



2022 Professional and Scientific WorkFlex Employee Satisfaction Survey Results

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY.
Professional and Scientific Council

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Authors: John Hascall, Matthew Femrite, Jacob Larsen, Sara Parris, and Jamie Sass
on behalf of the FY22 and FY23 Professional and Scientific Council Executive Committees

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Executive Summary

Based on unwavering feedback from their constituents, Professional and Scientific Council has been advocating for increased flexible working arrangements for Professional and Scientific Employees at Iowa State University since 2014. Prior to the launch of Iowa State's WorkFlex program, Professional and Scientific Council has had the opportunity to engage leadership at all levels of the university to share their constituents' questions, comments, and concerns about "flexible working arrangements."

In response to constituents' feedback during the first and second windows of the WorkFlex program, Professional and Scientific Council administered a survey to assess satisfaction among Professional and Scientific employees about the WorkFlex program. The survey was launched in April 2022, open for ten days, and available to all Professional and Scientific employees. The survey was distributed through email to all Professional and Scientific employees, with follow up reminders from Councilors through our newsletter, website, and social media. The survey engaged 795 Professional and Scientific employees with opportunities to provide free response comments.

The results of the survey were assessed for its quantitative and qualitative results, both presented in this report. While quantitative results showed an overall satisfaction, the qualitative results produced more mixed results. Overarching topics of concern for Professional and Scientific employees include:

- Fairness and consistency in the implementation of the WorkFlex program across different units
- Communication and messaging consistency of the WorkFlex program
- Robustness of the WorkFlex program, especially as it relates to recruitment and retention

Recommendations

The Iowa State Professional and Scientific staff Council recommends that:

1. Iowa State University continue to increase its efforts in communicating Workflex program specifics
2. Iowa State University increase its efforts to encourage units to adopt similar implementations of the WorkFlex program for consistency and fairness
3. Iowa State University makes an even greater effort to help establish good work-life balance and well-being for its employees through the WorkFlex program
4. Iowa State University adopt a more robust WorkFlex plan:
 - Offering a greater amount of remote work, up to 100%, for more employees
 - Offering more flexible WorkFlex programs that can account for changes in individual employees' scheduling, such as changes in seasonal work tasks, a sudden change in an employee's personal life, etc.
5. Iowa State University offer support for supervisors:
 - Offering education on supporting a team with diverse work modalities
 - Offering training and support to have difficult conversations with underperforming employees
6. Iowa State University find a way to provide alternative benefits to those whose job functions do not allow them to participate in the WorkFlex program

Survey Purpose and Overview

The WorkFlex survey was designed to be an anonymous, quick check-in with constituents with an opportunity for constituents to offer more information and engage with Professional and Scientific Council if desired by the constituent. To encourage participation, no answers on the survey were required, allowing constituents to pick and choose which questions they answered.

The survey was administered in Qualtrics and remained open for ten days in April 2022. The survey was distributed through email to all Professional and Scientific employees, with follow up reminders from Councilors through our newsletter, website, and social media. By day 10, 795 Professional and Scientific Employees had responded, although more than 2/3 of the responses occurred in the first three days the survey was open.

Constituents who participated in the survey were asked the following questions:

- 1) A description of the survey for constituents¹
- 2) What is your division?
 - a) Multiple choice, pick one: Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Operations and Finance, Office of the President
- 3) What is your college or unit?
 - a) Free response text box
- 4) What do you think of the concept of WorkFlex at ISU, regardless of how it has been implemented for you?
 - a) Multiple choice, pick one: Like a great deal, Like somewhat, Neither like nor dislike, Dislike somewhat, Dislike a great deal
- 5) Are you participating in the WorkFlex program? Please check all that apply.
 - a) Check boxes, pick all that apply: No, not at all; Yes, when to work; Yes, where to work
- 6) Are you a supervisor?
 - a) Multiple choice, pick one: No, Yes
- 7) To what degree is your position student-facing?
 - a) Multiple choice, pick one: A great deal, A lot, A moderate amount, A little, None at all
- 8) What will your WFH (Work from Home) percentage be for this coming WorkFlex period?
 - a) A sliding scale ranging from 0-100%
- 9) How satisfied are you with the amount of WFH time you will get? (Please indicate why, in the text box next to your chosen answer)

¹We need your voice! This is a brief survey designed to get impressions of the WorkFlex program at Iowa State.

As the second window for the Work Flex program is about to go into effect, The Professional and Scientific Council would like to know your impressions of the WorkFlex program. Informally, our constituents have been sharing their experiences about the program, including a variety of experiences across units for hybrid options. To get a more accurate and representative picture of Professional and Scientific employee opinions, we are asking for your help.

Your responses will be anonymous unless you leave your email for a follow up. The survey verifies you are an ISU employee but does not log your identity. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact pands-exec@iastate.edu.

