



Group on Institutional Planning (GIP)
Strategic Planning & Management Subcommittee
Hybrid Workforce – lessons learned, what works?
Facilitated by Elaine Van der Put and Gerona McGrath
Notes from Discussion – June 9, 2021

Overall points raised in the session:

- Direction regarding the nature of work (i.e., onsite, hybrid, etc.) is coming from the top leadership of universities and medical schools and managers have to adapt to what the institution requires of its workforce.
- Most medical schools seem to be initiating a full return to on-site work over the summer but some schools already had hybrid work arrangements in place prior to the pandemic.
- Hybrid work arrangements and fully remote work is very new for higher education but has been done in industry (IT, software development, etc.) for years. There may be lessons learned from industry?
- It is difficult to make a proper determination of true productivity when working remotely because the work during the pandemic was mandated at a time when the emphasis was on maintaining essential services and re-designing work processes quickly, not introducing new strategic initiatives or 'innovative' projects.
- Work arrangements will depend on the individual's circumstances and the requirements of the role/duties they perform. Job descriptions can be utilized to provide guidance.
- Decisions on work arrangements need to be made based on what is best for the institution and the people it serves.
- Hybrid or remote work should not be made available to employees with performance or productivity issues.

- Top leaders need to model work/life balance expectations regardless of whether their workforce is primarily onsite or working remotely.
- Schools cannot force people to be vaccinated or to wear masks, so this may impact comfort levels of some in the workplace.
- Managing employees that are either all fully on-site or all fully offsite is less complicated than managing in situations where there is a truly hybrid mixture. Needs to be clear messaging on expectations.

Level of physical presence in the office				
	100% (5 days a week) physical presence for normal work	60-80% (3 - 4 days a week) in the physical office either by employee's choice or mandated by employer	10-20% (1/2 a day to a day a week) irregular depending on specific needs	0% physical presence required (may be in a different city, state, or even country)
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is 'visible' and available • Allows for coffee breaks and opportunities to engage with each other • Good for people in relationship-oriented roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees may be more content with this flexibility and, as a result be more productive • Reduces environmental footprint from commuting and can make better use of parking infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff can participate if you have hybrid meetings using available technology • Allows for better utilization of space on campus if hoteling/sharing offices is possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings may be more efficient and cost effective since there are no time requirements for going to meetings across campus or across town or travel costs from out of town • Good for people in transactional roles (data entry, etc.)

<p>Challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many individuals want more flexibility in their lives, especially millennials • Need to maintain safety protocols at least for the foreseeable future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicting work styles and personality (introverts vs. extroverts) needs • Difficult to get approval for different groups (i.e., staff, faculty) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting structure: all meetings have to be designated as onsite or online • Employees required for onsite meetings must attend • Difficult to manage mixed meetings with some in the room and others participating remotely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building culture and connections are difficult • Difficult to separate work from home life, so wellness issues can arise from working “all the time”
<p>Opportunities to attract top talent moving forward</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More flexible you are, the more likely you will attract and retain staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can leverage the ‘best of both worlds’ by capitalizing on team connections and flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This flexibility is good for individuals, but the work has to come first. Cannot do this for reasons like childcare, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides employees with opportunities for childcare, eldercare, etc., since they can balance their schedules

<p>Risks of losing talent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Losing people who don't want to commute daily • Losing people who feel unsafe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived inequities in who can have this arrangement if all cannot 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no feeling of connection or loyalty to the school
<p>Effective Management Strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal conversations, drop-ins, lunch outings and social connections • Demonstrate the positives of having everyone on site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage by project, not by time. Updates to manager so status is always clear. This helps staff develop their daily/weekly "to do" list • Manage based on job description and individual styles • Balance activities that take place best in-person with activities best done online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be best to have large meetings with those at different sites to use Zoom • Fully online meetings may be more 'democratic' if individuals all login from their own computers regardless of where they are working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular online meetings and events to make the person feel connected • Daily or weekly 'check-in' meetings