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JAMIE KOENIG:

Hi everyone, thank you for joining. I'm going to give it another second before getting started, because I still have people joining the waiting room pretty quickly.

SPEAKER:

Hi everyone, hi Jamie.

JAMIE KOENIG:

Hi. We are about to just get started, thank you for joining.

Hello everyone, and welcome to this session of the Admin Essentials: Fostering Organizational Culture in a Remote Environment. My name is Jamie Koenig and I am a program specialist at AUCD. I would like to thank all of you for joining us today. This event is a roundtable discussion on the topic of Admin Essentials: Fostering Organizational Culture in a Remote Environment. This discussion topic came from concerns that we have been hearing from how to maintain a positive work environment remotely as well as concerns about what comes next as we transition to a post-pandemic workplace that is a little bit more hybrid.

We've invited Karen Heath, a codirector for the Center for Human Development at the University of Alaska, and David Rotholz, the Center for Disability Resources -- at South Carolina.

Both of their centers have at least a few people working remotely previously, so they have a lot of experience, both good and bad in this area. This is a conversation, so we encourage you to chime in with thoughts, questions, either out loud or in the chat at any point. Based on this Roundtable, sorry, I am admitting people- A tip sheet will be created and disseminated to the network.

Just a few of the required logistical items that we start all of our webinars with this roundtable is being recorded and will be available at the AUCD website following this event. If you can all turn on your cameras, so we can see her face, that would be awesome.

That does help us encourage discussion. If not, we totally understand. Please meet yourself when you aren't talking to prevent background noise. There will be a short evaluation survey at the close of the event. We really appreciate it if you provide feedback on the roundtable, and you can provide suggestions for future topics for admin essential series.

With that, to get us started, I will hand it off to David, to introduce himself and summarize some of what he has been doing and what he is taking about with moving forward.

DAVID ROTHOLZ:

Thank you, I appreciate it. I'm happy to be here and see you all here. As I mentioned, I am David Rotholz at the University of South Carolina, School of Medicine, primary role being the director, but codirector of also South Carolina LEND. I think that has been our LEND experience, which is why you heard me talking about how it was an easy pivot for LEND. But, I will focus primarily on what you said, and I'm happy to talk about LEND as well, if that makes sense.

When I was thinking about how did we keep our organization culture strong during the shutdown, and as we returned to, I will not call it the "new normal" to the space. There are really three themes that occur to me, and there are practical aspects of addressing those. To me, it really was about communication, trust, support.

Providing and I know Karen will talk about this too, but regular communication with our staff. Both in direct ways and in the peer networking way, where I will be in direct contact with our coordinator's, and the trust part is really driving from the communication.

I've heard an interesting presentation about this here on campus, several months back when we need the -- importance of information void. If we are not communicating enough with our folks, that void will be filled. It is not going to stay a void, but having that filled by other sources of information, may not be most conducive to what we are talking about here. In terms of having it be all positive.

Looking at the amount of support that is needed. I need to say, upfront, you are skilled folks. It is not like I have all of the answers or that what we did was unique. It is just that, I get one of the cubes appear to talk.

That is where I want to start. One other thing that I will mention before turning it over to Karen, Jamie mentioned with where we go from here?

Our center has done a really good job, it is a collaborative effort in maintaining and even enhancing our organization or culture. Part of that is based on adapting, so I have actually had multiple conversations today about "OK, we have some people who are wanting to have a formalized remote, partially remote working agreement." We have a university policy on this, that allows us to do that.

My answer is always "if this is something that the supervisor thinks will work, and we have relatively straightforward ways of being accountable, why wouldn't we do that?"

I do that a couple of days a week, because it is more efficient, not to spend the time driving. A lot of what we can do can be done remotely. We are willing to support the, and I think that is where we will be increasing the focus going forward. So, we are responding to appropriate needs, and -- any other pieces on that, is that we have very good accountability for what we get done.

All of our money comes from elsewhere. We have these grants and contracts, and if we do not produce, they will go away.