- a) Multiple choice, pick one: Extremely dissatisfied, Somewhat dissatisfied, Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, Somewhat satisfied, Extremely satisfied
 - b) Free response text box next to each multiple choice item, only text could be provided for multiple choice selection
- 10)** If you could change one thing about the WorkFlex program, what would it be?
- a) Free response text box
- 11)** Do you have any other opinions about the WorkFlex program that you'd like to share with the P&S Council?
- a) Free response text box
- 12)** Please add your email address if you would like your Professional and Scientific Council Councilor to follow up with you about anything on this survey.
- a) Free response text box

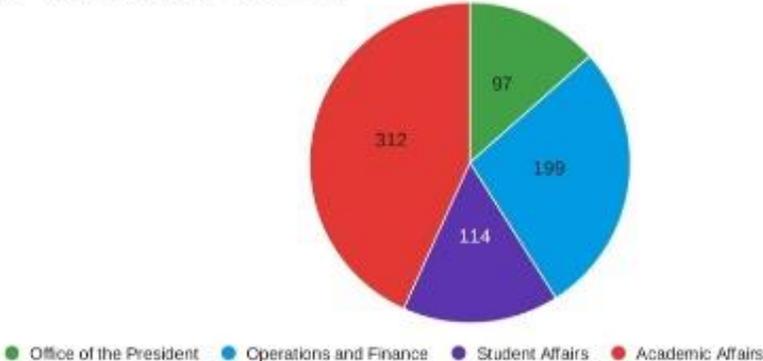
Survey Limitations

The survey's limitations included the following:

- Surveys were sent out to all Professional and Scientific employees as one large group rather than by individual division. Because of this, we had to rely on an employee's self-reporting that their division is accurate as self-reported.
- Respondents were not required to answer all questions, allowing respondents to skip questions while addressing others.

Quantitative Data Results

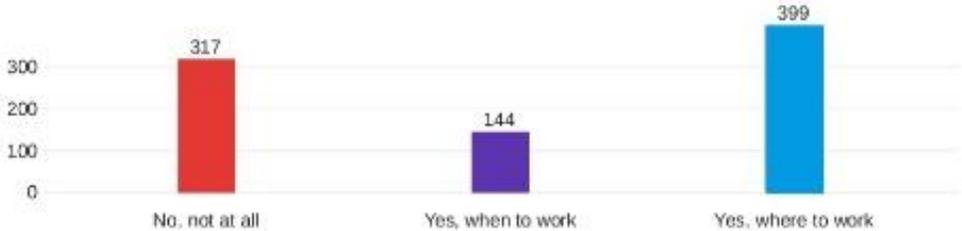
Q2 - What is your division?



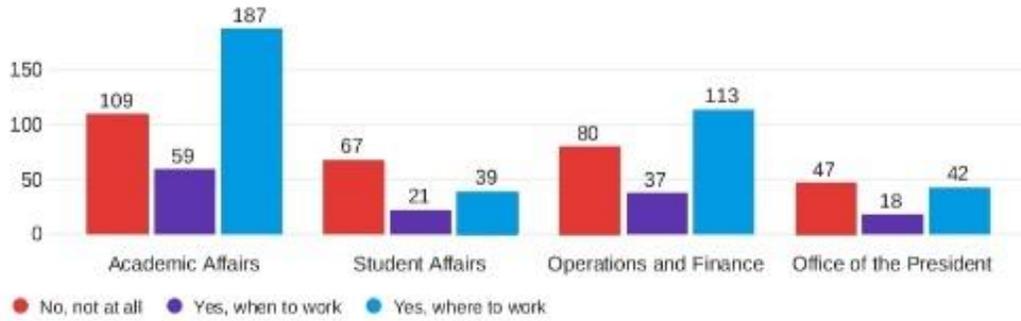
Q4 - What do you think of the concept of WorkFlex at ISU, regardless of how or if it has been implemented for you?



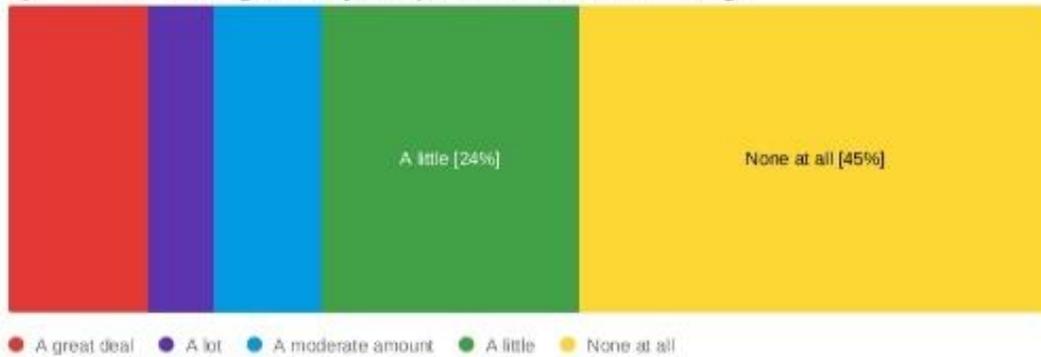
Q5 - Are you participating in the Workflex program? (Please check all that apply)



