Moderator: Perfect, okay just to let you all know, this will all be confidential. The only reason we’re recording is that it will be transcribed after the fact so that we can analyze the data. But it will not have your names. We will not be publishing your names with what you say. If you’re okay with that, go ahead and click on it on that. and , do you want to introduce yourselves?

How about and then .

Researcher: Okay, great, I’m . I’m a research professor working on this study. We’re interested in women, female staff, and what went on during COVID. Anyway, that’s what we’re going to talk about today, but that’s me.

Researcher: I’m . I’m a Master of Public Health student at the University of Utah, and a research assistant on the project. I’m excited to hear what everyone has to share.

Moderator: Wonderful, thank you so much. Like said, we want to specifically look at female staff. There’s been research done more on faculty and students and their experience during COVID, but not so much on staff, in particular

female staff. We’re grateful to get your experience. This is the group who worked mostly remotely. I know some of you it was completely remotely and some of you it was mixed. That’s what we’ll be focusing on today.

just put the consent form in the chat. You don’t need to sign anything, but that’s for you to look at to be able to see basically you don’t have to answer any questions you want. This is completely voluntary, and we appreciate you being here.

I will go ahead and ask the first question. Feel free to jump in if you have anything you want to say. If you’re having a hard time being able to jump in, you can raise your hand and we’ll call on, but there’s no need if we can just have a conversation. That’s fine, too. The first question is if you could tell us about the work that you do at the university. I guess with that one, it might be good to take turns. I’ll start to just give a quick overview. I’ll start with , you’re first on my screen. You mind telling us a bit about what you do?

Participant: I work with reporting databases, help build up data that comes from finance, student, and the HR systems at the university, and convert it into structures that work better for our analytical teams. They do the reporting out to external and internal agencies.

Participant: I work at [the gardens], and I am the finance director. Just working on the budgets, we were making sure we were on track with everything and spending the revenue, making sure everything gets recorded properly.

Participant: I’m a research associate in the [biomedical informatics department]. I do a bunch of different things, some data analysis, social technical work, just a bunch of stuff.

Participant: I work in office. I do space planning and strategy in construction management. I’m essentially the destroyer of worlds.

Participant: Hi, everyone. I’m . I work in two offices, the [global sustainability office] and the [sustainability office]. I’m an administrative assistant. I support the staff and leadership with a variety of tasks. I also have accounting responsibilities and I support grants for students and faculty.

Participant: It took me a second to find the mute button. It’s in a different spot, sorry. I’m

. I’m at [the gardens]. My role right now is [in operations]. I am in the development department, and I do a lot of statistics. I work on processes for our department. During the pandemic, my role was different. I was the [customer support manager]. I was in charge of communication, engagement, and renewal of our [gardens] members.

Moderator: , am I saying your name right?

Participant: It’s .

Moderator: I’m sorry, , you’re turn.

Participant: My name is . I work in the division of epidemiology. I’m a clinical data manager. I work on VA healthcare data, helping researchers do whatever research they need with the VA data. I just switched roles during the pandemic. Previously, I worked in the pediatrics department. I was a business data analyst on a national project that worked on emergency medical services data.

Participant: Sorry, I’m struggling with a cold or post-COVID crap. Anyway, I work in [the information technology department] on the auxiliary side. I support a lot of products that many of you use like the software catalogue. I’ve done stuff for [the gardens]. I’ve worked in the past with the development office. I still am working with the development office. I worked with construction on the campus site mostly. I’ve worked with a lot of you. I mostly have meetings. I don’t do any data analysis, but I do software usage analysis.

Participant: Hi, everyone, my name is . Similar to and , I have changed roles. During the pandemic, I was an academic advising coordinator in [academic advising], working with students, helping them identify their interests, strengths, figuring out what they might want to major in. Also, helping students who were interested in becoming people in professional fields like doctor, PA, PT.

Moderator: Awesome, thanks everybody. For the rest of these questions, feel free to just jump in whenever you have something to say. If you could share with us how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your work activities.

Participant: I’ll start. Before the pandemic then, I worked on campus a lot. Most of the time I never really had a remote situation happening. Then I went almost 100 percent remote. I was working 75 percent time and I took on a role of managing a calendar for [a leader in the sustainability department] and supporting her administratively. I expanded my duties during COVID. I also, a lot of the processes that I had done before that were in person like we do student travel grants. I would meet with students in person and then submit paperwork to the park building. I would walk over to the park building from my office and take it to the travel place. That all went digital. The same with electronic payment requests, that went digital. Some other aspects of my job became less about moving paperwork around and totally became paperless.