So, all of us is -- are in that boat here, but it is a healthy thing. So, it is not an issue where we have to see someone sit in an office, we make our deliverables, we get it done, and a level of excellence that we are comfortable with and it works.

That really does not require as much a face-to-face. The one other thing that I was on this, I think it was even on the papers -- one of the papers that I saw this morning. The head of Google, they were talking about moving forward with remote work, many businesses are going to be to have in three days a week in person, and 2-3 days a week, remote. The issue, most -- important issue, when we have people in the office, it is taking the best advantage of the time. So, there is an in person interaction, collaboration that takes place.

Not just using that desk. That is where I'm going to stop, for now. Karen?

KAREN HEATH:

Thanks. So, this is a good segue, because I think I'm going to talk a little bit more about the strategies that we use during the pandemic to really make sure that our staff was feeling engaged and that they were developing that organizational culture that we feel is so important.

The first thing that we did, is that we were holding weekly all staff meetings. We do move that to just monthly because we found that it didn't really seem as necessary anymore. Weekly, it was just to make sure that people were doing OK, and to have eyes on them.

We did do Zoom meetings. We also alternated the facilitation of that, so Karen and I didn't have to always be the one to come up with the content for the meeting. It gave people the opportunity to facilitate, in addition to coming up with new ideas.

People would come and play games, frankly. We did some Zoom Pictionary, and we found that it was really fun and engaging. I will do a plug for the AUCD video. I actually played that much because we have quite a few new -- staff, and we had the discussion, trivia game about which was the furthest north, that is us. Which was the furthest South. Which one were similar name Which had more state -- which states had more than one?

Everyone had the website up and it got them engaged in doing a little search.

I think, we will continue that. I did have one staff that said "I feel more connected to my colleagues, then I have ever felt." Because she was in a team that was a little more isolated.

So, the next thing we use this virtual space manager know of anyone has used KUMOSpace.com (it is a conference room, a fancy conference room, and it has a fireplace in the corner (Laughs) And really a nice space. You can move your virtual person around this conference room, and you have a circle around you. Whoever is in that circle, is the people that you can talk to.

You can see that so-and-so is over at the fireplace, so you can move your little virtual person, because you want to go and talk to them.

So, we have used a couple of times for our winter party. We had a scavenger hunt, so people had more natural networking. I know that all of us had a breakout room in zoom.

But then you are stuck in the breakout room, and I shouldn't say that way You don't get the opportunity to talk with everybody else that is at your UCEDD. There is about 45 of us now, and quite a few new staff have joined us since the pandemic that I have never met in person.

So, that has been a really cool thing.

Another initiative is using the diversity, equity, inclusion initiative to join together staff from across the center and from all of the different programs. So, I just sent out the emails this morning. This is really focusing on those early career professionals, and giving them an opportunity to meet on an initiative.

I'm using the diversity, equity, inclusion website and took it from AUCD to help a driver that

initiative. Everybody has responded in a really positive way. They are excited to work with these colleagues that they have never met. I have one brand-new employee who started this week, and that is who the supervisor said "I think this is a person that you should engage."

I am excited with that -- for that.

It has not been all lovely (Laughs) Right? There has been some real challenges about making sure that people are living the mission.

Those kitchen conversations were really important, especially for new staff. I feel that we had to create these virtual worlds to try and make sure that people feel engaged, and that they understand what our mission is. I think the other thing that I really miss is engagement, a more natural environment with folks with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I know I would bring some of our new staff to Special Olympics to do some engagement there. We haven't been able to do those. So, I feel like that has been a struggle for our center.

I will just get us started with some of the questions and then we can open it up.

DAVID ROTHOLZ:

No, I am good. Go ahead.

KAREN HEATH:

OK. I was just curious, what have others- what other successful strategies, challenges that you have had during COVID, and what is your vision for returning to a hybrid model or a full in office, or will you stay virtual?

Let's see what the rest of the network has to say.

