



# RUTGERS

THE STATE UNIVERSITY  
OF NEW JERSEY



# The FUTURE of WORK

2022 Task Force Report



**RUTGERS**  
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## Executive Summary

Over two years ago, COVID-19 forced the university to pivot most of its functions to a remote environment. Like so many organizations worldwide, Rutgers had no time to prepare for a transition of this magnitude and scale. In spite of this, the university community came together, successfully adapting to support our mission and serving as a national leader in managing the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and patients during this crisis. The extent and ultimate duration of this global health crisis were unknown. As weeks turned into months, we understood that the pandemic would transform how we operate as an institution, how we work as employees, how we interact and connect as colleagues, and what we value as individuals. How we proceed requires careful deliberation and thought to ensure Rutgers continues to thrive in a post-pandemic world. To succeed, we must balance our mission and commitment to our students, patients, and the communities we serve with the needs of our employees.

The Covid-19 pandemic served as an accelerant to our generation's most extraordinary workplace transformation. Understanding how this transformation will impact our institution is key to our continued success and essential to the advancement of academic excellence, attracting and retaining top talent, while fostering a caring, inclusive, and respectful work environment. Valuable lessons were learned on employing flexibility and innovation to better serve our students, patients, and the community.

To better understand these lessons, President Jonathan S. Holloway commissioned a Future of Work (FoW) Task Force chaired by Senior Vice President, Human Resources Vivian Fernández. The Task Force was tasked with gathering feedback from students, faculty, staff, and other impacted stakeholders to inform the development of a strategy aligned with our institutional needs, values, and priorities and in support of our campus communities' vibrancy. The charge included:

- Identifying our most immediate and critical business and service delivery needs and developing a workforce framework that is clear, equitable, and mission focused.
- A transition from crisis mode to a steady and skilled state, ensuring that we have the right people, policies, training, assessment tools, and technology to support short- and long-term strategies.

The Future of Work Task Force has prepared this report for your review and consideration. The report details key findings and observations, and short- and long-term recommendations. These recommendations provide a workforce framework that is mission focused and supports the university's transition from crisis to steady state. We thank you for the opportunity to serve on the task force and advance workplace excellence.

## Key Task Force Findings and Observations

Rutgers students, faculty, and staff experienced an academic year unlike any other during the first year of the pandemic. While Rutgers offers online programs, it is not an online university. The academic workforce displayed unprecedented resolve by quickly adapting to unexpected remote instruction and building fully online programs to meet service delivery needs. Faculty leveraged technology to deliver a mix of synchronous and asynchronous instruction with little to no notice and, in many cases, with minimal experience.

Employee and student surveys, focus groups, and listening tours highlighted faculty and student stress and fatigue related to remote instruction. Several themes emerged:

- concerns regarding student mental health and overall wellness;
- the need for coordination of student academic and co-curricular life at the university;
- the need for improved communication with students regarding available and changing student services;
- general university responsiveness toward student needs; and
- staffing challenges given changes in employee perspectives and requirements related to work-life balance, wellbeing, and workplace expectation due to the pandemic.

The experience highlighted the need to upskill faculty in using innovative technologies and better align academic and auxiliary support services to ensure that auxiliary services also adjust to support the new academic configurations as academic offerings change. A salient theme expressed by students was a clear desire for empathy and kindness and specific resources provided by faculty.

If the plan is for the university to continue or grow hybrid class options, facilities, technology, libraries, and any related academic support services need to align so that students can participate in hybrid options with ease. Some students reported challenges trying to navigate both in-person and remote classes. Whether moving around geographically disparate campuses, living in shared spaces, or commuting, students had to improvise, trying to locate quiet areas with minimal distractions and ample internet connectivity to log into the virtual classroom.

Students expressed many challenges with insufficient reservable space for academic engagement and felt strongly that the hours of the libraries and computer labs are inadequate and not aligned with the times of classes; therefore, making it challenging to access printing and computers in between, before, and after classes. Many described this lack of space as significantly impacting their student and academic experience.

The pandemic also triggered workforce shortages and challenges in recruitment and retention across the nation. Employees across industries and professions are reassessing their commitment to work and focusing on their overall mental, social, and physical wellbeing. Market trends highlight that what employees value most in an employer has changed due to the pandemic. Employees now place a higher value on flexibility and non-compensation benefits, as well as the increased productivity and efficiency that a hybrid work environment can provide.

Student employment was adversely impacted by the pandemic as well. This brought to light that the student employment program at Rutgers is not owned by any single entity, and the offices currently involved are not coordinated in their approach to student employment. Student

employment is not adequately funded to support the structure, wages, and developmental work experience university student employees need to successfully enter the workforce beyond their college experience.

To attract and retain top talent and remain competitive, the university needs to align with current workforce trends. A workplace culture of flexibility can effectively reinforce diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives by making positions more accessible to a broader and potentially more diverse applicant pool. The pandemic accelerated the need to support employees' personal and professional growth opportunities to maintain and increase morale, ensure high skill levels related to institutional mission and departmental functioning, and encourage job satisfaction. Embracing flexible work arrangements and leveraging professional development, career pathing, and other wellness resources will help grow and expand our footprint as a leader in higher education.

We learned that employees can effectively perform some, not all, jobs from remote locations during the remote work experiment. Remote work, however, comes with both benefits and challenges. For instance, not all student-facing roles are conducive to remote work. Further, expectations regarding how work is performed (i.e., length of the workday, timeliness of responses, work and pay equity for student-facing staff, work-life balance) can be complicated to navigate.

Not all employees will be eligible for remote work arrangements, as some roles require an in-person presence to provide essential support services. Equity should be addressed by ensuring a consistent, documented, and transparent process to determine eligibility for all flexible work schedules.

With the potential shift to flexible work arrangements and future work-from-home options, there is uncertainty about how this will impact the university's culture and how team connections will continue to be fostered. We must guard against the erosion of the campus life experience expected by our students and impact the local economy within our host communities.

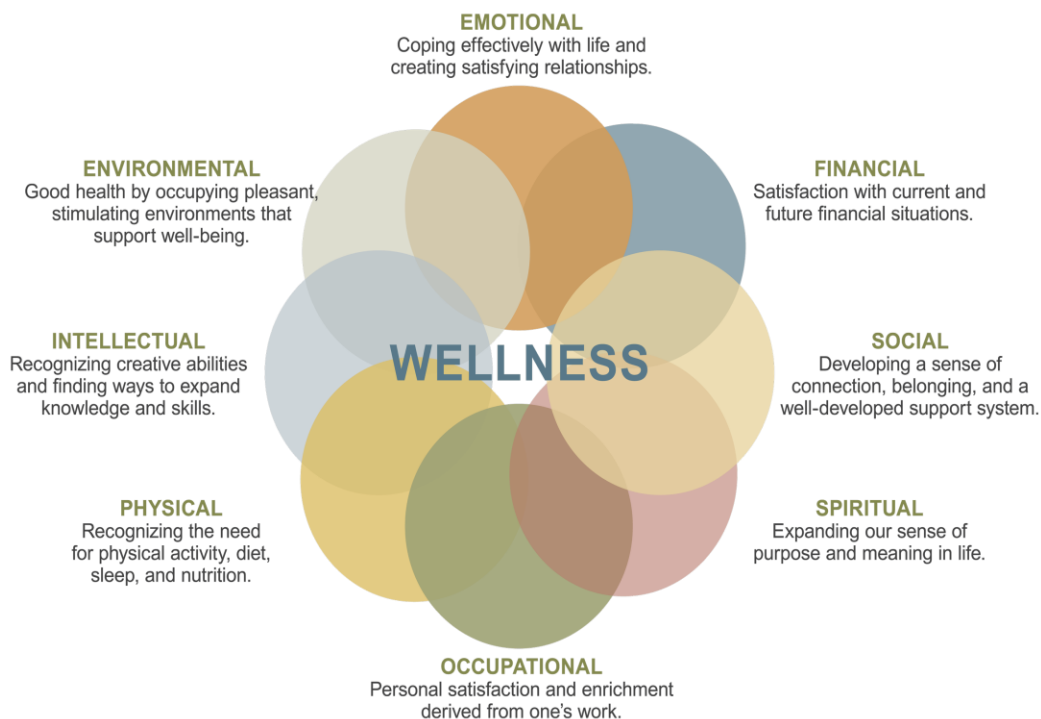
The pandemic illuminated gaps in employee fulfillment and wellness within our healthcare workforce. Many healthcare organizations are understaffed due to the early retirement of seasoned employees, fatigue and resignation of staff, persistent vacancies, and hiring challenges. The pandemic intensified the adverse impact of key social determinants of health (SDOH) for many of the patients we serve and for many of our employees, negatively impacting health, well-being, and quality of life. Further, several reports revealed that women, particularly mothers, who make up the majority of the healthcare workforce, have reported negative impacts on their mental health, including stress, anxiety, and depression, more frequently than their male counterparts.

The trauma and isolation caused by the pandemic have brought about significant increases in behavioral health needs for both the healthcare workforce and the population that it serves. Students and employees alike have experienced significant challenges related to their own personal and mental health or that of a family member or friend. New Jersey was one of the earliest and hardest-hit states in the country at the start of the pandemic, and our healthcare and public health workforce continue to be on the front line after two years of sustained unplanned deployment to meet the needs of pandemic care.

The pandemic demonstrated that telehealth can be a viable tool to address some healthcare delivery issues and the ability to deliver more healthcare outside of traditional clinical locations.

While some programs and services transfer well to digital platforms, they often lack the personal engagement many people desire to stay motivated and experience when coming into a facility. Much work is still necessary to better understand the needs of our community and our clinical workforce, how and where healthcare is provided, and the effectiveness of different models. The goal is to create equity and transparency for patients, clinicians, and staff while maintaining the highest quality care.

