

Summary Points from Open Forum Breakout Sessions:

How are you doing?

- *Potential follow up if no one wants to go first: This could be about work at JCU or just COVID-19 in general.*
- Some Staff are very disappointed that students were not brought back, concerned it sent a message as though we were not ready or didn't try. Others, however, are grateful for the safety of medically fragile community members.
- Staff are struggling right now overall. There is real fatigue from Zoom and they are missing a sense of community with colleagues and students. There is a tremendous sense of loss from colleague departures and the inability to offer in-person goodbyes.
- Staff articulated that they recognize the "no-win situation of safety vs. emotional and financial health."
- There is a sense of frustration and perceived lack of transparency as it relates to the Faculty and Administration dynamic. Also concerned about communication coming from the Staff Council regarding information surrounding these areas.
- Frustration shared about the Faculty not voting off-contract. Staff are curious about the pay cut for faculty salaries and if that has taken place or is that still a variable.
- Nice to receive news about no additional furloughs this Fall.
- Staff did have some concerns about the notification process of where a person has been that has tested positively for COVID-19.
- Staff reporting that students are sad and frustrated and the Staff feel universally drained and depleted. There is a sense of dread and unease anticipating the decision around being in-person this Spring as it impacts positions, furloughs, etc.
- Staff shared concerns that the RIF decisions came from "too high a level" with limited or no input from "grassroots" workers or supervisors on the ground.
- Those retiring or connected to retirees spoke about it being a bittersweet experience because of their love for the University, colleagues, and students. They also shared concern about the lost skills, institutional and operational knowledge.
- Some of this change has prompted others to expand their connections with colleagues and become more involved in the Staff Council.
- Staff have found it discouraging to hear certain comments from Faculty members and concerned that they are not viewed as a University team. Concern this division will impact the student experience and therefore retention. Others shared frustration that the Faculty have not shared in the "sacrifice or pain" regarding the cuts the Staff Community have experienced.
- Staff also shared that there is a concern that we will begin to lose good people in this current environment who are currently still here as they look at other opportunities elsewhere.

What things are at the forefront of your mind currently as a staff member?

- *Potential follow up: are there any issues affecting your ability to get your work done? (e.g., staff morale, working from home, job insecurity, your supervisor, additional job responsibilities, general anxiety)*
- Staff are in support of increased communication regarding COVID-19 protocols and University response to students and families on a regular basis.
- Staff have concerns about how to know who is still working at JCU in order to do their jobs effectively when needing to contact another office or employee.
- There were consistent concerns communicated of “how to stop doing things” that there is no longer the capacity to accomplish well. Staff have a real concern of the impact on quality/availability of services; the impact on retention/student satisfaction/experience; and the absorption of responsibilities by those who remain.
- Staff described their roles as “a neverending grind” that prevent them from having time/space for creative problem solving or innovative ideas. As responsibility is absorbed, there are questions of how the mission comes through the work in dignity.
- Staff raised concern about departmental websites not being updated with contact information; the University directory being out of date; and requesting a current list of employees with areas of oversight/responsibility to improve efficiency of deliverable services.
- Staff feel as though many areas are understaffed and overworked, in combination with cuts, is leading to very low morale.
- Many staff commented on the appreciation they have on the ability to work from home, though some without that option are frustrated. There was some concern on inconsistencies between those given the option and those not. Others shared about the difficulty to balance other obligations such as parenting with remote learning while simultaneously working from home or having a “high-risk” family member and concerns over reporting to campus.
- Newer Staff hired through the pandemic are sharing it is difficult to feel connected and get to know colleagues as well as the complications of on-boarding during a mostly remote period.
- Some Staff shared a specific concern on how disheartening the RIF was and that there is a perceived disproportionate effect from voluntary/involuntary departures of women of color.

Is there anything you would like Staff Council to do/stop doing this year?

- Overwhelmingly, the Drive Up Picnic was seen as a wonderful event. Many staff shared the importance of continuing similar opportunities to improve morale and sense of community.
- Some suggested that this current moment in history should be recognized by a time capsule event.
- Staff shared they would like collaboration with JCU Fit to help folks get outside, whether through the *Fast Break* program or other ways.

- Staff Council programming is seen as very successful, important and appreciated.
- Staff shared gratitude for the advocacy of Staff Council and is seen as important to share the story and voices of Staff with the current situation of Faculty/Administration.
- Breakout room format for Open Forum was well received.
- Gratitude for how the Staff Council keeps people connected and informed.

General Unanswered Questions:

- Question - What does the Covid-19 task force do? What is their main focus?
- Question - Is there a set standard for safety protocols on campus, besides wearing a mask? Folks feel that there are inconsistencies regarding this in various spaces around campus. Need to have the mandates/protocols clearly outlined/stated again.
- Question - What will the policies(Covid related) be if/when students come back in Jan. Need more standardization for remote work and better guidance about spacing out staff in spaces, etc.
- Question - are the salary and retirement cuts permanent or just a one-year thing?