

**Annotated chat from the NCURA Region VII Guided Virtual Discussion
on TELEWORK
March 26, 2020**

General Logistics

If a potential employee were seeking a remote position, do you think that this should be documented in one's cover letter? Or should that be discussed later at the interview/offer stage?

- I would advise waiting until an interview stage but addressing it then. I would not want to get to the offer and THEN find out the person wanted to be remote.

Can a remote or partial remote schedule be negotiated before being hired and added to the new employee's LOO, for either CU or CSU?

- Yes

Challenges & Solutions

Given the positive data concerning telework, why do the presenters think that there has been such hesitancy to allow people to do this in research administration? Also, Ashley touched on this in the beginning, but do you all think that this "social experiment" will lend itself to more full-time remote positions in the future? And finally, is there a list of institutions that offer full-time remote positions?! That would be a great resource to share if possible.

- That's a good question. I think that it partly has to do with 'the way we have always done it' and the intimidation factor of relying so heavily on new technologies.
- For some it comes down to trust, for others it might be due to lack of resources or the work involved in managing schedules.
- Discussing telecommuting as a retention issue worked well with leadership in our experience.
- I think given that good Research Administrators are in constant demand, it might help institutions to secure some of the top talents with increased flexibility in the future.
- I was on a search committee recently and we lost MANY excellent and experienced applicants because the unit didn't allow telecommuting.
- The SRAI session earlier this week included UC Berkeley who had a process for onboarding remote employees - if that helps.

What is being done to address social isolation and not taking breaks?

- I've been taking my dog on a walk at 5 pm so I physically can go outside and then when I come back inside I am not in work mode.
- I noticed this week, that I forgot to eat and family brought me food...so I can understand that it is hard to turn off.

- It's challenging turning it off. The computer is right here at my fingertips, so I'm always thinking I can continue working...just for a few minutes, but it always turns into more!
- I struggle with that [working after 5 PM and not taking lunch or breaks] too! I think it stems from not wanting to compromise that trust that we chatted about earlier. Wanting to show that we are working! When you are in the office it's almost like you get a pass for being physically present :)
- Set a timer and shut down your computer, don't just close it. And have a designated workplace, do not travel throughout the house with your laptop, if you have to, do it minimally.

What other challenges are people experiencing?

- One challenge is working from home along with my partner. We have to coordinate who is where especially when one of us has a video or phone meeting.

COVID-19 Response

How long is CSU on for the remoting in?

- Likely until the end of the term. Until the state "shelter in place" is lifted for sure.

I am wondering how to support researchers and their requests to set up labs in their homes?

- While support has been given to faculty to teach remotely, not much is being done at the presenters' and participants' institutions to help investigators set up labs at home due to Environmental, Health, and Safety (EH&S) standards.
- One school shared that they sent out guidance stating they need to get a supervisor's approval before ordering anything for home shipping. When they go back to the office, all remaining supplies needed to be moved to campus. Chemicals and gasses couldn't be shipped to homes per EH&S.

My supervisor sent out an email last week saying everyone has to be 8-5 during the COVID telecommuting. I would have thought this situation would require more flexibility, not less. Have any other units or institutions done away with alternate schedules in response to COVID-19?

- CSU has not done that as of yet because we don't have all the kinks worked out, but it is certainly on the table for consideration.

Systems

What systems are institutions using for communication?

- At CSU, we use Microsoft Teams for chat and video.
- Other resources include Slack, Skype, and Monday.com. If you use Monday.com, your manager can assign your workload, see the progress, set deadlines and track the progress, set urgency, etc.

Liabilities

I am wondering if a supplied computer or phone causes damage to a house how is that covered.

- That may be covered under one's Homeowner's policy. Check with your insurance policy and your office of Risk Management to be certain.
- This is what one institution's risk management shared... While workers' compensation coverage is still applicable while working from home, and the research itself may still be covered, the home and other property are not covered.