

Staff Safety Survey Results

Survey summary

The Staff Senate Executive Committee created a brief survey to gauge constituency opinion of the Campus Return to Work plan, divisional plans and feelings of safety amidst the transition back to campus this month. **592 constituents** of 3,005 full- or part-time staff (UNT Fact Site) responded to the survey. This amounted to a **response rate of roughly 20%**.

Desired survey outcomes

- 1) To give staff a place to feel heard on matters of returning to work and campus safety protocols.
- 2) To give the president a benchmark of how staff are feeling about returning to work this month.
- 3) To give the president insight on what issues, if any, might still require additional clarification for staff.
- 4) To highlight areas where there may still be gaps in communicating safety plans and responding to staff opinion.

Survey highlights

Return to Work Plan – Comfort Level:

Of 592 respondents, **34% said they felt comfortable or extremely comfortable** with their unit's Return to Work plan. **36% felt uncomfortable or extremely uncomfortable** and about 25% were neutral or unsure. 5.5% said their unit had not yet outlined a plan.

When asked about specific concerns related to reopening plans, **11% of respondents said they had no concerns** at this time. **25% were concerned about spreading the virus** to others, and **33% answered that they were concerned about contracting the virus**.

45% of respondents provided specific ways the university could make them more comfortable about returning to work; 35% said nothing else was needed, **20% replied that they were comfortable** returning to work.

Remote Work:

Over 400 respondents replied that their jobs could be performed remotely, and **546 respondents (92%)** felt that staff members whose positions could be performed via work-from-home status should be given the option to continue telecommuting through the fall semester, even if they did not fall into a high-risk category.

Supervisor/ departmental flexibility and support:

Almost 60% of respondents reported that their **supervisors were extremely flexible** in terms of health concerns or extenuating circumstances for staff. Another 23% said their supervisors were somewhat or moderately flexible, while less than 10% felt their supervisor to be inflexible in some way.

Short answer responses:

There were almost **500 short-answer responses** provided on various questions about safety and returning to work. Here are some of the most common themes presented:

Common themes:

- Concern about personal health issues and vulnerability returning to work
 - Concerns about the health of family members
 - Concerns about the unknown health conditions of coworkers' family/ housemates
- Concern about the rising COVID cases in the area
- Concern about the University's preparation & contingency plans not feeling safe: ex. Concerns about building ventilation, not enough cleaning products, what happens when someone tests positive for COVID, etc.
- Concern about the lack of communication from division/department chairs
- Concern about compliance and enforcement of University safety guidelines
- Concern about having to return to work without having any or adequate childcare

Additional responses:

- Some are comfortable returning to work and comfortable with University's plan and the communication of plan via Town Halls.
- Fear of losing job, fear of the unknown and stress about returning to an unsafe work environment were also present.
- Several people noted that they felt their supervisors were ignoring their requests/ not honoring medical requests to continue working remotely.

Suggestions offered by staff for how the university can mitigate safety concerns:

- Allow remote work to continue for all positions where it's possible to work remotely
- Allow offices to continue to be fully remote in operations serving students
- Provide free testing for front line staff who are at higher risk for contraction in their job (Housing, custodians, receptionists)
- Provide free testing and quick results to all staff (in addition to faculty and students)
- To-go (only) meal plans for campus dining
- Establish clear consequences for students and staff who do not follow reopening guidelines
- Hazard pay
- Provide UVC purifiers
- Part-time parking permits for staff who will work in-person half the time
- Make as many courses besides hands-on activities off-campus when possible

Conclusion

We hope the results of this survey provide the President and campus leadership with a quantifiable sense of how staff members are feeling as they return to work this month. Respondents overwhelmingly

expressed that the Work from Home option should remain available for appropriate staff through the fall to enhance campus safety and decrease the potential for virus spread on our campus. It's concerning to see reports that staff did not feel like their supervisors were communicating with them or responding to their request to maintain their remote status. These concerns should be addressed as the President and campus administration move forward with Return to Work plans for the fall.