



Faculty & Staff COVID-19 Impacts Survey Executive Summary

April 1, 2021

To gain a better understanding of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on employee productivity and well-being, including the differential impacts upon those from underrepresented populations (e.g., essential workers, caregivers, people of color), the university conducted a campus-wide survey of faculty and staff and held focus groups with campus leaders. The Faculty & Staff COVID-19 Impacts Survey was launched on January 19, 2021 and responses were collected through February 19, 2021.

Respondent Characteristics

There were 1,534 respondents to the survey. 42% of respondents were Administrative Faculty, 38% were Academic Faculty, 18% were Classified Staff, while 2% of respondents chose “other.” 97% of respondents were full-time employees. The majority of respondents identified as white (61%), were women (59%), and fell within the age ranges of 35-54. Unit affiliation varied across respondents.

Impact on Work Performance and Development

1. What Went Well: Respondents recognized UNLV’s quick response to the pandemic and commended university actions.
 - a. **Flexible Work Schedules/Working Remotely:** Flexible work schedules and remote work allowed workers to better manage the challenges caused by the pandemic on their work and family responsibilities.
 - b. **Technology Support:** Employees frequently praised the support received from the Offices of Information Technology and Online Education. Workers appreciated assistance with the transition to working and teaching remotely.
 - c. **Health and Safety Protocols & Equipment:** Respondents appreciated the steps UNLV took to protect the community from COVID-19, including social distancing, remote work/teaching, barriers to protect frontline workers, and supply and availability of personal protective equipment.
 - d. **Support from Supervisors and Administration:** Overall, respondents appreciated the flexibility and support received from their supervisors. Respondents also felt that leadership (across all levels) took a proactive and practical approach to addressing the many work and health related challenges of the pandemic crisis.

2. What Was Challenging: The majority of workers reported that their job was more difficult during the pandemic.
 - a. Scope of Work: Employees reported that their scope of work changed during the pandemic (i.e., assigned additional responsibilities, redefined job duties).
 - b. Teaching Remotely: Faculty reported difficulty with transitioning courses online, offering a quality online experience, keeping students engaged, supporting students in a virtual environment, and learning new technologies.
 - c. Work Adjustment: Respondents reported difficulty with learning new technologies to support remote work, setting up technical equipment, accessing wi-fi/internet services, mitigating work creep, and navigating burnout from being home-bound and participating in virtual meetings.
 - d. Increased Caregiving Responsibilities: Caregivers reported difficulty balancing work with increased caregiving responsibilities. The most commonly reported impacts were interruptions during the workday, not being able to attend meetings, taking longer time to complete tasks, difficulty focusing on the task at hand, having less time to work, working a non-traditional work schedule, having difficulty teaching remotely and performing research and service, and not being able to write or publish.
 - e. Decreased Mental and Physical Health: Employees reported fear, anxiety, stress, depression, and physical ailments due to the pandemic which affected their ability to perform work. The majority of respondents strongly expressed a fear of contracting the virus.

Impact on Well-Being

Overall, workers reported that they were “doing okay” or were “doing well.” There were three major impacts on employee well-being:

1. Loss of Community: Employees reported that their relationships with colleagues, students, and the overall UNLV community became worse or did not change.
2. Stress: The majority of employees reported being stressed. For academic faculty, the top contributors of stress were the transition to online teaching, avoiding the virus, and general uncertainty about the future. For administrative faculty and classified staff, avoiding the virus and uncertainty about the future were the top contributors of stress.
3. Lack of Socialization: Employees reported missing in-person interactions with colleagues and students and attending campus events.

Pandemic Response

Respondents found the majority of actions that UNLV put in place to support employees during the pandemic to be helpful. Overall, the two most helpful actions across all job categories were: flexible workload agreements and the telecommuting policy. Differences existed by job category:

1. Most Helpful:
 - a. For academic faculty, the 1-year tenure-clock extension was most helpful.
 - b. For administrative faculty and classified staff, the town halls and coronavirus webpage were most helpful.
 - c. For classified staff, the COVID-19 Impacts Statement was most helpful.

2. Least Helpful: For some academic faculty (36%), not including 2020 student evaluations of teaching as part of their annual performance evaluations was least helpful.

Future Impacts

Respondents were asked to rank what pandemic-related responses they might like to see continue post-pandemic. The top two items reported for all respondents were: working remotely and meeting remotely.

Other items highly ranked by employee groups were: for academic faculty, having a reduced class size, and, for caregivers, more online course options for the future.

Additionally, respondents were asked what other problems UNLV could solve to better support employees during the pandemic. The items most commonly reported were:

1. Access to the COVID-19 Vaccine: Workers wanted equitable access to the vaccine across all job categories.

2. Economic Security: Employees recommended higher base salaries, better medical and pharmaceutical plans, and new measures to prevent personal financial loss imposed upon them by the state (e.g., furloughs).

3. Transparency and Accountability: Workers recommended that campus leaders increase transparency regarding campus finances and exercise better fiscal management.

