



Priorities in Focus  
Designed for Leaders, Managers, & Supervisors

# Manager Toolkit

Houston Community College Preparing for the New Norm





**Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus**

**1 Table of Contents**

**1 Table of Contents ..... 2**

**2 Introduction: A Changing World..... 5**

2.1 Purpose Statement..... 5

2.2 Objectives..... 5

**3 Supervision in Our Changing World ..... 5**

3.1 Protect Your People and Your Productivity ..... 6

3.1.1 TOOL: Protect and Empower Your People ..... 6

3.1.2 TOOL: Serve Your Student Core Needs..... 6

3.1.3 TOOL: Establish Business Continuity ..... 6

3.2 Establishing Specific Work Expectations: Onsite & Remote ..... 6

3.2.1 TOOL: Onsite Hygiene Expectations ..... 7

3.2.2 TOOL: Remote Burn Out..... 8

3.2.3 TOOL: Remote Loneliness ..... 9

3.2.4 TOOL: Solicit Faculty and Staff Input..... 10

3.2.5 TOOL: How Supervisors Influence Faculty & Staff Behavior..... 10

3.2.6 Employee Expectations Will Change ..... 12

3.2.7 How Can HCC Supervisors Prepare for These Changes in Employee Expectations? .... 14

3.2.8 How Supervisors Can Support Remote Employees..... 15

3.2.9 TOOL: 10 Recommendations for Ongoing Remote Work ..... 17

3.3 Supervision: Resolving Issues with Remote Faculty & Staff..... 19

3.3.1 TOOL: What the Experts Say ..... 19

3.3.2 TOOL: Appreciate the Upsides..... 20

3.3.3 TOOL: Try to Give Your Colleague the Benefit of the Doubt..... 20

3.3.4 TOOL: Move the Conversation Away from Email..... 20

3.3.5 TOOL: Focus on What You Have in Common ..... 21

3.3.6 TOOL: See the Other Side ..... 21

3.3.7 TOOL: Consider Cultural Differences ..... 21

3.3.8 TOOL: Bring in Someone Else if Necessary ..... 21

3.3.9 TOOL: Use the Fight to Strengthen Your Relationship ..... 22

3.3.10 TOOL: Increase Informal Communication ..... 22

3.3.11 TOOL: Principles to Remember ..... 22

**4 Getting Started: Adopting a Framework ..... 23**

4.1 Framework: Three Stages, Three Stakeholders..... 23

4.2 Framework: Indicators of Success after Each Stage..... 24

**5 Role of Assessment Processes..... 25**

5.1 TOOL: Assess Workforce Planning ..... 25

Date: 6/1/2020



**Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus**

5.2	TOOL: Assess Career & Performance .....	26
5.3	TOOL: Leveraging Staffing Plans .....	27
5.4	TOOL: Assess Leadership Support .....	30
5.5	TOOL: Assess Remote Work.....	31
5.6	TOOL: Assess Infrastructure Management.....	32
5.7	TOOL: Assess Workforce Communication.....	33
5.8	TOOL: Assess Readiness for “Next Time” Disaster Response .....	34
<b>6</b>	<b>Maximize Staffing &amp; Redefining Jobs .....</b>	<b>35</b>
6.1	TOOL: Make Work Portable across the Organization .....	35
6.2	TOOL: Go Viral.....	36
6.3	TOOL: Accelerate Automation .....	37
6.4	TOOL: Share Talent is Cross-Enterprise Talent Exchanges .....	37
6.5	TOOL: Make Work More Flexible.....	37
6.6	TOOL: Break Down Jobs.....	38
<b>7</b>	<b>Maximize Your Environment.....</b>	<b>38</b>
7.1	Why Maximize Your Physical Environment? .....	39
7.2	Work Environment is Being Redefined .....	40
7.2.1	TOOL: Floor Plan for a Collaboration Neighborhood .....	41
7.2.2	TOOL: Floor Plans Based on Function .....	41
7.2.3	TOOL: Floor Plans Based on Hoteling.....	42
7.2.4	Use of Social Distancing – Cubes.....	42
7.2.5	Use of Hoteling.....	43
7.2.6	Use of Space Sharing.....	45
7.2.7	Benefits of Maximizing Space.....	45
7.3	Maximize Your Remote Virtual Environment.....	46
7.3.1	TOOL: Remote Work.....	46
<b>8</b>	<b>Faculty &amp; Staff Engagement .....</b>	<b>49</b>
8.1	TOOL: Weekly Meetings, Check-Ins, and Hang Outs .....	49
8.2	TOOL: Virtual Team Activities.....	50
8.3	TOOL: Handling the COVID-19 Crisis.....	50
8.4	TOOL: Encourage Healthy Habits.....	51
8.5	TOOL: Recognize Burnout.....	52
8.6	TOOL: Psychological, Logistical and Practical Problems .....	52
8.7	TOOL: Remote Collaboration .....	52
8.8	TOOL: Remote Team Building.....	53
8.9	TOOL: Checklist for Engaging Talent in Remote Meetings .....	53
8.10	TOOL: Faculty Engagement: Coronavirus Information for Higher Education .....	54
<b>9</b>	<b>References .....</b>	<b>55</b>
9.1	General Articles .....	55

Date: 6/1/2020



***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

9.2	Focus on Maximizing Environment .....	56
9.3	Focus on Faculty Engagement .....	56
9.4	Focus on Employee Recognition and Storytelling .....	57
9.5	Videos .....	57



## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

### **2 Introduction: A Changing World**

Organizational disruptions and change always create uncertainty among students, faculty, staff, managers, and senior leaders alike. COVID-19 is certainly the most salient and ubiquitous disruption impacting nearly every organization on the globe including Houston Community College. In response, HCC is making rapid, widespread changes that are dramatically changing the student and employee experience. We are all still learning how these temporary changes affect students, faculty, and staff, but another question is quickly emerging – *how will these current disruptions affect our way of conducting operations and the student and employee experiences in the future?*

As more faculty and staff work flexibly or remotely, HCC will need to change the way we operate in the long-term. Both virtual service delivery and remote working forces structural and systemic change to accommodate different ways of working and different ways of being ‘available’ and productive, as well as our structure, systems, staffing, and physical environment.

#### **2.1 Purpose Statement**

The purpose of the Toolkit is to provide resources and tools to leaders, managers and supervisors as we create a new world of work.

#### **2.2 Objectives**

The objectives of the Toolkit are to:

- Provide structured approaches for leading workforce modification
- Provide tools and resources for data-driven decision making
- Provide step-by-step processes for validating information related to staffing
- Provide various topical assessment strategies, tools and resources

### **3 Supervision in Our Changing World**

In response to the uncertainties presented by Covid-19, HCC has asked their faculty and staff to work remotely. While close to a quarter of the U.S. workforce already works from home at least part of the time, the new policies leave many faculty and staff — and their managers — separated from each other for the first time. As we reopen our campuses, we will continue to supervise remote faculty and staff while we supervise others who



## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

physically return to campus locations. Supervising a combination remote, flex and onsite team will require some supervision sensitivity, flexibility and skill.

### **3.1 Protect Your People and Your Productivity**

In this climate of crisis, your decisions not only determine how you operate in the near-term, but also significantly impact how you will operate in the future. Smart leaders will seize this opportunity to take swift action to navigate the crisis to avoid business disruption and potential revenue loss, forge new levels of trust with their workforce, and position their organizations for greater resiliency and productivity in the future.

An important first step is to begin planning to enable remote workers at scale. Develop and provide clear guidelines to your people about self-quarantine. Prepare for a larger than normal percentage of employees to be on sick leave. Each campus and college will have different needs and requirements for workplace and people management, customer service, data management, and business continuity. But there are three major foundations that all organizational leaders should consider

#### ***3.1.1 TOOL: Protect and Empower Your People***

Adjust your workplace to enable your people to work remotely through digital collaboration tools. Build the necessary skills around these new ways of working. Start cultivating a digital culture. Construct a workplace of trust.

#### ***3.1.2 TOOL: Serve Your Student Core Needs***

Adapt to changing global and local conditions by serving your students' core needs, including being transparent in your operations and compassionate in your engagements – all of which will create deeper, more trusted relationships.

#### ***3.1.3 TOOL: Establish Business Continuity***

Ensure supplier relationships and business-to-business processes are effectively supported. Develop new business processes to adapt to new ways of collaboration and decision-making.

### **3.2 Establishing Specific Work Expectations: Onsite & Remote**



## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

As our work environment is altered, it follows performance expectations will be modified to adjust to changes in our collective work life.

### **3.2.1 TOOL: Onsite Hygiene Expectations**

Going forward, here are some specific examples of hygiene etiquette protocols you may want to implement:

#### **1. Put it in writing.**

Send out a note to your workforce encouraging people to practice hygiene etiquette as a new cultural norm. List specific examples of what that means for individual employees as well as what specific measures your organization will be taking to keep the workplace, your employees and others safe. Post signs inside and outside of office spaces, as well as in restrooms, reinforcing the proper protocols (e.g., cough/sneeze etiquette and handwashing protocols).

#### **2. Demonstrate proper coughing, sneezing and handwashing techniques at the start of every meeting or as refreshers form time to time.**

Treat this as standard protocol, similar to how flight attendants remind you on every flight to fasten your seatbelt. It may seem like common knowledge, but these basic techniques are still not common practice.

#### **3. Designate your office space and conference rooms as handshake-free zones.**

Business etiquette has long taught that handshakes are everything in initializing relationships. This is changing, and hopefully permanently since 80% of common infections are spread by hands, [according to](#) the BC Centre for Disease Control.

Fortunately, there are many alternatives that can be equally effective in establishing rapport yet much safer. Alternatives such as [jazz hands](#), the famous Vulcan salute from *Star Trek* or a simple genuine smile, are entirely germ-free. Invite your team to get creative and come up with a unique one for your organization.

#### **4. Provide disinfectant wipes, hand sanitizer and tissues as standard office supplies.**

### ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

Consider these as essential as printers and paper. Encourage your staff to regularly wipe down surfaces and have your cleaning crew disinfect door entrances and other high-touch surfaces regularly.

#### **5. Virtualize work when you can.**

In-person workplaces and meetings provide a power of proximity where invaluable relationship-building can occur, but remote work is becoming the new norm and not just because of COVID-19. A recent Stanford University Graduate School of Business [study](#) showed that businesses with flexible workplaces are more productive than those requiring employees to be in the office.

Similarly, we know that with proper tools and meeting design, virtual meetings can be as productive or even more productive than in-person meetings. Consider the following benefits of virtual meetings:

- Leveled playing field by equalizing dominant and non-dominant personalities.
- Faster idea generation through parallel processing. This is often more efficient than an in-person meeting, using manual techniques such as flip charts and sticky notes.
- Reaching solutions quicker through rapid prioritization of ideas.
- Asynchronous participation, which is great for business that span time zones.
- Richer meeting documentation consisting of the participants' own words, rather than relying on a third-party note taker.

COVID-19 is contagious, but so is culture. Take this opportunity to institute hygiene etiquette and flexible work arrangements as new cultural norms in your organization and breathe easier from now on, whatever the future holds.

#### **3.2.2 TOOL: Remote Burn Out**

One risk, perhaps unexpectedly for remote working faculty and staff, is burnout. People using flex or remote policies often do feel more grateful to their employers.



### ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

That feeling of indebtedness can lead some remote employees to keep their foot on the gas until they run out of fuel.

Research indicates faculty and staff respond to the ability to work flexibly by exerting additional effort, in order to return benefit to their employer. Some of the intensification happens at the employee level (choices they make to “return the favor”) but frequently, it is the employer intensifying the workload with requests that cannot be accomplished within certain timeframes.

To ensure employees experience gratitude rather than indebted servitude, check in. Go beyond project updates and work-related conversations. Leaders need to know what is going on with their people beyond just their work.

Rethink which attributes constitute going “above and beyond.” Working longer hours, answering emails late at night, putting time in on the weekend, coming in sick, piling up vacation days, not sleeping — those attributes are way too often considered “high-performing” traits. However, all it does is increase and reward the behaviors of burn out. Instead, lead by example and encourage your virtual staff to slow down (even when they do not want to) by supporting mental-health breaks, taking vacations, and spending time with family.

Remember, remote employees are tougher to diagnose with burnout because you cannot see changes in their personality on a day-to-day basis. Ensure there is a process of checking in and being aware of the signs.

### ***3.2.3 TOOL: Remote Loneliness***

According to the [2018 State of Remote Work](#), loneliness is the biggest struggle to working remotely. Although being alone is not the only cause of loneliness, it can be a significant contributor. It’s also a dangerous and growing epidemic that scientists are taking seriously.

What can managers do? One option would be to establish an “in-the-office” day, when remote employees are encouraged to come in. According to a Gallup poll of 9,917 employed U.S. adults, remote workers that come in to work at least once per week are the happiest. These “mostly” remote workers report a slightly higher rate of engagement, but more importantly, they were more likely than full-remote or full-office workers to say they had a best friend at work, and that their job included opportunities to learn and grow.

### ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

In a tight labor market, supervisors are going to do what keeps their people. Today, that likely includes more flexible work options, paired with a leadership and management style that helps remote workers flourish.

#### ***3.2.4 TOOL: Solicit Faculty and Staff Input***

To ensure a smooth operation, you may want to solicit input from faculty and staff using methods that are appropriate for the particular situation. Following are some formal and informal approaches to collecting input and feedback:

- Ask direct questions or guided input on a specific issues or initiatives
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Staff meetings
- Focus groups
- Discussion teams
- Task groups
- Committees
- Input teams

#### ***3.2.5 TOOL: How Supervisors Influence Faculty & Staff Behavior***

As you think about your experience management efforts, it's important to understand how people flow through the experiences in their lives — as students, stakeholders, customers, faculty, staff, citizens, etc. To help deepen that understanding, here is a simple model, the Human Experience Cycle. As you can see in the chart below, the Human Experience Cycle is made up of five elements:

**Experiences:** What actually happens to a person during an interaction?

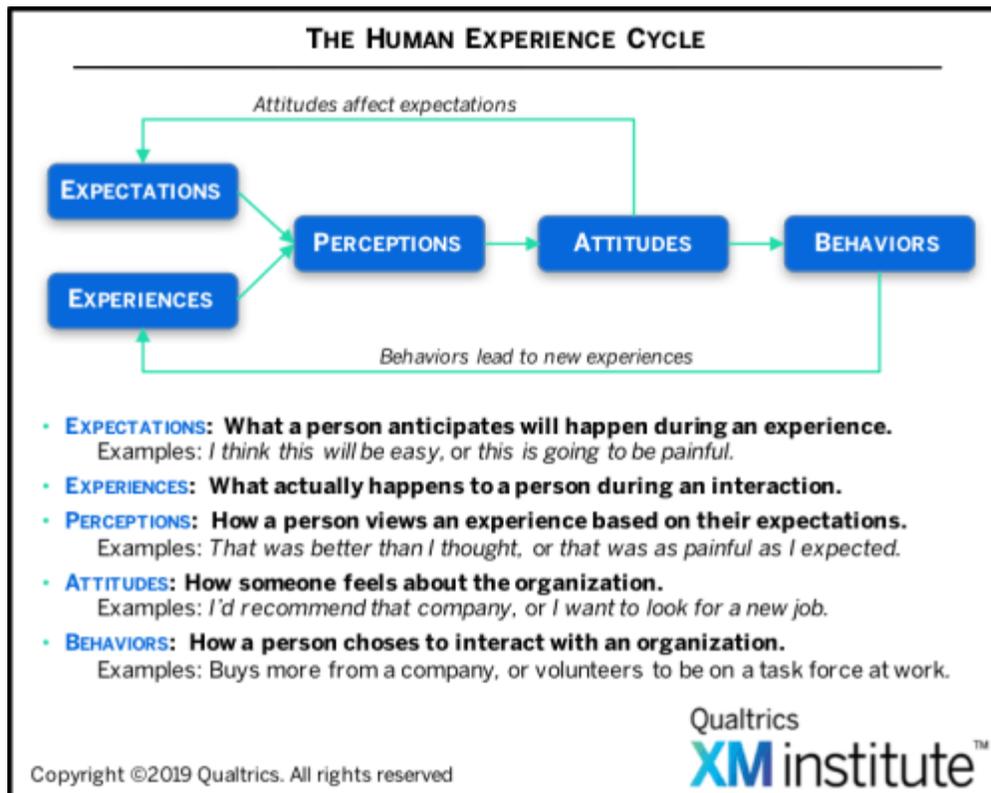
**Expectations:** What a person anticipates will happen during an experience. This can be heavily influenced by previous interactions.

**Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus**

**Perceptions:** How a person views an experience based on their expectations, which are viewed across three dimensions: **Success** (can they achieve their goals), **Effort** (how easy or hard is it), and **Emotion** (how does it make them feel).

**Attitudes:** How someone feels about the organization. These are somewhat persistent mindsets, such as *I like that company, I don't like my job, or I love that brand.*

**Behaviors:** How a person chooses to interact with an organization, which is heavily influenced by that person's attitudes. If I like the organization, then I may look at other product offerings they have.



Here are some implications of the Human Experience Cycle:

**Experiences are in the eyes of the beholder.** How someone feels about an experience (their *perception*) is based on their expectations along with the actual experience. So the exact same experience can lead to different perceptions for different people. That is why you need to think about the



## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

expectations you are setting prior to an experience and consider delivering different experiences based on people's expectations.

**Experiences are judged by the emotions they create.** Our memories are not like video cameras, they are more like an Instagram account where we take pictures whenever we feel strong emotions, and then we judge that experience in the future based on reviewing those pictures. That is why it is critical to proactively think about which emotions an experience is likely to generate, since those are the elements which will most drive perceptions.

**Attitudes are important...** Many organizations measure attitudes as part of their overall metrics program. This is an important area to understand because it represents an accumulation of multiple perceptions and can often be a leading indicator of behaviors. That is why many successful programs prioritize their efforts around the experiences that most highly affect attitudes.

**...But behaviors are the goal.** The success or failure of an organization is driven by what people actually do, their behaviors. Over time, you need to make sure that the attitudes you're measuring have an actual impact on the behaviors you really care about — *is our phone calling campaign really impacting student completions?*, or *is our employee engagement measurement predicting attrition?* If not, look for different attitudinal measurements that are more predictive of those important behaviors.

**Tip:** Align your efforts around the Human Experience Cycle.

### ***3.2.6 Employee Expectations Will Change***

We are all still learning how these temporary changes affect employees, but another question is quickly emerging – ***how will current disruptions affect employee experiences in the future?***

Research suggests that faculty and staff perceptions of experience is influenced by their expectations. Dramatic disruptions will likely accelerate changes to faculty and staff expectations of their organizations. And while we do not know for sure how or the rate at which employees' expectations will change, organizations should prepare for several possibilities.



## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

### ***3.2.6.1 TOOL: Employee Will Expect to Bring Their Whole Selves to Work***

Bringing one's "*whole self to work*" has become a popular phrase of late. However, in certain cultures, industries and organizations, this is considered "unprofessional." All of a sudden, though, this has become the reality for millions of workers.

For example, those of us working remotely for the first time are taking video conference calls with children and family members in the background. We get to see and hear intimate details of others' home lives. Now, this does not mean that all employees will *want* to bring their whole selves to work in the future as many will prefer strict work and personal boundaries. But organizations *should* expect employees' expectations to adjust when it comes to this.

### ***3.2.6.2 TOOL: Employee Will Expect More Work Flexibility***

Many faculty and staff are experiencing flexible work arrangements for the first time in their careers. And for some, this will be an emotion-charged experience that will create lasting expectations.

In some countries, like Japan, working from home wasn't even conceivable for most organizations and employees but over the past two months, it became a reality. While remote work is not appealing to everyone, organizations *must* anticipate that workers will expect for more flexible workplace policies in the future. This includes the options to work from home several days a week or allowing employees to tailor the workdays around their schedules.

### ***3.2.6.3 TOOL: Employee Will Expect Greater Connection with Their Colleagues***

As with any crisis, along with the terrible consequences, there are also amazing things that happen. One of those things is that nearly every worker on earth is facing the same crisis together.

In many ways, this global experience with COVID-19 puts everyone on equal footing and again, this is a profound, emotional experience that will likely change faculty and staff expectations and perceptions of working in a virtual environment.

We must prepare *now* to facilitate this same level of collaboration and cooperation in the future.



## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

### ***3.2.7 How Can HCC Supervisors Prepare for These Changes in Employee Expectations?***

Where do we go from here? How can leaders deliver a sense of purpose across a wide range of environmental, social, home life and work life issues facing employees? How can leaders ensure we do not lose focus on bottom-line results while still demonstrating compassion for the unique challenges facing our faculty and staff? Following are tools to consider:

#### ***3.2.7.1 TOOL: Formally Seek Feedback from Your Faculty and Staff***

Ask your faculty and staff for feedback informally and formally on a continuing basis. Faculty and staff who are asked for their feedback during times of major organizational change were substantially more engaged than those who are not.

However, this does not mean that supervisors should simply ask the same questions it always asks. Rather, be ultra-sensitive to faculty and staff current concerns and uncertainties, which may mean focusing on their physical safety, their ability to get work done, perceptions of support, quality, and frequency of communications, etc.

#### ***3.2.7.2 TOOL: Measure Faculty & Staff Expectations***

This might seem like a no-brainer. But it is also not something that most organizations do. This can easily be done through direct conversation between faculty and staff and their supervisor's [direct conversations between employees and their managers](#).

For example, ask specific questions around their expectations about flexible work arrangements that you may be considering and then multiple times after any changes have taken effect. These findings should inform how the organization communicates and frames communications.

#### ***3.2.7.3 TOOL: Unite Your Faculty & Staff around HCC Cultural Values***

HCC has formal core and cultural values. In every organization, there are gaps between the organization's ideal cultural values and the actual subcultures that exist. For faculty and staff moving to a completely remote environment, this is a unique opportunity to break down subcultural differences and unite employees around those ideal, cultural values of the organization.



## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

Now that faculty and staff are getting used to a *new normal*, organizations will not simply be able to revert back to their old workplace policies and practices. Now is the time to anticipate, measure and prepare for the future of work in-line with your faculty and staff expectations.