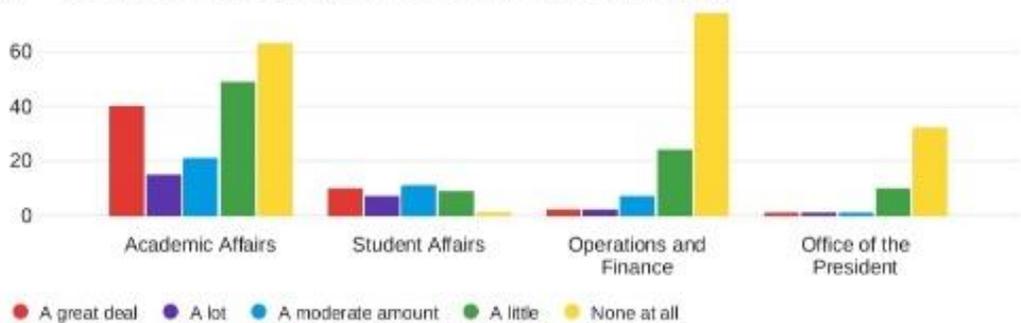
Q5 - Are you participating in the Workflex program? (Please check all that apply)



Q7 - To what degree is your position student facing?



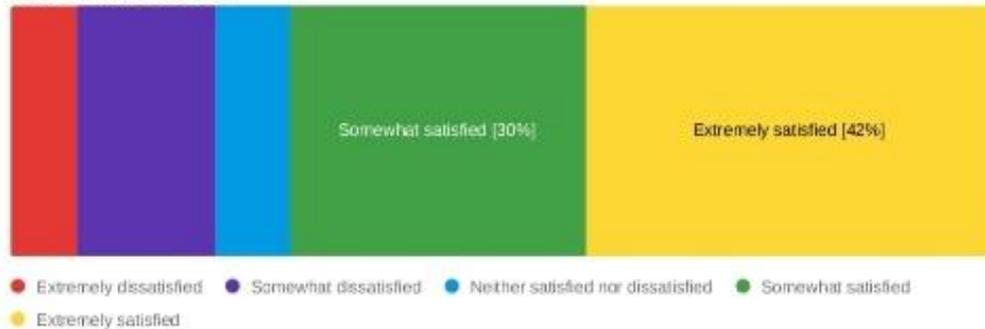
Q7 - To what degree is your position student facing?



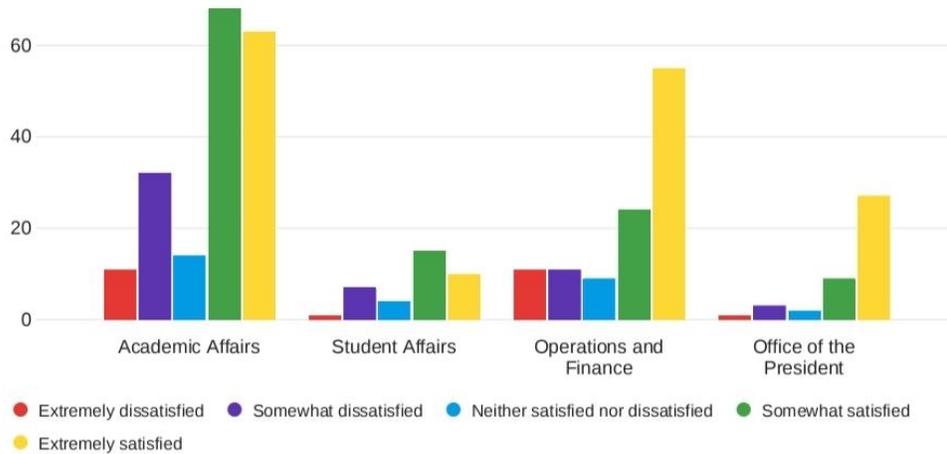
Q8_1 - WFH percentage for Summer and/or Fall 2022

Field	Mean	Median	Responses
Academic Affairs	40.29	40.00	181
Student Affairs	31.59	20.00	37
Operations and Finance	55.52	60.00	108
Office of the President	51.41	50.00	39

Q9 - How satisfied are you with the amount of WFH time you will get?
 (Please indicate why, in the text box next to your chosen answer) -
 Selected Choice



Q9 - How satisfied are you with the amount of WFH time you will get?
 (Please indicate why, in the text box next to your chosen answer) -
 Selected Choice



Qualitative Data Results

There were several themes that emerged from the free text responses in Q9, Q10, and Q11 of the survey. Themes were coded into categories and sub-categories. As expected, common themes appeared across all three questions. Common themes from all three questions were further sub-coded into more specific sentiments.

All responses to the survey were completely anonymous and all questions were completely optional. Most respondents filled out the survey in its entirety; however, we had many who only choose to answer one or two free response questions, most typically Q11. Results are presented below.

General Opinions of WorkFlex

Total Respondents: 55

General opinions on the WorkFlex program were provided by 55 of 795 respondents, accounting for 6.9% of the respondents. These general opinions are well reflected in the themes below and cover topics such as work-life balance, increasing hybrid and remote work opportunities in the WorkFlex program, consistent, fair, and equitable application of WorkFlex across units, and recruitment and retention concerns.

