RUTGERS

THE STATE UNIVERSITY
OF NEW JERSEY

The FUTURE of WORK

Town Hall Progress Report | July 7, 2022

Overview

- COVID-19 provided valuable lessons on how we can employ flexibility and innovation to better serve our students and the community.

- Employees can effectively perform some, not all, jobs off campus.

- In order to attract and retain top talent and remain competitive with market trends, we must expand our view of flexible work arrangements.

- We must have the right people, policies, training, assessment tools, and technology in place to support short and long-term strategies.

- To this end, President Holloway established the FoW Task Force.

University Community Feedback

- **Over 29,000 touchpoints.**
- Distributed a FoW survey for faculty and staff.
- Disseminated a survey for student employees.
- Hosted virtual listening tours for all students and employees.
- Held 60 focus group sessions.
- Created an online form to gather input.
- Launched the Future of Work website.
- Drafted direct messages to employees and students to encourage engagement.
- Produced a series of Rutgers Today stories.

Student Focus Groups | April 2022

- **Academic Experience**
  - First- and second-year students requested in-person options to help them build stronger connections to their peers as part of their college experience.
  - Third- and fourth-year students felt they could more easily adapt to online learning to balance work and academics.
- **Connections to Peers/Faculty/Staff – Experience with Employees Working Remotely**
  - Students felt isolated and noted that "it took a toll on mental health."
  - Need more predictable hours, less locked doors and empty buildings on campus.
  - Student well-being and interventions rely heavily on in-person interactions.
- **Campus Spirit**
  - College traditions are "dying," and the campus feels "dead."
  - Need greater social interactions on campus.
- **Student Life**
  - More in-person events and improved communications about mental health services.

Faculty/Staff Survey | November 2021

- **Satisfaction Working at Rutgers**
  - 80% reported high levels of satisfaction with working at Rutgers.
  - 65% would recommend Rutgers University as a great place to work to others.
  - Satisfaction associated with experiencing work-life balance including:
    - Improved mental wellness, reduced stress, and increased morale.
    - Felt more productive at home.
    - Experienced quality time with family and provided appropriate care for family members.
- **Interest in Types of Flexible Work Arrangements**
  - 76% of supervisors and 78% of employees prefer hybrid work.
  - 51% of supervisors and 40% of employees prefer a compressed work week.
  - 46% of supervisors and 45% of employees prefer a flex workday schedule.
  - Primary concerns related to social isolation, reliability of technology, and no breaks.
- **Frontline Employee Insights**
  - 43% requested access to childcare and eldercare support services.
  - 34% requested wellness programs.

Findings and Recommendations

The future of work recommendations were informed by the all of the feedback received and are consistent with President Holloway's message regarding our shared responsibility to create a vibrant campus community for our students, patients, employees, and visitors.

Academic Affairs

Working Group Charge: Examine academic programs and initiatives to support adaptability to an ever-changing workplace and to recommend career readiness skills for flexible work/life paradigms.

Findings

- The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need to upskill faculty in using innovative technologies and better align academic and auxiliary support services to ensure that auxiliary services also adjust to support the new academic configurations as academic offerings change.

Recommendations

- Reimagine teaching and teaching approaches to enhance student engagement and learning.
- Improve the quality of technologies and faculty preparation for effective online teaching.

Student Needs & Experience

Working Group Charge: Examine the impact of the pandemic on the student experience and how the university is keeping pace with fulfilling the needs of students given the health and well-being of students and current staffing demands and changes. The committee will make recommendations related to student well-being, student needs, and the associated staffing realities.

Findings

- concerns regarding student mental health and overall wellness;
- the need for coordination of student academic and co-curricular life at the university;
- the need for improved communication with students regarding available and changing student services;
- general university responsiveness toward student needs; and
- staffing challenges given changes in employee perspectives and requirements related to work-life balance, wellbeing, and workplace expectation due to the pandemic.

Student Needs & Experience

Recommendations

- Augment the university infrastructure to better support student needs and provide a healthy, responsive, coordinated, data-informed student experience.
- Create systemwide strategies to maintain a healthy and robust student engagement experience.

