

Leadership in Academic Resource and Accessibility Spaces: Navigating Turnover, Burnout, and a Hybrid Work Model

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March 3, 2022



Agenda

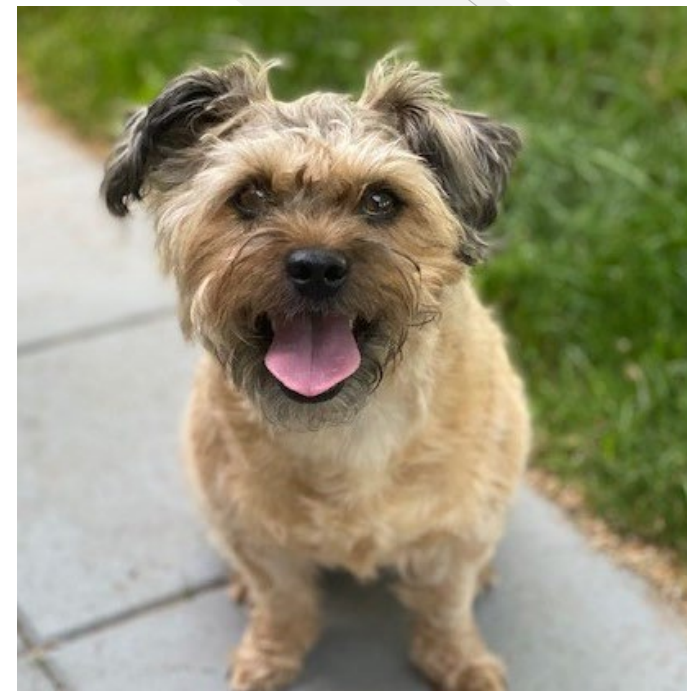
- Introductions
- Overview of Tufts and StAAR
- Evaluating programs and processes
- Taking action and moving forward
- Resource kit
- Question and answer

Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that the land we live, learn, and thrive on are the traditional, ancestral, and unceded homelands of Indigenous and tribal nations. Our home and institution is on the original homelands of the Massachusetts tribal nations.

Presenter Introductions

- **Katie Swimm**
 - She/her/hers
 - PhD in Theatre and Performance Studies from Tufts University and an MA in Literature from Northwestern University
 - 2012
 - Academic coaching and subject tutoring programs
- **Kimberly Doan**
 - She/her/hers
 - MA Tufts University, Child Study and Human Development
 - 2012
 - Accessibility programs





Setting the Scene:

Tufts, StAAR, and more

Tufts University



Katherine Swimm and Kimberly Doan - Tufts University - 20th Annual Weingarten Center Disability Symposium at University of Pennsylvania

StAAR Center

- StAAR team
- Staff of 13 team members
- Student staff



Academic Resources

- Academic Coaching
- Writing
- Peer Subject Tutoring



Accessibility Services

- Academics
- Residential
- Dining services
- Transportation
- Parking

Merge and Timely Needs

- 2020-2021 department merge
 - Holistic link
 - Streamlining
- Stressors associated with merge and COVID
 - Management/reporting changes
 - Financial
 - Timing
- Need for transition from daily crisis-management to long-term solutions

Shifting Landscape

- New precedent set for hybrid work expectations
 - 60% say they'd like to work from home all or most of the time when the pandemic is over.
- What are teams looking for?
 - 1. Flexible options- when searching for a new position, **88%** they look for flexibility for hours/location
 - 2. Re-imagining how productivity is measured
 - 3. Diverse teams



Sahadi, Jeanne (2022) <https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/16/success/pew-survey-covid-affect-on-work-from-home/index.html>

Minahan, Tim (2022) <https://hbr.org/2021/05/what-your-future-employees-want-most>

Shifting Landscape

- “The Great Resignation”/staff turnover
- Generational considerations
- Need for an enhanced growth environment
- Changes in resources within department/institution



Evaluating Programs and Processes:

