Moderator: When [Researcher] presses that, go ahead and click that you are okay with it. I appreciate that. Oh good, here is our last person joining us. Perfect okay. If we can just start by going around and sharing what you do at the university? I will just call your name in order as I see on the screen. , if you could go first to tell us what you do at the university?

Participant: Okay, can you hear me?

Moderator: Yes.

Participant: My name is , and I am the admin assistant to the CIO. I work in the IT department.

Moderator: Perfect. ? Which one do you prefer to go by? Participant: is easier.

Moderator: Okay awesome. Go for it.

Participant: I am . I am at [U2]. I am the Financial Officer over [the alumni department].

Moderator: Awesome. ?

Participant: I am in Dining Services. I run one of our dining halls on campus. Moderator: Awesome. ?

Participant: I have kind of a dual role here. I am the Director of Concurrent Enrollment for [U2]. I am also one of the assistant registrars over the catalog, the degree audit program, and curriculum.

Moderator: Great. ?

Participant: I am the Financial Officer for the College of [Nature and Sustainability]. Moderator: ?

Participant: . I am the Associate Director for the [redacted] Center.

Moderator: Awesome. ?

Participant: I am the Associate Director of [Catering].

Moderator: Thank you. , can you hear us? Okay, no worries. No worries. We will get back to you.

Participant: She said she is having issues with her connection. She will get out and start again.

Moderator: Okay, thank you. I appreciate that, . For the rest of the questions, feel free to just jump in whenever you want. We do not have to go in any certain order. If you could share with us how the Covid-19 pandemic impacted your work activities?

Participant: [Moderator], I have a question. How long do you want to consider the pandemic? Is it when [U2] transitioned to working remotely in March or to when our office came back? We came back in August of 2020. Or is it continuing on? How far of a range?

Moderator: That is a great question. I feel like that is hard to answer. Any and all of the above. It is anything that you feel like changed in your work. We can keep it very broad.

Participant: I will say a whole lot more Zoom meetings after that. I maybe went to just a handful before. Then after that, it is like at least half of my meetings are now on Zoom. It is so much easier. It is not like nobody wants to meet in person. It is just, oh here is a quick meeting. You are across campus or whatever. Our office was only out of the office from March 2020 until mid-August of 2020. I am in the registrar’s office, so we had to be back because it is everything that relates to registration, scheduling, and getting going.

Participant: I never left. We pivoted. We had a group of students – a whole housing unit had to be fed. Catering did all of the meals for anybody who was isolated. I never left. It was exhausting.

Participant: Like , for the most part, I never left. There were a few weeks in April when we finally shut down. At the beginning, it was every day things changed. We had to update procedures to be whatever they said was safe at that point for serving all of the residents who were still on campus. We had to keep trying to come up with ways to do social distancing, feed people, and get them. They normally eat in the dining halls. We had to get them meals to go. Employees were leaving left and right, so we were constantly trying to figure out how to cover everything. Then we finally shut down mid-April, and I did not come back until mid-May. After that, it was just trying to figure out how we were going to make things work for the school year.

Participant: It seems to me that we got word on a Wednesday. That Thursday and Friday, we had board meetings and then we had a big event – our [redacted] Event, which is huge. I know had to pivot with us because

we cancelled that. Bless her heart, we had a little 80-year-old lady get on a bus in California to come up here to be at the event. It was such a big deal. In my office, we had to have at least one person on because people were still donating money. As a team, the donations pivoted towards those students who could not get home, who had food insecurities, or other things. We put together a hardship grant. We had money flowing during that time that people were making donations. We needed somebody here. The leadership team traded off, but I was here most every day because I prefer being here as to home. My kitty thinks my keyboard is her resting spot. I never went home for more than one day a week at the most.

Everybody else was out. My boss would be here if he was not traveling. He did not do much traveling initially. Then the people who do the deposits would come in for just a short time.

Participant: I am in some way like . We had to have somebody that was present in our office the whole time. For my staff, I was the one that stayed in the office because we had to deposit money and do I-9s in person still for some of our items. We actually started preparing for Covid actually a week or two before the call was out because we had to have all the students transition to being in online courses. I worked with Distance Education at the time. We actually were doing the hiring on the Thursday and Friday when everybody was being told to go home. We were trying to get all the people hired and into the spots to be able to start doing all the online teaching. We had a lot of transition in trying to do the operational side of things to go ahead and facilitate that for each of those entities, hiring people, getting things in place, getting them access, and having all of that. We are shared service trying to help central offices and the departments be able to do that.