### ***3.2.8 How Supervisors Can Support Remote Employees***

As much as remote work can be fraught with challenges, there are also relatively quick and inexpensive things that supervisors can do to ease the transition. Actions that you can take today include:

#### ***3.2.8.1 TOOL: Establish Structured Daily Check-Ins:***

Many successful remote supervisors establish a daily call with their remote faculty and staff. This could take the form of a series of one-on-one calls, if your faculty and staff work more independently from each other, or a team call, if their work is highly collaborative. The important feature is that the calls are regular and predictable, and that they are a forum in which faculty and staff know that they can consult with you, and that their concerns and questions will be heard.

#### ***3.2.8.2 TOOL: Provide Several Different Communication Technology Options***

Email alone is insufficient. Remote workers benefit from having a “richer” technology, such as Micro Soft Teams, Cisco Jabber, WebEx Meeting, WebEx Events, Text Messaging, which gives participants many of the visual cues that they would have if they were face-to-face. Micro Soft Teams has many advantages, especially for smaller groups: Visual cues allow for increased “mutual knowledge” about coworkers and also help reduce the sense of isolation among teams. Micro Soft Teams is also particularly useful for complex or sensitive conversations, as it feels more personal than written or audio-only communication.

There are other circumstances when quick collaboration is more important than visual detail. For these situations, provide mobile-enabled individual messaging functionality which can be used for simpler, less formal conversations, as well as time-sensitive communication.

#### ***3.2.8.3 TOOL: Establish Rules of Engagement***

Remote work becomes more efficient and satisfying when supervisors set expectations for the frequency, means, and ideal timing of communication for their

### ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

teams. For example, “We use Micro Soft Teams for daily check-in meetings, but we use Cisco Jabber when something is urgent.” Also, if you can, let your faculty and staff know the best way and time to reach you during the workday (e.g., “I tend to be more available late in the day for ad hoc phone or Teams conversations, but if there’s an emergency earlier in the day, send me a text.”) Finally, keep an eye on communication among team members (to the extent appropriate), to ensure that they are sharing information as needed.

We recommend that managers establish these “rules of engagement” with faculty and staff as soon as possible, ideally during the first online check-in meeting. While some choices about specific expectations may be better than others, the most important factor is that all faculty and staff share the same set of expectations for communication.

#### ***3.2.8.4 TOOL: Provide Opportunities for Remote Social Interaction***

One of the most essential steps a manager can take is to structure ways for faculty and staff to interact socially (that is, have informal conversations about non-work topics) while working remotely. This is true for all remote workers, but particularly so for workers who have been abruptly transitioned out of the office.

The easiest way to establish some basic social interaction is to leave some time at the beginning of team calls just for non-work items (e.g., “We’re going to spend the first few minutes just catching up with each other. How was your weekend?”). Other options include virtual pizza parties (in which pizza is delivered to all team members at the time of a videoconference), or virtual office parties (in which party “care packages” can be sent in advance to be opened and enjoyed simultaneously). While these types of events may sound artificial or forced, experienced managers of remote workers (and the workers themselves) report that virtual events help reduce feelings of isolation, promoting a sense of belonging.

#### ***3.2.8.5 TOOL: Offer Encouragement and Emotional Support***

Especially in the context of an abrupt shift to remote work, it is important for supervisors to acknowledge stress, listen to faculty and staff anxieties and concerns, and empathize with their struggles. If a newly remote faculty and staff are clearly struggling but not communicating stress or anxiety, ask them how they are doing. Even a general question such as “How is this remote work situation working out for you so far?” can elicit important information that you might not otherwise hear. Once you ask the question, be sure to listen carefully to the response, and briefly restate it

### ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

back to the faculty and staff member, to ensure that you understood correctly. Let the faculty and staff member's stress or concerns (rather than your own) be the focus of this conversation.

Faculty and staff look to their supervisors for cues how to react to sudden changes or crisis situations. If a supervisor communicates stress and helplessness, this will have a "trickle-down" effect on faculty and staff. Effective leaders take a two-pronged approach, both acknowledging the stress and anxiety that faculty and staff may be feeling in difficult circumstances, but also providing affirmation of their confidence in their teams, using phrases such as "we've got this," or "this is tough, but I know we can handle it," or "let's look for ways to use our strengths during this time." With this support, faculty and staff are more likely to take up the challenge with a sense of purpose and focus.

### ***3.2.9 TOOL: 10 Recommendations for Ongoing Remote Work***

#### **Recommendation #1**

Research suggests that telecommuter job satisfaction is maximized when telecommuting occurs at moderate levels (around 2 days per week), especially for jobs that require high inter-dependence. With this in mind, encouraging a mixed work arrangement where employees are not entirely remote may help with employee satisfaction and morale.

#### **Recommendation #2**

Do not adopt a one-size-fits-all approach to telecommuting policies. Each employee is unique and will need to cater the policy to her or her needs.

#### **Recommendation #3**

In order to be most productive, telecommuters need to have a strong sense of self-efficacy, or belief about his/her ability to complete tasks. Provide encouragement to telecommuters in an attempt to foster self-efficacy, especially during the initial adjustment period for new telecommuters.

#### **Recommendation #4**

Professional isolation, loss of identification with the organization, and feeling excluded are real threats to teleworkers and can have implications for performance and turnover. To avoid these sentiments, be sure to include teleworkers in organizational events, socialization activities, and training and development opportunities that are available to other employees. On a more daily basis, it may be helpful to set up a "virtual water cooler" via intranet or



## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

shared email folder, and managers should take extra efforts to contact telecommuters more frequently so that they feel in “in the loop.”

### **Recommendation #5**

The mere offering of telecommuting is not enough. The organization culture must also adapt to support use of these policies, else they are likely to be underused and less efficacious for those who do use them. This can be achieved, in part, by: a) shifting norms surrounding face time; judge employees by their actual output rather than the time they spend at the main office. b) Ensuring that raise and promotion systems are not biased against those who work remotely. Employees commonly cite fear of negative career consequences as a reason that telecommuting benefits are deemed unusable. c) Creating buy-in from top management. True culture change of any kind requires buy-in the top and the creation of a structural plan that outlines specific behaviors that will foster change.

### **Recommendation # 6**

Communicate and clearly articulate the details and expectations surrounding telecommuting up front. This may be best achieved by establishing a telecommuting training program for tele-commuters, managers of telecommuters, and even the coworkers of telecommuters.

### **Recommendation #7**

Deciding who can and cannot telecommute can be a challenge, and it can lead to perceptions of unfairness if not handled correctly. The ideal situation is to offer telecommuting universally, but this is not be feasible in all organizations and job types. When this is not possible, it is imperative to have a clear set of criteria regarding how telecommuting decisions are made. Allowing employees, including telecommuters and non-telecommuters, voice in determining these criteria is also beneficial.

### **Recommendation #8**

Because telecommuters are “out of sight” it may be tempting for managers to give stricter standards or highly monitor their behaviors. But research suggests the most effective supervisors manage telecommuters and non-telecommuters in an identical same manner. The focus should be on managing the work and not the worker.

### **Recommendation #9**

## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

Provide employees with advice on how to best structure their remote workstation. For many employees forming boundaries between work and family roles is important. One way to do this is to have a separate room for telework if the home arrangement allows it. Additionally, employees should make sure that family members also understand the work and home boundaries.

### **Recommendation #10**

Discourage employees from using telecommuting as a means of childcare. Working while simultaneously caring for children can lead to role blurring, which has been linked to greater work-family conflict and distractions during work time.

### **3.3 Supervision: Resolving Issues with Remote Faculty & Staff**

Whether you are exchanging snarky emails, openly disagreeing on a conference call, or giving each other the silent treatment, it is frustrating and painful to fight with a colleague when you are not in the same office. Without the benefit of forced togetherness, disagreements can easily be left unaddressed or quickly spiral out of control. What makes fighting from afar so problematic? What is the best way to solve a disagreement with someone who is in a different location? And how do you mend the relationship if you cannot look the other person in the eye?

#### **3.3.1 TOOL: *What the Experts Say***

Where are several things that make conflict with a remote colleague challenging, says Mark Mortensen, an associate professor of organizational behavior at INSEAD? “The two main things that get in the way are the lack of shared understanding about how you work and lack of shared identity,” he says. When you don’t have things in common, you’re less likely to give the person the benefit of the doubt. Plus, you don’t know how the other person is reacting. Is he being quiet because he’s setting aside his feelings or is he actually stewing? “You’re not seeing body language, facial expressions, or hearing voice intonation,” says Pamela Hinds, a professor in management science and engineering at Stanford University. “By the time, you realize there’s a conflict it’s often much later than if you were sitting side-by-side.” Not all is lost, of course. “The same approaches that work face-to-face also work virtually,” says Mortensen. “They’re just not going to come as easily.” Here are a few things to think about and do differently when tension is brewing with a colleague miles away.

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### ***3.3.2 TOOL: Appreciate the Upsides***

“There are a lot of upsides to working at a distance,” says Mortensen. For example, you often let the small things go. “If we’re meeting in person, it might take one look at me to tell that I’m mad but on the phone, you might just sense that I’m a little more snippy than usual and maybe don’t make too much of it,” he says. Hinds agrees: “When you’re face-to-face, you tend to thrash it out even if your position isn’t that well thought out.” With distance, there is often forgiveness or even just ignorance. “You’re less likely to detect annoyance, eye rolling, and all the other cues that go along with conflict,” she says. “The focus tends to be much more on the work and the content of the work.”

### ***3.3.3 TOOL: Try to Give Your Colleague the Benefit of the Doubt***

Because you don’t have a shared context—you’re not sitting in the same building, experiencing the same weather, seeing the same things—it’s easy to make assumptions about how your colleague feels or why he is acting the way he is. If he’s always late to your weekly call, you might presume that he doesn’t respect your time or he’s not committed to the project. “Our natural reaction is to make personal attributions when something goes wrong, rather than situational attributions,” explains Hinds. Instead of thinking the worst about your colleague (“He’s so self-absorbed!”) ask yourself what else could be going on. Maybe he’s late because he has a meeting right before yours. Perhaps he’s in a bad mood because it’s been raining for a week straight where he is. Admit to yourself that you don’t know why he’s acting the way he is and it may have nothing to do with you.

### ***3.3.4 TOOL: Move the Conversation Away from Email***

Chances are most of your interaction with your remote colleague is over email. This is problematic. [A 2007 study by Syracuse’s Kristin Byron](#) showed what we all know intuitively or have come to learn: using e-mail generally increases the likelihood of conflict and miscommunication. “We’ve evolved as humans to pick up on contextual cues. I read your facial expressions. I can tell when you’re making a joke or not. When we’re not in the same place, I don’t have those cues at my disposal,” says Mortensen. If you’re arguing via email, stop. Pick up the phone and call your colleague, or schedule a time to do a Skype video call. “In order to resolve a conflict, both sides have to understand the other’s perspective. That’s much harder to do when you can’t see each other and the communication isn’t synchronous,” says Hinds.

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### ***3.3.5 TOOL: Focus on What You Have in Common***

When you're talking with your colleague—by phone or video—start the conversation by highlighting what you have in common. You can talk about how you're both parents of young children, for example, and the college you both went to, or your shared commitment to the job. "Remind people about shared experiences, shared victories, wins. Those will focus people on how we're more similar than not," he says. You don't have to do this overtly by saying, "Hey, we're both moms!" but you can ask about her kids or tell a quick story about yours. "The more you make those things front and center, the more people will feel interdependent on each other," says Mortensen.

