

Staff Senate FLEX Working Group Final Report Executive Summary

The Staff Senate’s flexwork/remote work working group called “FLEX” was launched in summer 2021 to assess Academic Division staff and managers’ experiences with flex/remote work (“flexwork”). After an initial survey of staff in late 2021, FLEX recommended several action items to learn more, including two additional surveys to staff and managers. New surveys were sent in June 2022 to the Staff Senate’s 6,235 constituents who are not Classified staff (persons who are subject to the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Telework policy). The focus of the FLEX Working Group Final Report is two-fold: 1) the June 2022 staff survey responses, and 2) the FLEX team’s recommendations based on staff responses, consultations with UVA HR, and review of peer institutions.

The June 2022 survey response rate was significant: 1,540 employees (25%) responded, and 355 managers (10% of 3,415 Academic Division managers) responded, totaling 1,895 responses, for an overall response rate of 30% of all Academic Division non-Classified employees. The FLEX team asked respondents about their schedules and awareness of existing flexwork resources. Respondents reported:

- Employees:
 - 17% are working in person (1/4 of whom reported that their managers did not or could not explain why they must work in-person)
 - 83% work some form of a flex schedule (48% are hybrid, 25% are remote, and 10% have occasional flexwork opportunities)
- Managers:
 - 29% are working in person
 - 71% work some form of a flex schedule (55% are hybrid and 15% are fully remote)

60% of employees were unaware of the [Employee Flexwork Toolkit](#) on the HR (Human Resources) website; 35% of managers were unaware of the [Manager Flexwork Toolkit](#) and Employee Flexwork Toolkit. Nearly 20% of managers reported that they do not feel supported in making flexwork decisions for their teams.

Respondents shared the benefits and challenges they experienced with flexwork (numbers represent the total number of respondents indicating each item):

	Benefits	Challenges
Employees	767: Productivity improved 753: Commuting costs/time reduced 484: Work/life balance improved 389: Flexibility in work schedule	283: Communication issues 176: None 149: Resources 106: Work/Life boundaries impinged
Managers	156: Employee Happiness 109: Efficiency 103: Work/Life balance improved 100: Productivity improved or maintained	69: Connection: Loss of community 59: Working together is harder 56: Logistics: more effort to manage 51: Communication is harder 50: Managing is harder

See the accompanying PowerPoint final report for complete details of the FLEX project.

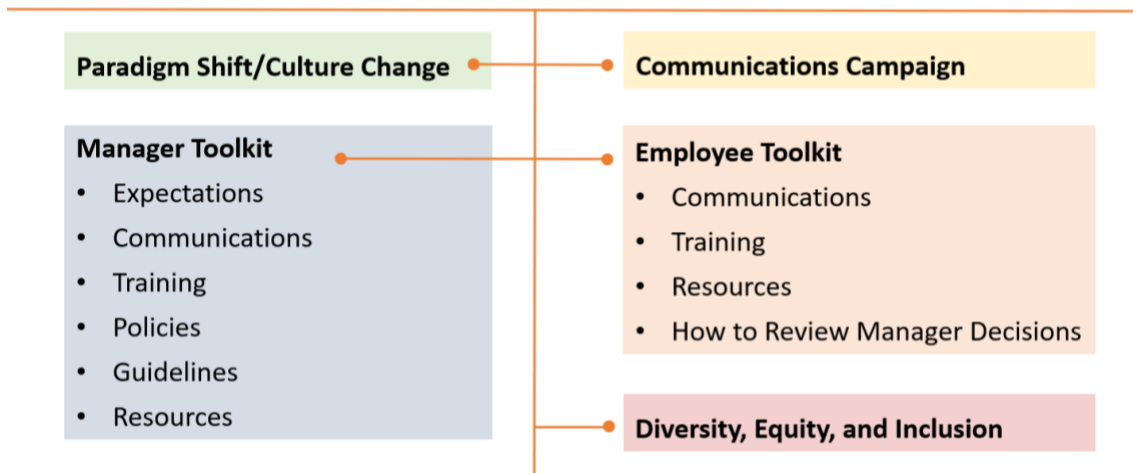
Both staff and manager groups reported many benefits and few challenges with flexwork. There are nuances in the managers' responses: in general, they reported benefits for their employees and challenges for their teams and their work as managers.

Clearer communication of existing resources, the development of flexwork/remote training programs and policies to address gaps in current policies, and the expansion of existing toolkits will address these challenges.

One consistent theme in both surveys was a call for clear, consistent high-level communications from the UVA President's Cabinet supporting flexwork. The FLEX working group also highlights the need for policy and communications to address DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) considerations.

Because both groups reported significant benefits from flexwork while also identifying challenges, the FLEX team offered the following five recommendations (details for each recommendation are in the PowerPoint final report), which Staff Senate voted on and approved with an overwhelming majority:

Final Recommendations Summary



The FLEX team conducted a preliminary survey of public peer institutions (with support from Rebekah Latour, the Women's Center Greer Fellow), finding a variety of creative options among our peers. Of note:

- The [Rutgers University](#) and [University of Arizona](#) websites are models of clear, effective communication.
- Arizona describes flexibility in terms of [space and schedule](#).
- The [University of Illinois](#) articulates 10 cultural standards guiding remote work (pg. 7 of linked document).

With this project's feedback from employees and managers of the Academic Division, there are actionable steps our leadership can take toward the culture of integrity, mutual respect, excellence, collaboration, and innovation called for in the first strategic goal of the 2030 plan, Strengthen Our Foundation. The 2030 plan calls boldly for UVA to be the best employer in higher education, and the Staff Senate appreciates the opportunity to collaborate with leadership in achieving that goal.

Respectfully submitted on October 3, 2022, by:

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