Participant: I agree with all that. I was also 100 percent in office before the pandemic and moved fully remote. Then I kind of did a partial remote/in office hybrid schedule. I remained on one FTE during the pandemic, but my job duties increase, and I had to just figure out new systems and new communication. There were a lot of new roll outs for digital and virtual systems. Just learning those and communicating those to different staff.

Participant: I had a similar experience, although it was kind of funny because the nature of my job is to be traveling around to construction sites, traveling around to different buildings, looking at things. There were honestly weeks on end

where I wouldn’t actually go to my office. I would just work out of my backpack all over the health sciences campus. It was sort of funny because then it was like okay well, I only work at home. My office is still sort of empty. It was sort of a weird thing to not have an office to go to that it didn’t really matter. I went all over the place anyway.

Participant: I’m similar. I was required to be in office previously, but I don’t know. I had done a big push when I started this job to make a lot things digital that were previously not, to save paper, just because we were filing and taking up space, and it was expensive. I was kind of lucky in that a lot of my technical workflows were already all digital. But other things like just interacting with members and being here to answer phones, and process gifts, and those sorts of things, I could work to do at home. But I did get my hours reduced as well. I was at 75 percent. Then later in the pandemic, we tried to start, at the [gardens] we were lucky because we could have some outdoor events. We had a lot. We had a little more leeway with being able to introduce some things earlier. We did have some fall activities where I was coming in and doing events for my members. But most of those things fell to the wayside.

My job just changed to try to find interesting ways to engage our members

and make them still want to renew even though they had lost a lot of their benefits, especially like our concert season got canceled which ends up being a lot of why people renew up here. There was a lot of different tacks taken and a lot of the voice changed on a lot of our acquisitions and stuff. I was doing a lot of research into that and innovative ways to keep people excited, which I wasn’t doing in the same way before.

Participant: My office did not change at all. Our systems were completely online. We had actually been requesting to be able to work remotely just one day a week prior to the pandemic. We received hard no’s on that request for two years running. The conversion for us was learning Zoom, learning Teams. We were actually already using Teams but not for meetings. But that was pretty quick for our office because we weren’t trying to learn other systems as well. All of our customers already reached out to us either through emails or phone calls. There wasn’t any interruption to us in that way either. What did change for us was COVID itself increased data demands. My office does recording up to the academic president and vice presidents and deans offices. The type of information they needed to figure out what the impacts were to students, how to reschedule classes, all of those things, we were able to tap into the data that they needed to look at to do the tracing they needed during COVID from the financial aid, HR, and student administration side, the impacts there. While we had that increase in demand for reporting, they also had a hiring freeze.

We actually lost a couple of positions just prior to and during COVID that we weren’t able to fill. We found that hover time, we got behind in our capabilities to keep up with the demands.

Participant: My job also completely changed. Being in student services, you’re in person for everything. Prior to the pandemic, I would see student appointments in my office. It was very rare to have a phone or video appointment. Then starting that week in March, our entire office moved remote for the foreseeable future. We started doing virtual appointments with students. We didn’t use Zoom at first. We used something else. Doing phone appointments and then gradually as the year went on, started doing more and more of the events that we would have normally done in person like an info session or something like that. We started doing those remotely as well.

Participant: For me, we were all in person all of the time. We had also tried to work remotely on certain days and we got a hard no on that as well. For me, what I found is that not only myself and our other team members actually were more productive in the work that they did even though we had—we had a whole

student side to our house, and they’ve been busy. We’ve been busy with upgrades and all kinds of things. It actually allowed more time to get work done. Like today, I don’t feel good, right, so I’m working at home. It was

supposed to be my in office day because we’ve gone hybrid. But it’s allowed me to actually work when maybe I’ve been sick or not felt so well. I think that’s a huge benefit of not having to go into the office and be sick because I

think there was a lot of pressure for people to be in the office when they were sick and not encouraged to go home. I was a lot healthier for that time. I was grateful for that. But I got COVID for the first time just recently. I’ve been lucky.

But the time that it saves me and I’m pretty sure that everybody else is going to be saying the same thing, but the time that it saved me and the money that it saved me, I did not realize the value that that has like driving to work and taking 30 to 45 minutes to get there and coming home, getting stuck in traffic. Just for me, I felt like I was contributing more to having a better environment because I’m not driving every day, and things were more digital. I’m not printing out all kinds of crap. But for me, I like working at home. I know for some people, it’s probably difficult. I, of course, don’t have young children either at home. That part didn’t impact me at all. Anyway, for me, I think I was more productive and the time savings and the money savings even on food. It’s just amazing. The health benefits were really good for me.

Moderator: I really appreciate you bringing that up, because that’s actually a really good segue into the next question, which is thinking about your job now compared to pre-pandemic, has there been a change in flexibility? It sounds like you’re saying yes, definitely it’s been more flexible. Go for it.