### ***3.3.6 TOOL: See the Other Side***

One of the key skills in resolving a conflict is perspective taking, seeing things from the other person's point of view. So put yourself in her shoes and imagine what she's experiencing. Why might she be upset? What about this situation is frustrating to her? "That will put you in a stronger position to solve the problem, and to mend the fences later on," says Mortensen. You may be working with limited information if you've only met your colleague in person a few times, so ask questions like, "How are you seeing this situation? What might I be missing because I'm here and not there?" You can also encourage your colleague to see things from your vantage point by asking, "If you were me, what would you do?" "This is helpful in any conflict, but especially in distributed teams," says Mortensen.

### ***3.3.7 TOOL: Consider Cultural Differences***

"Language and cultural differences often compound the issue," says Hinds. It can be hard to know how to handle a conflict with someone who is from a different culture, who may send different emotional cues, or with whom you don't share a language. "If someone says, 'No, it is fine,' it may not mean that. It may mean, 'I'm in complete disagreement with that but I'm not going to say that,'" she says. This is particularly challenging for Americans: "In the U.S., we tend to be relatively direct and we're not as adept at reading more subtle cues from less direct cultures." If you're not sure how to translate their behavior, find someone who can advise you, a colleague in the same office or from the same culture.

### ***3.3.8 TOOL: Bring in Someone Else if Necessary***

If you're not able to solve the issue between the two of you, you may need to ask someone else to intervene. "It helps to involve a third person, someone who is not

### ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

invested in the content of the conflict, to help you reflect and integrate both sides,” says Hinds. It doesn’t matter where that person is located, “as long as the people involved in the conflict agree that the person is reasonable.”

#### ***3.3.9 TOOL: Use the Fight to Strengthen Your Relationship***

One of the benefits of solving a conflict with a remote colleague is you then have a shared experience. You want disagreements to become water under the bridge but it’s helpful to talk about them as well. “Once you’ve gotten past the point where the fight’s really raw and you can speak about it in a neutral way, you can talk about what happened and that becomes a shared identity,” says Mortensen. Hinds agrees: “If the resolution went well and you’re both feeling good about it, that’s all you need. It’s very beneficial to the relationship.”

#### ***3.3.10 TOOL: Increase Informal Communication***

[Research by Mortensen and Hinds](#) shows that casual, unplanned communication dramatically reduces conflict when you’re not in the same location. Take advantage of opportunities for informal interactions. Keep your instant messenger open to share personal snippets or jokes throughout the day. Take virtual breaks together, chatting on the phone while you both sip tea. Or you might leave your computer cameras on so that you can see each other throughout the day. “These video links between offices create a shared space and provide more opportunities for these spontaneous—but often very productive—workplace conversations,” says Mortensen.

#### ***3.3.11 TOOL: Principles to Remember***

**Do:**

- Highlight anything you have in common—personal or work-related
- Put yourself in your colleague’s shoes and try to understand how she sees you
- Go visit your colleague in person, if feasible

**Don’t:**

- Fight over email—pick up the phone or get on a video call
- Assume the worst about your colleague—admit that you don’t know why she’s behaving the way she is
- Just put the fight behind you—use it as a shared experience to strengthen your relationship

## *Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus*

### **4 Getting Started: Adopting a Framework**

Institutions are continuing to manage their response to COVID-19's profound disruption to everyday life, often without much of a safety net. While some institutions are relying on their business continuity plans and emergency response and disaster recovery processes, all institutions appreciate that this pandemic has raised issues not even the best-laid plans could have foreseen.

To help you prioritize the plethora of organizational, TE management, and faculty and staff benefit issues the crisis has raised, Segal has created a [COVID-19 Response Framework](#) that provides a practical guide for your workforce priorities. The Framework is crafted to complement other processes your institution may be using, and at its simplest, can be used as a checklist of actions needed to progress through the predictable stages of recovery.

#### **4.1 Framework: Three Stages, Three Stakeholders**

The Framework consists of three interconnected stages that represent the full scope of an institution's response to the pandemic.

These stages are:

- **Secure** the Present
- **Adapt** as the Impact of the Virus Evolves
- **Reimagine** the Future

Strategic organizations understand the need to balance and address the different needs and perspectives of their vital stakeholders. With each stage, institutions should define what success looks like from three crucial perspectives: The **Enterprise** as a whole, the various groupings of **People** in its workforce and impacts on **Individual** faculty and staff members.

The stages do not follow a specific time horizon because:

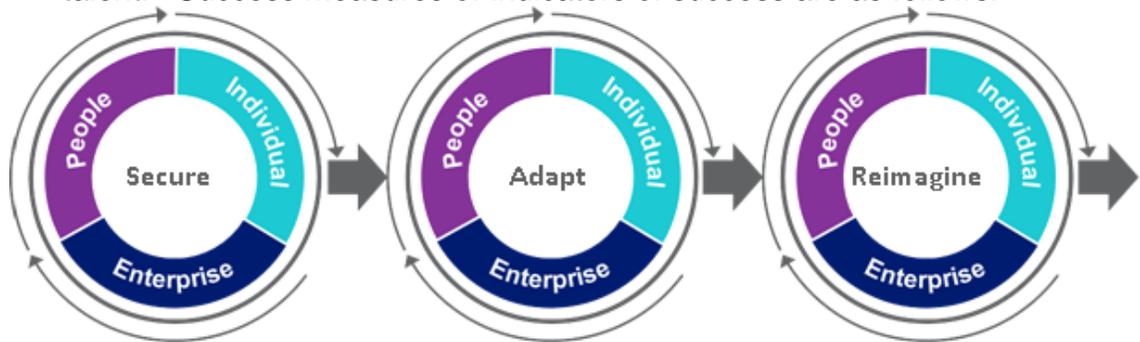
- It is currently unknown how long the crisis will last.
- The virus will peak at different times in different parts of the United States.
- The crisis will impact different types of institutions differently.

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If the virus returns before a vaccine is available, we may need to revisit some stages

**4.2 Framework: Indicators of Success after Each Stage**

When managers know the indicators of success at each stage, they can systematically plan and execute operations as well as align organizational talent. Success measures or indicators of success are as follows:



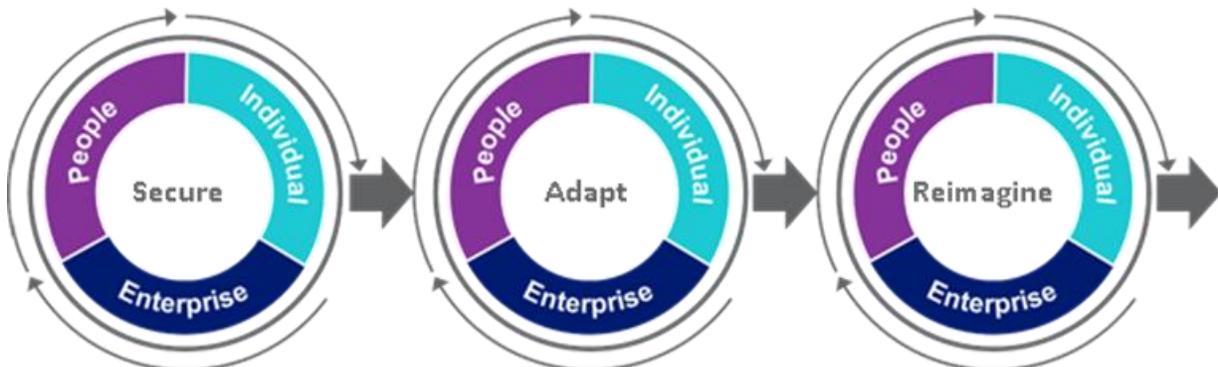
<b>Enterprise</b>	The enterprise is prepared to address the immediate needs of the institution and its constituents	Leadership of the enterprise is clear on various business scenarios, their key trade-offs and their internal and external risks.	The enterprise has the information and resources it needs to craft and execute a reimagined business plan or/and operational model.
<b>People</b>	Groups of people associated with the institution trust that organizational leadership will chart the right path.	The people are productive and proud of the institution's response to the crisis.	There is clarity and clear understanding of leadership's decision-making process and long-term outcomes.
<b>Individual</b>	Individual faculty and staff members feel mentally, emotionally, and physically safe and know what is expected of them.	As plans evolve, individual faculty and staff know how they need to adapt as well as contribute to their institution's success.	Individuals understand how the macro effects of the crisis will impact their futures at the institution and their career trajectories.

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**5 Role of Assessment Processes**

Proactively identifying your department, unit, programmatic, and staffing priorities is vital to transitioning into the new world of work. Various assessment processes allow you to make data-driven decision to best serve our students and lead faculty and staff in our new virtual environment.

**5.1 TOOL: Assess Workforce Planning**



Priorities	Priorities	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Assess talent acquisition issues (e.g., people who have been given offers and available job candidates).</li> <li>✓ Identify potential business scenarios and forecast impact to workforce.</li> <li>✓ Develop workforce strategies that address financial impacts.</li> <li>✓ Apply value / mission-based approach for making staffing decision.</li> <li>✓ Explore new / alternative staffing and compensation approaches.</li> <li>✓ Develop strategies for reducing labor costs.</li> <li>✓ Assess other internal / external factors impacting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Assess what you have learned from remote workforce:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operations</li> <li>• Organizations</li> <li>• Workflow</li> <li>• Culture</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Evaluate new perspectives on workforce competency and capacity requirements</li> <li>✓ Identify opportunities, risks and benefits of potential long-term organizational changes.</li> <li>✓ Identify near and long-term impacts of the change on the workforce.</li> <li>✓ Review and assess policy environment – identify opportunities to reduce and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Engage in larger scale organizational and operational transformation.</li> <li>✓ Design new service delivery models.</li> <li>✓ Reimagine roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities.</li> <li>✓ Redesign processes and workflows.</li> <li>✓ Reimagine and redesign policies.</li> <li>✓ Leverage technology to reduce or redeploy workforce.</li> <li>✓ Engage in comprehensive change management practices to evolve workforce culture.</li> </ul>

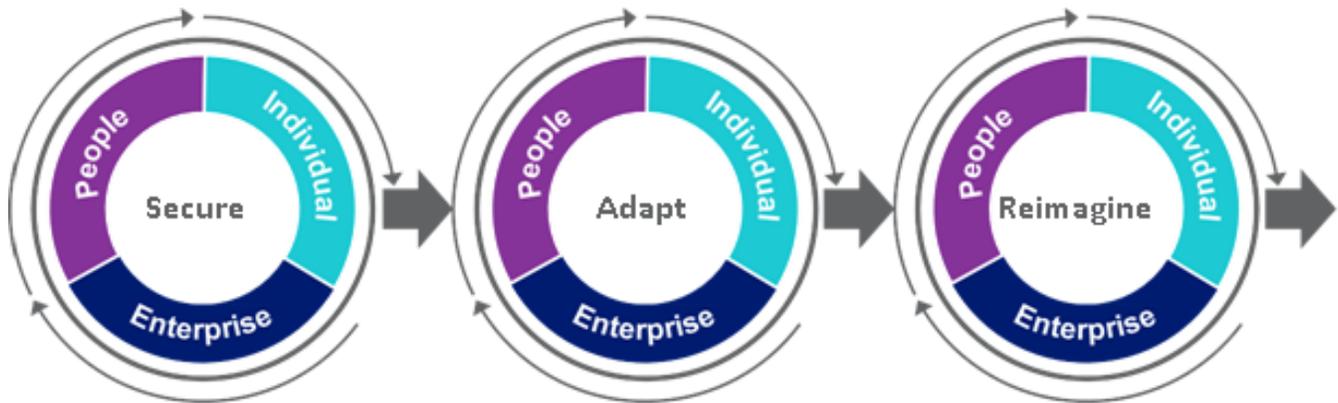
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<p>the community and the workforce.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Explore leading practices in cost reduction.</li> <li>✓ Develop strategies for near- and long- term cost reduction.</li> <li>✓ Identify untapped opportunities to stimulate new revenues.</li> </ul>	<p>refine policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Review and assess governance models and structures.</li> <li>✓ Evaluate technology deployment and identify opportunities to expand or enhance systems and tools.</li> <li>✓ Evaluate any disparate impact caused by layoffs, furloughs and salary reductions.</li> </ul>	
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**5.2 TOOL: Assess Career & Performance**

Managers are exploring ways to revamp how, where, and by whom interaction work is performed. Managers that succeed in these efforts will enjoy productivity gains, greater flexibility in responding to opportunities, and better access to scarce talent. But to get there, they must rethink how they manage their faculty and/or staff.