The demand for existing employee wellness support increased, putting additional pressure on challenged resources. One important lesson learned is that we need to manage expectations. Clients that expect hour-long weekly individual therapy sessions may be better suited to less frequent sessions, group therapy, online resources, educational workshops, mental health apps, peer-to-peer programs, or health and wellness coaching. The "one size fits all" approach is no longer efficient for clients and providers alike and limits the scope of effective interventions. Employee well-being is impacted by overarching elements of the work environment and individual factors. Changes in working environments (e.g., remote work, isolation, disconnection, etc.) and significant personal traumatic events from 2020 to the present day have impacted faculty, staff, and students' overall health and well-being in many of the eight dimensions of wellness<sup>1</sup>.



Employee wellbeing is a shared responsibility that will lead to meaningful and long-lasting change and transform workplace culture. To foster employee wellbeing, together, we must improve the culture of our work environment and the efficiency of our organization's infrastructure. The cost of poorly managed conflict is the most significant reducible expense for organizations. Effective workplace conflict management enhances workplace culture, employee morale, and organizational effectiveness.

<sup>1</sup> The 8 dimensions of wellness model developed by Dr. Swarbrick was adopted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) 10 years ago <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma16-4958.pdf> and has been adopted widely by many US universities and workplaces as well as mental health and prevention programs in the United States and abroad.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated existing trends and brought change to the Rutgers' research enterprise. The Rutgers Institutional Review Board (IRB) underwent a dramatic transformation to speed the approval of COVID-19 focused protocols. These changes now impact all IRB-approved protocols at Rutgers and have provided a foundation for further evolution of services critical to the success of research studies with human participants. The Research Contract Services team doubled productivity, as measured by the number of contracts processed, during remote work brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Rutgers should seek to understand these changes, maintain the performance of these teams going forward, and consider carefully where similar changes to administrative units might lead to similar outcomes.

It is recognized that it might be difficult to replicate or maintain some of the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some critical aspects of research and scholarship require in-person activities. The potential for chance interactions at in-person social activities, such as seminars, symposiums, or meals, was dramatically reduced. Research and scholarship needs across Rutgers are diverse; flexible policies will be required to address the needs of all constituencies.

Rutgers must reimagine its space to facilitate more flexible use. Offices are increasingly being shared between employees with complementary work schedules, and hoteling spaces are configured for employees. The necessary infrastructure must be established to ensure that spaces can be reserved and configured appropriately to meet the organization's business needs.

If the built environment is reconfigured to include hoteling and shared spaces, funding for renovations will be needed to convert private offices and working areas to these new modalities. A reduction in plant size and more shared space will require an initial investment to realize long-term savings. Additionally, Service Level Agreements and staffing configurations, including security, will need to be modified according to revised occupancy plans and schedules.

Technology resources, including infrastructure, software, and IT staff, are a driving force behind day-to-day operations and integral to Rutgers' mission. During the pandemic, employees used any available device because there were no other options. While those solutions worked at the time, Rutgers must establish new university-wide standards reflected in updated policies and procedures to mitigate risk. Now is the time to make the changes necessary to facilitate a new, modern, agile, competitive workplace.

As the university launches new in-person and remote work models, Rutgers must increase its focus on effective employee communications. A strategic and multifaceted internal communications program would meet employees where they are and ensure faculty and staff have the information needed to succeed and feel valued at Rutgers. Our goal for Rutgers is to provide faculty and staff the information and meaningful experiences required to successfully work at an evolving university and ensure employees are recognized as valued members of a beloved community. Further assessment of the current communications landscape is necessary to understand the needs of our community.



## Future of Work Task Force Recommendations

It is important to note that some recommendations may involve changes to mandatorily negotiable terms and conditions of employment and/or impact such terms and conditions. The Office of General Counsel, Office of University Labor Relations, and University Human Resources will be consulted before any recommendations are implemented to identify whether negotiations are required and, if so, to facilitate such negotiations with applicable unions.

### Short-Term Recommendations

In no order of priority, the FoW Task Force recommends that the following be initiated and/or implemented, where possible, for September 2022:

- **Implement formal flexible work arrangement options.**  
COVID-19 has provided valuable lessons on employing flexibility and innovation to better serve our students, patients, and the community. To support employee well-being and morale, address workforce recruitment and retention challenges, promote efficiency in the delivery of services, and further sustainability efforts, the university should explore an emergency childcare support program and develop clear policies and guidelines to support the equitable implementation of flexible work arrangements. Launch expanded definitions of flexible work arrangements (including condensed/compressed workweek, hybrid, fully remote, etc.) as a pilot program for FY23. This pilot would require all departments to assess the unit's business needs and as a standard require all employees with approved hybrid work arrangements to be physically on campus for a minimum of three days per week. To empower local decisions that create a balanced approach between organizational business needs and employee well-being, the university will develop resources to assist supervisors in evaluating positions for eligibility for flexible work arrangements while considering the nature of the work performed, the communities served, and employee preferences. Out-of-State and Out-of-Country work guidelines must be established where appropriate and feasible.
- **Develop the infrastructure necessary to support new work modalities.**  
The formal implementation of expanded flexible work arrangement options may result in unforeseen risks at both an operational and institutional level. The workforce should have a central method for making inquiries or reporting concerns that haven't been addressed. Implementing such a process can alert senior leadership to new or existing risks that require mitigation. The University should develop a toolkit to standardize IT equipment, software, accessories, office supplies, and timekeeping mechanisms or programs to be implemented university-wide for non-exempt remote workers. Streamline platforms to facilitate file sharing, video conferencing, and academic course delivery while taking into consideration data privacy and security needs. Pursue virtual and self-service options, including chat functions and virtual meetings with service population(s). Change meeting length and/or structure to allow for well-being breaks. Analyze and recommend options to reduce licensing and/or support costs. Provide guidance on budget development, including what costs will be the responsibility of the University and what will be an employee cost. Establish a consultative, cross-functional body to meet individual researchers, clinicians, and instructors with specific IT needs that will not be satisfied with more established solutions.
- **Design training resources to navigate flexible work arrangements and build a respectful workplace.**  
Supervisors will need additional resources to effectively manage multi-modal teams and implement formalized flexible work arrangements. These resources include but are not

limited to measuring productivity, collaboration, team building, employee engagement, employee evaluation, coaching, data security, professionalism in remote environments, etc. The University will provide targeted learning opportunities to help supervisors and employees understand, identify, and address early warning signs of stress, anxiety, and burnout.

- **Establish one university-wide Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program.**

Creating recognition opportunities and events for employees can help to build a more positive work environment and improve employee engagement and morale. Create pride and loyalty in the institution and build on the ideals of a beloved community where employees are engaged, productive, valued, and rewarded for their contributions. Give employees a sense of purpose and belonging and incentivize teamwork and collaboration across departments. Improve employee retention and aid in the recruitment of top talent.

- **Develop common mechanism(s) to determine impacts of flexible work arrangements and other future of work-related programs, policies, and activities.**

Use quarterly pulse surveys, satisfaction surveys, and other mechanisms to determine how flexible work arrangements impact mission-critical services to students, faculty, researchers, patient care, staff, and the administration. Monitor the economic impact of the reduced on-campus population on retail and local community retail, including the effect on the student life experience and town/gown relations. Report the benefits, barriers, costs, savings, efficiencies, and other implications. Modify flexible work arrangement policies and guidelines, if necessary, to maintain productivity, satisfaction, and quality of service for students, faculty, staff, patients, and other university community members. Only arrangements that preserve, innovate and/or enhance services and sustain the workforce should be approved for continuation. Conduct a periodic review of programs, policies, activities, etc. created and implemented as a result of the lessons learned from the pandemic to determine if and when a pivot in strategy and tactics is necessary.

- **Create communication materials to support the recommendations of the Future of Work Task Force and position Rutgers as a higher education leader and forward-thinking institution capable of capitalizing on lessons learned throughout the pandemic.**

The University will require significant communications support from in-house staff and/or external firms to write, design, produce and distribute the broad mix of communication materials needed to successfully implement the Task Force's recommendations. These will include messaging and materials for full-time, part-time, remote, hybrid, and in-person employees. The University may also consider developing a unifying language that conveys the culture of work at Rutgers to which we now aspire. The University will also require communications that are specifically designed for student employees.

Officially announce the Future of Work Task Force Report and the approved recommendations. Promote proof points and progress milestones that demonstrate Rutgers' commitment to competitive recruitment, employee wellbeing, and employee retention. Highlight Future of Work activities that help meet the goals of the Rutgers Climate Action Plan. Highlight employees and programs that demonstrate a commitment to excellence and a culture of equity and inclusion.

## Long-Term Recommendations

In no order of priority, the following recommendations are theme-based and are designed to address lessons learned and concerns articulated by the Rutgers community. These require a longer-term strategy and focused working groups on assessing feasibility, resources, assessment tools, and timelines for implementation.

### Enhancing the Student Experience

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted life globally and significantly transformed the college experience. Many students reported feeling disengaged and disconnected, and experienced challenges with accessing mental health resources. They expressed difficulty absorbing course materials, job loss, financial hardship, and diminishing school spirit as the college traditions they had grown accustomed to were “dying.”

- **Augment the university infrastructure to better support student needs and provide a healthy, responsive, coordinated, data-informed student experience.**

Build, expand capacity, and improve marketing around mental health support services and resources by ensuring that minimal student to clinician ratios are met. Ensure that each campus counseling center is adequately equipped to meet the ongoing clinical, crisis, and walk-in needs of the campus community. Closely align mental health services with other student-facing resources (i.e., CARE Teams, Disability Services, food pantries, Residence Life, Health Promotion, Health Centers, Spiritual Life, etc.). Revisit pandemic-related guest restrictions in university housing to increase peer-to-peer engagement and improve student wellbeing through social interaction. Improve and align university services that contribute to the student academic experience (i.e., academic advising, tutoring, libraries, printing centers, cashiers, financial aid, etc.). Develop a consistent service strategy and offer multi-modal methods to deliver individual and group services, including the exploration and standardization of self-service, peer support, educational workshops, and health and wellness coaching, with virtual and in-person options. Ensure predictability, accuracy, and consistency in hours of operation to meet service delivery needs.