Participant: I was just going to say I’m not in the office anymore, but I was in the pandemic. Kind of post pandemic or as pandemic was kind of winding down, but not really, because it’s only just now starting to wind down. Starting like fall of 2021, after over a year working fully remote, our bosses wanted us to go back in the office. Yes, there was more flexibility. They started out very slowly. They started us having go in one day a week and then two days a week for the fall semester. Then in spring of ’22 was when they were going to have people start coming in three days a week. That was going to kind of be the new norm going forward as a hybrid three days in the office, two day working remote, which that was just not enough for me. I wanted to be fully remote. I really liked it. I tried really hard to get that to happen. I was just

told no, can’t do it. That is a big part of why I left and got the new job that I have now where I am fully remote. Yes, more flexible in that little office post pandemic compared to pre, but not as flexible as I would have liked.

Participant: I think that’s kind of true here, too. I think there is an interesting situation because we have sort of like guest services department that has to be here. There is a lot of concern about fairness and who is. My job could be fully remote. I will say I like coming in sometimes because I do like, I love my coworkers. I enjoy spending time with them. But I get a lot more work done at home because I’m not always helping individuals and I can just really focus. It’s different. Like everyone is saying, my mental health is different. I actually eat the food I need to take afternoon walks. There are lots of ways

that spare time I’m having is going to take care of myself while I am still

getting more of my actual job done. But I know here we’re doing where we are allowed two days. I think a lot of that is sort of this idea that we need to be fair to everyone and not everyone has a job. Port staff can’t work from home. You can’t check in members at the front desk from home. I think they’re trying to find a balance where everyone feels valued, too.

Participant: The flexibility has meant the world to me. I am a single mother of three, one who has a chronic illness. Just being able to shift around when I work to some degree. If I had to take him to several doctor’s appointments, it used to be it was really difficult for me to make up that time and that work. I’m salaried, so it doesn’t necessarily mean losing hourly work, but there is work to be done. It is a real luxury to me to say okay, I’m going to lose two hours today doing medical stuff. I’m just going to get up at 5:00 and work or work through 7:00. The ability to accommodate the things that I need to do with my three kids and still get my work done and be productive has just been phenomenal. I’m outrageously grateful for that aspect of it for sure.

Participant: I would say the flexibility for me, there is really maybe four categories that I see flexibility increased for me in ways that made a big impact on my life. One is family. I have two sons that are now in middle school. I live closer to their schools than work. I was much closer. It’s very easy for me to do a quick drop off, pick up, get them somewhere, and get back quickly that I just could not have done when working in the office. I can also spend breakfast time with my boys every day. I used to have to leave before they were up.

Now, I get that time. I get just as much work done. I’m ready to go when I can. I can work some before they get up and then pause and spend that morning time with them. That’s really been valuable to my family balance.

I also find that I’m able to stay active much easier and I can get outdoors based on the season at the right time of day. In summer, I can get outdoors early and then come back and shower. But in winter, I can start working. When the light comes up, I can get out and come back and shower quickly and get back to work. That makes a big difference, especially in the office, professional attire, getting sweaty outside walking. It just wasn’t okay to do that. Having the shoes that are comfortable enough to walk in. Women’s dress attire has often held us back. Even though I try to have a dress attire that didn’t hold me back, it always did more probably men. That’s made a big difference in me getting the exercise I need and getting the daylight I need in the winter hours which has been a big boost to my mental state.

The third area is I’ve been going through perimenopause all during this time. We’re all women here and so I think we talk about these things. But I’ve had some periods of extremely heavy bleeding that would have been very

difficult to have when I needed to be in the office. I haven’t had to tell anybody about it. I haven’t had to worry about what that brings in terms are you okay at work and is your clothing okay. I’ve been able to manage that

independently and without needing to tell anybody about that because I’m working from home. That’s made a big difference. There is a lot of other things with perimenopause that being able to reduce my stress, being able to slow down a little has been really impactful in helping me manage some other symptoms that come with that.

The last area of flexibility I talk about is when I was in office, it was very difficult to find meeting space. To get to meet with people on demand when a topic is pertinent, work through projects, and keep them moving, finding meeting space was often a roadblock in keeping things moving. We find that now that we are all remote, meeting space is not an issue. We meet when needed and it’s much easier to get together with people. Also, being in an IT type of role, a lot of the detail that we’re sharing is very technical, very

detailed code that we’re trying to share on screens. It’s actually much easier to share, look at, and review that type of content when each of us are individual on our screens on a meeting than it is in a big meting room. We found we’re much more successful in communicating when needed and how needed during meetings.

