February 2021 Campus Pandemic Planning Listening Sessions

For the past year, a committee comprised of administrators, staff, students and faculty has convened to collaborate and plan campus operations during the current pandemic, taking into account the guidance of state and local health experts while navigating a constantly changing landscape to plan the safest-possible continuation of our educational mission. As we prepare for another major shift in operations this fall, there are many things we don't know yet, and planning must take into account multiple scenarios and incorporate flexibility to adjust as circumstances deem necessary. As part of this important planning process, members of the planning committee held listening sessions open to all employees during the last week in February. This is what we heard…

What's going well?

- Remote student services, including advising, tutoring and use of disabilities services. Advising appointments are up 20% this year!

- Some teams have actually gotten closer (but some do miss the connections).

- Staff have proven they can work from home. Also, the break from an 8-5 schedule has provided much-needed flexibility.

- Remote work has allowed staff to participate more fully in university activities. Ability to attend Zoom meetings has led to transparency and more participation in shared governance.

- Reduced time (and cost) of commuting has increased productivity.

- University is leveraging technology much better to provide services to students and employees and to communicate.

- The SF State family is resilient, especially our hard working students.

- Students and staff appreciate the greater flexibility that faculty are showing their students and the changes in policies (such as Cr/NC deadlines) that are helping students.

Concerns and Suggestions

- Concerns about vaccinations. Will they be required?

- Concerns about ventilation and air circulation in buildings and offices.

- More inclusion of staff in planning processes, campus conversations and decision making. Move to remote instruction and work was done quickly and didn't allow for any consultation. Hope that return to in-person instruction and work will be more inclusive.

- Concern about strengthening communications within and between cabinet areas.

- Concerns about ensuring the full and safe participation of staff in campus planning and conversations

- Concerns that faculty and staff may come to campus sick or those who bring sick children to work with them.

- More training for students, faculty and staff on maximizing use of technology.

- It would be best if our return to work, like our return to in-person instruction, was done gradually and by rotating people on campus.

- As we look toward a likely hybrid work future, how so we help ensure that those working on campus and those working remotely are all included and treated fairly?

- While some like remote work, others find it harder to be inspired and stay focused.

- Many expressed concerns students: their ability to form connections; their frustration with remote learning, and their longing for campus life,

- Need to develop better communication—use of multiple tools and better communication at all levels. Need to better apply University level messages to individual units.

- Fears for students' mental health and the crises they are dealing with.

  Persistent concerns about technology and connectivity.

  Concerns about childcare issues.

- Create more virtual professional development opportunities.

- A hybrid model of in-person and remote work is likely the most effective. We should create an inclusive unit-by-unit process to determine the mix.

- Concern about equity in access to services when returning to in-person.

- Remote advising has worked better. But there is recognition that some students need in-person services.

- We need to survey staff and continue the listening sessions.

- Figure out what has worked better remotely. Not everything has been worse. Some things have been better.

- International students require special consideration due to quarantines, time differences,

  etc. Needs for both synchronous and asynchronous modes of instruction.

  Students want more virtual services. Tutoring may be less effective.

- Encourage faculty to ask students how things are going and what might strengthen remote learning.

Questions: While the University does not currently have answers for the many questions that were asked, this list will be helpful in identifying the specific issues that we need to address as we build plans to return to campus.

- What will the University's vaccination policy be?

- How much autonomy do departments and programs have? Who makes the decisions, and how do you ensure transparency?
- Will social distancing and/or masks be required? Will masks be available on campus?

  Will there be a new CSU work-from-home policy?

  Will we continue offering more online courses?

  Will there be a mandate for staff repopulation?

  Recognition for all the work staff did in the transition to remote work.

- Building coordinators and union reps should be involved in planning. Unit- and building-based plans.
- Assure students they can complete their degree remotely.

  Limit campus access to SF State students and employees.

- What safety precautions will be in place? Physical barriers? Building density? Ventilation?Structural changes will take time.
- How can we have group events?
- What accommodations for students/employees who no longer live near campus? Lead time for returning? Bring people back slowly and on a rotating basis.
- How can you ensure privacy in advising (for example) when physical distancing?

  What is the University's response to a positive test by an employee? Notification?

  Quarantine? Will WASC require 50% in-person instruction?