Opinions, Suggestions, or Criticisms - WorkFlex Process and Implementation

Total Respondents: 94

There were a wide of variety of opinions in this theme that were later developed in other themes. The most common sentiments expressed under this theme included: supervisor needing more or less discretion to make decisions for their individual unit; a need for increased flexibility not tied to the academic calendar; an

Right now, WorkFlex seems to be implemented as a "favor" granted by supervisor or associate dean of my college rather than a "benefit" that one is entitled to request. For example, after turning in my rather modest request for 30% (out of 60% possible) remote work, I was informed that LAS had "decided" (but not communicated) that staff could only apply for 20%. The implication was that I was asking for way too much. I understand that not every request can be approved, but if there are limits on what one can request, that needs to be communicated. An improvement would be communicating up front--perhaps with our job title designation--the typical allowable WorkFlex. Or if that's too complicated, making public announcements of policies regarding WorkFlex like limiting it to 20% for an entire college. Right now, the approval process feels opaque and capricious.

Respondent 210

increase in fair and consistent application of the program across units; a desire for greater guidance to determine who makes decision to approve WorkFlex decisions in a unit, including calls for better communication university-wide regarding WorkFlex; a desire to see a less rigid process for future flexible working opportunities.

This theme becomes more specific as respondents discuss the process of WorkFlex implementation. The driving force in this theme was the respondents' call for more autonomy in the WorkFlex agreement

I requested two days and have already been told that it will likely not be approved because only one day is being considered for DSO/DSA employees. This is deeply frustrating, because it indicates that upper admin is not taking the time to individually consider the needs of their employees as this program is intended, but instead is choosing to implement a blanket policy for everyone. Fairness is not equity. This is also frustrating considering the lengths at which I have gone to prepare my office AND communicate my reasoning - it was communicated immediately (informally) that it wouldn't be approved, and it's troubling to me that we're being asked to do this intentional work without any type of genuine consideration.

Respondent 206

and Scientific staff may be need an in-person presence required on campus. Respondents also had criticisms relating to the fairness of implementation process. There were also concerns from respondents that WorkFlex implementation does not account for invisible labor done by Professional and Scientific staff choosing to remain hybrid or fully on campus.

implementation process—37 respondents suggested that WorkFlex's current implementation is too rigid and does not account for the needs of individual departments. Specifically, people would like to see greater flexibility in WorkFlex timelines. Suggested options included less lead time from one WorkFlex window to the next, fewer windows, including permanent WorkFlex arrangements and/or long-term WorkFlex arrangements, windows tied to job positions, i.e. student facing jobs have windows tied to the academic year while others do not, and windows that can account for times when more Professional

A standardized calendar of "black out" dates. This could be done by position, for example all academic advisors need to be on campus the week before and first week of the semester and on all orientation dates, month of June, etc, but it would be the same across colleges. Also, all of the same position title would have the same guidelines, ex academic advisors can work remotely 20%, again keep it the same across colleges so one college isn't getting more of a benefit.

Respondent 105

Implications for Workload with WorkFlex

Total Respondents: 9

On the workload, there were nine respondents of 795, accounting for 1.13%. Four of these respondents self-identified as supervisors in their comments, and all self-identified supervisors specified it was more difficult for supervisors to use WorkFlex. Two respondents shared that WorkFlex, particularly hybrid working arrangements, helped with their personal workload.

Three respondents shared concerns about the quality of work from hybrid or remote working situations, while two identified that there seems to be a larger workload for Professional and Scientific employees who work fully or mostly in the office.

Two respondents also raised concerns about the attentiveness of those working from home, describing how they experience difficulties reaching remote staff and how the quality of their work seems reduced. Respondents suggested that supervisors monitor such situations and have conversations with such staff to convey their performance expectations.

1. As a supervisor, I feel like I can never take this option because then all the employees would want to as well. Along those lines, people who take WorkFlex are seen as less dependable and not as hard-working. 2. People without kids feel like they have to justify wanting to work from home, whereas people with kids seem to have a built-in excuse.

Respondent 541

Suggestions for Supervisors/Units

Total Respondents: 30

Regarding respondent opinions and suggestions for how to improve WorkFlex, 30 respondents of the 795 (4%) made several comments. The majority expressed a need for supervisors and departments to have greater decision-making authority, but also that supervisors could benefit from more training. Some felt there needs to be more options for WorkFlex and that their college or division is being too restrictive. More support from leadership was also mentioned, together with a need for more supervisor guidance. Finally, respondents wanted performance standards for remote and in-office work.

Criticisms for Supervisors/Units

Total respondents: 84

When expressing their direct criticisms of their supervisor and units 84 respondents of the 795 (11%) brought up a variety of topics. Most prominent were the complaint that departments set seemingly arbitrary limits on WFH amounts or that colleges and divisions are being too restrictive. Many also find their supervisors unsupportive of WorkFlex while some seem to not like the WFH option. This causes many to feel that WorkFlex has not been implemented as intended by UHR, with added problems such as the approval process being biased and playing to favorites or WorkFlex requests being denied informally, which makes the process look like a show. Respondents express a need for better guidance and want individual duties and position responsibilities to be taken into account in order to make the process and eligibility more flexible.

Savings for Employees with WorkFlex

Total Respondents: 21

Twenty-one respondents pointed out how ISU employees can save time, money, and energy by working from home. They also reported an enhanced focus on work tasks due to fewer distractions and improved health and wellness for themselves and unvaccinated family members.

