

**Thematic Analysis of CODRE Campus-Wide Listening Session #4
Fall 2021**

Topic: Returning to Campus During a Pandemic: What's Your New Normal?

In the Midst of an Ongoing Pandemic

Change in work patterns

- I have had a lot of time to sit and think about my work and home life and priorities
- Having to work hybrid feels like I am working harder than ever
- Working back-to-back meetings is difficult. In the past you had a break to move to the next meeting but that doesn't happen as much now. Some days I work from 8 am to 8pm sitting in-front of the computer
- I get emails at all times of the night and day. It is disruptive when I have my phone in the bedroom with me and I get alerts in the wee hours of the morning or middle of the night.
- I was told I needed to come into the office. I gave the days and hours I would be there.....but the doors to the building were locked [due the exposure to COVID]. I had to constantly either call a coworker or walk around the building trying doors.
- With students back on campus we are expected to plan in person programing, but we get calls from angry parents if their child has to quarantine because they have been exposed to COVID. This is not a housing policy it is a university policy. I wish people would understand that
- Faculty teaching students in a virtual environment had limited options when teaching courses such as art and photography

Feelings of isolation

- Feelings of isolation, I miss having face to face interactions with coworkers and students
- I am a hugger; I must ask if it is okay to give a hug to family or coworkers that I have not seen in a long time
- Living by myself is extremely difficult, especially when I don't really have/.... friendships or connections in Louisville. A lot of times, I feel like there's no one. The few things I tried to get involved with, it feels like my health snatched it away
- With the pandemic and isolation, I was very near suicidal; "I have decided to live" has been the biggest thing I've learned.
- It was really hard- had to find solace in my hobbies

Health concerns

- Worsening chronic illnesses and my need for accessibility. I have seen my health spiral [downwards] in the last 18 or so months.

A New Normal for Students, Faculty and Staff

Ongoing concerns for safety from COVID

- Getting COVID from being on campus and taking it home to under-age kids
- Having family members go in and out with the risk of exposure for those who remain at home
- Not knowing the vaccination status of faculty/staff/students
- Anxiety in social settings, even outside, when I see people who are not wearing masks
- I've felt that anxiety, about people not wearing masks or not wearing them properly, vaccinated or not. I find myself holding my breath for as long as I can whenever I'm forced to go into stores and stuff like.
- In [dept.] classes are getting larger because people have gained an interest in the subject since COVID, but I am not sure how I feel being in a class of 60 or so people. I am conflicted. Happy that class is back in person but afraid of the size of the class. Why can't we have more hybrid learning
- I think returning to campus is a terrible idea
- For those members who have children who contract COVID and/or must quarantine.
- A poll of students said 93% of students want an on campus experience, but how do we accommodate that when students are forced to isolate due to contact with COVID, we need to make arrangements so that they can be able to access class work

Feelings of guilt

- As much as I want our students to have an immersive learning experience from student involvement and engagement, I fear for my safety and health, and the potential harm we do to the larger Louisville community if we had a superspreader event on campus
- Making lots of compromises. [Meeting/Teaching] Is not the same on TEAMS

Taking care of self and others

- Being honest about my health and accessibility needs, rather than pushing myself just because I'm scared of how people might respond. Remote work, a blessing, my goodness.
- Reaching out to encourage and check in with coworkers, family members, friends, etc.

Access to vaccines

- Students say they have been searching for the FDA approved vaccine, and it has not been as easily accessible on campus

Feelings of being unappreciated

- While some of us have had the ability to work remotely we had to pay out of pocket to set up home work stations.
- I have seen messages which I thought started out as words of appreciation to workers but ended up thanking the Foundation for their support. Where is the appreciation to the faculty and staff that sacrificed their retirement fund, and paid out of pocket to set up home offices to work from home?
- It feels like the university is more concerned with "we're tired of remote work and we need money from students and their families, so let's do whatever we can to get that"

Coping with the pandemic

- I have learned to expect things to get worse, be prepared to hear bad news
- Netflix, Hulu, HBO Max, Amazon Prime Video
- Walks in my neighborhood, contemplating about doing Yoga with [friend], good food, community, and doing good work
- Enjoying outdoor aesthetics has really helped as well (i.e., trees, water fountains, bodies of water, the wind)
- Going through a stack of family photos and sharing them on Facebook to connect with family far and near
- Dreaming of all the things my life could look; reimagining the way; I go after my creative dreams. I'm sharing my writing and my art in ways I never thought I would. I'm diving into my Blackness and all that means and how that looks.... I've gained confidence in more than just my identity as "a productive worker"
- Trying to protect my mental health by not worrying about it any longer
- Trying to find things to make me laugh
- Having to come to terms with what I feel comfortable with. "I still have to do my job!"
- Good to know that UofL had our backs! "UofL means more to its employees that maybe the administration knows"
- Not being afraid to ask for help

Suggestions for administration

- Encourage divisions, departments, upper administration to be creative when it comes to designing new programs and initiatives
- Offer a hybrid option, and strategically redesign existing spaces to support the in-person component
- I feel like the University has resources for students, but more could be done to support staff. We're here to support students, but we need some internal support too
- I would like to see UofL provide a statement of support and details of how they will accommodate these occurrences [of faculty members having to isolate with their children when they have to stay home after an exposure]
- Create a memorial for those staff, faculty, and students who have lost the battle against COVID
- Streamline and restrict sending emails to working hours to avoid disrupting [employees] quiet times
- Happy that class is back in person but afraid of the [large] size of the classes. Why can't we have more hybrid learning?
- More transparency and autonomy for supervisors and employees
- UofL needs a disaster plan for pandemics
- Provide emotional/mental health support to employees by those familiar with UofL and its context and not a third party

Need for Accommodations

- Parental leave if kids must quarantine
- Support for those who live alone at home with pets when they return to work
- When students are forced to isolate due to contact with COVID, we need to make arrangements so that they can be able to access class work
- Being away from school aged kids when being required to work in the office isolated from co-workers