Participant: I agree. I think the meeting, just being able to feel like you can be involved in what you want to be involve with and not being limited or kind of pushed out because you don’t have time. Post pandemic, I am on a hybrid schedule, but I feel like the flexibility and just I feel more appreciated as an employee. That could be because we had a leadership change since the pandemic. I used to just sit and I’m salaried, but I used to sit 9:00 to 5:00 and kind of count down the time a little bit, and not leave before my supervisor left, and things like that. Now, I just kind of feel like I’m trusted to do my job and not be physically somewhere. I just know that I can get my work done in this amount of time. As long as I’m completing tasks, it’s not based on a time schedule if that makes sense. I think the flexibility and the appreciation I feel, and the value I feel as an employee has changed since the pandemic.

Participant: I have just heard so many people articulating things that I feel and really didn’t have the words for. That’s really interesting to hear people talking

about stuff. Yes, the sick days, like if you’re not feeling well and being able to be flexible to work around it, work early if you have an appointment. I have mental health issues with some of my family members. Being there in my home has helped them so much because I am a solid, steady presence there. Even if I’m not interacting with them, just being there has been a huge benefit.

I also thought about the environmental benefits that brought up in not printing out all kinds of paper, and not traveling and community. I think that’s great.

One thing that came up just today is this idea of seat time, which I think was kind of talking about. You are supposed to be in your seat at your office for 9:00 to 5:00, Monday through Friday. Isn’t it nice to just have that blown out of the water and have people that trust you to be doing the job that you’re doing. You can do it in the way that you get it done instead of just sitting there trying to look busy or something. That’s a big benefit for me.

Participant: For sure, I think the traveling for me, I live in [city], so I had to drive up to [city] every single day. Before joining the [biomedical informatics department], I used to work at an office. I actually got hired on right when the pandemic hit. I started temporarily from home, but afterwards, they just made me permanently remote worker. At first, it was really hard because training was remote. I didn’t know any of my peers. That was really hard because I’m a really outgoing person. I like to be around people. I didn’t know who to ask for help so that was a little bit rough. Once everyone got to know me and got to know what I do, it was a lot easier to get the help that I needed in order to do my job. I do love the flexibility and the fact that my boss just checks in on me and says, “If you need any help…” but I’m just left to do my work in the hours that I want, how I want. That’s been really nice.

Moderator: I have to say this is so incredibly helpful. Thank you to all of you for sharing.

Is there anybody else that wants to add anything on flexibility before we move on to the next question? Yes, go for it.

Participant: Yes, I was going to say in my previous role, I actually started, I don’t know, like a week before the pandemic. The week before I was in that job, we were in the office, and it was required to be in the office every day. Then the next week, we moved to remote. It was a little bit challenging trying to figure out the job and all of that stuff, and the people, and whatnot in that remote setting. I think it was new for everybody as well in terms of training and whatnot. Our customers were I guess outside of the university, so we were already doing Zoom meetings and phone calls and such like that. Most of our in person work was just because I think the university required it. It was mostly internal work.

But yes, as things kind of moved forward during the pandemic, there was sort of a push to have people com back. The division that I was part of sent out a survey asking people what their preferences were, but we were already at an issue with space before. It didn’t seem like a lot of people wanted to come back. There wasn’t like a huge push or pressure to make people come back.

That was nice in terms of the flexibility.

Then where I am now, I moved into that job also remote. It’s been remote for me the whole time, so I don’t know what this role looks like in person if it was in person. It’s a lot of individual work. It seems like it could kind of be a little bit silly at this point to make people come back. Like where our data is

housed is in Texas. We’re not even, if we were to go into the office, it wouldn’t be that we were closer to the stuff that we needed. We would just be doing what we do at home but in an office. There has not been a lot of push in this group, either, to come back. Though my boss is a social person. She wants people to come back, but literally no one on my team wants to. I think she’s learning to accept that.

Moderator: Awesome, thank you all. I see some of you posting things in the chat, which is awesome, too. , do you mind saving that chat. That’s awesome, thank you so much. Moving on from flexibility to communication, have you noticed a change in communication levels compared to pre-COVID? That could be where communication level is healthier pre-pandemic, are they

healthier now, what about during the pandemic, any changes you’ve seen with communication?

Participant: For me, I think communication is almost better. The one downside about being in the office is communication because we are all in cubicles. People stop by all the time to visit, which I enjoy. The problem is it takes us away from doing other stuff. If I need to talk to a developer, I walk over and talk to a developer, but that person might be right in the middle of something and I’m actually interrupting them. What I see a change in communication, and I like this part, people will send me a message on Teams to say, “Hey, are you available for a phone call?” Most of the time I can say yes. Other times like I’m really busy right now. That’s really helped. That’s been a positive for me in communication is more people reach out via chat to say are you available for a phone call. I like that better. Sometimes we do too much in chat without a phone call. That’s the other part of it, right, we get these long chat messages going when a phone call might be easier. That’s what’s changed for communication to me.