Priorities	Priorities	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identify essential services faculty and staff.</li> <li>✓ Continue performance management but revisit goals necessary to support current environment.</li> <li>✓ Manage a remote</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Reconfigure work content and reporting relationships.</li> <li>✓ Determine necessary promotion cycle adjustments.</li> <li>✓ Evaluate training and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Develop an updated faculty and staff value proposition.</li> <li>✓ Reconsider on-site, travel, remote work, and flexible schedule policies.</li> <li>✓ Revamp career</li> </ul>

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<p>workforce; identify new competencies that are needed and relate them to professional development</p>	<p>development budgets and delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Convey individual performance expectations and priorities.</li> <li>✓ Implement current succession plans or adapt with interim or acting roles.</li> <li>✓ Examine current succession plans to identify new needs and gaps.</li> </ul>	<p>architecture and pathways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Determine go-forward staff development programs and policies.</li> <li>✓ Evaluate institutional succession planning processes in light of your emergency management responses.</li> </ul>
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**5.3 TOOL: Leveraging Staffing Plans**

Hiring managers were asked to review fiscal year 2021 staffing plans in conjunction with Activity Based Optimization considerations. Leveraging the work done previously is strongly recommended.

**Background**

To review the Staffing Plans submitted for Fiscal Year 2021 and determine trends, actions, areas of concern and areas of opportunity relating to Activity Based Optimization (ABO) considerations.

**Approach Taken**

- Review the staffing plans presented for FY21
- Analyze for trends/changes
- Based on data what recommendations or actions should be suggested
- Use ABO principles to make recommendations

**Findings**

Based on the review of the staffing plans submitted, departments, areas, and colleges are either planning to remain consistent based on approved budgeted positions; or the plan to add additional positions far outweighs any reductions/closing of positions.

**Intents to Repurpose Position(s)**



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- Positions listed for Repurpose on Staffing Plan were not all truly a repurposing of a position. It was attempts to change the level or change the duties being performed. These will need to be reevaluated under stricter budgeting and staffing standards

#### **Intents to Add Position(s)**

- Positions listed to be added on staffing plan were already budgeted approved positions for the current fiscal year that had yet to be requisition, posted or filled. These would need to be updated and reevaluated under stricter budgeting and staffing standards. Are the positions actually needed if they had already been approved and not filled?

#### **Intents to Reduce/Close Position(s)**

### **Recommendations**

#### **Review submitted Staffing Plan**

- Revise campus operations levels following campus operations standards developed by College Operations Officers.
  - There should be a modification to the standard since facility usage may see a decrease due to an increase in online instruction.
  - Expand analysis to Campus Service Techs, Receptionist and other related campus operations areas.
- Implement Advising model proposed by Student Services. Expand model to include Testing, Enrollment, Student Accounts based on ability to work remotely, size of enrollment, and other important variables.
- Revise intended adding of positions and/or repurposing of positions based on suggested questions, observations and actions that should be taken with provided action steps below.

### **ACTION STEPS**

#### **Questions Managers, Supervisors should consider and Actions to take**

**Asses what you've learned from remote workforce.**

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1. Do we have the right number? (Think in terms of services delivered online and/or in person)
2. Do we have the right position(s)?
  - a. Positions previously budgeted went unfilled are those absolutely needed
3. Do all of these positions have to be physically onsite to perform their duties and functions?

\*

**Explore new/alternative staffing approaches.**

- Can we deploy current staff who have not been working remotely to new assignments without taking them out of current job classifications?
- Train current employees in new tasks related to online and remote work so they can assist with different or new actions and activities.
- Be aware of the interdependencies within the units of your campus. Be aware how the elimination of a specific tasks or project in one of your areas, that makes sense to you because it saves money, affects other groups in the campus.

\*

**Identify near and long term impacts of the change on the workforce.**

- What skills is your area missing that you can build from existing staff?
- Reimagine roles, responsibilities and accountabilities
- Talk and explain to people how and why jobs are changing
  - Train in new ways of operating.
- Communicate openly, and consistently the process and goals of the effort.
  - Communicate regularly and in a variety of ways
  - Keep everyone abreast of new developments and information
  - Lack of information can mislead people, and produce uncertainty and indifference, especially in this new situation.

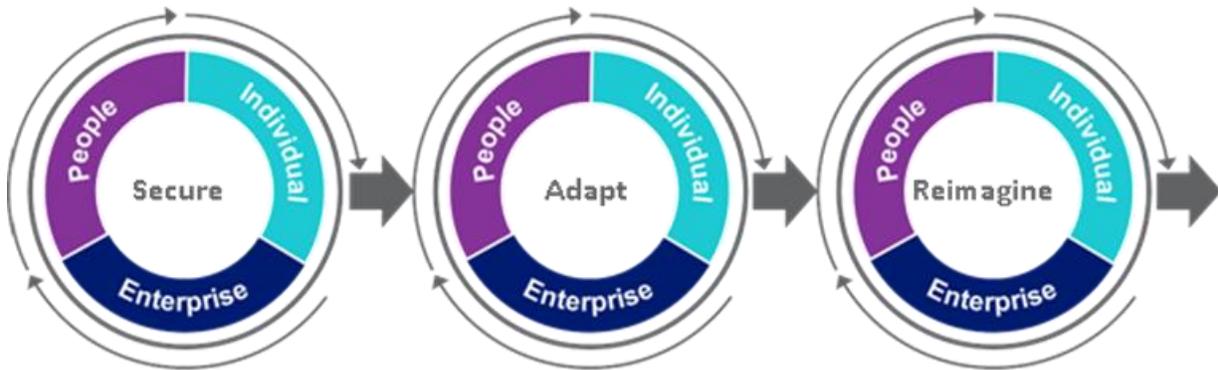
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**Evaluate technology deployment and identify opportunities to expand or enhance systems and tools.**

- What common practices do we need in place for the system to operate effectively? It is the little things that make a big difference. (Phone extensions, proper technology equipment, etc.)
- Leverage technology to reduce or redeploy workforce

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**5.4 TOOL: Assess Leadership Support**



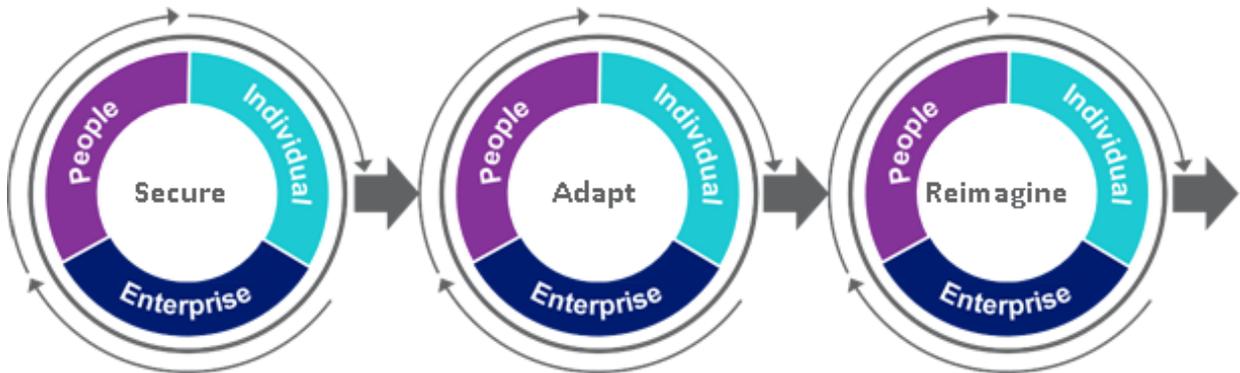
Priorities	Priorities	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Develop structures and processes to stay informed on fast-developing information from all critical sources (government officials and key stakeholders such as students, faculty and staff, donors, community members).</li> <li>✓ Leverage leadership team to inform critical decision making.</li> <li>✓ Build mechanisms and processes for decision making that allow for flexibility and adaptability.</li> <li>✓ Develop and deliver authentic and candid communication and announce a central location for obtaining critical messages.</li> <li>✓ Ensure that leaders are visible and accessible and speaking with a common voice.</li> <li>✓ Engage in strategic scenario based planning and build a plan that is responsive and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Develop strategies and mechanisms to ensure leadership team and key faculty and staff are being nurtured, respected and valued.</li> <li>✓ Develop strategies and approaches for connecting with customers, partners, providers and other external stakeholders.</li> <li>✓ Develop strategies and mechanisms to lead the organization through significant change.</li> <li>✓ Develop reliable and dependable forums and vehicles for communicating to key internal and external stakeholders - Commit to regular communication.</li> <li>✓ Evaluate whether structures put in place to stay informed are effective and modify as needed.</li> <li>✓ Modify scenario based strategic plans based on new data and information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Develop a process for creating a new / modified vision for the future.</li> <li>✓ Develop a process for collecting and analyzing organizational and operational insights gained during crisis.</li> <li>✓ Leverage insights to transform legacy departments, operations, systems and policies.</li> <li>✓ Invest in effective and comprehensive change management strategies for evolving organizations and cultures.</li> <li>✓ Develop approaches for providing ongoing coaching and leadership development to senior leaders.</li> </ul>

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<p>flexible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Develop mechanisms to ensure leaders remain focused, calm and in-control.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Develop strategies and processes for staying connected to faculty and staff engagement levels, performance, productivity and morale.</li> </ul>	
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**5.5 TOOL: Assess Remote Work**