At the same time as , I went home for a few weeks in April, but have been here the whole time. Our building actually, I think only had about three people in it that were there. It was nice. We knew where everybody was. As people started filtering back in, I was like, oh no. It was a little nice to be able to know that it was just us there. There were a lot of Zoom meetings. I actually helped facilitate the contract for the university to get onto Zoom because we were doing [online portal] and different things like that before with [technology company]. I was just trying to make sure that we could get enough licenses together and all of that together. I worked with on it too. I was just trying to get all the operational side of things to facilitate a distance. There was a lot of impact within our area, and I was trying to facilitate those contracts and make sure things were in place for it. That changed a lot from my day-to-day business, which was usually just hiring people and doing budgets. It was a lot of work trying to work that into it and everything.

Participant: For me, it was in and out. I was working some at home and some here in the university. At the same time, we were building the center. At that point the center was only about a year running. It was in the middle part of the library. I was building the part here in the [redacted]. I was trying to figure out meetings on Zoom, and also trying to figure out a way for other students and ensure that they are safe and their families. One of the communities here in [redacted] was more affected with Covid because of the company that they worked with.

Participant: I do have to say that we did start planning for Covid before anything was shut down. Luckily, social media kind of saved us with that because of what was happening on TikTok, Twitter, and those kinds of things with the campuses in New York. They had isolated all their students on all of their campuses. People were taking pictures of their lunches and their dinners, having delivered six apples and a spoon. We were able to put a plan in place of when things did get shut down or we did need to start providing lunches. We had that in place already. It was not only lunches, but breakfast, lunch, and dinner. We already had that in place before the shutdown happened.

Participant: We have 72 employees in our department, and we had several who are high-risk so there was a lot of fear going around. Out of the 72, five or six of us chose to stay the entire time. Our offices were out until way into the beginning of 2021 because we were able to pivot, use so much of Zoom, and have meetings that way. As far as how it affected me, I was completely trying to source sanitizer, TP, Clorox wipes, and just trying to find all these different places that we could get them.

I do not know if any of the other departments were involved in this, but we got a lot of money from CARES. Our physical infrastructure team had to come back and physically be on campus. It was really hard for them to work in masks and all their PPE items that they had to wear. I was bringing in a bunch of different masks for them all to try out, and we still did not know if it was N95s, cloth, paper, or what we were supposed to be wearing. It was a lot of panic at first, but I was really surprised how fast everyone just settled down into work remote – especially for the ones that had little kids at home. We just got used to seeing them in the meetings.

What can you do? They are working from home.

Moderator: , can you hear us and respond? Participant: Yes, I hope that you can hear me now. Sorry. Moderator: Yes. Yes, we can hear you.

Participant: Okay. I work in housing. We actually got word of things starting to happen. It was Friday, March 13th. It was Friday the 13th, actually. We

were here until about eight o’clock that night trying to figure out how we get communication out to the students to let them know that things are going to be happening. We had to hurry and put together some documents in our system that allowed students to notify us if they were leaving, what date they were leaving, and all of those types of things.

How it impacted my work activity is I probably was working during that probably first three weeks. Basically, students started leaving on the 13th. They just dwindled as far as leaving throughout the rest of the semester. What I had to do is process all of their housing refunds. Prorations on rent were based on the day that they checked out, and then also on meal plans. We had to calculate all of that. What was left on their meal plans? I ended up probably working at least 70 to 80 hours every week for those weeks that we were there. That was huge. It was huge for me. I was both working here in the office, and then I would be working all hours of the night at my house in order to get those things processed.

Moderator: Wow. Thank you for sharing that. Thank you everybody. Thinking about your job now compared to pre-Covid, has there been any change in flexibility in your job now when compared to pre-Covid work?

Participant: I always had flexibility. If I had a huge report or when we do salary planner, which is setting up the [redacted]90 for the next year, I would always go home and do that. I very seldom worked from home. Here now in our office, we have several teams that are hybrid. One team one day a week works from home. I have got another team that has a rotating working at home. My team, I let them work from home, but it is an as- needed basis. They would rather be here also. I have had times like in July; I had a boatload of approvals. I just could not get through them, so I worked from home. It is a lot more flexible. I do not have to run it up the ranks to ask for permission. The ones who are on continuous same hybrid, that one has been put through and approved by whoever approves them.

, who approves them? HR? I do not know. Somebody.

Participant: Yeah, the Dean or something like that.

Participant: We are pretty much a hands-on department. It has allowed the technology to give a little bit easier access to taking a laptop home or having their desktop with them. I can say, if you are sick enough that you need to stay home, but you want to keep up on your emails, there is that ability. It has created flexibility that way. That being said, an event coordinator or catering person cannot do an event from somewhere else. Some of our team that is more administration or support have had more flexibility.

Participant: Can I add on that? The one thing that I have noticed in the office is people do not tolerate somebody coming in who is ill. They are all about, go home. Get out of here. We do not want to catch it. If you think you can work, go home and work. Before, oh I have the sniffles, but I can power through it. We do not want people to do that in our office.

