University recognized holidays to support education and advocacy (including Election Day, Juneteenth, Martin Luther King Jr. Day).

Training and Professional Development

- Provide staff with 2 hours of dedicated professional development/training time every month.

SELF -CARE

For staff to thrive, self-care is vital, without it staff face the potential of increased stress, sickness, low productivity and burnout. The following recommendations are designed to provide and support a healthy work/life balance and the tools for staff to care for their health and well-being.

Recruiting / Talent

- Explore innovative benefits packages that include employer-sponsored assistance with student loan debt, preventative health care, expanded parental benefits, family-care alternatives, and stipends for childcare related expenses.

Supervisor/Manager Support

- Create a culture that empowers staff to prioritize time in their work day (remote or on-site) to engage in self-care with the help of calendar reminders, push notifications, etc.

Time Off Program/Policy

- Create vacation/PTO donation system that staff can utilize in times of hardship. Structure it similarly to the current Emergency Hardship Program.

Health & Well-Being

- Consult with existing U-M providers of well-being support services (MHealthy, FASCCO, employee health benefits, etc) to conduct a comprehensive review of offerings to assess where gaps are and where more resources are needed – both current pandemic specific needs and development of a strategy for longer-term needs. Executive leadership should be prepared to act on the recommendations quickly to address pandemic specific needs.
- Develop an employee facing storefront from which staff can purchase ergonomically-approved office furniture, equipment and supplies at a discount through our strategic partnerships.

The greatest self-care a company can offer employees is ensuring they step away from their work

WHAT IS THE WISE COMMITTEE ASKING EXECUTIVE OFFICERS TO DO NEXT?

The WISE committee requests that following the presentation of this report, U-M Executive Officers be prepared to take decisive action and be active support/sponsorship to implement these recommendations that are designed to keep U-M on a path to remaining “Leaders and Best”.

- Review the high level and detailed recommendations.
- Acknowledge and embrace the changes that will define the workforce of the future while setting a tone that places U-M on an ambitious path towards becoming a measurable leader in all types of work arrangements.
- Select which recommendations best support staff and U-M missions.
- Appoint a Project manager to oversee the research and implementation of the recommendations.
- Provide appropriate resources (leadership, people, time, and funds) to take these ideas from recommendation to reality.
- Support leaders, supervisors, and staff as they evaluate and determine which unit work is most appropriately done on site, remotely, or in a hybrid manner.
- Provide tools, training, and best practices for supervisors and staff to successfully transition to long-term remote work agreements which span the employee life-cycle from recruitment to retirement.
- Assist in communicating both the willingness to experiment with remote work and the essential nature of on-site and hybrid roles. Help build transparency and trust around what is possible.
- Support a culture of flexibility, innovation, and experimentation around remote work agreements. Continue to conduct lessons learned, correct course, and enhance the tools and best practices.
- Continue to carve out dedicated time and funds for staff. Ensure that staff remains an institutional priority during a time when U-M faces historical teaching, research, athletic, financial, and political challenges.
- Proactively continue to create and implement ways to recognize and support staff with innovative practices (such as: additional Season Days, bonuses, etc.)
- Capitalize on the moment. View the seismic work and world shift as an opportunity to lead and learn.

APPENDICES

- [WISE Committee Charge](#).
- [WISE Committee Short-Term Recommendations](#).

To develop long-term recommendations, the WISE committee created four sub-committees to focus on four key areas. [This document](#) details their complete recommendations:

- Employee Lifecycle.
- Manager / Employee Relationships.
- Campus / Remote Site Considerations.
- Information Technology Resources & Support.

Additional Supporting Documentation

- [Keeping a Work Force Strong During the Pandemic](#) - Chronicle of Higher Education
- [State of Remote Work](#) - OWLLabs
- [Competing in the Post-COVID Era](#) - Steelcase
- [4 Trends That Are Shaping the Future of Work](#) - Entrepreneur
- [State of Remote Work](#) - Buffer
- [Returning to Work in the Future of Work](#) - Deloitte Insights
- [How to Make Work From Home Accountability Easy](#) - Hubstaff
- [Turn Remote Work From Culture Killer To Culture Creator](#) - Forbes



Our goal is to evolve the way we work over time with intention—guided by employee input, data and our commitment to support individual work styles and business needs while living our culture (*Microsoft*)