- **Create systemwide strategies to maintain a healthy and robust student engagement experience.**

The vibrancy of Rutgers campuses is a shared responsibility and not solely dependent on the presence of student-facing services. Higher education literature has consistently documented that learning does not only happen in a classroom or research lab. Learning takes place outside of the classroom during faculty office hours and campus events, in the dining hall and program offices, and in dozens of incidental interactions between students, support staff, faculty, peers, and local community members who visit RU campuses. Establishing university-wide baseline departmental and program service standards and expectations is essential. Determine good staff-to-student ratios to maintain the campus vibrancy that students need and expect as part of their educational experience. Ensure that flexible work arrangements accommodate and foster a student-centered campus environment. Refocus on co-curricular activities by offering more opportunities for school-sanctioned in-person events, programs, and cultural activities to increase school pride, engagement, and student well-being. Partner with student leaders and student organizations on initiatives to improve attendance and increase interaction among staff, students, and their peers. Strategically plan, communicate, implement, and assess future curricular and co-curricular experiences at Rutgers.

- **Reimagine teaching and teaching approaches to enhance student engagement and learning.**

Determine strategies to promote and foster more personalized interactions with faculty and create more engaged and meaningful classroom and learning experiences. Increase student-faculty contact, cooperation among students with their peers, and the active engagement of students in the learning process. Adjust the academic calendar to plan for accommodations needed when there is a rise in COVID infections. Improve alignment in course delivery, inclusive of syllabus, content, and course design standards for in-person and online courses. Engage students with course material and provide opportunities for collaboration through small-group activities and experiential learning. Align academic and auxiliary support services to ensure that support services properly adjust to the newly configured academic offerings.

- **Improve the quality of technologies and faculty preparation for effective online teaching.**

Reskill or upskill the academic workforce, focusing on critical and durable skills, including collaboration, cooperation, problem-solving, resiliency, and meaningful and purposeful work. Additional training on innovative technologies and flexibility in work schedules would be mutually beneficial to faculty members and the students they serve. Create more professional development opportunities for the effective integration of technology into instruction and learning. Routinely assess demand and acceptance of online learning in a traditional university setting. Focus on faculty support needed to effectively teach with technology and design innovative learning environments for in-person and online courses. Determine acceptable assessments supported by rubrics to show evidence that students understand and achieve the intended learning outcomes of the curriculum. Develop options for effective online review, with the possibility of developing an assessment center for online courses.

### **Promoting Employee Wellbeing**

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about an unprecedented reassessment of work choices, resulting in the prioritization of work-life balance. Workforce shortages and the loss of talent has created a competitive job market with high turnover, recruitment, and retention challenges at all levels of the organization and across all industries. The university's ability to effectively compete for talent and fulfill its mission under these circumstances will predicate our ability to balance workforce preferences and organizational business needs. The following recommendations are designed to further the university's goals of employee retention, personal and professional productivity, and job satisfaction. Our goal is to create a caring, inclusive, and respectful work environment where employees are engaged, productive, valued and rewarded for their contributions.

- **Establish a Conflict Diagnosis and Resolution Unit as part of the Office of Workplace Culture within University Human Resources.**

Create and expand conflict resolution and conflict mediation pathways for university employees. Implement mediation services and conflict management coaching to minimize worker absenteeism, turnover, lost productivity, and costly grievances and litigation. Provide guidance and resources for employees, including supervisors and non-supervisors, to mitigate conflict issues to a timely and favorable resolution. Develop training resources to improve emotional intelligence, provide diagnostic questions, listen, reframe, and communicate through disagreement. Equipping supervisors with conflict management and resolution skills through de-escalation techniques, training, and materials designed to reframe conflict as a catalyst for change and growth will foster a caring, inclusive, and respectful workplace.

- **Design and deploy a systemwide Employee Wellbeing Program and Implement “Project Reset, Refocus and Readjust.”**

Build a comprehensive program that addresses the individual, group, and administrative issues related to the employee telecommuting experience during the pandemic (Reset), recognizes the current dealing with the unknown and clearly communicates and acknowledges new work requirements (Refocus), and facilitates the creation of a systemwide Wellbeing Program to design a vibrant “RU Back campaign” with built-in community partnerships activities and expanded capacity around mental health support services for the entire Rutgers community (Readjust). Enhance communications about wellness resources, including an enhanced Employee Assistance Program, utilizing the My-Rutgers portal as communal information sharing space with clear messaging from administration and new proactive communication methods to direct resources to faculty, staff, and students to limit the need of the individual reaching out. Create a culture that empowers employees to prioritize time throughout their workday to engage in self-care activities offered on-campus or remotely.

### **Increasing Innovation and Supporting Sustainability**

COVID-19 has provided valuable lessons on how Rutgers can employ flexibility and innovation to better serve our students and the community. Unfortunately, this has happened within the context of ongoing climate change, which is important to note given the significant impacts of severe weather on New Jersey. The climate crisis is a defining global challenge of our time, one that the world must come together to address. The following recommendations support the university’s sustainability efforts and are designed to increase innovation.

- **Re-examine foundational elements of university space—both interior and exterior—and perform utilization study to assess ongoing physical plant needs.**

Determine how underutilized spaces can be re-assigned, rebranded, lightly altered, or renovated to meet evolving needs. Ensure that requirements are informed by, coordinated with, and supportive of strategic changes in academic, research, and clinical operations. Consider the assignment, use, and type of academic and administrative office spaces and university parking use, need, and associated costs in the analysis. Invest in laptops and docking stations as a standard-issue device for new employees and create phased-in replacement schedules for existing employees to accommodate on-campus hoteling spaces. Following the flexible work arrangements pilot program for FY23, develop a comprehensive action plan for the pandemic-changed Rutgers.

- **Expand collaborations with Rutgers Climate Action Group and New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center.**

Prepare the healthcare workforce for changes in medical practice required by climate change and focus on new construction/renovation projects for clinical operations, incorporating climate conservation strategies. Further, a specific focus on clinical operations should be more intentionally built into the New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center, with the addition of clinical partners and participants. Minimize travel to and on campus and increase productivity, flexibility, and efficiency by encouraging continued use of virtual meeting platforms and implementing flexible work arrangements as a pilot program for FY23. Modernize paper-based legacy workflows to minimize waste, operate more efficiently, and facilitate remote/hybrid work. Consider incorporating sustainable energy alternatives into fleet maintenance replacement schedules.

### **Ensuring the University Remains Competitive in a Post-pandemic Environment**

Recent studies indicate employees and candidates value a healthy lifestyle and holistic work experience, including purpose, career progression, diversity, and inclusion. The following recommendations are designed to ensure the university remains competitive in a post-pandemic environment.

- **Implement critical recruitment and retention strategies to attract and retain top talent, identify turnover trends, and remain competitive with the market.**  
Deploy a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan for Rutgers with an initial focus on high attrition and hard-to-fill positions, including compensation benchmarking, centralized job advertising, leveraging recruiters, implementing exit interviews, and creating an Employee Referral Program. Build employee satisfaction and retention surveys to collect actionable qualitative and quantitative data around service anniversary dates. Evaluate existing policies and procedures regarding hiring, promotions, and reclassifications to ensure equitable and market-competitive compensation practices. Develop educational programs around UHR policies and equitable compensation practices. Enhance the well-being of providers of mental health, recreation, and related services to encourage retention of Rutgers employees. Collect data to inform analysis of cost savings or avoidance (i.e., employee retention, turnover, engagement, or similar measures). Explore and plan a system of emergency support services for frontline employees during emergencies.
- **Create mechanisms to increase transparency and promote diversity.**  
Establish metrics and information-sharing mechanisms to facilitate transparency and data-informed decision-making to support goal achievement. Design and implement dashboards to report and track applicant pools for students, faculty, and staff. Train hiring managers to create broader and more diverse applicant pools, improve offer acceptance rates, and decrease 90-day turnover. Formalize processes to recruit, hire, develop, evaluate, recognize, and retain employees that promote access and equity. Enable purposeful professional growth of all employees and establish support structures to identify and promote diversity in leadership. Provide employees increased opportunities for advancement at all levels through enhanced on-the-job training and skill-building.
- **Define the Rutgers Employee Value Proposition (REVP) and develop rich content to showcase in a multimedia campaign.**  
The REVP will showcase Rutgers as an Employer of Choice, feature employee testimonials, and highlight our purpose-driven mission, workplace culture, DEI initiatives, and professional development opportunities to internal and external audiences. Develop a total rewards package to promote benefits offered to Rutgers employees beyond compensation and healthcare coverage (i.e., paid time off, tuition remission, leave options, employee discount programs, commuter resources, wellbeing services, professional development, career advancement opportunities, etc.). Streamline employee benefits, where feasible, address equity concerns and minimize confusion in branding and communications materials. Consider the varying needs, wants, and expectations of the diverse and changing workforce to ensure inclusivity in the campaign.
- **Redesign the onboarding and new employee orientation experience.**  
Create a roadmap for managers, including guidance, tools, and timelines for critical onboarding and orientation activities with appropriate follow-up at 30/60/90 days of employment. Streamline and coordinate the processes to ensure timely movement throughout the experience, improve communication, and decrease candidate dropout. Provide structure for creating and executing a mentor system that departments can

implement to help new employees acclimate. Implement new hire onboarding and orientation surveys.

- **Expand the Rutgers employee development strategy and create a robust suite of programs to promote continuous learning, professional development, and career pathing.**

Create a suite of development programs with multiple modalities and phased-in implementation for learning aligned to the Rutgers Leadership competencies to ensure leaders have the necessary skills and tools to lead the university into the future. Create clearly defined and transparent inclusive leadership expectations and competencies and mechanisms for ongoing self-reflection and incentives for growth. Utilize performance management to recognize inclusive leadership as a necessary competency of supervisors at all levels, maximize employee engagement, improve performance, facilitate purposeful development, and aid in the navigation of developing career paths. Equip managers with expanded guidance, training, and tools to build their skills in managing performance, identifying employee strengths, creating experiential learning opportunities to highlight and build upon those strengths, and leading teams effectively. Build a comprehensive staff/professional development program and career growth opportunities for all Rutgers employees. Implement career coaching for professional development and as a tool to retain highly qualified employees and implement thoughtful succession planning. Develop tracks that train, advance, and promote employees as a feeder into other professions at Rutgers.

- **Improve the student employee experience.**

Create administrative coordination of university student employment incorporating existing campus-based career services operations, financial aid, human resources, and other campus entities, as appropriate, to ensure productivity and efficiency. Provide budgetary support for a reimagined university student employment structure and experience. Appoint a university working committee to recommend the structure and funding for the program. Create clear and centralized access to employment opportunities, coordinated onboarding activities, mentoring and professional development, and career preparation.

### **Supporting Strategic Clarity**

All of the above recommendations are aligned to the President's Value Propositions and directly address the charge of the Future of Work Task Force. The following complement the above recommendations and specifically support the pursuit of strategic clarity at Rutgers. The recommendations have been informed by robust discussions among members of the Communications Working Group, the proposals of the Future of Work Task Force, and market trends. All point to the heightened importance of effective internal communications, not only as a lesson learned from the Covid-19 pandemic but also as a critical need for the future of university work. As the university launches new in-person, hybrid, and remote work models, Rutgers must also increase its focus on employee communications and programs that inspire an inclusive work environment. The Communications Working Group offers recommendations for a strategic commitment to a multifaceted and comprehensive internal communications program that focuses on ensuring faculty and staff have the information and meaningful experiences required to successfully work at an evolving university and are recognized as valued members of a beloved community.

- **Develop a comprehensive strategy and action plan for systemwide internal communications.**

Rutgers needs a comprehensive strategy and tactical plan to ensure faculty and staff have the information they need to efficiently do their work and feel valued members of the

university community. The strategy should address the broad range of communications that inform the employee experience in four areas:

- **University Operations:** Basic overview of organizational structure; guidance on finding what you need; official announcements and initiatives; university policies and procedures including HR, IT, travel, ethics, compliance, parking and public safety, branding, financial transactions, employee reimbursements;
- **Employee Benefits:** Health, retirement, tuition remission, and other HR benefits; employee training and career cultivation; access to libraries, dining halls, museums, and other facilities; employee price discounts for tickets, technology, goods, and services; access to campus programs and lectures;
- **Institutional Culture:** Orientation to work at a major research university; institutional tone and voice; collaborative and collegial work style; profiles of the people of Rutgers; establishing a sense of place for on-and-off campus workers; and
- **Employee Recognition:** News, information, stories, and programs that recognize the performance, service, and accomplishments of faculty and staff.

Rutgers employs individuals across the university who produce a broad range of quality communications to faculty and staff as part of the mission of their respective departments; however, there is no central oversight or single area dedicated to managing a systemwide internal communications program at Rutgers. The Task Force recommends the appointment of an individual to lead the communications strategic planning effort. The project director will convene an Internal Communications Working Group to establish best practices and guiding principles for internal communications, discuss communication strategies, tactics, and outreach programs that help build a shared sense of community among remote and in-person workers, and consider ways to streamline the considerable and broad range of communications employees receive from units across Rutgers.

- **Undertake a systematic audit of university policies to identify and address gaps, reduce redundancy, minimize confusion, and promote consistent and uniform application.**

The Task Force has identified the following policies for review and possible revision pending approval of the related recommendations. It is understood that many of the provisions of these policies may be mandatorily negotiable.

#### Existing Rutgers Policies:

- Rutgers Policy 10.3.1: Student Services & Other Student-Regulated Policies and Programs
- Rutgers Policy 10.3.2: Student Residency for Tuition Purposes
- Rutgers Policy 10.3.12: Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking, and Related Misconduct
- Rutgers Policy 10.3.2: Student Residency for Tuition Purposes
- Rutgers Policy 30.1.8: Access to University Facilities
- Rutgers Policy 30.1.12: Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime and Statistics Act
- Rutgers Policy 30.2.1: Parking and Traffic Regulations
- Rutgers Policy 30.2.2: Parking for Employees in Legacy UMDNJ Positions
- Rutgers Policy 40.2.10: Equipment Inventory and Property Management
- Rutgers Policy 40.3.1: Risk Management and Insurance Policies
- Rutgers Policy 60.1.8: Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action



- Rutgers Policy 60.1.11: Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy
- Rutgers Policy 60.1.12: Policy Prohibiting Discrimination and Harassment
- Rutgers Policy 60.1.13: Policy Prohibiting Workplace Violence
- Rutgers Policy 60.1.26: Recreational Privileges
- Rutgers Policy 60.1.27: Day Care Facilities
- Rutgers Policy 60.1.29: Adverse Weather and Emergency Curtailment Operations
- Rutgers Policy 60.1.31: Gratuities, Guests, Gifts, and Use of University Resources
- Rutgers Policy 60.1.34: Rutgers University Disability and Reasonable Accommodation Policy
- Rutgers Policy 60.2.1: Educational Benefits
- Rutgers Policy 60.3.14: Overtime/Comp Time for Regularly Appointed Staff
- Rutgers Policy 60.3.19: University Closings
- Rutgers Policy 60.3.22: Alternative Work Arrangements and Telecommuting for Regularly Appointed Staff
- Rutgers Policy 60.4.10: Salary and Salary Adjustments for Non-Aligned Employees
- Rutgers Policy 60.9.1: Employee Assistance Program
- Rutgers Policy 60.9.4: Non-Standard Work Schedules
- Rutgers Policy 60.9.15: Job Bidding and Promotion
- Rutgers Policy 60.9.20: Medical/Family Medical Leave Act/Leave of Absence/New Jersey Paid Leave
- Rutgers Policy 60.9.28: Performance Evaluations
- Rutgers Policy 70.1.1: Acceptable Use Policy for Information Technology Resources
- Rutgers Policy 70.1.2: Information Classification
- Rutgers Policy 70.1.6: Email and Calendar Policy
- Rutgers Policy 70.2.3: Information Security: Mobile Computing and Removable Media
- Rutgers Policy 70.2.5: Issuance and Use of Mobile Communications Devices
- Rutgers Policy 70.2.6: Network Security Management
- Rutgers Policy 70.2.9: Information Security | Remote Access
- Rutgers Policy 70.2.21: Information Security | Workstation Use and Security
- Rutgers Policy 80.1.7: Rutgers University Website Policy
- Rutgers Policy 100.1.9: Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information
- Rutgers Policy 100.1.11: HIPAA Minimum Necessary Requirement
- Rutgers Policy 100.2.3: Fair Market Valuation

**New Policies and/or Other Policy Audit Considerations:**

- Student employment policy to ensure equity between departments.
- Establish and/or reinforce policies that support a culture of accountability and align with diversity strategic priorities.
- Adopt consistent hiring, promotion, and advancement committee policies and practices across the university to further equitable outcomes.

**Enhancing the Patient Experience**

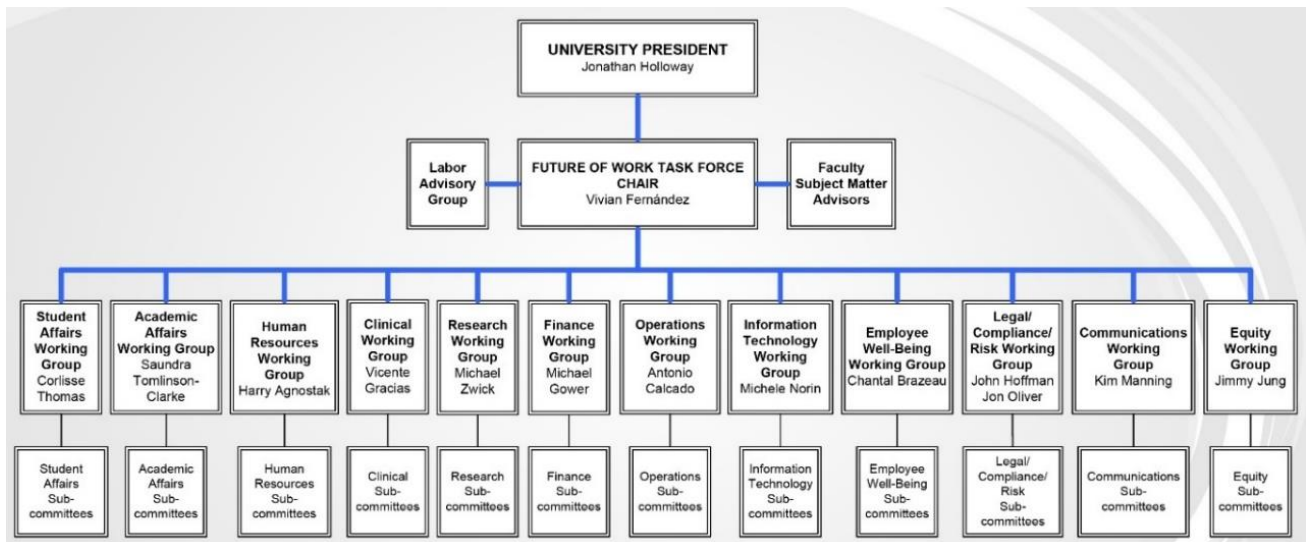
The pandemic triggered a significant exacerbation of challenges in the healthcare workforce and illuminated gaps in workforce fulfillment and wellness. The trauma and isolation caused by the pandemic have caused significant increases in behavioral health needs for both the healthcare workforce and the population that it serves. These FoW recommendations impact clinical operations, and the healthcare workforce must be aligned with our clinical affiliates and allow

Rutgers to continue to meet elements of all clinical service agreements. The following recommendations are designed to address those challenges while improving patient experiences.

- **Undertake workforce planning exercises at Rutgers Health to improve elasticity across all disciplines to enhance patient outcomes and healthcare worker wellbeing.**  
Identify areas of deficiency and ensure enough redundancy in the healthcare workforce to prepare for ongoing patient access and care and anticipate future surge requirements. Increasing the size of the interprofessional healthcare workforce at Rutgers will require significant support and investment to increase access and enhance return for the organization.
  
- **Develop guiding principles and best practices related to telehealth and augment alternate locations to improve access to clinical care.**  
Implement RBHS's strategic plan to build an integrated, collaborative, patient-centered workforce that leverages the expertise of all healthcare professions to serve patients, families, and communities. Leverage telehealth to address the shortage in the clinical workforce, increase access to healthcare, and improve the quality of care and efficiency in practice. Evaluate the development and implementation of adequate telehealth resources to expand access to Occupational Health Services for remote employees. Conduct a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment to determine the types, sites of care, and support service requirements of our community and the effectiveness of telehealth and in-person clinical models. Standardize a telehealth platform based on the assessment data to meet patient and clinical needs. Pilot a community-based Rutgers Health clinical site to augment alternate locations for clinical and support care delivery outside the hospital unit (i.e., a school, Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC), or mobile unit).
  
- **Launch a Pilot Program to hire community health workers (CHW) and patient navigators at Rutgers Health to address social determinants of health needs in the patients being served.**  
The COVID pandemic exacerbated the adverse impact on the social determinants of health (SDOH) for many of the patients we serve and for many of our employees. SDOH have a major impact on people's health, well-being, and quality of life. Addressing these determinants can often worsen burnout in the workplace while manifesting high levels of emotional/psychological and spiritual distress in the clinicians who provide direct patient care. A pilot program to hire Community Health Workers will focus on providing service to the population(s) that would benefit the most from SDOH supports. In addition, an evaluation of the pilot should include an analysis of the optimal team composition of providers (professional and community-based) with an emphasis on understanding the best utilization of professional social workers and CHWs. The pilot should consider linkage to the Rutgers Health Service Corps, which is being developed.

## Future of Work Task Force Composition and Structure

The task force was structured with university-wide representation including 12 working groups, a union advisory group, faculty subject matter experts, and several subcommittees. The working groups were given a charge within each of their areas of expertise to help guide their work.



- Academic Affairs Working Group chaired by Saundra Tomlinson-Clarke:** Examine academic programs and initiatives to support adaptability to an ever-changing workplace and to recommend career readiness skills for flexible work/life paradigms.
- Clinical Working Group chaired by Vicente Gracias:** Reflect on Rutgers Health lessons learned throughout the COVID-19 pandemic related to the clinical community from the perspective of patient care and the healthcare workforce. Identify, prioritize, and pilot Future of Work recommendations to enhance patient outcomes and the workplace experience for clinical faculty, staff, and learners, in partnership with our health system affiliates.
- Communications Working Group chaired by Kim Manning:** Recommend and implement strategies and tactics to ensure that faculty, staff, and student employees are informed about the Future of Work initiative, are aware of opportunities to provide input, and are notified of the publication of the Task Force Report and approved recommendations. Recommend communications strategies and produce communication materials that support the successful transformation of work at Rutgers and inspire a culture in which employees are engaged, productive, and appreciated.
- Employee Well-Being Working Group chaired by Chantal Brazeau:** Examine the impact of the pandemic on employees and provide recommendations to foster employee well-being. These will include approaches to optimize mental health and wellness resources, enhance employee growth and professional development, facilitate building community and connections, enhance the work culture as it pertains to employee well-being, and address employee stressors in the current work environment.
- Equity Working Group chaired by Jimmy Jung:** Delivering recommended strategies and tactics to ensure an equitable and inclusive in-person, remote, and hybrid

workplace environment for Rutgers University faculty, staff, and student employees at all levels and across all campuses.

- **Finance Working Group chaired by J. Michael Gower:** Identify short- and long-term financial impacts on the future of work with a focus on revenue opportunities, cost-saving benefits, and determining resources necessary to support the evolving needs of our community. Analyze the recommendations from the other workgroups to project financial impact of implementing those recommendations.
- **Human Resources Working Group chaired by Harry Agnostak:** Identify and recommend strategies to enhance talent acquisition and retention in an evolving job market while establishing guidelines and resources to support the equitable implementation of a reimagined mission-focused workforce and workplace, focusing on four primary subject areas including: work schedules and arrangements, talent retention and development, resources and expectations, and labor and compliance.
- **Information Technology Working Group chaired by Michele Norin:** Identify and recommend IT resources needed to support flexible work arrangements at Rutgers, including software and hardware standards and plans for the logistical challenges of remote and on-site IT support. Assess the competitive landscape for talent acquisition and retention, including a review of peer institutions and employment markets with whom we compete for qualified and experienced applicants.
- **Legal, Labor, Compliance and Risk Working Group chaired by John Hoffman:** Assess, evaluate and provide counsel and guidance for the legal, labor, risk management and compliance issues raised by the Task Force during its deliberation and report writing phase.
- **Operations Working Group chaired by Antonio Calcado:** Evaluate today's service delivery model, incorporating pandemic lessons learned, as it relates to the strategic, tactical and operational plans of the university going forward. Develop recommendations to address necessary changes that are inclusive of core business functions, employee equity, managerial and administrative capacity, service expectations, buildings and grounds use and student support in advancing the university's mission of educational delivery, research, patient care and community service.
- **Research Working Group chaired by Michael Zwick:** Explore the future composition and characteristics of research teams using lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. Identify actions that should be pursued to reshape the future of research work and teams at Rutgers University.
- **Student Needs and Experience Working Group chaired by Corlisse Thomas:** Examine the impact of the pandemic on the student experience and how the university is keeping pace with fulfilling the needs of students given the health and wellbeing of students and current staffing demands and changes. Make recommendations related to student wellbeing, student needs, and the associated staffing realities. Additionally, develop recommendations regarding transforming the student employment experience into an impactful and valuable work experience that has meaning for the future of work for students.

The task force, comprised of over 300 of our colleagues, worked collaboratively to identify our most immediate and critical business and service delivery needs. Collectively the teams considered our greatest challenge of balancing employee preferences in a competitive job market with student and patient needs. Together, the members of the task force thoughtfully created a workforce framework designed to be clear, equitable, and mission focused.

The task force members did a tremendous amount of work and gave countless hours of their time to help shape the Future of Work at Rutgers University. We thank you for your commitment to improvement and look forward to the work that lies ahead to implement the approved short- and long-term task force recommendations.

## Community Input Process

The voices of our faculty, staff, and student employees across all campuses was critically important to the success of the Future of Work initiative. To ensure we provided opportunities for faculty, staff, and students at all levels across all campuses to participate, the task force established several mechanisms to gather input including:

- distributed a FoW survey for faculty and staff;
- disseminated a separate survey for student employees;
- hosted virtual listening tours for all students and employees throughout February and March;
- held 60 focus group sessions for faculty, staff, and students;
- created an online form to gather input from the university community;
- established a centralized Future of Work Task Force email address;
- launched the Future of Work website, including FAQs, committee member names and contact information, and other important progress reports;
- drafted direct messages to employees and students to encourage engagement; and
- produced a series of informative Rutgers Today stories.

These efforts led to significant awareness of and participation in the Future of Work initiative, including 16,554 views of the landing page since the website launched in October of 2021; 8,239 surveys completed by faculty and staff; 2,210 surveys completed by student workers; over 150 ideas, comments, and suggestions received via the online Community Input Form; 1,592 faculty and staff attendees at virtual listening sessions; and over 200 participants in focus groups.

The diverse experiences, views, and recommendations shared by community members helped us better understand the evolving needs of our employees and the communities we serve. It is important to note that the results from the various data gathering mechanisms represent a snapshot in time. Some of the recorded responses – particularly with regard to student dissatisfaction with campus life and campus spirit – have already started to see improvement with the return of in-person events and classes, the lifting of various COVID-related restrictions, and additional faculty and staff on campus. The task force members hope that the implementation of the proposed recommendations will further expand on these improvements and reinvigorate the robust campus vibrancy that represents the heart of Rutgers University.

Below are some of the key findings of the data gathered from faculty, staff, and students through the surveys, focus group discussions, and listening tour sessions. The task force wishes to thank everyone who participated in the community input process for their candor and willingness to share their personal experiences in an effort to collectively shape the future of work at Rutgers.

### Faculty/Staff Survey Results

The future of work survey for faculty and staff was designed to determine the interest of Rutgers employees in flexible work arrangements, and in some cases, assess their experiences with telecommuting during the pandemic. The survey contained questions to measure professional fulfillment and understand employee needs in terms of well-being, job satisfaction and engagement. The survey was distributed to a total of 28,917 faculty and staff in November of 2021 and received 8,239 responses representing a 29% response rate during the month that it remained open. The survey data provided insight related to employee preferences, concerns,

and perceptions and was utilized to inform the development of short- and long-term recommendations.

Below we highlight some key takeaways from the faculty and staff survey.

### 1. SATISFACTION WITH WORKING AT RUTGERS.

**80%**  
reported high levels of satisfaction with working at Rutgers.

**65%**  
would recommend Rutgers University as a great place to work to a friend or family member.

**90%**  
understood how their job fits into the overall mission of the university.

Open-ended responses indicated that high levels of satisfaction were associated with experiencing work-life balance when working remotely including:

- Improved mental wellness, reduced stress, and increased morale
- Felt more productive at home
- Experienced quality time with family and provided appropriate care for family members

### 2. INTEREST IN FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS.

**76%**  
of supervisors preferred telecommuting (a job that is performed fully or partially remotely)

**51%**  
of supervisors preferred a condensed or compressed work week (working full-time hours over fewer days)

**46%**  
of supervisors preferred flextime (giving staff flexibility on the start and finish times of their working day, typical with a mandatory “core” time in the middle of the day)

**2%**  
of supervisors preferred job sharing (two or more part-time workers sharing a full-time job)

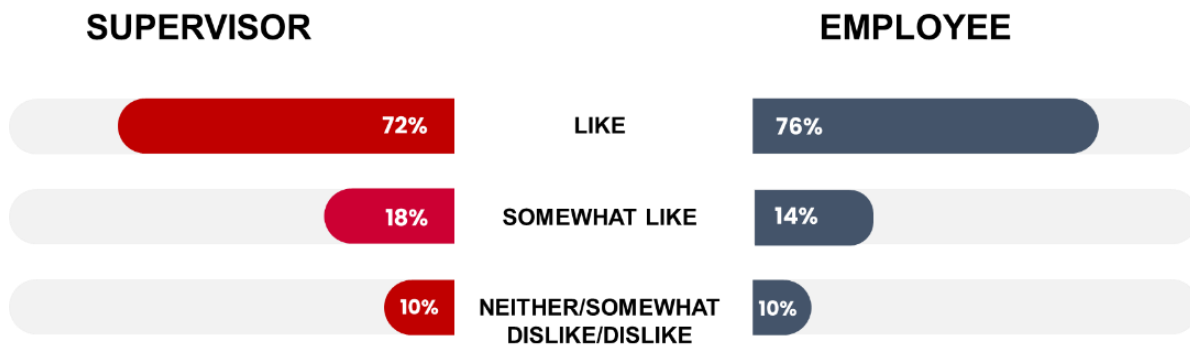
**78%**  
of employees preferred telecommuting (a job that is performed fully or partially remotely)

**40%**  
of employees preferred a condensed or compressed work week (working full-time hours over fewer days)

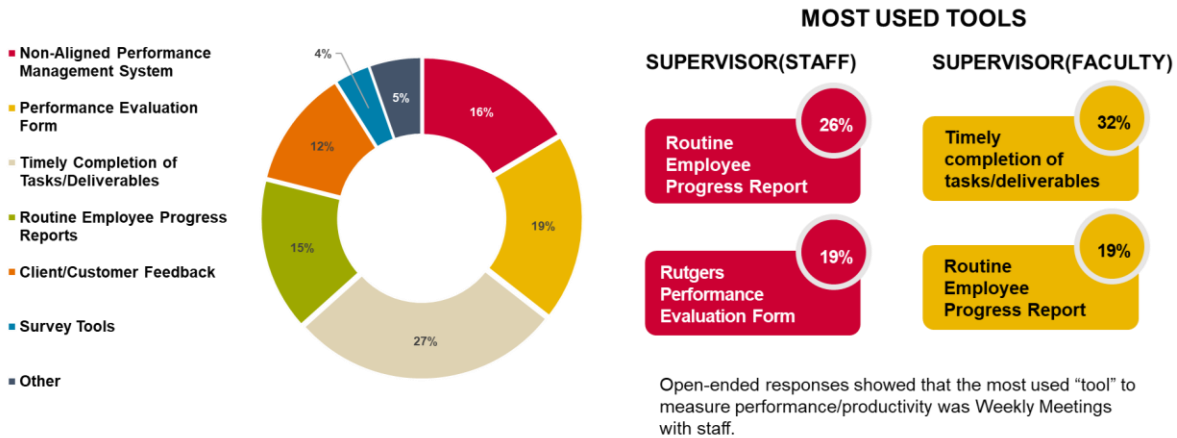
**45%**  
of employees preferred flextime (giving staff flexibility on the start and finish times of their working day, typical with a mandatory “core” time in the middle of the day)

**3%**  
of employees preferred job sharing (two or more part-time workers sharing a full-time job)

### 3. FEELINGS TOWARDS FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS.



#### 4. MEASURING PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY.



#### 5. CONCERNS REGARDING FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS.

**49%**

of supervisors had no concerns about flexible work arrangement

**31%**

of supervisors were concerned about social isolation for themselves and/or their employees

**20%**

of supervisors were concerned about the lack of breaks while working remotely

**16%**

of supervisors were concerned about the equitable implementation of flexible work arrangements

**61%**

of employees had no concerns about flexible work arrangement

**25%**

of employees were concerned about social isolation

**15%**

of employees were concerned about the reliability of technology

**11%**

of employees were concerned about the lack of breaks while working remotely

#### 6. SUPERVISOR REQUESTS REGARDING FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS.

**Supervisors consider flexible work arrangements imperative:**

- For finding a better pool of candidates when recruiting
- Increase morale and retain current employees

**Supervisors asked for the following with regard to on-site work:**

- Clear messaging regarding the benefits of returning to on-site work
- Clarity regarding parking costs for remote workers

**Supervisors asked for clear policies and training regarding:**

- Flexible work arrangements
- Promotion standards
- Pay equity/salary cap policies

**Supervisors asked for training in the following areas:**

- Communicating effectively (work expectations and managing virtual environments)
- Managing remote workers:
  - Employee work-life balance
  - Assessing mental health
  - Time management
  - Keeping employees engaged
  - Team-building

**Supervisors requested better technology including:**

- Laptops
- Hotspots for remote employees
- Incentives for remote work



## 7. FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE INSIGHTS.

**65%** of **frontline employees** believe their positions should be eligible for a flexible work arrangement

**67%** of **frontline employees** said improved benefits and incentives would enhance job satisfaction at Rutgers

**50%** of **frontline employees** said promotion opportunities would enhance job satisfaction at Rutgers

When asked about additional services that would enhance work-life balance, frontline employees requested:

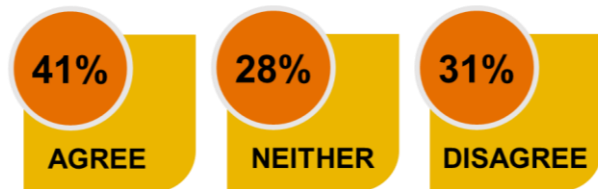
- **34%** wellness programs
- **30%** access to childcare or emergency childcare
- **13%** access to eldercare or emergency eldercare

## 8. FACULTY PREFERENCES REGARDING FUTURE OF WORK.

PREFER TO TEACH HYBRID AND IN-PERSON COURSES



EFFECTIVE LEARNING DEPENDS ON IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT



## 9. ISSUES RELATED TO RESEARCH DISRUPTION DURING THE PANDEMIC.

RESEARCH LARGELY HAPPENS AT HOME/OFFCAMPUS



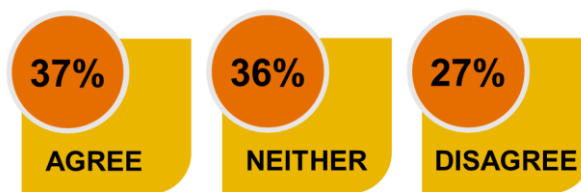
RESEARCH DEPENDS ON CAMPUS FACILITIES



RESEARCH WAS INHIBITED BY WORKING FROM HOME



RESEARCH WAS ENABLED BY WORKING FROM HOME



## 10. BIGGEST CONCERNS REGARDING THE FUTURE OF WORK.

**16%**  
Employee morale

**12%**  
Retention

**12%**  
Flexibility

**11%**  
Health and safety

**9%**  
Productivity

**9%**  
Managing in a post-pandemic environment

**8%**  
Recruitment

**8%**  
Managing employee expectations

**8%**  
Equity

**4%**  
Technology concerns

### Resources Necessary to Minimize Concerns:

- **24%** Standardized policies on flexible work arrangements
- **18%** Assistance with policy interpretation
- **17%** Training for supervisors
- **15%** Training for employees
- **13%** Information sessions
- **10%** FAQs

### Student Employee Survey Results

The survey was designed to understand student employee perceptions about their onboarding experience and leadership, telecommuting during COVID-19, interest in flexible work arrangement options post-COVID, job satisfaction and employee well-being. The survey was distributed to a total of 16,109 current and former student employees, including 6,780 “terminated” student employees and 9,329 active student employees and received 2,210 responses representing a 12.9% response rate.

Below we highlight some key takeaways from the results.

#### 1. No longer working at Rutgers because:

	N	%
I found a job off-campus	45	14.7%
I graduated from the university	102	33.2%
I was not offered Federal Work Study as part of my current Financial Aid Award	9	2.9%
The department/area I was working with no longer has the position available	31	10.1%
I needed more time to concentrate on my academic work	65	21.2%
Other	55	17.9%
Total	307	100.0%

#### 2. Off-campus employment opportunities provide (check all that apply):

	N	%
A better alignment with career goals	25	58.1%
Better flexibility in how I can perform job duties and assignments	16	37.2%
A work environmental that is closer to home	11	25.6%
Higher wages	29	67.4%
More convenient work hours for my schedule	40	93.0%
More hours to work through the week	20	46.5%
Other	1	2.3%
Total	142	--

**3. I found my student employment job at the university through:**

	N	%
A job posting on a department/area website and/or bulletin board	274	13.9%
A job posting on a job board website	247	12.5%
A referral from a student/faculty/staff	559	28.3%
The Federal Work Study Office within the Office of Financial Aid	615	31.1%
Walking around to campus offices asking about job opportunities	38	1.9%
Other	245	12.4%
Total	1978	100.0%

**4. Was your position eligible for telecommuting during the pandemic?**

	N	%
Yes	879	69.3%
No	389	30.7%
Total	1268	100.0%

**5. Do you believe your position should have been eligible for telecommuting?**

	N	%
Yes	46	12.5%
No	323	87.5%
Total	369	100.0%

**6. I was limited in my ability to work during the pandemic because:**

	N	%
The department/area did not offer me the option to work at all	25	7.2%
The duties and tasks associated with job were only to be completed in-person and this option was not provided to me	154	44.6%
The volume of work and past hours worked prior to the pandemic were no longer available	44	12.8%
I did not have the appropriate equipment to perform my duties and tasks remotely	39	11.3%
Other	83	24.1%
Total	345	100.0%

**7. Do you have any concerns about telecommuting? Check all that apply.**

	N	%
Reliability or access to necessary technology	163	20.3%
Long hours/no breaks	96	12.0%
Social isolation/lack of personal engagement	370	46.1%
Friction between on-site and remote workers	54	6.7%
Equitable implementation of flexible work arrangements	49	6.1%
Lack of communication from supervisors/colleagues	172	21.4%
Other	30	3.7%
I have no concerns about telecommuting	285	64.5%
Total	1219	--

**8. Which of the defined flexible work arrangements would you prefer if made available to your position? Check all that apply.**

	N	%
Telecommuting (fully remote)	613	41.3%
In-person	658	44.3%
Flextime (core time in middle of day, flexible start and stop)	450	30.3%
Hybrid (remote and in-person)	849	57.2%
Ad-hoc (temporary telecommuting as-needed)	203	13.7%
Other	18	1.2%
Total	2791	--

**9. I am satisfied working at Rutgers University.**

	N	%
Strongly disagree	22	1.3%
Somewhat disagree	57	3.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	108	6.3%
Somewhat agree	553	32.3%
Strongly agree	974	56.8%
Total	1714	100.0%

**10. How likely are you to recommend Rutgers as a great place to work to a friend or family member?**

	N	%
Strongly unlikely	42	2.5%
Somewhat unlikely	60	3.5%
Neither likely nor unlikely	252	14.8%
Somewhat likely	652	38.2%
Strongly likely	700	41.0%
Total	1706	100.0%

**Student Focus Group Sessions**

The student focus group sessions were conducted during the Spring 2022 semester immediately after students returned from Spring Break. Student researchers facilitated the sessions on behalf of the task force and were provided with a list of questions designed to understand student needs and perceptions with regard to their academic experience; student life; campus spirit, pride and vibrancy; connection to students, faculty and staff; and current experience with Rutgers employees working remotely. Participation was limited but the discussions provided additional insights for the task force to consider. Below we highlight some key takeaways from the discussions.