SPEAKER:

The feedback I am getting is that everyone would like to be hybrid. No one wants me home all of the time, but they would like to be hybrid. The challenge of that, is that some people's job required him to be here than others. That will be a challenge. And as many of our staff, parents the fluctuation of what services are available also may coming in a challenge. I definitely think hybrid.

SPEAKER:

I am in Iowa, and one of our challenges has been that we all were called back to the office last July, and have not been able to work from home. Which, there was a revolt.

Now, they are just reopening it as a possibility, so everyone is interested. That has been interesting

There is certainly a feeling that remote work isn't looked upon favorably by our institution, and we are within a hospital. It is a shift, because clinicians cannot work from home. In most cases. So, we are talking about all programs. But we also have a big arm of our UCEDD, who always work from home We also have in-house folks who have been helping us create a blueprint for how that would be.

It has felt very disjointed. And I think we are just trying to figure out how to navigate. There are so many people who have experienced it for so long, and other people who have not been allowed so we are trying to figure out the middle ground, "new norms" and how we want to

communicate with each other and stay connected.

SPEAKER:

I find that the time- my name is Kim, for those who don't know me, I work with Wendy Warren Johnson in Arizona and we have been back in the office since July. Remote work has not been available to us, except for a two week period where our numbers in our county for COVID were so serious that we had to go remote. Other than that, we have been in the office. But, we have been in the office with the caveat, that we can stay apart as much as possible. So, we are -- doing a lot remotely, making sure that we are connecting. We have done team shadows, where we utilize- we have a regular team challenge -- team -- channel, but we have a relaxed- We have a friendly "UCEDD, you said" And they can post recipes, jokes of the day, where we would make up for those interactions that people are not having with you would go to lunch together and hang out in a break room together.

We are still asked not to do that type of thing. But, Wendy has been really focused on making sure that everyone is still feeling connected. As much as Karen said, we hired a quite a few people during the pandemic, so the team dynamic has changed drastically, but we have not been able to do together. We are doing a lot of breakaway Wednesdays, where it is a 15 minute jump on if you can and I meet and greet from the team where you're not used to. Team building Tuesdays, is what we have done where we had our HR come in and address our topics like stress release. We really engage the universities.

We really leverage the services that they have that can make our team fun and helpful during this time. We are doing our very best to make people feel connected to the UCEDD and we are here, but not in the same way that we were here before.

SPEAKER:

I am Lori and from North Dakota and we have not been remote for one year. So, everyone went home in July- I mean in February, March, whatever that was of 2020. And we came back in July, that same year and have not been remote since.

We actually have gone to a distance, employee model because of the number of people that we have hired. We are out of space. We actually had to ask people who was willing to work from home office. We actually had a couple of volunteers, it was not as popular as I what I -- as what I thought it was when to be. We had one employee who moved out of state, she is a key person and we didn't want to lose her. So, she is working for us from North Carolina (Laughs) And it is working really well for us. And what we ended up realizing, is that we located everyone in our community. But, a lot of our projects are statewide.

Now, we have been flexible enough to offer a position to people who live all over the place, and we are actually hiring people, knowing that they will be working remotely.

So, there are a lot of really cool and interesting things and it opens a lot of opportunities to us. People are kind of excited, because they feel like they are trying something new and it is not imposed upon them, the way that it was with COVID. We are in a really good place, but we are now worried about -- and I worry about that culture things when we are having meetings, to make sure that we really are living our ideals, even in the most remote places.

It is asynchronous - bless you - and so what you can do is go in and I can go in and record a little thing and put up some power points, text, documents into this voices red. It then I can invite people to my thread and then I would invite the entire center.

They can add comments, put up their video, put in some text, share information and actually contribute. So, it is like a discussion page, but it is multimedia.

The staff really seemed to like that, and the younger folks are really into the videos, and they open it up and do a little thing and then of course, our -- as older folks are willing to type in our responses, and they appear on the site. It is a little bit of something for everybody, so I would encourage you if you did not -- have not checked into voice thread, it is pretty easy.

I was peeking into this KUMOSpace and it looks really cool. Thank you for sharing that.