The one thing I don’t know if anybody else has noticed, I’m not young, but some of the people who have worked on campus for a long time or they really like being in the office, are the ones that are putting pressure on the rest of us to come into the office. That could be frustrating for me because what we heard a lot was, “Well, we need to know you’re doing your work if you’re sitting there. We know you’re doing your work if you’re sitting in your

chair.” I’m like really and how do you know that.

Communication I think is better. The not having to have people come to our office for a meeting or go. I work downtown, so I would have to travel on campus for a meeting. I think this has helped everybody be able to meet easier and not waste time traveling. Communication is just, for me, it’s been good. I don’t have a boss that micromanages either. That helps an awful lot, too.

Participant: I actually agree. It’s funny because there is one thing that I have heard more than once is, “Well, why would I request a Teams meeting when I could just walk down the hall if you were in the office?” It’s like how is that any easier than like climbing up and down stairs. It’s a funny comparison. But I think you’re right that it does tend to be people that are really comfortable in the office and quite as sure about how to operate when we’re at home. I would

say it’s interesting.

Like mentioned, our leadership changed. Some of the changes we’ve experienced is hard to tell if it’s pandemic related or leadership related. I do think we have some things happen in the pandemic where people were feeling out of loop more so than we might have before. There was like a staff newsletter instituted and some of these things that held over that increase communication kind of across the board for everyone. Instead of you find out if your director thinks to tell you, it’s just there for everyone to see. I think that’s been really nice.

But I think I’ve been lucky because our team is small and tight knit. I feel like our communication has always been really, really strong. But it tends to be the org as a whole, that sometimes you’ll see it lacking. I think that probably did improve a little and whether that was because of our new executive director or something else, or the pandemic specifically, I’m uncertain. Maybe will have a better idea about what she thinks.

Participant: Org-wise, I think our communication has increased. I think in pandemic when we were trying to figure out roles and life and duties, not everyone was included. But post pandemic now that we’re all back, we are either meeting in person or just more inclusive Teams meetings or Zoom meetings. It’s helped me because I don’t have to go onto campus, pay for parking, and do all that when I need to attend a meeting. It’s nice that I feel that I can go to more.

But on the flip side of all that I’m like a really shy person. In person, I feel like I can speak up a little bit better and kind of do that side chat with the

person you’re sharing a table with. In Zoom situations, that side talking and getting to know you on a personal level, I just stay quiet. I’ll answer if called on, but it takes a lot to talk during a Zoom meeting compared to an in-person meeting for me, personally.

Participant: I think for me, my writing style got better. I talk in sarcasm and if that

doesn’t come across very well in writing. I had to learn how to write a little bit better so people could understand my humor or something. That has changed. I actually like people to come to my office and bug me because it takes me out of my zone because I hyperfocus so much. Sometimes you just need a little bit of a break. I think that part I really miss, also, like an actual connection. All of my coworkers are lovely, but I don’t have this personal

connection where I’m like, “Hey, you want to go get a drink” or anything like that because I’m not there in person. It’s not like it’s friendly, I guess.

Participant: I would add that something that is getting better. I mean I agree it is really great not to have to travel to meetings. It’s great to not have people pop in and interrupting your work. But it’s getting better, but there was serious Zoom fatigue in my world for a while because I felt like every phone call or email that people normally would have just done quickly, they were setting up Zooms. I don’t know if it was because people were stuck at home and they were bored or they were lonely, but it got to this point of I would sit down at my desk and just sit on camera for literally eight or nine hours. It’s like guys, no. Give me a Microsoft message. I will tell you the answer. I don’t need to see you today. We’re good.

Participant: There is one more side of communication I would like to share. I already talked some about how it had really improved for our teamwork, but in our office, there were some, I guess you could call them tensions between some groups that over time had just built up. Being in the office, there was often this feeling that there were some subtle microaggression, I guess you could say, between certain people or between certain groups. Leaving the office and coming home made those go away. It was a really interesting side that I

hadn’t expected that made work much more comfortable in some scenarios. It took away those interactions and crossing paths where that was occurring. It took that piece away. People say we miss the water cooler discussions. Some of those were very healthy, but some of them were not. Those don’t have a format on Zoom.

Participant: You mentioned water cooler. We had someone actually set up weekly water cooler calls on Teams. That’s anybody could jump on. We actually learned more about people because we should choose someone to present and talk about themselves, what they do that’s not work related, etc. That actually is a better opportunity to get to know some people and understand them a little bit better. That was helpful setting up the water cooler that way.