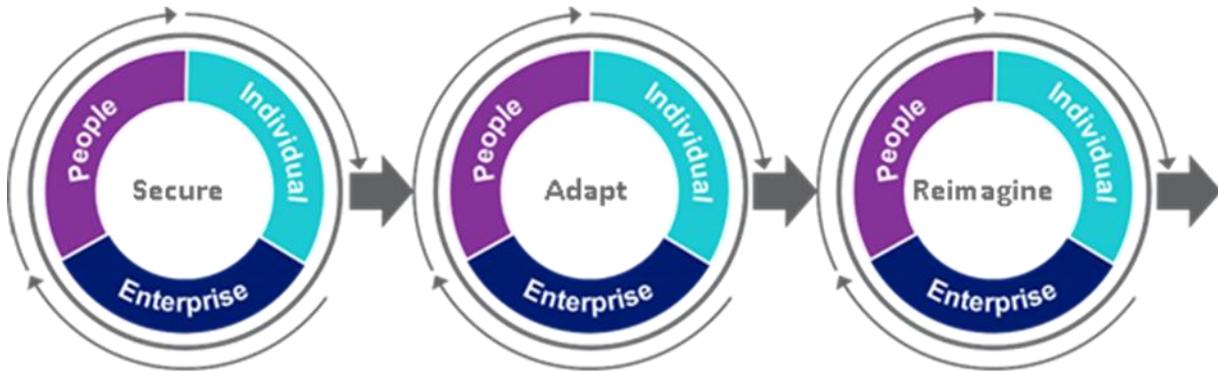
Priorities	Priorities	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Create technology infrastructure to enable employees to work remotely in a secure environment.</li> <li>✓ Distribute guidance on effective remote work practices.</li> <li>✓ Provide basic training for on-line tools and applications.</li> <li>✓ Develop processes and mechanisms to regularly connect with remote workforce.</li> </ul> <p>Continuously monitor the environment to assess and mitigate challenges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Develop more detailed / permanent policies for remote work.</li> <li>✓ Assess risk management factors and design policies / strategies for mitigating risks.</li> <li>✓ Evaluate opportunities to extend work from home roles beyond crisis period.</li> <li>✓ Develop performance management process and expectations for remote work.</li> <li>✓ Plan for back-to-office procedures – onsite thermometers or testing, protected privacy, etc.</li> </ul> <p>Train/communicate HR professionals and managers to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Assess learnings from crisis period and evaluate new opportunities to extend remote work options.</li> <li>✓ Refine workflow and processes to enable more remote workforce opportunities.</li> <li>✓ Review visitor protocols and appropriate questions related to exposure.</li> </ul>

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	understand how to lead staff working remotely.	
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**5.6 TOOL: Assess Infrastructure Management**

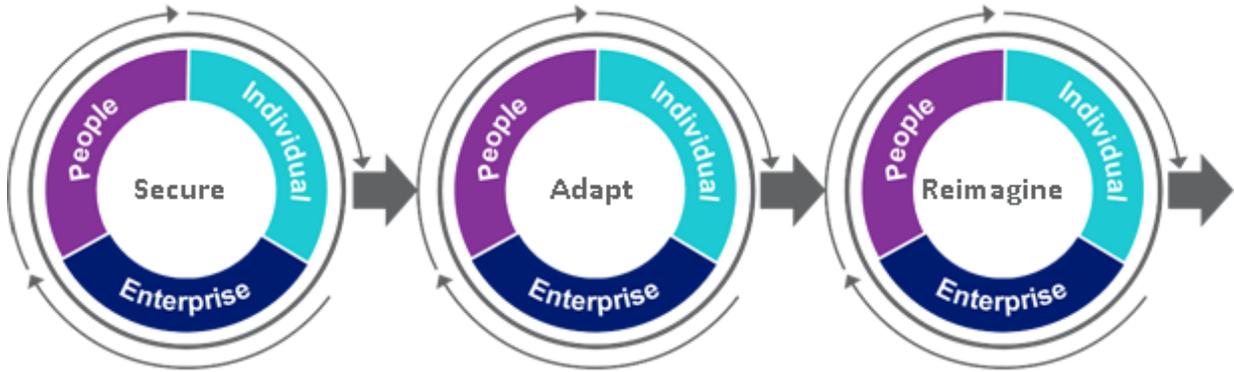


Priorities	Priorities	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Determine on-site staffing needs including facility security.</li> <li>✓ Reconsider on-site utility needs, supplies, generators, etc.</li> <li>✓ Distribute on-site protective gear (e.g., masks, gloves).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Assess temporary re-purposing of buildings. Evaluate Capital Plans for needed short-term adjustments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Review visitor protocols and appropriate questions related to exposure.</li> <li>✓ Undertake revised Capital Planning to align with changes in vision and operating assumptions.</li> </ul>



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**5.7 TOOL: Assess Workforce Communication**

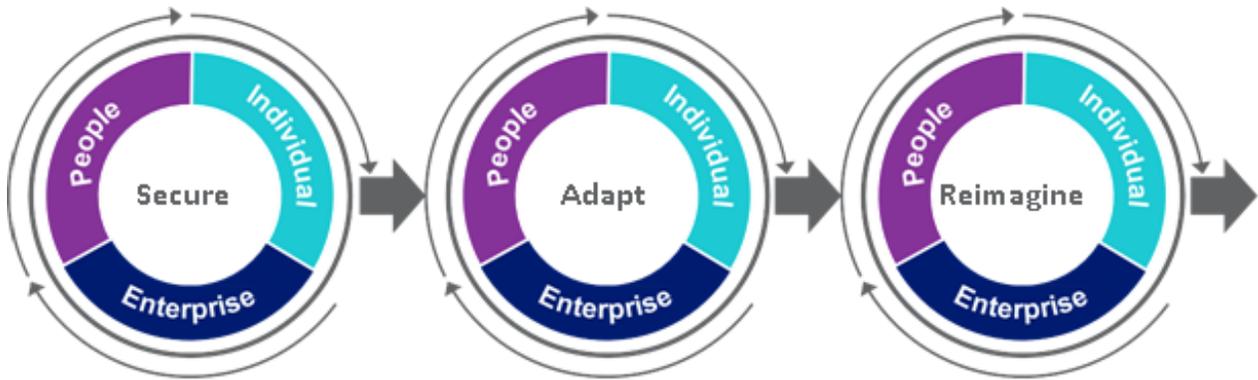


Priorities	Priorities	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Align and assess communication needs for short-term priorities.</li> <li>✓ Offer guidance to managers regarding strategies to stay in touch with their teams.</li> <li>✓ Initiate crisis response and change management activities.</li> <li>✓ Develop consensus among leaders about key messages and communicate them.</li> <li>✓ Reinforce awareness of healthcare, mental health and financial resources for faculty and staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Align and assess communication needs for mid-term priorities.</li> <li>✓ Communicate and educate faculty and staff on how to effectively navigate through various work, employee benefit and community resource processes. Specifically communicate changes in processes or workforce expectations and their related time horizons</li> </ul>	<p>Develop and deploy compelling communication about the reimagined future of the institution.</p>



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**5.8 TOOL: Assess Readiness for “Next Time” Disaster Response**



Priorities	Priorities	Priorities
<p><b><u>Protect People</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Initiate Business Continuity Plan and Disaster Recovery procedures.</li> <li>✓ Mobilize Incident and Disaster Response teams.</li> <li>✓ Assess immediate impact and develop action plans (employee health, medical needs, availability, and food, shelter and financial needs).</li> <li>✓ Notify faculty &amp; staff, contractors, customers, suppliers and vendors of status, restrictions, limitations, and interim procedures (building access, travel, meetings, events, deliveries).</li> <li>✓ Address potential technology and infrastructure issues (remote access software, network bandwidth, cyber security, IT Help Desk support).</li> <li>✓ Review your telecommuting policy that outlines the employer’s expectations for</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Protect Operations</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identify and equip essential staff required to keep critical business processes operating</li> <li>✓ Setup and support staff and contractors to work remotely as needed – adjust telecommuting policies if required.</li> <li>✓ Stabilize supply chain (order management, new suppliers as needed, and risk management)</li> <li>✓ Establish centralized communication function and provide ongoing updates to staff, contractors, students, suppliers and vendors (status, plans, risk mitigations, and issue resolutions).</li> <li>✓ Make temporary adjustments to HR and other business processes.</li> <li>✓ Review event cancellation insurance.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Protect the Institution</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Conduct financial stress testing and trigger-based action planning. Model cash flow, budget, and balance sheet scenarios based on economic forecasts.</li> <li>✓ Review Property &amp; Casualty policies against risk exposures (equipment, personal property, values)</li> <li>✓ Review and consider improving HR processes.</li> <li>✓ Conduct technology assessment and remediate issues as necessary.</li> <li>✓ Establish an annual process to update the business continuity plan, emergency response and disaster response programs, to train designated response teams, and to test elements of the plans and programs.</li> </ul>

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faculty and staff who work from home.		
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## 6 Maximize Staffing & Redefining Jobs

The outbreak of Covid-19 has forced organizations including HCC, into perhaps the most significant social experiment of the future of work in action, with work from home and social distancing procedures radically changing the way we work and interact. But the impact on work is far more profound than just changing **where** people work; it is also fundamentally altering **what** work is performed and **how** we perform it.

Many faculty and staff are doing tasks they never could have imaged a few weeks or months ago — sometimes in ways they would not have thought of. With jobs at the heart of how work gets done, leaders have an unprecedented opportunity to reimagine them by rearranging work and having faculty and staff take on different responsibilities to better respond

We propose several tools to support managers as they **shift work, talent, and skills** to where and when they are needed most, thereby building the organizational resilience and agility necessary to navigate uncertain times and rebound with strength when the economy recovers.

### 6.1 TOOL: Make Work Portable across the Organization

Given the current situation with Covid-19, it is more important than ever to move people to the most mission critical work as fast and efficiently as possible. As part of its coronavirus crisis response, for example, departments may want to temporarily convert faculty or staff from across the organization into positions intended to field an onslaught of calls from students or into advising roles as students adjust to our new virtual instruction model.

By breaking out of rigid job constraints, the right talent and work can be matched to solve evolving organizational challenges in real time. Networks of teams empowered to operate outside of existing organizational hierarchy



## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

and bureaucratic structures are a critical capability to reacting quickly in times of crisis.

We can set up internal project marketplaces that break down work into tasks and projects that can be matched with people from anywhere in the organization with relevant skills and availability. These marketplaces can enable people who suddenly find themselves bereft of their normal job tasks to quickly and easily find different work using their core or adjacent skills where their contributions make a difference.

Using such marketplaces, HCC can also quickly backfill a sick employee, add extra team members to mission-critical projects, and cope with sudden hiring chills. Hiring Managers facing hiring chills can be creative in approaching task assignments with existing talent. Why not think how to split an intended new hire position into five part-time experiences for existing employees — thereby giving employees new opportunities to learn and grow while also enabling h/her to meet organizational goals.

Deconstructing jobs into component tasks also makes it easier to see which tasks can be performed by workers working remotely or in other geographic locations. Leaders can bundle adjacent tasks that allow for remote work into new jobs, and port the tasks that require on-site work into other, fewer jobs — thereby limiting the amount of work that must be performed in the office or on-site.