DAVID ROTHOLZ:

As you are talking, one of the things that occurs to me, is to what extent you are doing formal versus informal agreements for remote work?

We are doing both. It depends and it also has to be something that is (indiscernible) in every way. But, for short-term, we can do informal for a longer term it requires a more formalized agreement that goes through HR. I thought I would put that out there.

SPEAKER:

We have- before COVID, we had a situation. When you live way out in the hinterlands, the weather is bad, and different things come up. We have had a one off, you could work from home, for a day or a couple of days, since before COVID.

We have remained that policy, so that is our short-term thing. We've asked people from a space -- perspective, to make a decision. We will not -- hold a office space for them, so it has to be a formal scenario. Our process is, anyone who is interested, needs to meet with their immediate supervisor to discuss the needs of the project and whether the work that they need to do can be done from home.

And what it would take. And they actually have to talk through these logistics because the internet, all of a sudden is an issue. Sometimes, we need to be able to pay people to increase their internet home. All of a sudden they do not have a work telephone, and they need one because they want to publish their phone number And all of those things. We do let them take their work computer home, and a printer and scanner, but we do not supply the office furniture. So, we do have some little protocols that we have established that work for us.

We had to play around with it. Also, the other thing, purchasing office supplies remotely, we had to figure out, because they cannot just put in an order and have it shipped to their house. Because of the way that our billing works. So, we have to have people willing to buy their own supplies and request a reimbursement. A brother printer -- Ink for their printer...

It wasn't just a small endeavor.

KAREN HEATH:

I'm curious about other- what other conversations have you had about your space? I heard you say, Laurie, you had people commit to whether or not they were planning on working from home? And to give up their office? That is a conversation that I think we are having at our center. The other model, the hot desk model, which I know is being thrown around. I'm just curious what are other things that you said? Or what are other things that you are thinking about?

The hot desk model- I see Leanne that you ask. As I understand it, it is a dedicated space in an office that you would just be able to bring your laptop and then plug in all the things that you would need, monitors, phone, etc. It is not your dedicated office. So, you may be coming in on Monday, and someone will be using in that desk on Tuesday, and however, It is a way to allow, for that hybrid model -- so you're given a place to land when you come in. They call it "hoteling" (Laughs) OK.

SPEAKER:

Our center said, if you're not going to be here 50% or more, you do not get a dedicated desk. Of course, we have no idea how many people will be here 50% or more. Every time we get together to make a plan, the plan changes. So, I stopped trying to make plans (Laughs). They had us do formal remote work agreements, and then not. So, because we are a medical Center, it changes. I cannot make people to come in and wear a mask, to sit in their cubicle to go on zoom, it seems silly. There are formal agreements, and eventually, there will be rules about how sharing a desk would be, if you are not here very often.

SPEAKER:

I'm going to put into the chat it is a long question I have more questions than answers at this point. Partly what you said

Audio lost

SPEAKER:

You are muted, Anne.

SPEAKER:

I am concerned that it is going to be a lot more work for me. I will be very upfront. In trying to manage teams, will you say "ever had to come in on Thursday, because that is where our team meeting will be. Or does everyone have to stay home because we have been doing is you meeting But we are really trying to deal with setting up hierarchy between the coalitions who have to be here and those who don't, and -- clinicians, and those who have a mixed job. If anyone has any tips. When you said the 50% Exactly, we have been struggling. Is there " what is the criteria for having an office versus a hot desk, versus this

SPEAKER:

We struggle with everything you just said as well. An additional struggle is not some of our team members have been and always will be, fully remote.

I also, philosophically what would be great is that if we got together once a month, even those team members won't be. It seems the consensus in our center, is that hybrid centers are the worst. It should be fully present or fully remote. We are struggling with executor. Do we require one to be in office one day a week on the same day, but then It feels almost arbitrary

DAVID ROTHOLZ:

Some of our projects, cannot work remotely. So, they are here every day. We also have others that have been pretty much remote for years. They would come in and two days a month on the same day, to have the in person meetings, but now they are doing that via zoom. And we had some questions,, actually, today. We won't treat differently, but it actually had to do with the price of gas. Where some folks are saying, it is getting really expensive to drive here.

