FLEXIBLE WORK INITIATIVE

Summer 2022
FLEXIBLE WORK INITIATIVE

AGENDA

• Project Background
• Project Goals
• Evolving Workplace Trends
• Survey Results
• Next Steps & Project Timeline
• Staff Council Perspective
PROJECT BACKGROUND

- COVID-19 deeply impacted the way we work.
- Staff Council expressed concerns to HR and University Initiatives about increased staff turnover and decreased morale due to flexible work options not being offered in some units.
- Human Resources, University Initiatives, and Staff Council collaborated on:
  - Staff Survey (administered by Staff Council)
  - Supervisor Survey (administered by HR and University Initiatives)
  - Summer Pilot Program (currently underway)
PROJECT GOALS

• Gain a deeper understanding of current UArizona workforce needs and experiences related to flexible work.

• Learn from the offices/units who are already leading the way in this area.

• Develop guidance and resources that assist supervisors and employees to successfully implement flexible work arrangements that are:
  • Equitable
  • Responsive to the unique needs of units across campus and
  • Aligned with the University's employee recruitment and retention goals
THE EVOLVING WORKPLACE

National Workplace Trends

• Boston Consulting Group surveyed more than 12,000 employees and 75% of respondents reported being able to maintain or improve productivity with a shift to flexible work.

• Gallup research shows that the highest level of employee engagement comes with a hybrid schedule of partial remote work.

• Harvard Business Review found that 60% of employees surveyed reported that flexibility is more important to them than salary or other benefits.

• Pew Research Center found that in 2021, for 45% of employees, not having enough flexibility was a major or minor reason they left their jobs.
THE EVOLVING WORKPLACE

**UArizona Workplace Trends**

- UArizona job applications are down considerably compared to pre-pandemic applicant pools.
- Applicants are frequently inquiring about flexible work options during the recruitment/interview process.
- Parents continue to experience childcare barriers for which flexibility is needed, such as lack of early and after care due to teacher shortages and challenging transportation issues due to bus driver shortages.
- Employees appear to be experiencing high levels of late-pandemic burnout, for which flexibility can be helpful.
- Many other PAC-12 peers are embracing flexible work (Colorado, Utah, Oregon), putting pressure on our recruitment and retention strategies.
SURVEY RESPONSE RATES

Supervisor Survey: 40%

Staff Survey: 21%
## SURVEY RESULTS: STAFF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Flexible Work</th>
<th>% Staff Who Currently Have this Arrangement</th>
<th>% Staff Who stated this Arrangement would be Somewhat or Very Beneficial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Scheduling</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid Work Week</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Business Hours</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Remote Periods</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compressed Work Week (Year-round)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully Remote Work</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SURVEY RESULTS: STAFF

92% Of staff respondents who have experienced flexible work arrangements agree or strongly agreed that flexible work increases their productivity.

92% Of staff respondents who have experienced flexible work arrangements agree or strongly agreed that flexible work increases their morale/job satisfaction.

94% Of staff respondents who have experienced flexible work arrangements agree or strongly agreed that flexible work benefits their wellbeing.
SURVEY RESULTS: STAFF

40% of staff respondents stated that 50-75% of their job duties could be completed remotely while 48% of staff respondents stated that 100% of their job duties could be completed remotely.

20% of staff respondents stated that flexible work schedules have not been applied fairly or consistently in their units.

For a significant number of staff, having flexible work options is necessary to retain them in their current positions.
SURVEY RESULTS: 
STAFF AGE

Staff over the age of 55 are:
• Less likely to have a flexible work arrangement in place.
• More likely to state that flexible work makes them feel disconnected from co-workers.

Staff under the age of 55 are:
• More likely to state that flexible work arrangements increase their productivity, morale/job satisfaction, personal wellbeing, and financial wellbeing.

Staff under the age of 35 are:
• More likely to have a flexible work arrangement in place.

Staff age is negatively associated with:
• Seeking employment that offers more flexibility (e.g. younger staff are more likely to be searching for employment with more flexibility).
SURVEY RESULTS: STAFF SEX

Female staff are significantly more likely than male staff to:

- Have flexible work arrangements in place.
- Say that flexible work arrangements increase their productivity, morale/job satisfaction, personal wellbeing, and financial wellbeing.
- Say that their health, wellness, and finances contribute to their need for flexible work.
- Be seeking employment that offers more flexibility than their current position.
SURVEY RESULTS: STAFF COMPENSATION

- Salary employees are more likely than hourly employees to have a flexible work arrangement in place.

- The higher the compensation rate, the more likely a staff member is to have a flexible work arrangement in place.

- Hourly employees are more likely to say that flexible work options tailored to employee needs are not available in their unit and that flexible work schedules have not been applied fairly or consistently in their units.
“I have thought about leaving the UA but because I have a flexible work arrangement to pick up my child from school is one of the main reasons I stay.”