Participant: We do something kind of similar. We have a weekly priority meeting with the core two teams that work together. We used to be on task with that meeting, jump right into topics. But we’ve actually opened it up and allowed informal discussion and what’s going on, and water cooler type discussion for at least the first five minutes. Sometimes we go ten minutes. We just let it because we all need that time. It’s a weekly way to do that. But there are also topics coming, so it doesn’t get awkward like who is going to jump in and create water cooler discussion. That’s worked really well for us.

Moderator: This is all super, super helpful, thank you so much. I’m noticing that we have about two minutes left. I want to ask you all about during the pandemic, what

differences did you see between men and women in their experiences at work and were the changes that occurred different for men versus women?

Participant: It kind of relates to our last thing. A lot of times in meetings, men would be kind of dominant. That sometimes I think that they were in a position and just being in that position was enough. A lot of times women have to work pretty hard to keep themselves seen as valuable and participating and in control. I feel like it really shook the men up that all of a sudden they just couldn’t be oh, I’m sitting on my laurels. I’m God. I have this position. Somehow it seemed like it helped to level the playing field a little bit in the relationship, in the men that I know really well. All of a sudden, I felt like some of the skills that I had became more valued. I think that happened with some other women that I know. It’s just—I’ll stop there.

Participant: I think to what said earlier about being able to run to the school, that is less visible now. I think it puts us on a more even professional keep with men because I no longer have to say, “Crap, one of my kids just had a nonstop bloody nose at school. I’ve got to run.” Get him home, get him established, get back. I can just do that, and I come back and I’m in my chair. I’m in the next Zoom. The ability to compete and let the mother side of you be over there, I think I want to say I think it’s leveled the playing field a little bit

because I don’t think we’re seen so much as, “Oh, geez, these women have these issues.” I do know, at least if you believe the media that it wasn’t so

even keeled in terms of moms were being mom and helping people do school at home and doing work. Perhaps the partner is just working and not doing the school stuff. But I really want to think that there has been a bonus in that respect. I don’t feel like I have to share that every school emergency.

Participant: Even going to the doctor.

Participant: Anything.

Participant: Yes, I agree with that, along with . I hate mispronouncing names, I’m so sorry. said not having some of the snide comments that we would get from men. I know it sounds—well, I don’t think it sounds silly to all of us because I’m sure we’ve experienced it. Listening to men constantly comment on what women were wearing or how nice they looked, or you have a different outfit. That stuff would infuriate me. We don’t have that now when we’re not in the office. That’s been helpful for me.

Participant: I think I notice that women were more likely to be okay, like we are all better off with being remote. Men like being in the office for some reason. Before I came to you, I worked with two men in one office. They were completely

against going remote even though we could go remote. That, I didn’t understand that.

Participant: I noticed that all of our developers like being at home. Our network teams, they like being at home. I don’t know one person that says, “I want to be in.” But where some of the inequities were before, some of the teams were allowed to take one or two days and work at home previous to COVID or the pandemic. Once we had to go remote, that leveled the playing field because several of us were not allowed to do what the other teams were allowed to do. I think that was helpful. By the way, most of those people that had the time off were men, not women.

Participant: Yes, same thing in my office. One person got to work remote one day a week was a guy.

Moderator: Any other thoughts on differences between men and women? Were the changes more difficult for one gender versus the other? Were they more beneficial for one gender or the other? Any other thoughts on this?

Participant: I had a colleague, and I would be speaking on their behalf. But several colleagues with young children at home, and I believe it was so much more difficult on the women who had young children at home. I have also had male colleagues with young children at home and it seemed much easier for them, much easier for them to disconnect and not have interruptions during meetings. Whereas some of the women in my office, they had babies on their lap during the meeting. I would never see something like that with a man even though they had children the same age.

Participant: Yes, it’s not just little kids. My kids were teenagers and some of my friends had teenagers. Yes, they can operate the computer and do the online school, but do they have the executive function to do it, not so much. You do, you spend a lot of time.

Participant: I believe women are the default parent. Participant: They are.

Participant: When you’re at home with the children, it’s a different experience for the male than it is the female. There might some women where that’s not the experience, but everyone I talked to, we feel like we’re the default. Kids come to us first no matter what.

Participant: I think that since, now during the pandemic that was harder because women had to take care of their children. It’s almost like since then, now, we can be there for our families. It’s not as big of a deal because we’re not taking time off. I’m not taking two or three hours a week off to take my son to his different appointments. I can be working. It’s almost made it easier for me to fulfill some of those roles. Sorry, , for interrupting you.