So, it was coming up from that angle, but we cannot be treated any differently. It has to come down to the same criteria, in terms of is it appropriate for your job, and can we have it work successfully? Remotely, partially, fully?

It is coming our way, and if gas keeps going up, we will have more requests.

KAREN HEATH:

I feel like we will have to have this again in six months, to see what everyone did. We can compare notes and try and figure out strategies for this. For the hybrid, I always tell people, it is a worldwide discussion, where what this new work life would look like. So, if people were asking what we are going to do, we have no idea. This is all new to me and pretty much the entire world. So, it is definitely a conversation. I'm going to switch and see if Jamie, would be willing to talk a little bit about I know that you are working remote, and that you have not been in the office. You are in another state entirely. And I want to have a conversation of how we are supporting our early career professionals. That is something that I have a concern about in this environment. I'm going to let Jamie talk a little bit about her expense.

JAMIE KOENIG:

I'm happy to share a little bit about that. As Ken said, I have never been in the AUCD office, and I've been working here for about one year and four months. This is my first "real job," as full-time, year-round, benefits, the whole shebang. And I do think a lot of the things that we talked about with the planning call "that is exactly how I am feeling with not being as connected to the workplace as I might like to be. I know AUCD has a lot of teams, which is very similar to (unknown term), and even earlier today, I had meeting with someone who I have never had a meeting with before at AUCD.

Having things like that makes it harder, sometimes to get the work done, and the other thing that I am reminded of with our plan discussion is that with the disconnect of not knowing other people in the teams plays into this mission of how to get these things done, if we don't know who is across the organization.

Knowing everyone is not a viable thing anyway, if there are hundreds of people. But, in our case, if we have 30-40 range, I should know everybody. And even thus far, I don't, as an early career professional, this is something that I suggest talking to Don on Monday about "is that coming into an organization remotely as a first job, it is hard to get a sense of the hierarchy, dynamics, what is the workplace culture of this place specifically?"

Having a real job where you do not walk away from at the end of 10 weeks has been a very different experience. Those are just my thoughts. I don't know if you had -- specific questions. Laurie, I see your hand is up?

SPEAKER:

Thank you. I was going to ask "I actually do come into the office, so I am not on the remote side, other than for those couple of months that we did at the beginning of the pandemic. I'm wondering, there are always kind of a group of folks that believe that when someone is going to work from home, they are not going to work as much?"

But what I suspect, and what I see, at least from what I have observed is that it is the opposite, that the people that are working from home, don't necessarily know when to turn it off.

They don't have those natural prompts to say "stop working" (Laughs) "It's time for you to go

back and do something else in your house. And I'm just wondering, from anyone's point of view, is there concern that people are putting into much time and effort? I think we probably could tell, pretty quickly if someone is cheating the system, because they're not going to get their work done.

So, I am not too worried about that side of it. But, the other side, I am worried about.

SPEAKER:

I am more concerned about where you are headed, Laurie. With opposite problems. I think we change the way that we work, and we can be scheduled from zoom meetings from 8 to 5, and have seven or eight meetings every day, with very few breaks. So, returning to the office and something that is really more impossible, I think it is too much. When you are home, and have a little bit of an outlet, and running to the bathroom, I am in my office and having to do all of these protocols. It is really worrying that someone said "I don't ask people to come to office and sit in their office and be on zoom for eight hours. That is ridiculous." But, that is the way we are working right now. So, what are we asking to come back to work for, and how can we change the culture of this constant meeting? Even before, at least people understood, if you were taking two minutes to get upstairs to the meeting room, there was a little break and there, but now there is nothing.

I think I'm a little bit worried about the long-term, because COVID has done so many things to enable us and to do things that we never done before. I push it up. But, we do need to pull back on some level, and I'm not quite sure how to do that. And, to help those that we work with, to do that.