Participant: For me, it is a little bit different. Until January, it was just me here in the office. Now we have a new member on our team. Also, I went through leadership changes. Our Director left. Our Associate Director left. Then somebody called, and we got a new Vice-President. It has been changing with the leadership. I work with students. Most of my staff are student workers. When they allowed all the students to go back home, pretty much everybody left. I had one or two here that were able to work with us. For them, because as a student worker, they cannot work from home. For me, it was flexible at the time. Now it is not that flexible because, like I said, it is just me and my program coordinator right now, so we need to be here. Our Vice-President is still figuring out if we are sick and if we can work from home. If we are sick, we are sick and we cannot work. That is still in process.

Participant: For us here in housing, we have all just pretty much worked here the whole entire time. There was a period of time when they were getting. There was a little bit of pushback from the administration to make sure that we were lower on the staffing scale just so we did not have everybody here by each other. We took one day at home. We rotated between the four people that work in our office. All of our maintenance teams and facility teams and all of that have been here the whole entire time. We really did not have that flexibility based on the work that we have to do every day.

Participant: In dining services it is kind of the same. You cannot really feed people remotely. There are a few things we can do remotely as far as administrative stuff goes, but 90% of our job has to be done right there with the customers. The whole idea of people not tolerating people coming in sick has become really complicated in dining services. We have about 400 student employees. A lot of them will call in for every sniffle. Oh, my roommate has a cough, and I am afraid it is Covid. I should not come in. That has been a real challenge for us to try to make sure that we always have enough staff when people are so afraid of coming to work sick or afraid of other people coming to work when they are sick. I think that has been one of the biggest challenges post-Covid for me.

Moderator: This is awesome. Does anybody else want to add anything about flexibility before we move onto the next question?

Participant: I think there has been a lot more remote work or even being able to hire people remotely at least for the admin part of things. I know there were

some people that were doing hybrid schedules before, but I think that there are a lot more hybrid schedules now than there have been before.

Sometimes even just to accommodate cross-campus entities of people meeting together, a Zoom is better than people going in person sometimes.

I think the efficiency of being able to do work sometimes -- I still love in- person meetings. I am not saying bad things about them. The efficiency of being able to jump on -- I was just in a meeting before this one – to jump from that one to this one and not have to walk somewhere, I think, has been really accommodating. Whereas before, I walked around a lot to a lot of different buildings and meetings. I think even within that, the whole working style of being able to do Zoom meetings, even if somebody was at home on this call right now, that accommodation has been really nice. Then having the hybrid and the remote work I think has been a lot more flexible for different people for whatever instances it might be. That I did not see before as much.

Participant: I agree with . The downside of that with the Zoom meetings is I can turn around and it is five o’clock, and I have not left my desk. Before Covid, at least once a day I would have to get up to go to a meeting someplace. It was probably a lot healthier, because I know I have put on a few pounds with Covid.

Participant: The other thing that is the downside with the Zoom meetings is I personally prefer my in-person meetings. It is especially because English is my second language, so sometimes it is better for me to have an in- person meeting. It is also because my screen is very big, so I can have Zoom, I can have this, and I have a few other things. Every time that something pings like my emails, I tend to open my email. I need to kind of focus and say okay, this is a meeting. You need to be 100% focused. At the same time in the back of my head, it is like there is nobody here. I can just try to multi-task, which does not work very well.

Moderator: I am glad you all brought up Zoom meetings because it ties in with the next question, which is about communication. I do want to ask one follow- up question about flexibility. That is for those of you who have jobs that you have to be on campus all or most of the time, such as dining, housing, or others. Have you seen anything change in flexibility? Obviously, maybe it is not being able to work from home. Is there any other thing that has become more flexible? Is it really just back to normal and back to the slog with no changes in flexibility?

Participant: I can say that Covid compassion left pretty quickly. As far as flexibility, when it came back, everybody wanted it bigger and better. For some reason, they had a bigger budget for what they wanted to do. They also were like this is the time. If we are going to change anything, we are going

to change it now. An event that had been done for years and years the exact same way, they were changing it totally up. It was not flexible. We were having supply chain issues. People would understand it from a grocery store point of view or a restaurant point of view. When I would consult with them and they would want something that was out of the ordinary, there was not a lot of flexibility in that. They would get frustrated. They did not understand the rising costs and those kinds of things. Like I said, that Covid compassion once we went from doing zero things to 100%, there was a very short time. We had a few events, but then it went from zero to 100 overnight. People became very inflexible and very frustrated that we could not provide the services that they wanted right then.

Participant: I think for us, it is kind of what said with the Covid compassion stuff. I think that there was a little bit just internally and within our staff. There was a little bit of animosity towards some of the people who got to work from home, because that was not fair. Here I am. I am having to go into places that potentially have sick. I have to fix a sick with somebody who has Covid or whatever it may be. There was quite a bit of animosity towards other university employees about that because it really was not a fair playing field.