Participant: It’s okay, I’m glad you spoke because I was changing tactics a little. It’s similar where I don’t have children, but even in my household when my

partner and I both ended up at home during the pandemic. We have pets. If the pets do something or something was going on, I was always the person who had to stop my meeting. He was just down there on his. It was like a funny thing where I’m like oh, I didn’t know you were like this until the pandemic. Like that, I do like working at home, but even the pandemic changed our relationship. There are a lot of things that occurred that now, you see things differently. That is definitely one of those. He had a lot more privilege in how he was able to interact with work and how important it was for him to be professional.

This is a lot of TMI for strangers. But like where I was in charge of the pets. We did start. It was really interesting. We had a dog that was really ill and there was a lot of stuff going on. When I did have to go back to the office, it ended up actually costing me a ton of money because my partner said, “He can’t be here when you’re not here.” There wasn’t daycare that would take care of his illness nearby. I was driving from [city] to [city] to the [university] so that I could be in the office. Then his illness eventually claimed him.

Obviously, now I have a small commute again, but it was kind of that interesting thing where my partner was just like I would rather you.

There are those kind of weird dynamics. We’re kind of lucky because we

didn’t experience a lot of that. I think some of that is there are a lot of women up here. Those sorts of dynamics are obvious in moments and there is definitely like there are groups we talk about like the boy’s club up here, too, that exists, but it’s just not I don’t think as dramatic especially in places that are maybe more dominated by men. But just personally, in my own household, I saw those dynamics even without children involved.

Participant: I actually found that I’m really lucky with my spouse. He shares in everything, so I am very lucky including cooking dinner. I am grateful for that. It actually brought us closer. He worked at home way before the

pandemic. They shut down their offices. They’ve been working at home. It was nice to be able to sit down and not be stressed about fixing dinner and just having a nicer time together. Sometimes we would get on each other’s nerves, but we had a pretend officemate that we could blame everything on, so that helped. I’m sorry about your experience with partners because that would be so hard, the bad experiences I should say.

Moderator: I love the idea of having a pretend officemate to blame things on. That’s genius. It seems like I want to make sure I clarify, and I am understanding this correctly. I like the clarification that you made. Make sure I’m understanding this. That during the pandemic, there were some, it was more difficult for women, especially women who had pets or children to take care of that more of that burden fell on them. But since the pandemic, it’s almost

better. There is more beneficial, maybe, for women, because of the increased flexibility. Is that kind of what you were getting at, and would other people agree?

Participant: Yes.

Participant: In my office, we’ve all been given the opportunity to work in the office if we choose to. I don’t have a single colleague, female colleague that’s chosen to do, so I think that’ telling.

Participant: I mean I guess to that point, I think it just seems like people have mentioned so much how life falls on women. It’s like when you’re in the office and you’ve got ten minutes between a meeting, you can’t really do anything to help move your household tasks forward. But when you’re at home, you’re like, I can put in a quick load of laundry. I can start cutting up vegetables for dinner or whatever. It just kind of helps to bring things I think together and not be so stressed always for me. Well, I can’t always be like doing housework during work hours, but when I have a little bit of off time, it kind of helps prepare. Then maybe once I get to the evening time, it’s not as

stressful because I haven’t had to drive home from work and then take care of the dog, and then figure out dinner. It’s like some of those things I’ve been able to take care of a little bit during the day so then in the evening it’s like okay I also get to relax or like on the weekend, I also get to have a time to take a break, too.

Participant: I think the difference for me is it’s opened up a whole new way of working and living, actually. I much prefer the after pandemic than I did the pre- pandemic. That’s a big change for me. Just the life-work balance has been huge.

Moderator: Awesome, this has been so wonderful. I realize we only have one minute until noon. Those who have to go right at noon, go for it, totally understand. If you do have a couple more minutes, we just have one more subject matter to talk about. It should take about ten more minutes. Either way, if you need to go, totally understand. Thank you so, so much for being here. If you were able to stay ten more minutes, that would be amazing.

Researcher: I’m actually the one that has to step out. I’m so sorry. This was amazing. Moderator: Phenomenal, right?

Researcher: Amazing discussion, thank you so much everyone, wonderful.

Moderator: Thanks, . This really has been phenomenal. For those who are able to say for this last subject matter, we talked about it a little bit. This is based on pandemic decisions for work activities. What type of changes for your work

are still in effect? In particular, was there a change in your equity in your job during the pandemic? Like I said, I know we’ve talked about that said, but do you have any more thoughts on what’s still around post pandemic, especially in regard to equity?

Participant: I guess I would just add like probably it’s not like a super great thing for employers, but just even like had also mentioned that she had changed job during the pandemic. I think just because it was a little bit easier if you were in a situation where you are like this isn’t working out to look for a

situation that’s better without having to be like, “I have a dentist appointment today,” like when you go to interview, you just block off your calendar and no one really asks you. I feel like in that regard, it kind of makes that easier, especially if you are in a bad situation and you need to get to a better situation without it becoming a whole thing. Then there is always the you never know if you’re going to get fired because you’re looking for a new job or something like that. That’s been a benefit that I think is still around.