DAVID ROTHOLZ:

One of the questions that occur to me, when I think of folks working too much, too late, too early is, what is our response? If someone sends why would I see an email at 9 o'clock at night? But, do you respond? I find myself not responding. So, it is not an interaction, and that I will wait unless it is urgent, but we don't need to be doing this too late.

I will leave it at that. How do we address it that, in our daily, weekly activities.

SPEAKER:

I'm sorry. Go ahead.

SPEAKER:

I was just going to share one coping mechanism that I read about online, I think it was in Harvard business review, and I tried it. It is actually related to what Jimmy was talking about. In early career professionals. Creating small groups of people with similar places in their careers, might be having similar challenges. And having a regular monthly get-together to provide each other support.

You're able to brainstorm each other! With each other, collaborate together on something that could help accomplish. I've been trying that with a colleague, and it has been amazing! Kind of like our own therapy center together, and it is a colleague and I come and we have been able to preserve -- brainstorm at each other.

For COVID, you don't have those personal interactions with people as much. You are on these big meetings. So, as far as a suggestion for remote workers, I think it is a fantastic practice to put into place.

KAREN HEATH:

Can I ask you, Dina, did you find this person on your own or did supervisor help with that? How did that come about?

SPEAKER:

I found this person on my own. (audio issues) sorry, did I get stuck?

KAREN HEATH:

I think you froze for a second. We heard that you found this person and then that is what we heard

SPEAKER:

OK, we are similar ages, our children are similar ages, and she is a public health faculty person who is in different parts of our university than I am. So, getting to know what we both do, and sharing our ideas have been a breath of fresh air. And having that personal connection with another person.

KAREN HEATH:

So it was a cross- so not someone from the UCEDD

SPEAKER:

But, we don't work regularly together

DAVID ROTHOLZ:

Was it Sabrina that wanted to make a comment?

SPEAKER:

Yes, David. You mentioned how to handle and manage the emails, 9 PM. Setting up something there. We have a structure in which office hours are set between 10 AM-2 PM, for those people working in a remote environment. You can flex that time, before or after, but you need to be available between those set office hours. It has helped maintain as an administrator, maintain some efficiency and getting some things done.

You know that Sabrina is sending emails, or someone else sending emails we in it, the expectation is at some point, between 10 PM-2 PM, the next day, you will respond.

SPEAKER:

So, do people have scheduled meetings during that time?

SPEAKER:

Yes, you can schedule meetings during that time.

SPEAKER:

OK, that is interesting.

SPEAKER:

Whereas if someone was to work at 6 AM and then and the time to 2 PM. Or if you work at 10 AM, and then you start -- and at 10 PM because that would then keep a poor day-to-day, so 10 AM-2 PM is your basic office hours. Again, we are sticking with that, or that 9-5 mindset, and

flexing that mindset.

DAVID ROTHOLZ:

That sounds creative and effective to me. There's a question in the chat too. About the hallway discussions, coffee pot discussions.

There are other meetings that included from other organizations, where it wasn't only the agenda that had things happen, it was the fact that we are in the room at the same time. And it was Stacy who asked the question, that is a huge challenge, I think that it is probably our biggest loss at this point, but I am wondering how other folks in this roundtable have addressed that. And if you found a great way, I'd love to hear about it.

JAMIE KOENIG:

I don't think this fully addresses it, but I think something that I've been deliberate about recently, is scheduling chats with people. You don't have the same organic, spur of the moment thing, but having a talk with someone that you work with, there's nothing on the agenda, can take you so many places. Sometimes, it does end up talking to projects and stuff, coming up with new ideas for how to approach things. And for the spur of the moment aspect of it, you do have more committed time to it, so when it does happen, you can really dig in, which is really nice. You can really dive in, and I think Lori has her hand up?

SPEAKER:

I don't know if I have an answer to the question at hand, but Sabrina reminded me I am a visitor, and I like to walk around with my coffee cup, and I jokingly tell my secretary where I am saying "I'm taking my coffee cup for a walk" (Laughs) Somewhere down the line, I have to remember where I left it.