Clinical

Working Group Charge: Reflect on Rutgers Health lessons learned throughout the COVID-19 pandemic related to the clinical community from the perspective of patient care and the healthcare workforce. Identify, prioritize, and pilot Future of Work recommendations to enhance patient outcomes and the workplace experience for clinical faculty, staff, and learners, in partnership with our health system affiliates.

Recommendations

- Undertake workforce planning exercises at Rutgers Health to improve elasticity across all disciplines to enhance patient outcomes and healthcare worker wellbeing.

- Develop guiding principles and best practices related to telehealth and augment alternate locations to improve access to clinical care.

- Launch a Pilot Program to hire community health workers (CHW) and patient navigators at Rutgers Health to address social determinants of health needs in the patients being served.

Research

Working Group Charge: Explore the future composition and characteristics of research teams using lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. Identify actions that we should pursue to reshape the future of research work and teams at Rutgers University.

Findings and Recommendations

- The Rutgers Institutional Review Board (IRB) underwent a dramatic transformation to speed the approval of COVID-19 focused protocols that provided a foundation for further evolution of services critical to the success of research studies with human participants.

- The Research Contract Services team doubled productivity, as measured by the number of contracts processed.

- Rutgers should seek to understand these changes, maintain the performance of these teams going forward, and consider carefully where similar changes to administrative units might lead to similar outcomes.

Equity

Working Group Charge: Delivering recommended strategies and tactics to ensure an equitable and inclusive in-person, remote, and hybrid workplace environment for Rutgers University faculty, staff, and student employees at all levels and across all campuses.

Findings

- It is critical that we provide strategies and policies to ensure an equitable and inclusive in-person workplace environment for Rutgers faculty, staff, and student employees at all levels and across all campuses.

- Rutgers needs to give employees a sense of purpose and belonging and incentivize teamwork and collaboration across departments.

Recommendations

- Create mechanisms to increase transparency and promote diversity.
- Establish one university-wide Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program.

Employee Well-Being

Working Group Charge: Examine the impact of the pandemic on employees and provide recommendations to foster employee well-being. These will include approaches to optimize mental health and wellness resources, enhance employee growth and professional development, facilitate building community and connections, enhance the work culture as it pertains to employee well-being, and address employee stressors in the current work environment.

Findings and Recommendations

- Design and deploy a systemwide Employee Wellbeing Program and Implement "Project Reset, Refocus and Readjust."

- Establish a Conflict Diagnosis and Resolution Unit as part of the Office of Workplace Culture within University Human Resources.

- Implement a caregiver support option pilot program.

Human Resources

Working Group Charge: Identify and recommend strategies to enhance talent acquisition and retention in an evolving job market while establishing guidelines and resources to support the equitable implementation of a reimagined mission-focused workforce and workplace. The Human Resources Subcommittees will focus on four primary subject areas including work schedules and arrangements, talent retention and development, resources and expectations, and labor and compliance.

Recommendations

- Implement critical recruitment and retention strategies to attract and retain top talent, identify turnover trends, and remain competitive with the market.

- Redesign the onboarding and new employee orientation experience.

- Undertake a systematic audit of university policies to identify and address gaps, reduce redundancy, minimize confusion, and promote consistent and uniform application.

- Implement formal flexible work arrangement options as a pilot program for FY23.

- Design training resources to navigate FWA and build a respectful workplace.

Policy 60.3.22

- Current policy in effect until 8/31/22

- Draft policy in effect on 9/1/22

- For regularly appointed non-aligned staff

- Relaxed during pilot program year

- Includes:
  - Expanded FWA offerings and definitions
  - Application requirements
  - Approval authority