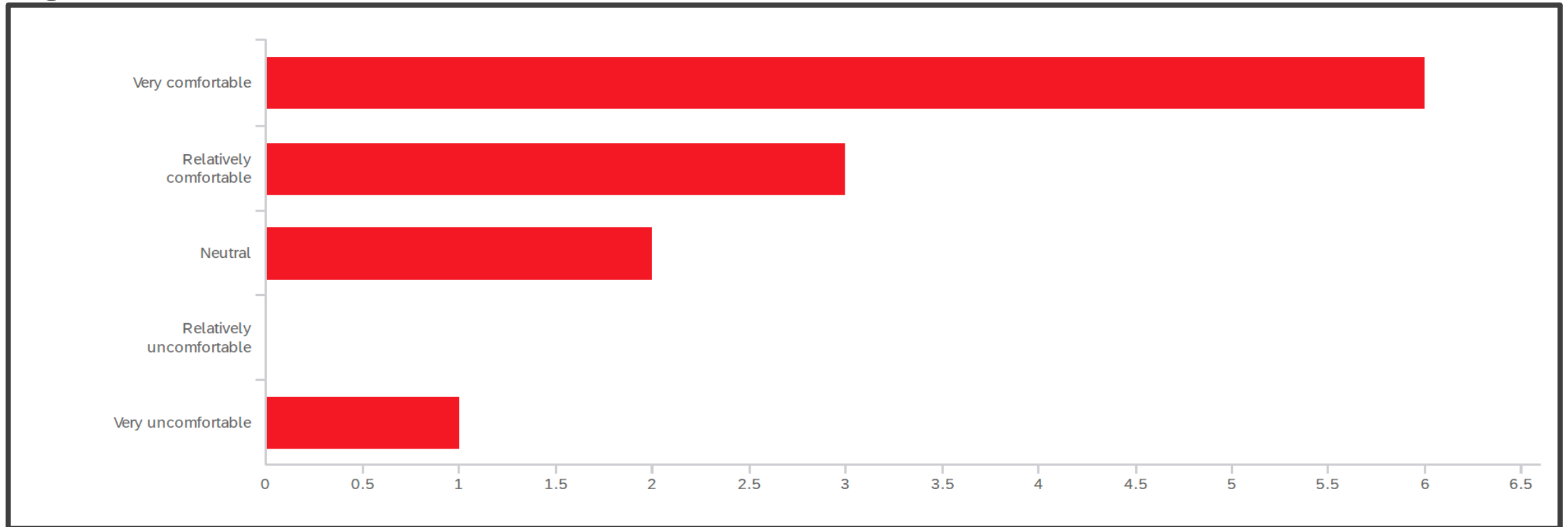
Identifying Gaps and Addressing Needs

Identifying Gaps: Using a Climate Survey

- Standardized method of assessment was a department climate survey
- Questions assessed:
 - Preferred work modalities and schedules
 - Workplace culture and morale
 - Processes, familiarity with resources, etc.
- Surveys shifted in intention, scope, style, and frequency to meet the changing needs of the team

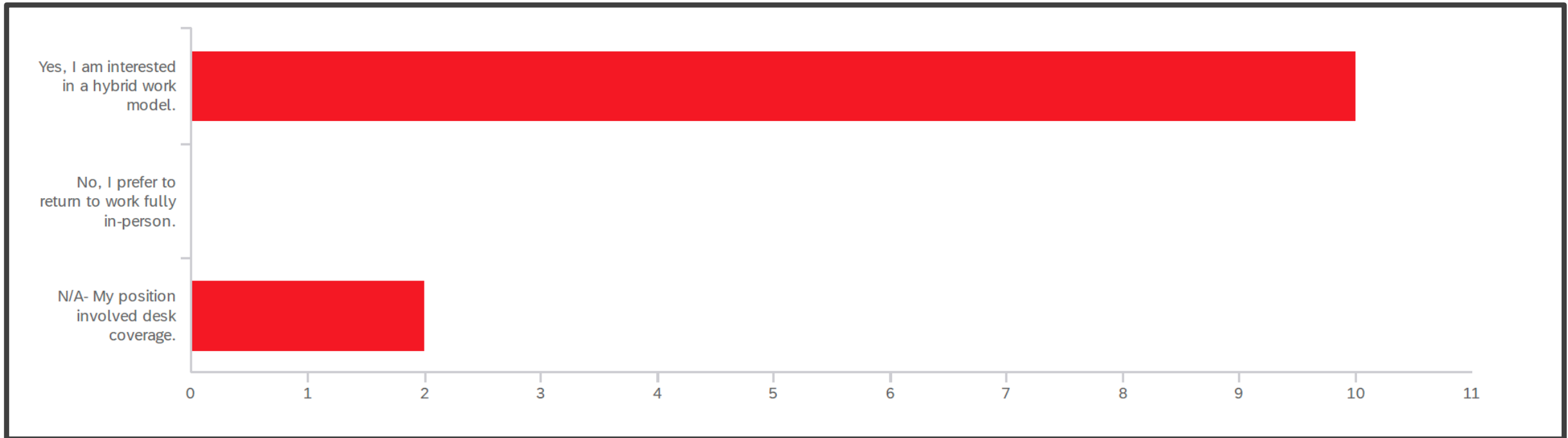
Survey Results: Readiness to Return

Given the current progress around pandemic responses (vaccine rollout, safety measures, continued distancing and mask use, etc.) how comfortable do you feel returning to work for August 2021