### **6.2 TOOL: Go Viral**

Employers first began ramping up their use of remote-work arrangements in the 1990s, in part to retain the services of mothers who preferred not to commute or who wanted to work part time. By some estimates perhaps one-quarter of all US jobs could be performed remotely, and in our 2011 survey of 2,000 US businesses, one-quarter of them said they planned to use more remote workers in the future.<sup>5</sup>

Something to think about: Increasingly, new hires may not come into the office for training, which can be delivered virtually. And because the rites of social media are so familiar to many employees, members of remote teams and their managers often establish relationships quickly.



## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

### **6.3 TOOL: Accelerate Automation**

For certain types of work, automation can increase reliability, improve safety and well-being, and handle sudden spikes in demand. In fact, automation is not a job-killer in today's economic environment, it is becoming a mandatory capability to deal with a crisis.

Supervisors and managers should consider expanding their use of automation to allow faculty and staff to operate, monitor, and control systems remotely, thereby reducing the risk of human exposure to the virus and enabling functions to run smoothly without service disruptions.

### **6.4 TOOL: Share Talent is Cross-Enterprise Talent Exchanges**

As leaders, we must all ask ourselves: How can we tap into the broader ecosystem of talent to build the resilience of both departments and people during these challenging times? One innovative response is to develop a cross-enterprise talent exchange, temporarily moving faculty and staff without work due to the crisis to those departments that have an excess of work. This avoids the frictional and reputational costs associated with letting talent go while supporting faculty and staff in developing new skills and networks.

In these talent exchange arrangements, the departments receiving faculty or staff define which skills they're looking for. They then work with the departments sharing their faculty and staff to define the length of the exchange.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic is a difficult time, it can also be a time of unprecedented creativity. Reimagining jobs around the constraints of today's challenging educational and work environment may accelerate the future of work and open up new and innovative ways in how, where, and by whom work gets done. Ultimately, this can help us build greater resilience and efficiency in our departments, and help individuals live healthier, more sustainable lives.

### **6.5 TOOL: Make Work More Flexible**

By breaking some jobs into components and using technology to virtualize others, employers can engage labor far more efficiently. Due to COVID-19,



## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

organizations are exploring a spectrum of mix-and-match work arrangements:

- Traditional full-time workers in the office
- Part-time talent
- Remote worker arrangements

Organizations who optimize such configurations and manage them effectively can begin engaging talent as needed, thereby lowering overhead costs and improving response times. The key to this talent-on-demand model is the availability of workers with specialized skills who are willing to work on a contingent basis.

### **6.6 TOOL: Break Down Jobs**

Nearly all high-skill interaction jobs include tasks that can be hived off to allow the best talent to focus on the most value-creating activities. A classic example was the introduction of paralegals into the legal profession, relieving attorneys of research and litigation-support tasks while allowing them to spend more time in the courtroom or serving clients.

We believe the trend to disaggregate jobs will pick up speed. In such cases, breaking jobs down into more specialized tasks will not only help organizations economize on scarce talent but also make it possible to perform those tasks more efficiently and effectively.

## **7 Maximize Your Environment**

Will you ever again step onto a crowded elevator without hesitation? Reach for a doorknob without concern (or gloves)?

Easing social distancing restrictions might reopen our organization as well as other organizations and businesses, but as long as memories of COVID-19 lockdowns are still fresh in people's minds, the experience of being inside a lab, classroom or office building most likely will not return to "normal." As a leader, it is recommended you think about how to optimize your existing space in order to exercise social distancing and maximize

## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

use of space in your environment. As faculty and staff return to our new normal, they will want an environment which supports their new combination remote, blended and onsite roles.

### **7.1 Why Maximize Your Physical Environment?**

Because you may have a percentage of your workforce routinely working remotely when we “return to work,” you may want to reexamine the use of physical workspace in your department. You may want to consider reviewing the use of space to maximize use of space in your environment. Some things to consider:

- Why maintain dedicated offices which are not used several days a week?
- Why not establish office shares so office space is in constant use?
- How can you establish social distancing for those people who do report to work?
- Why not establish collaboration spaces or use offices for meeting rooms?
- For those remote workers, why not establish cubes for the days they report onsite?
- Why not consider flexible scheduling (in physical office 2-3 days a week) to minimize contact for safe distancing?
- Are you able to consider open seating for those who work remote most of the time? Hoteling is essentially drop in work-spaces which involve no assigned seats.
- If you have talent who will be onsite most of the time because their responsibilities are transactional, is it time to consider seating them functionally with others who they mutually rely on each other to complete transactions for the college or campus?
- How will you make decisions concerning social distancing?
- How can you best organize or structure your environment to support a combination of remote, blended, and onsite faculty and staff who will attend meetings virtually and in small meeting rooms?
- Consider this - Do you have the technology located in the right places and space configuration to support effective department collaboration/goal completion?



## *Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus*

### **7.2 Work Environment is Being Redefined**

**The minimum viable work environment will be redefined as we know it.**

Millions of people all over the globe just proved that we do not need a physical office, a fancy cubicle, or even multiple monitors to get our work done well. Workplace standards, even at the most traditional of organizations, are going to shift and what people need to get their work done will be redistributed. These culture shifts point out that we can use a different, more modern set of resources to accomplish our daily tasks. We cannot simply take the old resources away and tell people to do more with less. It is simply that the resources will look a lot different and this experience is making us all more aware of that.

If our individual resources were pooled together for more shared purposes, what would the workplace look like? Reducing the number of private cubicles to shared desks could result in areas of collaboration, as opposed to heads-down workstations, and quieter, more comfortable individual pockets or offices for focus time. With proper hygiene, the office could look a lot more engaging and creative, with variety to suit every individual and their unique tasks.

**Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus**

**7.2.1 TOOL: Floor Plan for a Collaboration Neighborhood**

Example: Collaboration work-space neighborhood



NOTE: The Gensler La Crosse Company found in their 2016 workplace survey and observation activity analysis that open spaces with lots of natural light was best to keep teams moving throughout the day

**7.2.2 TOOL: Floor Plans Based on Function**

You may want to consider functional floor plans. Functional floor plans is the concept where work-spaces are organized by cross-functional teams in collaborative spaces organized by functions. In this new norm, work-spaces would not be defined by an organizational chart, but rather supply chain method. For example: Payroll would be in area with Benefits. The process functions would happen together in the same area. Also, considerations would be made for a blended work environment where remote staff and onsite staff would collaborate virtually. We would realize how to cost-effectively utilize current workspaces (i.e. cubicles, offices and conference rooms, etc.) to maximize current floor plan to accommodate the rotating schedules of staff working in the office and remotely. This new norm would double your floor plan for available in office work-space. It would spark spontaneous collaboration and information sharing with colleagues and integrate teams. An important benefit would be business continuity plans will evolve with the help of mobility programs and flexible work environments.

**Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus**

**7.2.3 TOOL: Floor Plans Based on Hoteling**

When your workplace is set up for employees to constantly move around, they have to be ready to work from a laptop at any time and in any place. With this in mind, many companies that have been interviewed feel there will be a shift for more traditional organizations to evolve several years faster than they were planning to be able to service this type of workplace strategy.

Moving people from desktops to laptops, having departments share clusters of desks vs. having assigned seats (with proper hygiene), and allowing employees the choice to work from home when business needs allow, means that work can continue whenever, wherever.

Those with more traditional technology and resources will likely want to continue tweaking and evolving their strategies to make sure they're better set up for scenarios like this in the future. "In the event there is a need in the future, that can be rolled out with less reserve and/or effort since there is now a roadmap for it."

**7.2.4 Use of Social Distancing – Cubes**

When considering social distancing and use of cubicles, look at assigning seats with proper spacing and marking off desks not in use. This type of social distancing should also be used in breakrooms, classrooms and conference rooms based on CDC distancing guidelines. The Social distancing cube configuration picture below could be organized by rotating schedules of staff in office versus remote working, while reserving seating for support staff that work in office at peak times or as support is needed.

Current cube configuration



Social distancing cube configuration



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Cost effective breakroom, and classroom social distancing patterned after Starbucks



#### ***7.2.5 Use of Hoteling***

Hoteling is a method of office management in which workers dynamically schedule their use of workspaces such as; desks, cubicles, offices and collaboration areas. It is reservation-based unassigned seating in which, faculty and staff reserve a workspace before they come to work in an office.

Organizations look to implement some sort of flexible desking or unassigned seating experience in their workplace but are hesitant to rock the boat. Faculty and staff who have had an assigned desk for their entire career are apprehensive to give up their desks decorated with personal effects. At the same time, scan the office and 1 in 4 of those photo-cluttered desks are not even occupied.

When it comes to giving faculty and staff what they want all while keeping space efficiency and a well-rounded workplace experience in mind, departments have it tough. Faculty and staff can be hesitant to change and managers get stuck using spreadsheets and outdated maps to try and manage complex desk workflows.

Flexible seating, unassigned seating — whatever you call it in your department — can be a huge transition for a department and can fail when not implemented correctly.

***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

Macquarie Group headquarters – Office designed to handle hoteling environment



Macquarie Group - Open office desking



An inside look at how activity-based companies like Microsoft and Deloitte are hoteling around the world. It is 2020 and the working world is a different animal than we once knew. Cubicle farms, private offices, and fax machines are all things of the past. And they're being replaced by open offices, hoteling, and activity-based work.

Not everyone is ok with hoteling and unassigned seats yet. But the companies that are, have made great strides to boost employee productivity and make the most of their real estate.

## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

Deloitte hopped on the hoteling train when they moved into the Edge, a futuristic and ‘green’ building, in Amsterdam. The consulting company added hoteling with only 1,000 desks for about 2,500 workers. Goodbye to private offices and assigned seats, they said, and hello to workspaces based on schedules. Instead of permanent seats, the office is separated by neighborhoods for hoteling.

### **Deloitte hoteling with activity-based work**



#### **7.2.6 Use of Space Sharing**

Space sharing is when faculty and/or staff share a work-space. It can be a formal or informal arrangement with an assigned desk or pool of desks for faculty and staff to share. If you’re looking to test out a flexible desking or expand on a current desk strategy without the risk of rocking the boat, a great way to dip your toes into a flexible desking experience is asking specific faculty and staff if they would like to participate if they are only going to report onsite a few days a week.

#### **7.2.7 Benefits of Maximizing Space**

- Financial savings
- More office resources for all
- Improved Productivity & Collaboration
- Visitor Management
- Manage mobility and satellite offices
- Congestion planning

## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

### **7.3 Maximize Your Remote Virtual Environment**

As faculty and staff work remotely it is essential they have the tools at home they need, they are organized in their new work routine, and have prepared a space to maximize work performance. It is fundamental that managers check to ensure remote staff have the tools they need and proper workspace.

#### **7.3.1 TOOL: Remote Work**

- Equipment (computer/laptop, keyboard, mouse, headset w/microphone, 16-32 GB USB etc.)
- VPN
- Software: Microsoft 365, Microsoft Teams, Cisco Jabber for Windows
- WebEx, WebEx Event, WebEx Train
- Cell phone apps: Cisco Jabber for (iPhone or Android)
- Access to job related sites: (Department, Team Response Email Sites, and Yammer), Systems: PeopleSoft, SAP, SharePoint, Microsoft Teams - Channels, etc.
- Checklist section to evaluate remote staff work from home area

### **Remote Work Environment Tips**

#### **1. Work area**

Your first task is to create a workspace in your house that is conducive for WFH (work from home). Ideally you will work in a room by yourself behind a closed door. No roommates, no fridge and no bed to tempt you away. Invest in the right furniture to make it comfortable. A proper desk and ergonomic work chair are better than a backache triggered by working on the sofa with your laptop. Keep your desk clean and tidy. Make sure you have a wall or background that suits a Skype or video call with colleagues.