I dropped in on them, in between meetings, like I'm walking around my coffee cup, and of course, the very first time, they answer their zoom call, teams call, and I just tell them that I am taking my coffee cup for a walk, just to see how you're doing.

That often will lead to a discussion like you are talking about, Jamie, when you are saying that you would think about the thing that you're doing. We would come up with different ideas. It is not the same, you're right. But, it is something that people really enjoy, and they start doing that too. They would pop in on their colleagues as well.

I think David, you hit the nail on the head, we need to model the behavior that we want to see. Anyway, for what it is worth.

DAVID ROTHOLZ:

I am just looking at the chat.

KAREN HEATH:

Here's another question that we had, what are the reasons that some employees are considering to continue to work from home? Even after COVID is no longer concerned? We talked a little bit about how you plan on accommodating that, but I am curious what other reasons are there that other people are giving you?

SPEAKER:

I am happy to relay why, for me. When the AUCD opportunity came up, seven months ago, I

was in Florida looking to move back to Colorado, and I have a son who is 19, who will be 20. For me, working remote works, because moving to Maryland with him, he would lose benefits and services. He would be on a waitlist for a while. So, until he is at a point in his life that he is on his own, working, I cannot move out of state. Because it is not a good opportunity for him. So, for me, as a remote worker, that is my reasons for why I couldn't come back to an office.

And I have been working remote for six months.

DAVID ROTHOLZ:

I can bring up an example, again, I had a lot of conversations in the office today. With traffic, it took her two hours to get to work today. It should be about a forty minute drive. I realize, those of you who may have worked in the DC area, whom I have complained from South Carolina we are about to head into 10 years of really unprecedented road construction in the downtown highway system, here. That is really going to make things absolutely crazy. Why we cannot base it just on commute, it always comes back to "can the job get done?"

When they start malfunction junction it will be just chaotic. That was today.

I was reading about the microbe.

KAREN HEATH:

So was I. At the same time, also reading about the increase of micro aggressions.

SPEAKER:

It is really interesting was up there was a person who is speaking is that when she moved remote, it was lovely that she had not have anyone touch her hair.

A stranger with walk up and touch her hair, and a feeling of not being violated like that on a regular basis was lovely to her.

KAREN HEATH:

Dina, you said something about the last interruption, people coming into chat or grab you

One thing that I noticed, and this was before the pandemic. When the supervisor who work from home, a couple of days a week, my challenge was that everyone that she supervised would come to me. Because they wouldn't want to bother her.

So, I am hoping that, that behavior changes and it would be easier. I felt it was rude to say "no, you should call your supervisor for that question

So, I am curious to see what will happen when we come back, if the hybrid or however we come back begins. Especially with people who are supervising others.

Whether or not that will continue to be an issue, if you are in the office and available, versus your supervisor who is a phone call away.

SPEAKER:

I think that is a huge issue for us if you are supervisor, because the hybrid is a different situation. I think there's some literature there are some things on the risk of not being promoted, if you're working remotely. People do not know you, they do not see you as actively engaged in organizations. So, there are risks for people. Those are again, that is not as grappling with these

issues, but it has come up in conversations.

"Well, we don't really want to ask her to take on that responsibility because she is never here.

That is how it is perceived, even though I know I have hired people who have always worked remotely, and if they are productive, they have great skills, but it wasn't for people and project management. It was as a consultant with a specific skill.

SPEAKER:

I will add to that, actually two of our most effective managers are in that group of people that have always worked from home.

I'd be happy to connect anyone with them if you wanted to chat with them about that. But, they really are they both have different styles who does daily huddles, and are very connected and the other one is a little more hands-off. But, we have seen some success with that.