Participant: As far as equity goes, I notice a difference in meetings with men. Online it’s not nearly as bad. When I’m in person, I’m one of the only women. In the

past, I’ve been told really condescending things like, “Well, sweetheart…” that kind of stuff. There are particular employee that always talks over me. Anyway, it’s just frustrating. But that doesn’t happen as much online, which I really like. It gave us the opportunity. EDI has been a really, really big issue on campus since the pandemic, horrible things have happened. They put together a committee and mostly women were on that committee. We came up with some really good stuff. Then leadership just like, “No, we’re not going to do it anymore.” So that was frustrating for me. When I look at equity, there is a hospital campus. When we talk abut that kind of equity, it’s not just gender. But it’s the hospital side in our building that said, “No, we’re not going to do it.” And the campus side really wanted to do it and make those changes. That was a frustrating thing for me. I don’t know if that would have been different when we were in the office or not.

Participant: I think for us, and again, it’s hard to know some of those changes whether or not it was because of our leadership change or because of the pandemic. But I do think some of our conversations around just like general equity, we never had an EDI committee at all until post pandemic. I think that was a combination of the occurrences of things that were happening during the pandemic that we were all dealing with while we were and the conversations we were having with our leadership. I think it’s also because we had a new director.

I also feel like one thing that changed a little bit is I feel like I’m shy in my own way, too, where it’s like I’ll get really awkward in groups. I’ll talk really fast. I don’t know that I’m always that great in meetings of like presenting the way I feel, especially if I feel strongly or invested in something. The

pandemic has given us, I feel like, a lot more opportunities to communicate in ways that make it so the things that were good, the ways we’re good at

communicating, it makes it a more fair table because you’re hearing from people in different ways. Then they can kind of communicate the way that best works for them. Then you’re really seeing them. I feel like this is

echoing what we talked about before, but that made me feel like I’m more on equal footing because I feel like people are seeing me and my skills and my abilities in a different way than they might if it’s just me babbling on in a meeting too quickly to understand.

Participant: Something that I noticed in the equity piece, I can’t’ speak much to genders. I was in a very female dominated profession in academic advising. Our office, I think there are only like five men working there at any one time. One thing I did notice was down to the differences in equity down to the physical location that they wanted us to go back to working. My office had like three separate buildings on campus, the different kinds of teams or groups

occupied. That’s we’re in the [redacted] building, some in building [redacted], and then some in the library. I was really jealous and frustrated when we started going back into the office for one and then two days a week. The people in the library had a lot more leeway to work remotely than us.

Part of that was due to space issues. I think the library wasn’t open again. Then we lost that space. The library wanted it back from our office to do things with. A lot of that is out of our control and I think also down to just weird drama and dynamics in this specific office with the supervisor there. But that was one thing that was not equitable. It was okay, if you were in one physical location, if you liked where you were, you lucked out and you got to do it more often.

Participant: I think one thing that I noticed when I came to the [university] is how many more women there are in my field, like in the IT space. There’s a lot more women. I have worked with men mostly in my career because I’m like the

only IT girl. That has been really nice to see so many women and women that stand up for themselves and have a voice has been really nice to see and look up to. Also, I speak very softly. People tend to talk over me. Then I have to

raise my voice. Then I just sound like a B word because I’m raising my voice. With Zoom, I feel like everyone just kind of shuts up and lets you talk. That’s been really nice not being talked over. That’s kind of my experience with that.

Participant: I’ll just share that I haven’t felt that way. There are certain groups on campus where I felt men talk over. There are a couple of groups that we’ve worked with in the past where that was difficult. It’s still just as difficult. I don’t, for me, I have not seen it improve over Zoom. The same frustrations are there in meetings. It’s the outside of meeting communications and those informal communications that is the big differentiator for me that meetings feel the same gender wise.

Moderator: If you don’t mind putting in the chat, if you haven’t told me by email already, what your job looks like now as far as how much you’re working remotely, are you completely remote, are you partly remote. I know some people have mentioned it, but just so we have it in one place, if you don’t mind just

putting that in the chat real quit. Then that’s all I have for you all. Is there anything else that we should have asked that we didn’t? Anything that you all want to add before we wrap up? Awesome, thank you so much. This really

has been awesome, so helpful. Can’t wait to look through this transcript. Really appreciate it and thanks for joining us. Hope you all have a fabulous day.

Participant: Thank you guys, thanks everybody. Participant: Thanks, bye.

Moderator: Thanks, . [End of audio]