With the unit/team I work for, I get to decide week to week how much time I spend on site and work from home/remotely. This leads to great satisfaction since needs vary as to where I need to be located each week. Team members are trusted to make that judgment based on their job responsibilities.

Respondent 477

Suggestions - Amount of Work from Home

Total Respondents: 405

When asked how satisfied they are with the amount of time they get to work from home, 24 respondents out of 795 (3%) indicated that they are satisfied with the amount of work from home (WFH) they currently get. However, 134 respondents (17%) asked for more WFH time, just like another 153 respondents (19%) specifically asked for 100% WFH time. Respondents outlined a number of sentiments and criticisms, indicating that they feel the process is inflexible, arbitrary, absurd, and rigid, while others find it causes inequities and

I could easily do more [work from home] and my supervisor agrees. It's the college that gets in the way. This is anything but 'flexible.'

Respondent 454

inequality among employees and that there is unclear and inconsistent guidance from their college with a lack of justification for denials. Some also perceive that there are hidden limits on the amount of WFH you can get that are below the 60% that is officially allowed. Survey data also shows that staff would like to be trusted more and given more agency in their WFH decisions, just like many feel that they themselves and their supervisors should have a

bigger say in how much of their position can be done remotely, as opposed to the college they are under. Of those that requested 100% WFH many pointed out their positions are non-student or non-public facing, that all their work can be done from home, and that on their on-campus days they sit alone in their offices anyway without interacting with anybody in person. While many respondents complain about the limits and decision-making in their college, the LAS was the only one mentioned by name, with respondents highlighting that policies and limits are too restrictive and that the deans seem to be out of touch with individual position responsibilities.

I would like to be able to hire individuals in at 100% remote. It opens up the candidate pool and we have lost staff due to the part-time remote implementation.

Respondent 49

Another significant issue raised by 37 (5%) respondents concerned the desire for more flexibility to allow for working alternating weeks on and off campus, more flexibility on which days are WFH options, as well as which employees are eligible for WFH, just to mention a few. Respondents also want more supervisors to have the freedom to offer and manage employee WFH time, as opposed to the colleges, just like several wanted the option for more WFH flexibility during the summer when workloads shift. Lastly, some respondents felt that WorkFlex is currently treated by college admins as a favor they can be granted, rather than a benefit they can request, with poor communication about guidelines or properly reasoned limits, just like some mentioned the need to treat individual staff with more respect for their professionalism and ability to manage their WFH schedule in a way that benefits both the university and themselves.

Work-Life Balance with WorkFlex

Total Respondents: 23

Twenty-three of 795 respondents (3.5%) talked about work-life balance explicitly in their responses. The most common sentiment expressed was that having a good work-life balance was valuable and that they felt positive about the WorkFlex program's ability to offer employees a better work-life balance. Specifically, respondents noted that WorkFlex improved their work-life balance in the following areas: improving family concerns such as being able to be home earlier with their families, improving physical or mental health such as being able to start a healthy dinner earlier in the day, saving time and money with a reduced commute, and allowing them to be more present. Five respondents also noted that their improved productivity at home improved their work-life balance. While most who mentioned work-life balance in their responses were happy with the amount they received and felt it enough to help make work-life better, there were some who felt that the amount of flexibility they received with WorkFlex decreased and/or that work-life balance was not achieved with flexible work arrangements.

Position Classification and Student-Facing Positions with WorkFlex Arrangements

Total Respondents:59

Another subject brought up by 44 of the 795 respondents (7%) centered on their classification, particularly in relation to those considered student facing. Staff perceive that student-facing staff are discouraged from or ineligible for participation in WorkFlex, which creates divisions and inequality with non-student-facing staff, causing several respondents to note that student-facing staff deserve flexibility too and the opportunity to work

from home, or some other form of benefit or compensation. However, WorkFlex policies seem to be inconsistently applied across campus and that in several cases administrators have failed to look at the actual

job responsibilities compared to the job title or department when determining remote-work eligibility. Consequently, better guidance is needed on what constitutes a student-facing position. Some respondents point out that those who are not student-facing should be allowed 100% WFH, while others suggest that the percentage of an employee's student-facing activities should help determine the percentage of their WFH eligibility.

I would like a blanket roll-out of availability. My office refuses the implementation of the program.

Respondent 138

Allow enrollment at any point in time instead of basing it on academic semesters. Allow greater flexibility for greater than 60% remote work for more positions when it makes sense for the position/unit. Allow greater supervisor discretion in approvals.

Respondent 68

Program Suggestions or Criticisms - UHR Level

Total Respondents:158

Program suggestions and/or criticisms that could be perceived to be actioned by UHR, as opposed to a department or unit level, accounted for 158 of 795 respondent's responses (19.8%). More than four dozen respondents called for a change in how frequently Professional and Scientific employees needed to submit applications for their WorkFlex enrollment. Several called for a permanent adoption once approved by a supervisor, while many others suggested a yearly schedule or any alternative that is not tied to the academic calendar, although many simply called for UHR to make changes without a specific suggestion.