4. Child Care: Workers recommended a childcare allowance and supported an expansion of on-campus childcare services and facilities.

5. Tenure and Promotion: Faculty recommended providing monetary support to reactivate research activities, and some faculty supported the removal of 2020 performance evaluations and 2020-2021 student evaluations of teaching from tenure and promotion review (18%).

Differential Impacts on Underrepresented Groups

Survey responses also identified common experiences and challenges that were unique to faculty and staff in three different groups: on-campus workers, parents/caregivers, and racial/ethnic minorities.

On-Campus Workers

Approximately one-third of respondents reported that they performed their jobs physically on campus during the pandemic (3 or more days a week). For on-campus workers, the most reported impacts of the pandemic were in the areas of job performance and employee well-being.

The majority of on-campus workers reported that their jobs were more difficult, and their scope of work changed during the pandemic.

Overall, on-campus workers (>80%) agreed that the University's health and safety protocols, particularly providing appropriate protective equipment, installing appropriate barriers for working with the public, and adhering to COVID-19 restrictions (mask-wearing, social distancing, capacity limits) were most helpful to performing their work.

Regarding well-being, on-campus workers reported a moderate level of stress during the pandemic. Over 40% of workers reported that coming to campus heightened their anxiety. When on-campus workers were asked to rank their top stressors during the pandemic, all workers ranked avoiding the virus as their top stressor.

Fifty-three percent of on-campus workers perceived that they were treated equally to those who did not work on campus. Roughly 48% reported that they could not have performed their work remotely.

Parents/Caregivers

Approximately 63% of respondents reported that they provided parenting/caregiving responsibilities for newborns/infants, preschoolers, school-aged children, adult children, and/or parents or other adults during the pandemic. For parents/caregivers, the most reported impacts of the pandemic were in the areas of job performance and employee well-being.

Overall, parents/caregivers reported that the ability to do their job during the pandemic was more difficult and their scope of work changed. Of parents/caregivers who had school-aged children, the majority (71%) had children attending school fully online through distance learning. Of those, 55% did not have external assistance to help with their child's learning. Of caregivers who cared for a parent or other adult, the majority of respondents provided in-home care without external support (45%), while 37% provided care at the residence of the parent or other adult.

Parents/caregivers reported working around the schedule of their child(ren) or the adult(s) they cared for during the pandemic, and also adapted a new work schedule that included evenings, early mornings, and/or weekends.

Regarding well-being, avoiding the virus was reported as the top stressor for caregivers of parents/adults, and balancing the demands of family and work was reported as the top stressor for parents/caregivers of newborns, preschool-aged, and school-aged children.

More than 50% of parents/caregivers felt that the pandemic negatively impacted their relationships with students and colleagues, as well as their sense of community with the university.

Racial/Ethnic Minorities

Approximately 30% of respondents were of a racial/ethnic minority: 11% of respondents were Hispanic or Latino, 10% were Asian or Asian American, 5% were Black or African American, and less than 5% identified as two or more races, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. For minority faculty and staff, the most reported impacts of the pandemic were in the areas of job performance and employee well-being.

For minority faculty and staff, the ability to do their job was more difficult during the pandemic and their scope of work changed. When asked how concerned employees were that the disruptions caused by the pandemic negatively impacted their career advancement, professional development, and job security, responses varied across minority groups. For Hispanic respondents, the ability to advance their careers (37%) and participate in professional development (36%) were concerning. Asian respondents were not concerned with the ability to advance their careers, but 33% reported concern with participating in professional development. For Black respondents, the majority (59%) were very concerned with job security, while 34% also reported concerned with the ability to advance their careers but no concern for the ability to advance their professional development (37%).

Among academic faculty, all racial groups reported the ability to conduct their teaching and research was more difficult. Asian (45%), Black (60%), Hispanic (81%), and white (70%) respondents reported the ability to conduct service was more difficult, while those of two or more races reported this was not impacted (47%), compared to 41% of this group that reported it was more difficult.

When asked to rate the helpfulness of UNLV's pandemic response, all racial/ethnic categories rated the telecommuting policy, flexible workload agreements, the coronavirus webpage, and town halls as extremely helpful.

For academic faculty, the 1-year tenure clock extension was rated as extremely helpful among all racial/ethnic categories except those of two or more races. This group rated this response as moderately helpful (43%). All racial/ethnic categories rated omitting the Spring 2020 student evaluations of teaching as not helpful, except for Hispanic respondents who rated this as equally extremely and moderately helpful (27%).

Regarding well-being, racial/ethnic groups reported a moderate level of stress during the pandemic. For minority faculty and staff, avoiding the virus was the top stressor. Hispanic and

Asian respondents reported additional top stressors: Among Hispanic respondents, avoiding the virus and balancing the demands of family and work were the top stressors. Among Asian respondents, avoiding the virus and transitioning to online teaching were the top stressors.

All racial/ethnic groups also felt that the pandemic negatively impacted their relationships with students and colleagues, as well as their sense of community with the university.

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