#### **2. Get organized**

Get your laptop, diary, pen, cell phone and chargers in place. If you are in noisy house, invest in a noise cancellation headphone. Use a mouse for better efficiency. Figure out who will take care of the children and keep them from disturbing you with schools closed. If your spouse is on

## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

WFH too, share time slots and children related chores. Organize routines and rules for other disturbances like the maid and doorbell.

### **3. Master technology**

Learn to use the best technology available for working remotely. You can use WebEx, Cisco Jabber and Microsoft Teams for video call and Cisco Jabber tool for messaging. Project management tools like Microsoft Project to help you achieve team outcomes while Microsoft Outlook tasks/to do list and calendar can help organize your day. Speak to HCC IT support at (713)718-8800, email: [it.support@hccs.edu](mailto:it.support@hccs.edu) for any help you need, including setting up a VPN, if required.

### **4. Plan workflow**

Plan your work before you start the day. Have a task list or target sheet in front of you. Prioritize your projects and schedule time slots including extra time in between to cater for contingencies like unforeseen work calls and new tasks received from your manager. When you begin a task, continue it till the end. Do not switch between tasks or get pulled away by your need to respond to a new email. Multi-tasking or frequent switching is a productivity killer.

### **5. Communication first**

The key to success at WFH lies in prioritizing communication. Your team and manager need to know that you are available and taking WFH seriously. Thus, prefer to call your colleagues on video or chat with them for routine queries instead of sending an email. Ask for regular performance evaluations from your manager and get adequate face time with him. If you are alone at home, you run the risk of social isolation. Participate in remote non-work-related video hangouts with your team. As a manager share more information than usual with your team, provide them with the technology they need, organize social interactions and discuss how they are coping with the situation.

### **6. Block people**

The biggest challenge in a WFH routine is the presence of other people at home or from your life. Block out distractions from people by agreeing on ground rules with them. Pretend you are not at home while following rigid work hours. Do not get involved in conversations, personal calls or housework. Use headphones, a hoodie or even tinted glasses to create boundaries.

## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

### **7. Calendar control**

Remember you are earning a salary in your WFH situation. Stay committed to your timings and deliverables. Avoid home chores or personal appointments during working hours except during scheduled breaks. Don't abuse WFH by being unavailable or else you will compromise your professional respect and may lose your job when your organization cuts costs to deal with Corona-triggered challenges.

### **8. Reschedule distractions**

What were harmless social media distractions at office become deadly productivity killers in a WFH where there is no team to pull you back to work. Remove social media extensions and switch off all notifications both in your laptop browser as well as on your cell phone. Switch off your mobile data and use it only for calls. Keep your coffee flask and snacks available on your desk so that you don't get up too often.

### **9. Cracking productivity**

Don't expect to be super-productive on Day One. Expect targets to take a hit while you settle down. To crack the productivity code, schedule the toughest tasks for the morning and calls in the afternoon. Work in bite sized chunks of 25 minutes—also known as the Pomodoro technique. Thereafter stand up and walk around for 5 minutes, preferably in sunlight and fresh air. Use a music list or a background sound on your speaker if it helps you focus. When you are productive and happy, you can enjoy and appreciate the perks of WFH better.

## **Balance Your Life**

### **1. Physical boundaries**

Establish rules and boundaries to protect your personal life from work that may creep into it. Do not carry work away from your desk and do not interrupt family time or social time to complete pending work. Increase your social interactions with friends to stave off loneliness and to compensate for lack of human contact.

### **2. Repetitive routines**

Create a morning routine just like your work day. Freshen up, change into work clothes, take a 5-minute walk like a work commute and grab your cup of coffee before you sit down. Similarly, follow an end of day

## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

routine including shutting and bagging your laptop. These routines help you switch between your professional and personal lives.

### **3. Break reminders**

Regular breaks are important for mental balance. At the workplace, a break comes in the form of a colleague stopping by or a trip to the coffee machine. In WFH, set up your alarm for regular breaks for meals, coffee, minor chores or simply to get up from your seat and stand for a bit.

### **4. No phone zone**

Since all your work is going to be conducted through technology, the biggest intrusion on your personal life will be the after office hours email, call or message on your cell phone. To avoid, have a no cell phone rule in your bedroom and dining room and consider switching off your data connection during family hours.

### **5. Play the role**

Don't stay in your "office gear" once your work is done. Set aside your headphones, vacate your workspace, get into home clothes and be fully involved in your regular family chores and activities. If you are meeting friends or exercising or going out for a walk, change into an appropriate get-up, switch on the right music and let your hair down.

## **8 Faculty & Staff Engagement**

When you have faculty and staff working remotely, how will you keep your team engaged? Remote work can cause social distancing and isolation. This section will cover strategies for managing social distancing in a remote work or blended work environment. The new normal will require Managers to engage in a creative ways to keep their teams socially engaged with each other. Your team may be social distant, but it does not need to be socially isolated. These are resources to use in your new normal.

### **8.1 TOOL: Weekly Meetings, Check-Ins, and Hang Outs**

Whether it TEAMS, ZOOM or Goggle Hang Out, video conferencing will allow Managers the opportunity to meet with their teams. Checking in with your team will allow Managers the opportunity to find out how working in a remote world is working for their staff. It allows Managers to listen to their

## ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

employee's concerns and recommendations they may have for making work processes more productive. In a new normal, many teams, are being creative and are figuring out ways to establish new best practices in a remote work world.

### **8.2 TOOL: Virtual Team Activities**

Teams may miss each other. In a virtual world it is important to have team activities that can allow employees to engage with each other. The following is a list of activities that teams can participate in to create employee engagement and help with the stress of working remotely.

- Employees can give a visual tour of their workspace via video or pictures.
- Allow employees to share their new normal stories and recognize them for their courage to share.
- Virtual Coffee Breaks allows teams to visit with each other while enjoying their morning cup of coffee.
- Mindful Mondays can be time for teams to reflect on their mental and emotional wellbeing. Managers can encourage employees to take time to journal, meditate, or talk to colleague.
- Wellness Wednesdays can be a day to encourage physical activities at home like walking, bicycling, dancing, yard work or gardening.
- Fun Fridays are a way for teams to meet for lunch and play virtual games, share hobbies, create fun projects that can perform virtually as a team.
- Virtual Happy Hours can allow teams to meet after work hours and wind down the week together.

### **8.3 TOOL: Handling the COVID-19 Crisis**

### ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

A team is looking at their Manager to lead them through this new normal. These are practical steps leaders can take to engage their team.

- Connect and stabilize
- Understand the ecosystem
- Communicate and act with clarity, confidence and transparency
- Check in and listen
- Leverage digital with trust
- Balance
- Show empathy
- Refresh knowledge of organization benefits.
- Keep things light

#### **8.4 TOOL: Encourage Healthy Habits**

Here are some tips to help your employees maintain a healthy new normal.

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day
- Follow your normal 'go to work' routine, e.g., shower, dress, make your bed, eat breakfast, etc.
- Take a short break (a few minutes) every hour to stand up, stretch and take a few steps.
- Take a 15-minute break every two (2) hours and move – take a walk, dance around the room, go up and down the stairs and stretch – just get the blood pumping
- Take a lunch break – completely unplug for lunch – make it a tech-free zone; move, eat, rest your eyes and meditate (no tech necessary – just close your eyes and think happy, grateful thoughts)

### ***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

- Add 30 minutes (or more) of exercise to your routine after work – play with your children, take a walk as a family (remember social distancing when you see your neighbors), dance to your favorite tunes, watch a workout video, bowl a few games on Wii, etc.
- Eat healthy foods • Stay hydrated • Get plenty of sleep

#### **8.5 TOOL: Recognize Burnout**

As a Manager, it is your responsibility to recognize the signs of burnout as you engage with your team. Here are some tips for combating burnout.

- Create a culture that supports psychological well-being
- Build resilience in your team
- Focus on getting unstuck
- Practice self-care
- Utilize EAP Programs
- Create Buddy Programs to check on each other

#### **8.6 TOOL: Psychological, Logistical and Practical Problems**

Manager's resources include:

- Managing in a crisis
- Managing stress
- Managing remote workers
- Managing “Essential Workers” during a crisis
- Managing among chaos, ambiguity and fear

#### **8.7 TOOL: Remote Collaboration**

- Understanding the stressful situation, employees think differently

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- Remote work environment. Setting up the office and rethinking meetings
- Remote Leadership. Offering guidance and security
- Remote Collaboration – Important behaviors for moments that matter
- Outlook – Using the current normal for the future

**8.8 TOOL: Remote Team Building**

A list of virtual activities for remote team building.

Reference: City Hunt - <https://cityhunt.com/18-easy-virtual-team-building-activities-for-remote-teams/>

**8.9 TOOL: Checklist for Engaging Talent in Remote Meetings**

<b>Before the Meeting</b>	<b>During the Meeting</b>	<b>After the Meeting</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Send an email to everyone before the meeting checking to see if they have a connection, the software, the technology, and knows how to use the technology for the virtual meeting.</li> <li>✓ Plan your agenda. Determine the goals for the meeting. Seek input is desired. Post or distribute in advance</li> <li>✓ Log in early to ensure your audio and camera are working correctly</li> <li>✓ Remove background items which may be distracting</li> <li>✓ Have documents and notes available</li> <li>✓ Ensure you have paper and pen</li> <li>✓ Determine rules of participation and discuss with the team at first meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Introduce everyone or ask people to identify themselves. Call roll call if required.</li> <li>✓ Have a soft start topic at the beginning of the meeting to put people at ease such as small talk</li> <li>✓ Communicate the goals of the meeting. Provide specific objectives to achieve within the time period</li> <li>✓ Summarize the actions completed and decisions made</li> <li>✓ Ask members to contribute by asking for input on items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Summarize main points of the meeting and follow-up actions after the meeting</li> <li>✓ Monitor action items</li> </ul>



*Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus*

**8.10 TOOL: Faculty Engagement: Coronavirus Information for Higher Education**

- American Association of University Professors Resources
- Faculty Resilience During COVID-19
- EDUCAUSE Resources
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***Manager Toolkit - Priorities in Focus***

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### **9.5 Videos**

- [HBR on Coronavirus: Presence during Video Meetings](#), 4:34, Harvard Business Review
- [HBR on Coronavirus: Virtual Teams and Trust](#), 3:06, Harvard Business Review
- [HBR on Coronavirus: We're All Anxious Right Now](#), 4:11, Harvard Business Review
- [HBR on Coronavirus: Working from Home](#), 3:09, Harvard Business Review
- [HBR Video: How to Say What You Mean Online](#), 2:57, Harvard Business Review
- [The Explainer: Remote Meetings](#), 2:24, Harvard Business Review
- [Three Tips to Improve Employee Engagement during Tough Times](#), 2:59, Harvard Business Review
- [Quick Study: Connecting Teams Remotely](#), 4:45, Harvard Business Review

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57

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