A number of respondents remarked that they wanted to see more autonomy in WorkFlex decision making from the employees themselves and/or their immediate supervisor to keep the process at a departmental level. Several related thoughts emerged: 1) there is too much paperwork or "red tape" involved because too many hands are in the process of approvals, 2) there needs to be a greater consideration of smaller or less

traditional units who want to participate in WorkFlex but feel they can't, 3) there needs to be a greater flexibility allowed in the WorkFlex program and those conversations would be better had at the departmental level, including the appropriateness of offering 100% WFH options. The respondents' comments regarding "greater flexibility" with the WorkFlex program had several associated ideas: 1) A

call for adoption for WorkFlex across all units if desired by

I wish it was more available to some of my colleagues and not at the whim of a stubborn supervisor. I think employees should be allowed to WFH more than 3 days a week during the summer.

Respondent 267

I [would] change it so colleges and departments could not flagrantly disregard its options.

Respondent 578

employees, regardless of position (2 respondents noted this in particular), degree of student interaction (3 respondents noted this in particular), or bias of unit, manager, or appointing authority (5 respondents noted this in particular), 2) A call for UHR to endorse the WorkFlex program to have increased flexibility in how, when, and where people work that is responsive to a shifting schedule that does not necessarily align with the WorkFlex window period and gives decision making to employees and their immediate supervisors, i.e. “Employee A can work a compressed schedule for the next few weeks and then resume a standard 8-5, M-F”, 3) a call for 100% WFH options endorsed by UHR through the WorkFlex program, and 4) a call for impartial reviews and an outlined appeals process.

More impartial review of requests university wide. While it works great for me and our team, friends in other parts of the university have told me their supervisors told them do not even bother to apply for any of it as requests would not be approved. Some of those are non-student facing positions entirely.

Respondent 63

Respondents had very different views about what they perceive to be UHR’s role in the WorkFlex program as well as what respondents would like UHR’s role in the WorkFlex program process to be. Five respondents critically (and incorrectly) noted the WorkFlex program was centrally administered by UHR. Fourteen respondents wanted more clarity and structure from UHR, especially in defining “flexibility,” holding their colleagues accountable when working remotely, and helping with change management as employees progressed through flexible working arrangements. However, almost double that number (21) found UHR’s involvement to be “heavy handed” and suggested that more control be provided to employees and their immediate supervisors. Respondents also requested more frequent and more consistent communication from UHR to their units, as many believe this affected implementation of the WorkFlex program in their areas.

Program Suggestions or Criticism - Unit Level

Total Respondents: 63

On the topic of suggestions and criticisms for the WorkFlex program that can be actioned at a unit level, 63 of 795 (7.9%) respondents offered insights. Overwhelmingly, respondents criticized their units or addressed that their colleagues on campus had been allowed limited hybrid WorkFlex options based on a position, title, or most frequently, as part of a college or unit initiative. Most often, the criticism was that the employee was limited to 20% remote work, if at all, with LAS and Student Affairs named as offenders.

Seven respondents identified 100% remote work as an attractive option for them and mentioned that their positions would be well-suited for fully remote work.

Another key sentiment expressed was flexibility based on the unit’s individual needs. One example of this included citing concerns that Student Affairs typically has not been enjoying WorkFlex opportunities and a more flexible program might provide them some relief in their non-peak seasons. Along this same line of thinking, respondents identified they would like more flexibility in their short-term schedules, such as allowing flexible working arrangements that can be altered on a week-to-week basis.

The process. The university is already aware of the benefits [and] I should not have to justify [those] again. Workflex exists because of studies and evaluations that have already been done for individual employees to take advantage of this work [and] it should be up to the supervisor. The supervisor should be responsible for ensuring minimal to no negative impact on the unit or university. Two basic responsibilities of a supervisor [are] successful accomplishment of the mission AND the welfare of their staff. Workflex options and opportunities fall under the welfare of staff.

Respondent 257

The heart of this theme was a desire for immediate supervisors to have discretion in WorkFlex decision making, including conversation that a supervisor should know and be responsible for creating a good culture for flexible working arrangements and that there needs to be better support and trust for supervisors to make good choices for their employees and units.

Three respondents articulated that they felt there is favoritism and unfairness in WorkFlex decisions at the local level, and one more person identified that there needs to be more concrete policies and procedures in place at the local level to prevent favoritism and to ensure targets are accomplished when working remotely. Finally, respondents also identified that they would like to see regular touchpoints and/or community building efforts at the local levels to engage the hybrid and/or fully remote workforce at Iowa State.

Guidance and Communication

Total Respondents: 41

Among the 41 respondents out of 795 (5%) who brought up the issue of guidance and communication, the great majority requested better and more consistent communication and education about the program, particularly when local policies are not in line with UHR policies. There also needs to be better communication and coordination across departments with who is working remotely, just like some asked for the revisions to the WorkFlex process to make it clearer as well as they expressed a desire to know how to appeal a decision.

Should be consistent across campus/colleges. LAS doesn't allow as much workflex time as Engineering.

Respondent 323

Consistency in WorkFlex Implementation

Total Respondents: 56

Regarding consistency, 56 of 795 respondents (7%) highlighted that there is a lack of consistency in how WorkFlex is implemented across different departments, colleges and units. For example, staff have noticed that similar positions in other departments or colleges have

I wish it was offered more equitable across the college. I have a coworker that gets twice as many WorkFlex hours as I do, and other departments in the College get multiple WorkFlex days. To me, it seems like a fairness issue.