“Many supervisors are worried about whether their staff are working if they are not present and visible. I am concerned this will limit retention and attracting new candidates as Gen X, Millennials, and now Gen Z are all looking for work-life balance and flexibility. Old styles of working are going to make us irrelevant.”

“Times have changed and many employees no longer want to work 100% in the office. To be a top employer of choice, offering remote work, flexible work arrangements will support employee needs.”
SURVEY RESULTS: SUPERVISORS

92% Of supervisor respondents stated that they currently offer their employees some form of flexible work while 8% stated they did not offer any flexible work arrangements.

93% Of supervisor respondents stated that some or all of their employees could successfully complete their work duties if they were permitted to work remotely 1 day per week.

90% Of supervisor respondents stated that some or all of their employees could successfully complete their work duties if they were permitted to work remotely 2 days per week.
SURVEY RESULTS: 
SUPERVISORS

**BENEFITS**
The two most commonly reported benefits of offering flexible work are increased employee morale/job satisfaction and increased employee wellbeing.

**CHALLENGES**
Nearly half of all supervisors who currently offer hybrid work, fully remote work, or flexible schedules reported experiencing no challenges.

For supervisors who did report challenges, the most frequently cited challenge for these flexible work arrangements was decreased employee engagement.

**CONCERNS**
For supervisors who do not currently offer hybrid work, fully remote work, or flexible scheduling, the top 3 concerns were:

1. Decreased availability to staff
2. Decreased employee collaboration
3. Decreased employee engagement
SURVEY RESULTS: SUPERVISORS

78% Of supervisor respondents stated that their employees are *somewhat satisfied or very satisfied* with the flexible arrangements currently offered to them while 9% are *somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied*.

50% Of supervisor respondents feel they *do not have support* or are *unsure* if there is support for flexible work from university leadership.

53% Of supervisor respondents stated they *need support from University leadership* to be successful in offering flexible work to their staff.
100% of supervisors under the age of 35 offer some kind of flexible work to their employees.

**Supervisor age is negatively associated with:**
- Being open to offering flexible work arrangements.
- Offering flexible work arrangements.
- Citing employee productivity, engagement, morale/job satisfaction, wellbeing, recruitment, retention, and cost savings as benefits of offering hybrid work.

**Supervisor age is positively associated with:**
- Citing decreased employee productivity and engagement as challenges of offering hybrid work.
SURVEY RESULTS:
SUPERVISOR SEX

Female supervisors were significantly more likely than male supervisors to:
• Offer hybrid work.
• Be open to offering compressed work weeks, core business hours, and summer remote periods.
• Cite increased employee productivity as a benefit of offering hybrid work and flexible schedules.

Male supervisors were significantly more likely than female supervisors to:
• Cite decreased employee productivity and decreased employee engagement as challenges to offering hybrid work.
• Cite decreased employee productivity as a challenge to offering flexible schedules.
“I love flexible work arrangements and allowing employees to work remotely. As long as you have clear expectations as a supervisor, employees get the flexibility they need while the University is able to meet its business needs.”

“As a Department Head, I think it is outstanding that UArizona is embracing the posture of offering flexibility and allowing employees to have greater levels of input and agency over their schedules. I believe the evidence is clear that employees are productive in these settings and that they very much appreciate the flexibility. I am humbled by how our staff has worked tirelessly through the pandemic and many have embraced additional workloads without complaining. Most people I know both within my department and elsewhere throughout the University are carrying heavy workloads and doing an incredible job. The least we can do is give our people a sense of agency over when and where they do their work. I honestly believe that this posture will lead to greater levels of employee engagement and loyalty to the UArizona and our mission. Thank you for allowing me to offer input on this topic.”

“Thank you for offering these opportunities, it is what makes UA a great place to work.”
NEXT STEPS FOR CONSIDERATION

• Evaluate positions/job duties to determine to what extent “traditional” work hours and locations are required to achieve your unit’s mission and goals

• Contact your HR Partner for any questions you may have about implementing flexible work, including supporting employee engagement and collaboration

• Reflect on how various identities may impact views of flexible work

• Consider the impact a lack of flexibility may have on the retention of particular staff populations (e.g. women, younger staff)

• Pilot flexible work options (e.g. commit to a 6-week trial period)
1. Conduct a deeper analysis, including College and Division Reports, of the survey data to broaden our understanding of current workforce needs and experiences related to flexible work. *(Summer 2022)*

2. Run flexible work pilots. *(Summer 2022)*

3. Communicate initial survey results to campus & launch flexible work website with robust resources. *(August 2022)*

4. Engage in focus groups to assess pilot program outcomes. *(Early Fall 2022)*

5. Continue to offer guidance and resources to campus based on survey and focus group results. *(Fall 2022)*
QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION