



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

Transformational Work We Can All Do:

Let's Transform this Campus While We Fight This Virus

Strategies for Working Remotely

- 1. Create a Routine** — Creating a comfortable space where you can work efficiently and regularly is important. Craft a routine with regular hours and scheduled breaks, including getting dressing for the day and stepping away for lunch. Set ground rules and expectations for others who may be sharing your space, such as family members and roommates. Avoid distractions as much as possible.
- 2. Check-in Regularly** — Check-in regularly with your supervisor and use Zoom, Google Hangouts or other video chat functions to meet virtually with your coworkers. Create a system in your team for managing and sharing documents.
- 3. Be Flexible** — Understand that we all are adjusting to not just a new work life, but also a new home life. Some employees may be dealing with additional challenges, such as disruptions childcare. It's important to be empathetic to these circumstances.
- 4. Keep a Positive Attitude** — These are challenging circumstances and it's OK to recognize that. But it's also important to remember that we will get through this together. There will be trial-and-error as you and your team figure out workflows and adjust to the new normal.

Additional resources:

<https://hbr.org/2014/10/5-ways-to-work-from-home-more-effectively>

<https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-be-more-productive-working-from-home-2012-9>

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/productivity-tips-working-from-home>

Reimagining Your Job

Spend time considering how your job could be done via telecommuting, or at least certain aspects of it – draft a telecommuting job plan

- Consider and communicate ideas for improvements to efficiency and communications for your unit. Hold Zoom calls with other staff in your unit to brainstorm ideas
- Have at least one conversation a day with someone inside unit and at least one conversation a day with someone outside your unit. Ask them what they like best about their job and workplace.

Additional Resources:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2018/05/10/five-things-you-can-do-right-now-to-improve-employee-experience/#4a22a0cf61a3>

Professional Development

Office of Communications & Marketing

91 Communications Building, Knoxville, TN 37996-0315
865-974-0765 865-974-4811 fax communications.utk.edu

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- Take the time to learn something job-related that you've always wanted to learn and never had time (e.g., coding, website design)
- Take the time to take UT training that is already required on an annual basis (e.g., Title IX, OIT, Clery Act, Emergency Management, etc.)
- UT online (K@TE programs); Other sources: e.g., <https://www.freecodecamp.org/news/here-are-380-ivy-league-courses-you-can-take-online-right-now-for-free-9b3ffcbd7b8c/>
- LinkedIn Learning via OIT [is an](https://oit.utk.edu/training/online-training/linkedinlearning/) online learning platform for creative and business courses-great for skill building: : <https://oit.utk.edu/training/online-training/linkedinlearning/>
- A lot professional associations offer free webinars
- Reading *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and other online materials that are relevant your profession.
- Complete online certifications that might be relevant or skill-enhancing
- Take this opportunity to connect or create connections with other professionals
- TED talks related to your field; engage with co-workers on these topics
- Learn a foreign language

Analyzing Best Practices of Other Institutions in Your Area

Networking within the University:

- Introduce yourself virtually to counterparts at UT Knoxville & other UT campuses
- Create and build relationships
- Share ideas on how to continue to move forward in role through challenge
- Build network for future

Networking outside your University

- Visit the websites of our peer and aspirational institutions to identify counterparts
- Do a deep dive on each institution – mission, goals, university structure
- What can we learn from them?
- Analyze one institution a day
- Engage in at least one conversation a day with someone outside your unit
- Identify your counterpart at other universities
 - Create and build relationships
 - Share ideas on how to continue to move forward in role through challenge
 - Build network between multiple university counterparts for future

Strategic Visioning

We do not want to lose sight of our broader mission and goals. Take any downtime you have to engage with our strategic visioning process.

- Read the working paper developed by the ad-hoc committee and on the chancellor's strategic visioning website.
- Watch Chancellor's Investiture
- Review draft mission/vision/goals statements and submit feedback

- Submit ideas for what the “Volunteer Experience” means to you and others.
- How does all of this relate to your unit? Identify three areas where your unit could have an impact. What would that impact be?
- Participate in one of the upcoming forums with the consultants – details to follow
- Have at least one conversation a day with someone inside unit and at least one conversation a day with someone outside your unit about making the university a better place
- Look at other colleges and university’s strategic plans. Identify three ideas you think relevant to us and how they might be implemented.

Enhancing our Workplace Culture

- Consider and submit ideas for making this the best public university in the south to work (need to prompt employees on categories to consider like benefits)
 - Culture and climate — What are our values?
 - Employee engagement
 - Professional development and training
 - Possibilities for promotion
 - Pay & Benefits
- Read about what makes for a highly engaged workplace
- Create virtual work groups around specific issues (e.g. childcare; mission, vision, values; policies) and work with supervisors to determine information that would be helpful by benchmarking from other universities and organizations
- Journal what worked for you related to working from home and what didn’t? What would have helped you?
- Supervisors should look at workload analysis and planning

Student Success

- Familiarize yourself with our new [Division of Student Success](#).
- The First-Year experience is critical to persistence and degree completion. What can your department do to enhance every new Vols First-Year Experience?
- Consider developing departmental FAQs on the front end to answer students’ potential questions about classes, academic and departmental policies, etc.
- Network with colleagues at other universities to gauge how they are supporting student success in an online environment
 - UT is coordinating a robust, proactive engagement plan with UT scholars through a virtual environment. If you’re interested in supporting this effort, please contact Doug Renalds, Director of Academic Success Center. Be sure to acknowledge students’ feelings and concerns during this time and work to address their concerns.
- The Division of Student Success will be providing a tip sheet for students early next week. Department heads should discuss this with instructors, and instructors should discuss these themes with their students.
- Be sure to recognize student success and accomplishments even in an online environment
- What would my children/I need from this university that I don’t see students getting?

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Review your department's diversity work plan. What should other ideas be incorporated into that plan?
- Stay engaged in ongoing professional development in DEI topics via articles, books, and other resources in groups or individually (e.g., organizational reads, online learning communities, webinars, etc.).
- Identify strategies your unit could use to ensure that everyone who works there feels they belong and they matter.
- Provide students and colleagues with strategies for engaging with each other online in a positive and constructive manner.
- Consider varied and inclusive means of communicating updates and information (e.g., Zoom, email, text, GroupMe, etc.) with colleagues.
- Prepare a list of strategies that will help to make your department more inclusive (e.g., modes of communication, policies, procedures, events, etc.).
- Learn what other institutions are doing to recruit diverse students, faculty, and staff. Brainstorm ideas for recruitment with a colleague that can be implemented in your unit.

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