Respondent 168

This is very structured "WorkFlex". The options available, structure, and wording given, indicates that ISU does not trust their employees or supervisors. We all have a job to do and methods of work that are different. Some people thrive in wfh, hybrid model, etc., It would be nice if there was a few weeks were people could try different things and show that their way works.

Respondent 785

more flexibility, which creates division amongst staff. Other have found that unspoken rules cause confusion, just like some complain they are not allowed to participate in WorkFlex. That said, consistency for consistency's sake is not appreciated. There must be room for individualized solutions.

General Positive View, Without Providing Specifics

Total Respondents: 87

Among the 795 respondents 87 (11%) expressed generally positive views of the WorkFlex program. Respondents particularly appreciated that WorkFlex allowed them to have their preferred work schedule and were pleased to have fewer distractions while working from home. Better work/life balance was also a positive factor as was the reduction in commute time. While overall positive about the WorkFlex program, some respondents did lament that not all employees can participate and that their positions or departments did not allow them a flexible work arrangement.

I think this is a great opportunity for people to have a more balanced work/life schedule. I'm glad the program is available and my department has been very accepting of the program from my point of view.

Respondent 60

Efficiency/Productivity

Total Respondents: 41

Among the 795 respondents 41 (5%) commented specifically on the aspect of efficiency and productivity.

It has made a significant positive impact in my happiness at ISU. I have more time to focus on my health and wellness when I can reduce my time commuting each week. I also get more of my administrative tasks done at home since there are fewer people interrupting me throughout the day.

Respondent 115

The WorkFlex program has been helpful for flexibility and retention of departmental staff.

Respondent 283

The great majority were very satisfied with how working from home allowed them to work effectively and be productive because they could better focus and had fewer distractions. Respondents specifically pointed out

they were as productive or more productive at home with only four respondents feeling more productive in the office.

Fairness/Equity

Total Respondents: 77

On the topic of fairness and equity, the survey had 77 out of 795 (9.9%) respondents who commented. There was a wide range of criticism noted in the survey responses. One of the most frequent sentiments expressed is that the opportunity for flexible working arrangements, especially hybrid and remote work, needs to be equitable for all. Thirteen respondents noted inequities in WorkFlex approval for Professional and Scientific employees based on employee position, most notably in Student Affairs. Many respondents also shared that they had heard or personally experienced inequalities in the WorkFlex program's administration based on unit and/or manager/appointment authority preferences and/or biases. Specific criticisms about the fairness and equity in the implementation of the WorkFlex program included: Not enough supervisor training to prevent inequalities in implementation; Not enough buy-in from leadership at all levels which prevents supervisors from making fair and equitable choices for flexible working arrangements in their

It didn't take me long to understand that WorkFlex was NOT going to be welcome in my unit, and I don't appreciate the underlying message of "don't even bother applying" coming from my director. This is counter to the overall message coming from the University about WorkFlex.

Respondent 622

units; Not enough communication from UHR and/or individual units to Professional and Scientific employees about the WorkFlex program, making it difficult to fairly implement. Some respondents also drew comparisons between the flexibility faculty have typically enjoyed in their schedules, noting inherent inequalities while four more respondents expressed frustration that some units have been allowed a fully remote pilot for so long. There is strong criticism from four respondents that inequities in the WorkFlex program and its implementation will lead to long-term bad morale for employees. Fifteen respondents noted that flexible working arrangements, particularly hybrid and/or fully remote work, promote inequality by placing an unfair burden on the people in the office full-time as they effectively take a pay cut to commute to work and provide more of the in-person services. There is a call from some respondents for a formal appeals system when inequality is perceived.

Flexibility with WorkFlex

Total Respondents: 131

In our department, the program was implemented with a request and an expectation that you adhere to that for the specific period. The point of WorkFlex is to be flexible. For example, when my kid's school moved pick up time to 1 hour later, Workflex could no longer accommodate my schedule. Or if I want to spend a week working from an alternate location, there is still a lot of humming and hawing, as if this is completely different, unexpected, and going to cause massive chaos.

Respondent 98

On the subject of the WorkFlex program's flexibility, 131 out of 795 respondents (16.4%) provided opinions, with many sentiments centered around the inherent flexibility of the WorkFlex program and practical implications that influence flexible working arrangements. Nearly 10% (13) of the respondents who discussed flexibility shared positive views about how flexible the WorkFlex program has been and that they appreciate efforts made so far. However, there were several criticisms and suggestions about the flexibility of the program, including a call for increased flexibility in general. More specifically, there were concerns that WorkFlex decisions for departments were treated the same in large colleges such as LAS and Engineering, that immediate supervisor decision making about WorkFlex has been limited in departments, and that

a Professional and Scientific employee's position, department, unit, or supervisor may inequitably impact the flexibility offered by the WorkFlex program.