**Academic Experience**

The academic experience questions were focused on preferred mode for experiencing academic services (i.e., courses, advising, meetings) and what challenges and/or opportunities students see with the current hybrid (in-person and virtual) environment. The discussions revealed that students wish to have the option of both in-person and virtual classes going

forward to allow them the greatest flexibility to choose what they need based on their schedules and their major. The choice is a personal preference that varies between each student we spoke to and their particular circumstances. Class year seemed to make a big difference in preference with first- and second-year students requesting in-person options to help them build stronger connections to their peers as part of their college experience while third- and fourth-year students felt that they could more easily adapt to online and remote learning to balance work and academics. Below are a few of the comments made during the sessions.

- Synchronous classes are better as they mimic a truer “classroom” feeling.
- Students question why they are paying tuition and campus fees the more we transition to virtual and prerecorded lectures.
- The ability to have live discussion and dialogue makes the learning more meaningful and does not allow for students to “slack” or “be lazy.”
- Students noted having Zoom fatigue and that social interactions are more “awkward” on Zoom.
- Some suggested the university establish best practices or guidelines for how to run a virtual class.
- Students favor a virtual format for “quick” meetings like advising and office hours. They highlighted the convenience of sharing screen with their advisors.
- Virtual options are good for Sundays and late-night classes.
- Commuters felt it is helpful and more efficient to be virtual for short meetings, so they don’t need to come all the way to campus.
- One student noted technology is not the strong suit of all professors and training should be provided. Some faculty had issues with technology that prevented them from uploading things on time - quality of presentations also were poor.
- Cheating was a concern with online exams.
- Some students advised that it is easy to get distracted with other things in an online format stating, “you think you’re being productive by checking email during class but you can’t concentrate on all those things at the same time.”
- As seniors, some students preferred the option to be virtual to focus on other things (i.e., internships) but as freshmen, they want in-person offerings to build connections, meet new people, etc.
- With specific attention to courses, one student shared hybrid learning has been helpful because she hasn’t had to travel from a long distance, but, for their major, she feels more rigorous courses benefit from in-person learning.
- While students have positive experiences with advising, they suggest improved access and marketing of resources like tutoring, writing centers, and mental health services.
- Degree navigator can be improved.
- They hoped for greater flexibility with class schedules.

### **Student Life Experience**

The student life experience questions were focused on the level of involvement with student organizations, programs and events offered on campus, and general questions about their time spent on campus and what challenges and/or opportunities students see with the current hybrid (in-person and virtual) environment. The discussions revealed that students want to see more in-person events on campus to help them build more personal connections with their peers and feel less isolated. Mental health and the need to improve communications regarding services available was a theme that came up in several of the focus group discussions. Students had varying reactions to questions regarding the most effective frequency and mode of communication from the university regarding the availability of or changes within student services. Depending on the students’ status (i.e., commuter, resident, student leader, veteran,

parent, etc.) they preferred different modes and frequency of communication. Below are a few of the comments made during the sessions.

- College traditions are “dying.”
- Feel less connected to classmates.
- Students want more interaction (especially as freshman and sophomores) so they try different clubs, go to dining hall to eat with friends, use on-campus rec services, study at libraries, experience services offered on campus like sporting events.
- Missed the spontaneous interactions that come with being on campus with everyone.
- Student leaders have seen a global decrease in student involvement.
- Students felt isolated during the pandemic and noted that “it was very sad and you can tell it took a toll on mental health.”
- Some students are more anxious, attend fewer activities, and not as interested in connecting post-pandemic.
- Advertisement of mental health services needs to be better.
- Majority of people are not connecting with other years, so we are lacking the connection between students.
- Students are interested in going to events because “everyone was locked away for so long.”
- “Virtual events are not fun – they’re not fun for student organizers or attendees.”
- Big meetings over Zoom are horrible and frustrating.
- Closing the R Zone did not support relationship building with classmates.
- The students considered the lack of connection a “struggle”. They reported following the vaccination protocols, receiving COVID tests, but did not like the housing restrictions and not being unable to have visits from friends who would bring connection and socialization.
- Regarding student employment, one student shared their experiences with a hybrid student format where events are held in-person. They reported events were negatively impacted when virtual.
- They have not allowed guests in this entire time, and it’s become a student wellness issue, there are people they need for their mental wellness to have people come in and it has become an issue that we cannot see our families.
- Students hoped COVID restrictions are lifted, or more reasonable, next semester, especially for the dorms. They vocalized the importance of student life.
- A student hoped to see improvements with the costs of room and board.

### **Campus Spirit/Pride/Vibrancy**

The campus pride and campus vibrancy questions were focused on the level of activity and energy on campus, availability and accessibility of programs, events, and services, campus pride and how flexible work arrangements have affected or will impact all of the above. The discussions revealed that students would like to see an increase in school-sanctioned programming, social interaction, and student involvement opportunities within the community to make them more excited and happy to be on-campus. Below are a few of the comments made during the sessions.

- The campus is “dead”, because the university does not offer as many concerts, shows, or cultural opportunities as it did before COVID.
- In the past 2 months, buildings are more packed so fortunately there is a lot of energy and feels much better.
- Socially it would be nice to have more programming and school-sanctioned events that allow students to have more of a social life outside of school.

- Allow students to have some sense of normalcy and do things that were considered normal pre-pandemic.
- Lack of school spirit and feeling that people are here to get their degrees and leave (especially seniors).
- Now, in person, people are catching up with each other, talking, laughing, bonding, good energy.
- The student felt the EOF events have been great for student morale and connection. The program offers a variety of events for students around topics, including mental health.
- A student described campus energy was lacking. They reported campus was empty and described Rutgers as focusing largely on academics.
- Student feedback included making most events in-person and increased marketing for events.

### **Connection to Peers/Faculty/Staff**

The connection to peers, faculty, and staff questions were focused on what experiences helped students feel connected and to what extent faculty and staff not working on campus every day has impacted their ability to foster these connections and relationships. The discussions revealed a desire to have more predictable hours of operation as many students noted that hybrid work models could be mutually beneficial to students, faculty, and staff alike. The frustration was noticeable with regard to experiences when students attempted to receive services and were met with locked doors and empty buildings when the hours of operation noted did not accurately reflect when faculty or staff would be on-campus. Another interesting point worth noting was the idea that student wellness and intervention relied heavily on in-person interaction and being able to see when a student isn't doing well, even when the student doesn't know they need help. Below are a few of the comments made during the sessions.

- Having faculty in front of you gives you a more personal experience and will allow you to connect better. Virtual makes you miss out on that.
- If everyone has dedicated days to be home - especially if the schedules line up with our needs - can be beneficial for both parties.
- Need predictable hours of operation.
- Need a balance. If in person for everything you get tired, and if you are behind a screen, you get fatigued and disconnected. Need a balance of both. If balanced approach, it will make people happier to be here and feel connected.
- Some services have been impacted by less faculty or staff (like libraries, cashiers, printing centers) people don't go because they can't rely on it being open.
- If we are never on campus, faculty and staff can't see if someone is not doing well and the ability to intervene when students don't even know they need help. In person is essential for student wellness.
- Asking for letters of recommendation is more difficult when there hasn't been face to face contact.
- Through campus employment, students create great relationships with staff.
- A student suggests Rutgers connect their schools. They described being isolated to their school/program and feeling the various schools live in silos.

### **Current Experience with Rutgers Employees Working Remotely**

The current experience with Rutgers employees working remotely questions were focused on determining student preferences regarding accessing services in-person, remote, or hybrid, and what challenges and/or opportunities students see with continuing to offer services in these formats.

- Getting in touch (financial aid, parking services) is difficult and they just are not responsive.
- Another student found financial aid “unorganized”. The student reported several issues, including lack of communication, with the financial aid office which put their aid in jeopardy.
- Need someone to be in the office to answer phones. Especially with time sensitive things.
- Office hours can continue online and via zoom.
- Virtual lab modules that needed to be paid extra for were not good quality.
- There’s room for improvement with resources like tutoring – makes it difficult to fully collaborate with students and give them the best education you can in a virtual setting.
- Students like having the option for both virtual and in-person so both should be made available going forward.
- Students reported having a hybrid class option is “fine” and dependent on the class. They agreed that some classes can be virtual while there are some classes best suited for in-person learning.

### **Fall 2020 Student Survey Results**

The following survey results were shared with the future of work task force. The survey was designed to understand student perceptions about their online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was conducted in 2020 at the height of the pandemic when courses were offered fully remote. Below we highlight some key takeaways from the results.