- **All current flexible work arrangements and telecommuting agreements expire on August 31, 2022**
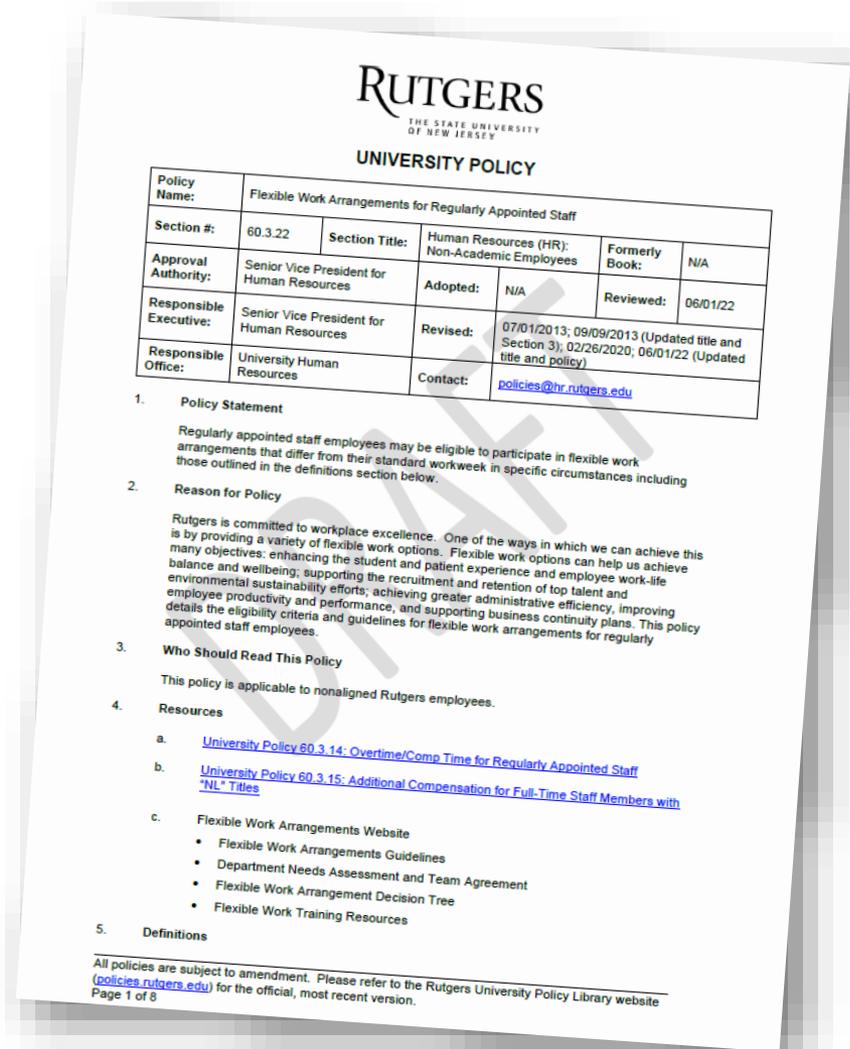
Information Technology

Working Group Charge: Identify and recommend IT resources needed to support flexible work arrangements at Rutgers, including software and hardware standards and plans for the logistical challenges of remote and on-site IT support. Assess the competitive landscape for talent acquisition and retention, including a review of peer institutions and employment markets with whom we compete for qualified and experienced applicants.

Findings and Recommendations

- Develop the infrastructure necessary to support new work modalities.
- Streamline platforms to facilitate file sharing, video conferencing, and academic course delivery.
- Pursue virtual and self-service options including chat functions and virtual meetings with customers.
- Establish a consultative, cross-functional body to meet individual researchers, clinicians, and instructors who have specific IT needs that will not be met with more established solutions.

Operations

Working Group Charge: Evaluate today's service delivery model, incorporating pandemic lessons learned, as it relates to the strategic, tactical and operational plans of the university going forward. Develop recommendations to address necessary changes and modifications to these plans that are inclusive of core business functions, employee equity, managerial and administrative capacity, service expectations and student support in advancing the university's mission of educational delivery, research, patient care and community service.

Recommendations

- Re-examine foundational elements of university space—both interior and exterior—and perform utilization study to assess ongoing physical plant needs.
- Expand collaborations with the Rutgers Climate Action Group to support sustainability efforts.

