COVID-19 Work Plan: The *Why* Behind It

Hello,

We are in unprecedented times:

- Experiencing a world pandemic
- Making choices as a nation, state and University to isolate our workforces
- Experiencing closures of our K-12 public and private schools and other businesses, which is bringing our families home, even as we may be setting up shop there depending on the nature of our University work
- Sending our residential students home and transitioning to on-line class delivery
- Considering whether our departments have work in these new circumstances
- Staying tuned to decisions by the Chancellor and Presidents
- Operating through a time and space where our Chancellor provided us pause to regroup and settle into adjustments
- Keeping apprised of federal and state legislative and process changes being put in place to speed support for employees and organizations, and
- We can imagine there may be more change.

You are a manager or supervisor with care, compassion and responsibility for supporting your team and the University's direction. You oversee employees becoming familiar with new workforce options at the same time you are. They may be analyzing their workload, wanting clarity and seeking answers.

- If you're a manager, you oversee all the resources for which you have functional oversight – your team members, budget, materials like tools and equipment and your physical spaces – which can be buildings or virtual sites
- If you're a supervisor, your role is the oversight of a person or team's daily work; work important for serving the university's students, research and community stewardship

Working together on decisions you make will be important in ensuring an aligned, team-equitable process.

COVID-19 Work Plan: Best-in-Class Workforce Practice

Knowing that it can be confusing in this time and space to narrow down to what's most important for you to do right now, the next pages will introduce you to the practice and associated tool for developing a Work Plan. Given the context, we'll call this a **Covid-19 Work Plan.** To be clear, this nature of tool is a best-in-class workforce practice. Specifically, the next slides will:

- Introduce the Purpose of a Work Plan and describe the various Components to include
- Explain what you can and cannot do considering these options with and for your team
- Demonstrate that a Work Plan is a living, breathing document that allows you to make a plan in given circumstances and accelerates your ability to shift the plan as needed when and if circumstances change again. It is meant to be dynamic

A Work Plan can be hand-written or typed simply into a Microsoft Word Document. As you learn the components and begin to craft yours, please know that your Human Resources team can serve as a consultant and support for you as you both develop and implement your Work Plan.

COVID-19 Work Plan: Scenario

Creating and/or Revisiting Your Work Plan given the Chancellor's April 4, 2020 Communicated Workforce Information

Context: On Friday, April 3, 2020, the Chancellor introduced workforce options in support of COVID-19. The information – representing translation of federal legislation, state response, bargaining unit and UMS responses – hit the UMS information street (so to speak) simultaneously for employees and managers. Because legislation offers options that can provide significant benefit for employees, it is likely that your employees will consider the information and proactively approach you quickly.

Your Action Steps as a Supervisor/Manager:

1. **Read and ensure understanding of *UMS Covid-19 Response: Bringing Focus & Clarity:*** This will be an incredibly useful tool to reference quickly. It summarizes the April 3, 2020 update and provides scenarios. Your employees may be well informed of their options when the approach you. Or they may not. Please be sure to check.
2. **Walk your team members through the *COVID-19 Employee Workflow*:** This flowchart is available on the Employee Benefits Center website and is also in the *UMS Covid-19 Response: Bringing Focus & Clarity* document. As a manager/supervisor, you will not be able to fully confirm your *people resources* and decisions until you walk through this flowchart with every one of your employees. Please do this with every employee to ensure integrity to equity.

   The left side will confirm where the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) may impact team member availability. The right-side focuses on whether there is work to do. Discussing and assessing both will clarify resultant volume of work and staffing you have available to conduct the work, allowing decisions to be made.
3. **Be confident and assured in your legitimate authority as manager:** The COVID-19 benefits are generous. At a point when you have an accurate estimation of work to be completed, it may impact employees' choices related to voluntary furlough. A furlough is only available when there is no work to be done as assessed and confirmed by you as a manager and, we would recommend, a second-level manager. Ultimately, this could feel like a push-and-pull with team member(s). Your responsibility as a manager is to work with your team to assure capacity to complete needed University work.
4. **Take thinking time – It's like cooking; It can need marinating:** Give yourself permission to understand and fully appreciate your current reality. Your employees are likely to want answers quickly even as you know you need to understand your whole team dynamic before you can make certain decisions. Your responsibility is to the University work that needs to be completed and to your team.
5. **Be Creative:** Need breeds innovation and in this current reality, we can consider that it all doesn't have to look one way. There can be creative options for completing work, and you are likely to need some, especially given the new remote work environment and the likelihood that the FFCRA benefit may mean you have employees out permanently or partially for a time and space.

COVID-19 Work Plan: Creating Yours

What is the PURPOSE of doing a Work Plan?

- A Work Plan ensures that your management decisions are proactive, based on the factual information available to you at the time and focused on the end goals of serving our students, the University's work and our teams
- How does it work: Creating a Work Plan involves reviewing relevant team and work data and then answering a series of interconnected questions in order to create a plan of action for how your function will operate under new conditions to serve the work. Work Plans can be developed by an individual relevant to their own work; or when a team member's work is interconnected with others', it is best to consider their work within the whole of what the function, department and University needs

What are the various Components?

