The Importance of Library Assessment in HR
A Case Study of Transitioning to a Hybrid Work Environment after the COVID-19 Pandemic

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to explore and document employee perceptions of remote work as a potential option for normal operations, based on experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic. The goals were to obtain feedback about remote work / telecommuting to develop a guideline, and measure satisfaction with the hybrid work environment several months after it was implemented.
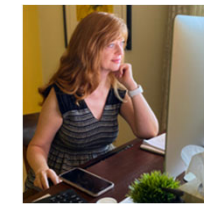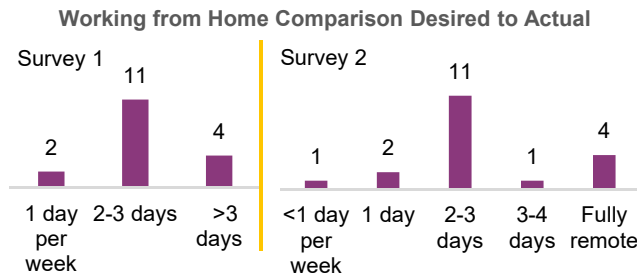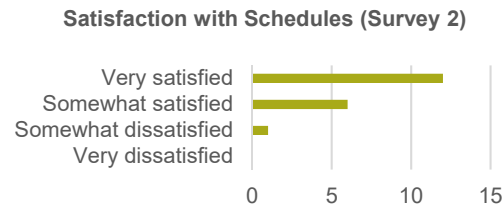
METHODS

Two web-based surveys were sent to all library faculty and staff (n = 20 & 22), one in April 2021 and the other in March 2022. Both surveys included multiple-choice and free-text questions designed in SpringShare LibWizard. Both were declared minimal risk by our institutional IRB.

The first survey included questions about how often employees wanted to work remotely; what tasks they believed could be done productively from home; what equipment they needed at home; and what challenges they believed the library faced with employees working remotely. This feedback was used to develop a remote and telecommuting guideline that was implemented in July 2021.

The second survey assessed employees' experience telecommuting or working remotely since the guideline was implemented, including questions about schedules, satisfaction, equity, what worked better than expected, and continuing challenges.

RESULTS

Survey #	1	2
Response Rate	85%	86%
Responses	17	19

Satisfaction with Schedules (Survey 2)

Very satisfied
Somewhat satisfied
Somewhat dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied

0   5   10   15

Working from Home Comparison Desired to Actual

Survey 1
2   11   4
1 day per week | 2-3 days | >3 days

Survey 2
1   2   11   1   4
<1 day per week | 1 day | 2-3 days | 3-4 days | Fully remote

Library employee working at home during pandemic.

Challenges with Hybrid Work Environment Comparison
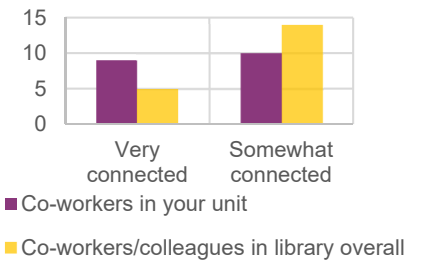
Survey 1		Survey 2	
Staffing the building & schedules	12	Having right tools where working	3
Demand for in-person services	8	Communication / finding people	3
Difficulties hosting hybrid meetings	5	IT issues	3
IT issues	5	Sense of connection	2
Equity/fairness on campus vs. remote	5	Hybrid meetings/ teaching	2
Difficulties working with hybrid teams	2	Schedule variability	2

CONCLUSIONS

Assessment programs can have a powerful impact on a library's administrative operations, especially when implemented at the beginning of a new initiative. Data gathered when the UNM Health Sciences Library and Informatics Center (HSLIC) began offering remote and telecommuting work options provided a valuable baseline used to develop a guideline, which can be built upon in the future, as this initiative matures. The strengths and challenges of a hybrid work environment can also be assessed longitudinally and adjustments made.

More assessment projects related to administrative operations should be looked to as possible research opportunities. They offer generalizable, and often overlooked, case studies that provide valuable information for the library community.

How Connected Do You Feel? (Survey 2)

0   5   10   15

Very connected
Somewhat connected

■ Co-workers in your unit
■ Co-workers/colleagues in library overall

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