June 11th 2020 Supervisory Forum

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Director of Organization Development and Engagement
Agenda

11:30 AM  Welcome and Introductions
           Brief PMP Update

11:35 AM  Workday Update

11:50 AM  Screening Process

11:55 AM  Workplace Planning Guide Discussion

12:30 PM  Managing Anxiety & Productivity

1:00 PM   Adjourn
Workplace Planning Guide for Supervisors/Department Chairs

Recognizing that we are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Amherst College community continues to engage in intensive planning for fall semester. Given that the situation is dynamic with many unknown variables, this Workplace Planning Guide is temporary in nature and may be modified at times. The College may reevaluate the appropriateness of remote work determinations at any time—particularly after the pandemic has subsided. Finally, please note that decisions made in accordance to this guide should be based on staff current job descriptions. Therefore, the conversations and analysis should not result in changes to job descriptions or to the essential functions of any staff position.

Instructions:

As we prepare for a phased return to campus it is important for supervisors/department chairs to assess the jobs in their area and implement a staffing plan that will include a dynamic combination of remote, on-campus or hybrid (a blend of remote and on-campus) work. This document has been designed to guide your work with these goals in mind:

- provide the best educational experience for our students;
- minimize the number of staff working on campus while meeting operational requirements;
- reduce the risk of virus transmission in the on-campus work environment;
- provide effective and clear work processes for those who are working remotely.

Plans should be based on the following guiding principles:

- In general, jobs that can be performed 100% remotely—while maintaining the core residential liberal arts mission of the college—should be.
- The analysis should be based on positions and job descriptions, not specific individuals.
- Follow the process as outlined in this guide. It has been developed to provide consistency across campus and to minimize inequities.
- Make the process collaborative by seeking input from and communicating with your leadership teams and direct reports with as much frequency, clarity and transparency as possible.
- To the extent possible, err on the side of flexibility and creativity when making these determinations. Think in terms of:
  - Does all the work need to be completed between the hours typically required for this position, or could there be some flexibility?
  - How might you focus on results as opposed to process (so that you are assured the work will get done but can have flexibility as to when/how it gets done)?
  - If a person is unable to commit to full-time work, what might the position look like if it were done on a part-time basis?
  - If the person holding this position won the lottery tomorrow and decided to leave, how much of their work could you go without or what would be your plan to ensure their work is completed by others?
Why Now?

• Having a solid tool/process is important, but what is really important is the conversation that you wrap around it.

• We are navigating uncharted territory.

• We are all in a learning mode, many of us doing things we haven’t done before or didn’t expect to be doing.

• The current situation calls for creativity and proactivity.

• Some are feeling vulnerable.

• We need everyone’s best ideas and the highest levels of energy/engagement.
| Ending | Neutral Zone/Limbo | Next Normal |
Ending | Neutral Zone/Limbo | Next Normal

Productivity
Morale
The diagram illustrates the transition from an "Ending" state to a "Neutral Zone/Limbo" state, and then to a "Next Normal" state. Along the x-axis, one can observe a progression from denial, anxiety, shock, fear, anger, frustration, confusion, stress, ambivalence, creativity, skepticism, acceptance, impatience, hope, energy, enthusiasm. The y-axis represents productivity and morale.
Neocortex
• Higher-Order Thinking
• Self-Reflection
• Creative Thinking
• Problem Resolution

Limbic System
• Emotion Center

Reptilian Brain
• Survival, Instinct
• Fight; Flight; Freeze

Interconnected
Share Bandwidth
In Competition for Cognitive Resources
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<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Alert but not alarmed</th>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived threat in “broader environment”</td>
<td>Very focused and productive – except for creative/generative work</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Alert but not alarmed</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived threat “in your neighborhood”</td>
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<td><strong>Level 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Alert but not alarmed</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived threat is “real and present”</td>
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Very focused and productive – except for creative/generative work |
| Level 2 | Perceived threat “in your neighborhood” | Very alert, alarm systems in the brain are starting to go off.  
Preparing for fight/flight/freeze  
Less productive – “hard to work,” expect for manual work |
| Level 3 | Perceived threat is “real and present” | All systems shut down  
Only reptilian brain is functioning  
“Can’t work” |
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Higher perceived threat level = reduced ability to think and focus  
Supervisors have a generally lower perceived threat level than staff
Science-Based Strategies

Helpful science-based strategies to support ability to focus and access the cognitive resources of our neocortex:

• Show appreciation (honor their value)
• Build connections (with the leader, with the work, with the organization, with other key constituencies)
• Identify things that can be controlled
• Provide certainty (clarity) where possible
In Summary

• Never has your role as a supervisor been more important
• Never has your role as a supervisor been more challenging
• “Over” communicate, over emphasize your good intent
• Actively, on a daily basis, implement the four strategies
On-the-Spot Leadership Series

• Based on belief that small things can make a big difference
• 45-minute sessions, Once a week for 10 weeks
• One specific, tangible tool in each session – connected to supervising remotely
• Take-away resource to support immediate application in your environment
• Register on the Learning & Development website