

Thank you to everyone who submitted questions for the 2021 Staff Focus Event. Provided are the questions and answers provided by the respective areas. We look forward to seeing you at the next one!

1. When will the updated Flexible Workplace Policy be released?

Human Resources and Legal Counsel are currently working on updating this policy. We expect to have an updated version to be reviewed by the University community during the Fall 2021.

2. As a forward-thinking institution, is there any possibility of incorporating flexible remote work opportunities for non-front facing staff moving forward? This would be an immense perk to attracting talent.

At this time in order to fulfill the core mission and strategic plan for UH, it is imperative that we plan to return to campus to serve our students and our community. For the past 15 months, we have been guided by two principles: flexibility and compassion. While these principles have served us well, changing conditions require us to look toward the new phase, which includes having a physical presence on campus. Each VP will evaluate those areas that can work fully remote moving forward. However, the remote work will apply to the entire unit, not individual employees.

3. In a time where so many organizations are embracing an official flexible work policy, why is UH holding strongly to 100% working in the office?

Please refer to the answer for question #1 above. In addition, our number one priority remains student success, which includes providing the best quality education for our students. Our students not only learn from their professors and other classmates, but they also learn from our employees who support them on a daily basis. In summary, having students back on campus will demand our presence also on campus to provide the best service to them.

4. It appears that MAPP 02.04.10 Flexible Workplace Initiative is currently being updated. If our dept. and college deem that our work productivity would still be effective in a hybrid model (as it has been for the last 15+ months), will the appropriate Vice President be flexible in approving a hybrid work schedule?

Please refer to question #1 above. Each VP will have an opportunity to assess their departments and determine if a unit can work remotely 100% of the time. However, such decision will include the entire unit not individual employees.

5. When will the updated Flexible Workplace Policy be released?

Human Resources and Legal Counsel are currently working on updating this policy. We expect to have an updated version to be reviewed by the University community during the Fall 2021.

6. TCM is working on researching and implementing a flexible, hybrid work environment. Is UH doing this?

I assume the reference is to TMC (Texas Medical Center). Nonetheless, please refer to question #1 above. Each VP will have an opportunity to assess their departments and determine if a unit can work remotely 100% of the time. However, such decision will include the entire unit not individual employees.

7. Has HR developed any work remote policies or flex work policies after our return to the office as staff have proven we can do our work from home effectively and many responsibilities can be performed virtually?

Each VP will evaluate those areas that can work fully remote moving forward. However, the remote work will apply to the entire unit, not just individual employees.

8. I understand that students and faculty are the primary focus however, staff and staff retention are quintessential to the core mission. What measures are being taken to retain staff and increase morale?

It is important for staff to understand that we are invested in their success in their current roles and in their career growth. The Catalyst Learning Program is a learning and development program designed to provide opportunities for staff to enhance skills for their current roles, as well as develop additional skills for future growth opportunities within the University. Catalyst features innovative programs focused on building skills and competencies in the areas of effective communication, personal growth, developing high performing teams, and leadership. In addition, Catalyst offers courses to help staff continue to thrive and succeed as work environments change and shift as needed.

9. Can you provide more info about budget updates and COVID protocols? How can UH ensure our safety during the pandemic since there is now no mask mandate, vaccine requirement, etc.

The FY2022-2023 state general appropriations bill (SB 1) was passed by the House and Senate and is waiting to be certified by the Comptroller. Once certified, the Governor has the authority to line item veto certain parts of the budget. The Governor has until June 20th to sign the bill. We continue to monitor the progress of the general appropriations bill and await its final outcome prior to making any decisions regarding the university's fiscal year 2022 budget. The university's budget will be presented to the UH System Board of Regents for consideration and approval at its August 26, 2021 meeting.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, guidance from the CDC and State have changed over time. In order to stay current, we strongly recommend one follow the guidance posted on our website: <https://uh.edu/covid-19/>. The University is following state and CDC guidelines. We recommend that you familiarize yourself with the [FAQ's](#), which include information about workplace safety and cleaning practices. While there is no vaccine requirement, we strongly encourage our community to get vaccinated to protect themselves and others.

10. Can HR send out communication on mental health benefits offered through our insurance and on campus especially with May being mental health month?

Although the month of May have passed, we encourage all employees to visit our HR Website for information on available benefits including mental health benefits offered through EAP.

11. Can we please have relaxed dress codes?

The general expectation is that we have an appropriate and professional attire to work on campus or work remotely. We have the opportunity and obligation to set an example for our students of how to conduct ourselves in the workforce, which includes wearing appropriate and professional attire. Each manager and respective VP will determine an appropriate and professional attire depending on the type of work performed by the employee.

12. Parents are struggling to find proper child care and many elementary schools are still not offering after care services and may not do so in the fall. Individual supervisors need to be able to provide flexibility in order to retain high performing staff members that happen to also be parents! These parents have risen to the challenge and continued to be productive working from home and/or with flexible hours. Can we please review HR polices so that working parents can have the flexibility they need to stay employed?

The University offers Back-Up Child and Elder Care for all benefits eligible staff that may require this service. Please visit the Human Resources Benefits page to find out more information about Bright Horizons Back Up Care.

13. When will the job descriptions for academic advisors (1, 2, and 3) be redrafted? The Undergraduate Advising Committee (UAC) has worked on this in collaboration with Teri Longacre's office, but we have seen no changes regarding these positions.

Human Resources will collaborate with Dr. Longacre to discuss the job descriptions mentioned.

14. Many staff did not purchase parking permits for this academic year and the permits for next academic year do not go into effect until well after we are being asked to return to campus. Can parking provide an appropriately priced special permit to help employees bridge this gap?

All of our available permits are currently on the parking portal and they are prorated to reflect remaining days left in this academic year. I would also highly encourage any and all staff that has not purchased their permits for next year do so as soon as possible as well. There will be some significant changes in place for FY22 regarding staff parking. More info can be found here: <https://uh.edu/af-university-services/parking/blog/2021/april2021/faculty-staff-changes.php>.

15. Can we please have relaxed parking and work hours?

There are certain times of the year where Parking and Transportation allows relaxed parking. These include, Spring break, Winter break and Summer. For details please visit the parking and transportation website.

As it relates to work hours, the typical office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from Monday through Friday (with one hour off for lunch). These are the regular hours of work for full-time employees; however, the work schedules of some departments/employees may be adjusted as necessary to provide maximum operational. For more information review MAPP Policy 02.04.02 Hours of Work.

If you have questions or concerns, please reach email StaffCouncil@uh.edu.