Survey Results: Interest in Hybrid Work

For StAAR roles that do not include desk-coverage: Are you interested in exploring a hybrid work model that includes both in-person and remote work?



Summer 2020 Survey Results

Burnout

- "I am able to fulfill my role while maintaining a healthy work/life balance"
 - 4 – Strongly Agree
 - 7 – Somewhat Agree
 - 1 – Somewhat Disagree
- On a scale of 1-10, our office rated their level of burnout at a 6.3 (average)

Survey Results: Ideal Environment

Describe your ideal fall 2021 hybrid work week format:


- Range of remote options
- Tasks required differing modalities
- Did not want to travel to the office to just be on Zoom

What would be beneficial to you as we prepare to return to work on campus?:

- Adjusted workday
- Upgraded technology
- Clear expectations
- Slow ramp-up to full return
- No new initiatives

Summer 2020 Survey - Takeaways

- Majority felt comfortable returning to work
- Strong desire for hybrid work
- Reticence to “take on too much”
- High level of burnout



Action and Efforts:
Supporting Retention,
Burnout, and Morale

Incorporating Staff Feedback based on Climate Survey

- Minimal in-office presence
 - University did not issue a standardized return-to-work plan; left to individual departments
 - Half our staff rotated in-office in pairs Fall 2020, individually in Spring 2021
- Student employees (tutors, writing consultants, graduate office assistants) conducted all their work remotely
- Minimal expansion of programs

Alleviating Workload Stressors with Administrative Tools

- Supporting the establishment of remote workspaces
- Collaborative document sharing
- Project management systems
- Proactive planning for meetings
- Electronic scheduling



Kimberly Doan

She/her/hers

Associate Director, StAAR
Center

Hello,

You've reached my scheduling
page. Please select a time that
works for your schedule!

Looking forward to connecting
with you,
KD

Please select an event type

30-minute advising meeting (academic advisees only)

Duration: **30 min**



50-minute accessibility meeting

Duration: **50 min**



30-minute faculty/staff meeting

Duration: **30 min**



Turnover

- Streamlining people operations processes
 - Hiring/interviews
 - Onboarding
- Comprehensive coverage plans
 - Cross-training/generalist model
 - Transition planning
 - Role guides
- Rethinking flexibility

Being Intentional Within the Team

- Enhanced focus on:
 - Teams
 - Individual support
 - Personal and professional development

I've survived another meeting
that should
have been an
email.



someecards
user card

Individual and Team Check-Ins

- Intentional time to connect about short and long-term goals aside from the day-to-day needs.
 - Academic Coaching Individual Monthly check-ins
 - Academic Coaching Weekly Team Meetings
 - Bi-monthly meetings
 - Central Administration Team bi-monthly check-ins
- Management weekly check-ins with our Dean of Accessibility and Academic Support

Individual Mid-Year Check-Ins

1

Review Performance
Planning Goals

2

Review Successes
and Opportunities
for Growth

3

Ask for Support

Full Staff Retreats



Intentional time to gather as a team

Reflecting on past semesters

Planning for the future

Team building and project development

Social activities

Morale and Professional Development

- Opportunities for engagement
 - Virtual escape room
 - Social time on the quad
 - Lunches on the patio
 - "Grab and Go" breakfast
 - Sculpting class at local studio
 - Group "quest" and puzzle solving at a local venue
 - Happy/social hour
 - Birthday door decorating
 - Sentiments of appreciation and recognition

Morale and Professional Development

- Increased focus on professional development opportunities
 - Virtual lunch and learn series
 - Linked In Learning
 - On-demand learning
- Support for managers

Resource Tools

Retreat Agenda & Suggested Activities

Reading List & Resources

Mid-year Check-In template

Climate Survey Template



Wrap-Up/ Q &A



Thank you!

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