#### **1. Positive experience associated with online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

<b>Positive experiences associated with online learning during COVID-19 pandemic</b>	<b>Ugrad</b>	<b>Grad</b>
I enjoy learning in an online format	24.5%	28.0%
I had more time for academics	41.8%	36.1%
I was able to attend classes more regularly	18.7%	13.0%
I was able to prepare more for classes	26.3%	18.9%
I was more productive completing homework or assignments	23.0%	17.7%
I had better access to faculty members	6.7%	6.1%
I felt more comfortable participating in class discussions	26.9%	15.3%
I felt more connected to faculty members	6.9%	6.2%
I felt more connected to academic support staff	4.9%	3.3%
I felt more connected to other students	6.1%	5.4%
I felt less stressed about my studies	32.2%	31.0%
Other	4.0%	9.0%
None of the above	21.2%	24.4%



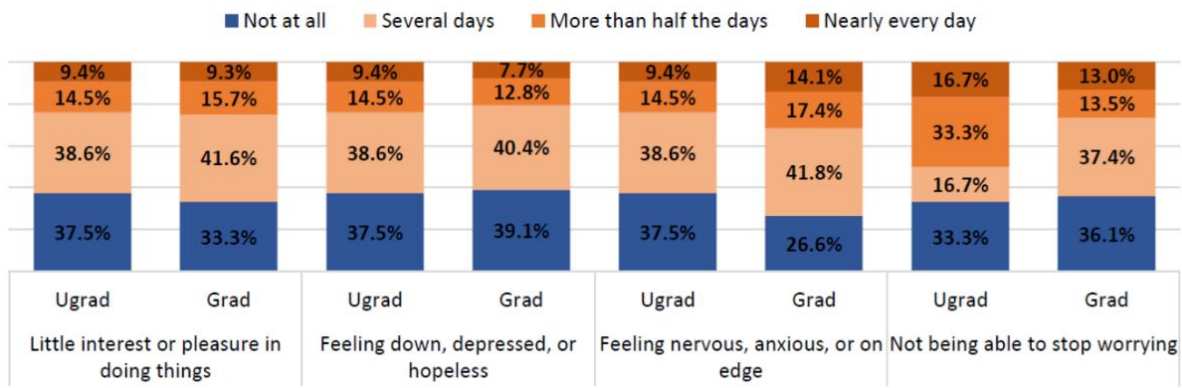
## 2. Obstacles to successful transition to online learning.

Obstacles to successful transition to online learning during COVID-19 pandemic	Ugrad	Grad
Course content that is not appropriate for online learning	36.1%	22.0%
Lack of clear expectations for online learning from instructor(s)	37.1%	20.4%
Lack of access to your instructor(s)	29.1%	16.8%
Lack of access to academic advising	21.7%	11.1%
Inability to learn effectively in an online format	55.4%	33.3%
Inability to access the learning support services	14.1%	6.8%
Lack of interaction/communication with other students	55.0%	46.9%
Lack of motivation for online learning	66.9%	45.4%
Lack of access to technology necessary for online learning (e.g., computer hardware)	16.3%	9.8%
Lack of familiarity with technical tools necessary for online learning	14.6%	8.1%
Inability to attend classes at their scheduled online meeting time	17.4%	6.3%
Lack of access to an appropriate study space or distracting home environment	52.3%	38.4%
Instances of bullying or harassment in your online classes	0.9%	0.5%
Other	6.8%	11.1%
None of the above	7.2%	17.9%

## 3. Factors contributing to decision not to continue education at Rutgers.

Factors contributing to decision not to continue at Rutgers	Ugrad	Grad
Financial constraints	48.8%	60.1%
Continuing education at a different institution	11.8%	5.9%
Working to support your family or yourself	22.5%	26.1%
Family caregiving responsibilities	10.0%	16.3%
Physical health issues	5.6%	5.9%
Mental health issues	18.1%	13.7%
Your experience at Rutgers during the COVID-19 pandemic	38.7%	28.8%
Concerns that all Rutgers classes will continue to be held online	58.8%	37.3%
Immigration issues	4.0%	10.5%
Travel restrictions	16.2%	17.0%
Safety concerns because of the COVID-19 pandemic	36.1%	23.5%
Other	11.4%	18.3%

## 4. When asked regarding their well-being and how often they were “bothered by” certain topics, students indicated:



## Progress on Future of Work-Related Initiatives

As we continued to work as a community to navigate the transformative changes born of the pandemic, we seized opportunities to launch new initiatives, try new things, and pilot short-term programs to meet the evolving needs of the campus community. Many of these relate to the future of work and have been highlighted below.

- **Launched several initiatives through Rutgers Health.**  
University-wide and department-level wellness-focused efforts under the leadership of the RBHS Chief Wellness Officer. Implemented a new electronic medical record system and telehealth platform for Rutgers Health. Appointed a new Chief Medical Information Officer. Began workforce planning via the RBHS/RWJBH Clinical Management and Operations Committee (CMOC). Successfully experimented with alternate locations for provision of care (for example, pop-up clinics for COVID-19 vaccination). Created a New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center at Rutgers. Launched a new initiative to improve the health and quality of life in economically disadvantaged communities dealing with food insecurity, high unemployment, low high school graduation rates and shrinking household income – funded through a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The four-year grant, part of a larger presidential and university-wide commitment to supporting health equity, will create the Rutgers Equity Alliance for Community Health (REACH), joining community-based organizations with university researchers, teachers, and students.
- **Developed Draft Flexible Work Arrangement Resources.**  
Developed guidelines, policies, and a decision tree to assist supervisors and employees in determining the suitability of positions for flexible work arrangements, in managing employees participating in flexible work arrangements, and in setting clear expectations for employees working in flexible work arrangements.
- **Launched Phase 1 of Refreshed Employee Development Strategy – One Rutgers Employee Development (OneRED)**  
The Rutgers Competencies were reframed to serve as the foundation for development at Rutgers for all leadership and professional staff. This included an employee development guide, career development plan, competency self-assessment and self-paced LinkedIn Learning paths aligned to the Rutgers Competencies. Additionally, a self-paced supervisor development LinkedIn Learning path was created to provide all supervisors with the essential skills needed to lead their teams successfully. Topics include moving from an individual contributor to manager, leading in a hybrid world, delegating tasks, assessing performance, becoming an inclusive supervisor, coaching and feedback, and hiring. The next phase will include a series of virtual, highly interactive webinars at scale that focus on hybrid work, employee well-being, and inclusion.
- **Launched OneRED Leader Coaching Pilot**  
A highly personalized digital coaching program that allows leaders to become the best version of themselves – will which provides access to executive coaching for individuals in staff leadership roles at the Associate Director level and above across the university. Through this program leaders will build resilience, support their well-being, and develop the growth mindset critical to lead effectively during times of change and foster high-performing teams. The Leader Coaching Pilot Program is designed to create a culture

of continuous learning and introspection by providing highly personalized 1-1 coaching to cultivate and strengthen leadership skills. The first cohort of the pilot program began in April 2022.

- **Launched OneRED High Impact Leadership Program**

The OneRED High-Impact Leadership Program is a strategic growth opportunity for high-potential Rutgers staff leaders. It is designed to create a network of leaders with a university-wide, “One Rutgers” perspective, who will play critical roles in shaping the future of the university. The program is developing leaders who are actively contributing to and nurturing an inclusive and beloved community, are readily equipped to adapt to the changing needs of the university, and able to respond to disruption and chaos in an agile and resilient manner. Cohort 2 of the program began in June 2021 and Cohort 3 is set to launch in September 2022.

- **Launched the Rutgers My Wellness App**

As part of the Rutgers Employees First initiative, the My Wellness app was developed in collaboration with University Human Resources, IP&O Strategic Services, OIT Application Services, and the Emergency Operations Center's Behavioral Health and Wellness workgroup. The purpose of the app is to support the physical, emotional, and social well-being of Rutgers employees by providing quick and easy access to wellness.

- **Compensation and Total Rewards**

Launched project to clean up job descriptions and begin sourcing survey vendors to aid in the development of a full-scale benchmarking strategy. Created a total rewards flyer to distribute at Rutgers Day 2022 recruitment tables. Conducted interviews for a new Director of Benefits under University Human Resources.

- **Launched the IP&O myPath Training and Employee Development Program**

The myPath Training and Employee Development department was launched to efficiently and effectively service all IP&O staff with their systems training and development needs. This department works to support all IP&O departments in providing accurate and standardized systems training. Training development and delivery utilizes the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) for all training projects to ensure consistency. Employee development supports IP&O employees by offering opportunities for career development through role-based training and facilitating career development by providing resource information, and individualized career development assistance.

## Conclusion

As the COVID-19 public health crisis heads into an endemic state, and as our emergent response moves into a new normal state, a clear path to operationalize a future of work that supports our employees, students, and patients must be developed. This report of the Future of Work Task Force suggests that clear path.

Our guiding principle in the development of this report was the preservation and enhancement of the student experience. President Jonathan Holloway has made it clear in his May 2021 announcement – “Rutgers is meant to be an in-person, face-to-face university community, with campus walkways, academic building hallways, libraries, dining halls, and student centers buzzing with live interactions.” The Task Force has worked diligently in defining a framework to make this vision of a vibrant and engaged university community a reality.

The FoW Task Force has also worked diligently to avoid recency bias. The recommendations offered in this report avoid advancement of permanent changes to address what may be transitional issues. Agility, nimbleness, and adaptability underpin all of the recommendations.

The information within this report is reflective of and informed by myriad ideas and suggestions that were received by the Task Force. The greatest challenge that the members of the Task Force faced was to take a very wide range of ideas and suggestions and distill them into recommended actions that would enhance the Rutgers experience and elevate our institution.

## Future of Work Task Force Acknowledgments

The following faculty, staff, and students contributed to the work of the task force. We are truly grateful for their input and support.

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### Clinical Working Group

The Working Group membership included leadership from Rutgers Health Council (RHC) as well as additional expertise that was invited from our health system affiliates RWJBarnabas Health and University Hospital-Newark. RHC is an interprofessional group of Rutgers senior clinically-facing leaders that exists in part to advise the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs on strategic decisions and overarching policy matters related to the effectiveness of the clinical enterprise of Rutgers Health.

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### **Communications Working Group**

The fifteen-member Communications Working Group includes representatives from across the university. During the course of the academic year, two members left the working group, and one new member has joined as employees transitioned to new jobs inside and outside of Rutgers.

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**Task Force Special Thanks for Support Services**

Kevin Lyons Chair, Rutgers Climate Action Group  
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Erin Johnson Faculty/Staff Survey Design  
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