JAMIE KOENIG:

What Anna was saying about promotability and the fact that so many people want to keep working remotely due to health issues. It makes me think about how important it is for disability organizations to normalize it and make it not something that you need to get accommodations for, unless the University is really being a stickler about that, because as long as there are different processes in place and these different types of remote workers, it is going to continue to be perpetuating ableism. I know, in my case, at AUCD, we do not have things fully figured out for what is happening post things opening. But, to me it is really important to recognize that has a flexible hybrid model, so we can be accessible. To me, it is very much an issue of accessibility.

SPEAKER:

This is done, and something that came up to mind for me when you're talking about that, was the idea of really, carefully clarifying the essential functions of a job. If someone is hired for the job, and loses the essential functions, whether they are doing it remote, in person, that is a requirement. To take something away, or not give them extra work, because they are remote, because they are not that feels to me like it is bumping up against that HR standard of the essential functions, and it sounds like it can be a harsh barrier or harsh boundary to draw, but there has to be a boundary somewhere.

DAVID ROTHOLZ:

With other folks, they likely also need to do to, they have to include the work location and the position description. It has gotten easier, and we have become more flexible but I remember, a few years back, having to justify that, it took forever to get that approved by HR and to have someone work two hours away, three days a week. There were sound justifications for it, and even then, it took a major revision of the person's position description. But I think you're right, as long as we clearly specify that, I think I am seeing increasing flexibility of doesn't matter, where their chair is? Or even if they are sitting or standing. We can do that.

JAMIE KOENIG:

Angela, I see that you're raising your hand.

SPEAKER:

One thing that David touched on, this is an old story line working with our university is a challenge. The other part that we are talking about, within our UCEDD and IDDRC but the

challenges of working with University structures that are were slow before, and often times, not as progressive as we needed them to be.

It is compounded by the current circumstances of "OK, now we are going to shift again" and the way that they shift is not very expedient. So, it makes it really hard to go forward sometimes. Just the idea of "OK, now we are going to do this. And there has been a lot of within every environment right now, there has been a lot of long-term, well-informed, institutionally well endowed people who have left our university for their next career or their post career work. That has been a challenge to really get some things done.

I think it is going to be something that we are going to have to continue to struggle with. I think we see a lot of (unknown term), and it makes me feel better that it is not just our university. I just know how hard it has been, and it has been in the past, and it feels like it is getting more challenging. With the shifts, I think it is going to be more awkward and challenging.

DAVID ROTHOLZ:

Our vision is to push harder.

SPEAKER:

I just wanted to reassure Angela, you're not alone. (Laughs)

DAVID ROTHOLZ:

I think we can all absolutely in some ways, we just have to push harder and I'm not sure what other descriptors to add in there. But, I've had to add another FTE to our business office, just to deal with the University stuff.

It isn't proportional to the number of projects, or efforts that we have, it is because so much harder to work with the University. Of course, they don't give us the funds for that, but we do what we have to do.

I would mention, that we had a year-long struggle, and someone who is a 10 year employee with an autism spectrum, we had to teach the University and force their hand. They would not work with us on this. They did not know how they had no idea what to do with the situation. They since came up with a policy, based on us pushing them for one year to do something on this.

There familiar with students with disabilities, but not with employees with disabilities, especially if we are talking about intellectual, developmental. It was huge.

He is part of our organizational culture, this young man has been a valued employee for over a decade. And we came pretty close to losing him over this. He is still here, and there are occasional challenges, but it is one of the things that was eye-opening for us and the University. Talking about navigating those challenges and the one sentence an hour job description? "Navigate the university Because everyone knows what that means, that is what you guys are all smiling. So, I will stop.

JAMIE KOENIG:

Well, we are at time. I want to thank you all again for joining us today, and especially a big thank you to Karen and David for facilitating this conversation really sharing their thoughts and perspectives. I have put a survey link in the chat, and if you have a chance to figure -- fill it out, that would be great. This was recorded, and it will be archived and the recording should be sent

out in the next few days! A tip sheet will be available in a matter of weeks or months (Laughs).
Have a good rest of your day, thank you for joining!

DAVID ROTHOLZ:

Thank you all, this was great!

KAREN HEATH:

Thank you, bye.

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