Finance

Working Group Charge: Identify short- and long-term financial impacts on the future of work with a focus on revenue opportunities, cost-saving benefits, and determining resources necessary to support the evolving needs of our community. Analyze the recommendations from the other workgroups to project financial impact of implementing those recommendations.

Findings and Recommendations

- Develop common mechanism(s) to determine impacts of flexible work arrangements and other future of work-related programs, policies, and activities.

Communications

Working Group Charge: Recommend and implement communications strategies and tactics to ensure that Rutgers faculty, staff, and student employees at all levels and across all campuses are informed about the matters under consideration by the FoW Task Force and are aware of opportunities to provide input.

Findings

- As the university launches new in-person and remote work models, Rutgers must increase its focus on effective employee communications. A strategic and multifaceted internal communications program would meet employees where they are and ensure faculty and staff have the information needed to succeed and feel valued at Rutgers.

Recommendations

- Develop a comprehensive strategy and action plan for systemwide internal communications.
- Create an Internal Communications Group to develop best practices for internal communications, communication strategies, and outreach programs.

Important Dates

- **July 11, 12, 18, 19: FlexWork@RU Information Sessions (policy, guidelines, system training)**

- **July 20:** FlexWork@RU Application System opens
- **August 15:** All flexible work arrangement applications due
- **September 1:** New Flexible Work Arrangement Policy and Procedures in Effect
- **Fall Semester 2022:** Operationalize Approved Short-term Recommendations

FAQs

Visit the FoW website at futureofwork.rutgers.edu

- Several resources are currently available, and announcements will be routinely made through the website.

- A robust list of FAQs is available on the future of work website.

- Additional questions will be added based on community input.
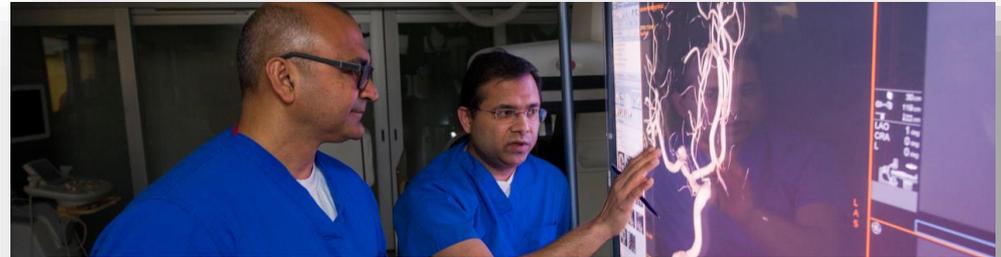
Flexible Work Arrangement FAQs

GENERAL INQUIRIES

- What is FlexWork@RU?
- What is a Flexible Work Arrangement?
- Who is eligible for a flexible work arrangement?
- Does this policy apply to faculty?
- Can part-time employees participate in flexible work arrangements?
- Can student workers apply for a flexible work arrangement?
- What if I do not work on campus? Does the 3-day minimum still apply?
- Will Rutgers offer flexible work arrangements on a permanent basis?
- Can employees participate in multiple flexible work arrangements?
- Are flexible work arrangements available to newly hired staff?
- Are there specific procedures that need to be followed to implement a flexible work arrangement?
- How are decisions made about eligibility for a flexible work arrangement?

FAQS FOR EMPLOYEE APPROVED FOR FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

- What is expected from me when I am working remotely?
- What do I do if my flexible work arrangement is not working out?
- Will the university provide me with equipment and supplies to work remotely?
- What happens if I have connection issues while working remotely?
- How does this policy impact employees who accepted a job offer for a fully remote position at Rutgers and live out-of-state?
- What happens to my flexible work arrangement if I transfer to another department and/or get a new position?

FAQS FOR DEPARTMENT HEAD/SUPERVISOR

- What resources are available to help supervisors make decisions with respect to flexible work arrangements?
- How should a supervisor handle a situation where it may be appropriate to approve one staff member's request for a flexible work arrangement and deny the request of another?
- How will staff members' performance be evaluated while working remote?