Nine respondents identified that they could not participate, but would have wanted to because they need or desire flexibility and feel they do not have it in their positions currently. Respondents voiced frustrations over a lack of 100% remote opportunities, citing this as maximizing workplace flexibility. Frustrations were also noted as several respondents shared that they did understand the need to physically report to an office when one or more of the following conditions were met: 1) their work could be done independently and did not require specialized tools only available on campus; 2) their work could be collaboratively done well online, and 3) they were not extensively client or student facing, and 4) their hybrid or remote work was supported by a supervisor.

Most importantly, an overwhelming amount of respondents identified a desire to maximize flexibility by having shorter-term or more informal WorkFlex arrangements, i.e. "I have nothing but virtual meetings and report writing to do on Tuesday next week, so I could easily work remotely that day," or "The next few weeks are going to be quiet with student traffic, so I could take more remote time to get caught up on administrative work." In this same group of respondents, six noted that on-campus commitments such as in-person meetings frequently impacted their flexible working arrangements.

Discouragement from Participating in WorkFlex

Total Respondents: 53

Of the 795 respondents 53 (7%) reported that they were discouraged from participating in WorkFlex, which obviously caused significant dissatisfaction and confusion. Most commonly, respondents experienced discouragement, resistance, or outright prohibition from participating from their direct supervisor or a higher-up administrator, while some reported that the hindrance from participating was a lack of support from their supervisor or a higher-up administrator. Others reported that guidelines were confusing or conflicting with what they were told or that criteria for participating differed from those presented by UHR.

Concerns Not Covered Elsewhere

Total Respondents: 43

The survey received comments from 43 respondents out of the 795 (5%) who had various concerns. Seven expressed concerns about how WorkFlex might affect ISU students. The most common sentiments were that staff would be harder to find if they were not in their office and that some might fail to respond in a timely manner to phone calls. On the issue of collaboration, a few responses focused on the negative impact WFH might have on collaboration among co-workers, how never meeting in person might cause a disconnect, and how remote colleagues took longer to respond to communications and calls to their office numbers in particular. Notably, some respondents also felt virtual collaboration was not as effective as doing it in person, just like one respondent expressed a desire to know if and when colleagues were working from home. On a related note, 11 respondents also had concerns about staff feeling disconnected from their workplace and each other. One suggestion given by a respondent was to require some on-campus hours for each employee, though they did not express how many. Eight respondents remarked that communication issues could cause a disconnect and that working different hours during the day might impact communication among staff, just like virtual communication might not work for everyone or every task.

Retaining Employees with WorkFlex

Total Respondents: 78

The survey received comments from 78 respondents out of 795 (10.1%) regarding retention and WorkFlex. At 29 responses, the most common sentiment expressed was that a flexible workplan, especially hybrid and/or fully remote work, is necessary to retain employees. In particular, 19 respondents shared that flexibility was necessary to remain competitive with industry positions to retain “key” and “valuable” employees while seven respondents shared that the WorkFlex program was a “necessary” benefit to compensate for lower salaries that Iowa State University Professional and Scientific employees typically receive compared to their industry counterparts. Ten respondents noted that without a flexible work plan they personally would seek other jobs, up to and including leaving Iowa State University. Two respondents shared they have specifically not applied for different positions at Iowa State that have been rumored to be unfriendly to WorkFlex and shared how that hurt Iowa State’s overall chances of retaining them as employees. There were multiple callouts to specific units, positions, and supervisors at Iowa State who appear to be implementing WorkFlex unfairly, inconsistently, and/or not simply not offering enough of it, therefore hurting employee retention in those units. More than

twenty respondents also noted that “side perks” of remote and hybrid work such as cost savings for the employee, better work-life balance, and improved mental health, increased retention. As a retention piece, eight respondents shared that hybrid and/or remote options need to be expanded to remain competitive and increase retention. Other conversations about the WorkFlex program included that it promotes and retains a more diverse workforce and should be the bare minimum for retention.

Recruiting Employees with WorkFlex

Total Respondents: 64

The WorkFlex program’s role in recruitment had 64 responses out of 795 total respondents (8%). The conversations about recruitment happened almost exclusively alongside conversations about retention, although respondents had more frequent, and more in-depth, conversation about retention than they did recruitment. The most common sentiment about the WorkFlex program’s role in recruitment is its necessity; in fact, nearly half of the respondents shared that having a strong, robust program was “necessary” and “vita[l]” for recruiting “valuable” and “critical” candidates. Conversations about the robustness of Iowa State’s hybrid and remote options was the second most common sentiment. Seventeen respondents noted that the amount of time offered in a hybrid flexible working plan would be a critical component in remaining a destination employer. Ten respondents noted WorkFlex is necessary to remain competitive with industry for recruitment and nine respondents said WorkFlex can serve as an attractive benefit when the salaries of state employees are not as competitive as their industry peers for Professional and Scientific employees.

Addressing Staff Responsibility and Accountability

Total Respondents: 32

Regarding staff responsibility and accountability, 32 of the 795 respondents (4%) provided comments, with the main issues focusing on remote staff answering phone calls in a timely manner and being available during regular office hours. Some also suggested that remote employees should be provided with access to their work phone numbers, just like it was suggested that Outlook should be set up to indicate when an employee is working remotely. Seven respondents expressed general concern about staff abusing flexible work arrangements, while two wrote that responsible staff could be trusted.