Component	Explanation
Version Control, DRAFT Stamp, and Page Numbers	Please ensure that your Work Plan has DRAFT noted on it until complete. It is ideal if you do this in the form of Version Control, noting the Version, Date and Draft all in the header or footer of the document so that it crosses over from page to page. Also, we recommend you include page numbers as part of your Work Plan. Ideally, select the format of Page X of X, in case the document is ever separated. Including these important stamps is a risk management strategy.
Scope and Timeframe	The Scope explains what Function, Department or other Governing Group the Work Plan is associated with. The timeline then describes the planned or anticipated timeframe covered by the Work Plan. You can identify one duration or phases within a duration, if applicable.
The Objectives & Key Results (OKRs) relevant to the Work Plan	What are you trying to solve for during this time? In other words, what are the goals you're trying to reach and measures that will demonstrate you've achieved them? Be realistic. Imagine that your OKRs may shift away from *business as usual.* Right now as we are facing unprecedented times, it is likely work will shift. Your University leadership can help you identify the directional aim and parameters, then you can clearly identify your OKRs.
An Explanation of Your Department's Work to be Done	As we know, our departments/functions exist to conduct certain work at the University. The Work Plan clearly outlines the work that needs to be done by the department during the timeframe you've outlined. These times may translate to significant changes for your function. Consider different circumstances: 1. You may find yourself in a department that genuinely has little or no remaining work. If you oversee or work in a childcare center on one of our campuses, and we've closed that service in lieu of isolation and safety practices, work may end after cleaning the Center and completing documentation 2. You may find yourself with a similar or increased workload your team has to accomplish. For example, if your department supports successful implementation of technologies for delivering student learning services at a distance, you have likely ramped up short-term. Plus, given that UMS will start using the new *Desire to Learn Brightspace* learning management system (LMS) for Fall 2020 classes, work will remain constant 3. You may find yourself in a department with continued work, though at a lesser volume than usual since students have gone home and typical other spring/summer events are currently cancelled or on hold

COVID-19 Work Plan: Create Yours

Other Components to include in your Personal planning and as part of your Department/Function's Work Plan?

Component	Explanation
Resources: Your Current Reality	This should be accurate to current resources available to do a scope of work, and also estimate future resources considering factors you know may change. Resources includes anything needed to conduct the nature of your area's work during this time. Some resources: Budget, Technology, Places (physical and/or virtual spaces/sites), People, and Products. As you can imagine, the changes in work, employees' circumstances as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the combination of new state and federal legislative benefits, and University budget impact are all good reasons why Work Plans should be created and also revisited as a working document.
Relevant Resource Data	This can include any variety of data pertaining to your resources. As we consider the current COVID-19 pandemic and response circumstances and benefits, some useful data could be: 1. Budget: Starting budget, anticipated expenses (especially new/unexpected ones per COVID-19), clarity on any budget decisions made by your manager or the University. If you don't regularly gain access or review your budget, we recommend connecting with your manager to do it at this time 2. Technology/Products: Equipment or access – such as internet or computer program access - that allows telework, if applicable 3. Places: Are there any limitations on sites based on the COVID-19 shelter-in-place guidance from the Governor? 4. People: Consider your and/or your team members' skill sets relative to new work or new ways of doing work necessary because of COVID-19. Also, since people will be considering new COVID-19 legislative benefits, it can be helpful to understand work volume by team member, their accrual balances, salary and hours, their family circumstances such as care for dependents, and more **Critical Note:** You can use data to predict and plan. Ultimately, related to your *people resources*, your practice must involve confirming their circumstances with them, not basing your decisions on assumptions. This is critical, especially as it relates to fair and equitable practices.
Decision-Making Criteria, Choices and Rationale for Decisions Made	It is important to have a set of decision-making criteria that is prioritized, inclusive, equitable and aligned with the objectives of the University related to your work and your function's/department's work. Use this set of criteria in making all your decisions, and check with your supervisor/manager about your criteria, rationale and final decisions. Since your team members will offer their input and availability into the mix, your final decisions should include conversation with them. Be sure to date and document your rationale as you make decisions. Especially when things are changing rapidly, it can be important to recall your rationale. It can also be worthwhile to note when you talked to your team member(s) about the plan so you don't forget.
Service & Communication Plan	Once you have analyzed your resources relative to the work to be done, in line with directional clarity by the University and supported by your manager, the next step is mapping the updates plan for how service will continue and also how/when any changes will be communicated to team members and colleagues (internal communication) and customers of your work (external communication). This includes how your customers will continue to receive/access your services. Finally, if there are new expectations for how work will be conducted, this plan should outline the specific new expectations for team members. Maintaining your regular weekly coaching with your team members will be important to stay mutually communicative about how things are going.

COVID-19 Work Plan: Sample Template

Scope & Timeframe:

Objectives & Key Results:

The end outcomes I'd like our department/function to achieve with quantity and quality-focused measures

1.
2.
3.

Explanation of Department/Function's *Work to be Done*:

Resources: Your Current Reality:

Attach Relevant Data:

1. Budget:

2. Technology/Products:

3. Places (Physical/Virtual):

4. People:

Decision-Making Criteria:

This should include your Service Values and other factors. Please prioritize these. You can write them in the form of a question that you ask yourself in every decision-making situation. Ensure they are business-relevant, inclusive and equitable. Also, be sure to apply them equally as you consider all your people resources.

Choices, Rational, Decisions Made

Date your decisions:

Service & Communication Plan:

Internal:

External:

Version, DRAFT Date, Page X of X