Then also too is when we started to transition out of that. When the students came back in the fall, we had this whole system of if they got Covid. Then we had to put them in isolation rooms. Then dining had to feed them meals, bring them meals, and all of this other kind of stuff. There was all this extra work that was involved in that whole process. Then as things kind of started to dwindle down and they were basically like not anymore. We are now just treating it like you are people that live with you or your family. You just follow those guidelines.

Then we had a lot of parents that were upset because we were not isolating their child or their child’s roommate from them and all this other stuff. It was just like an ongoing saga with people who were not happy about the different situations, depending on what it would be.

Participant: I do think that there was a little bit more compassion when it came from higher up. It is when it comes to people being sick, needing time off, or flexibility in that way. In the restaurant industry in general, we tend to work ourselves to death. It is not uncommon to work 60-hour weeks in restaurants. That is kind of the mentality. It is not just a campus thing. It is all over. Every restaurant I have ever worked in, that is how people view their jobs. They eat and breathe it. The idea of ever taking time off because you are sick or your child is sick is really traditionally okay, I guess we have to. There is not a lot of support. I feel like that has changed a lot. If somebody is sick in your house, it is a lot more of you have to just

make sure your family is taken care of. You have to have more of that work-life balance.

We have to take care of ourselves. There were a lot of us who got really sick with Covid during that time. My father passed away from Covid. There were a lot more personal stories where people realized we really have to balance that a lot more. I have seen a lot more compassion, at least from leadership, when it comes to that.

Moderator: I am so sorry about your father, . Thank you for sharing all of that. That is super helpful, everybody. Moving back to the communication thing, some people brought up Zoom and Zoom meetings. In addition to that, was there a change in communication levels when compared to pre- Covid work? Maybe have communication levels gotten healthier? Have they gotten less healthy? How are communication levels now in your job as compared to pre-Covid?

Participant: I can say pre-Covid and Covid times I was put on several different task forces and committees. Since then, those are all gone. I am not on those anymore. The communication was very frustrating for me, and I am sure

. We had some people. People from higher above us were walking through the dining halls, walking through the catering kitchen, or wherever and telling us how we should do our jobs when they had never stepped in before that. It is like you need to sanitize this way. We are like, we already do that. We are ten times more careful than we should have been. They were not understanding that.

Just having the optics on the whole university and having to feed the athletes for training table, but some of them refused to wear a mask. We were having to elevate that up. Whoever happened to believe wearing a mask or not wearing a mask, that was what we had to deal with. It was like, whoever was believing the protocol or if they did not believe the protocol, was what whoever they were reporting to or reported. Does that make sense? The team would report to a coach. If the coach believed it, then they would wear a mask. If the coach did not believe it, then they would not. Then they would want our staff to enforce it.

It was a difficult time, yes. Communication was difficult especially because everybody was being told ten and 12 different things. It is kind of like I do not remember who said it, but they said nobody quite knew what to believe. Which mask was better? There was a lot of confusion. That was everybody. That was from the top down. We just did not know what communication was valid.

Moderator: Does anybody else have anything they want to share about communication and how it compares now to before Covid?

Participant: Mine is more about dealing with the operational side. It might be administrative stuff. Before, people would walk in and talk to you. We would go to each person’s desk and talk. We have Slack here. Slack picked up a lot to have group messaging and to have a channel. We have all these channels now. If goes out or if IT was having issues, there were a lot of channels that would keep us updated. Before, they were emails that were sent to us or different things like that. I feel like that community of communication really picked up. Even being able to put notifications on there like I am just going to lunch. I have my staff all put on there when they are going to lunch and when they are coming back. If we are trying to get ahold of each other, we would know why there was a delay in trying to get ahold of each other.

We saw even outside our team. I even have my boss who was a VP and was going ahead and using it as well to talk to me, which is unprecedented for him to be able to do that. There was a lot of gravitation at least from our administrative side to go ahead and have that be our communication tool to get instant responses. That turned into, let me just step into your office was now Slack. It was being able to be like, let me go ahead and ask you a quick question. Even to this day, I still have it. That is the quickest way usually to get ahold of me. It is through Slack and everything. I think that changed that dynamic of people walking into my office or coming in asking me questions. I now use that instant messaging platform or group text messaging platform for it.

Participant: For me, I was over at the [redacted building], which is a standalone building. Most of the dining services are in a different area in different buildings. I felt very isolated during Covid and even after Covid because everything transitioned so much to online meetings and stuff. I would go months without seeing other people in dining services in person aside from the ones who were actually in the building with me. All of my upper management and stuff, I would not see them in person for weeks and weeks at a time. A lot of times, we felt very isolated that way because we did not feel like there was a lot of attention to what was going on with us and our operation as much as some of the other operations.

The rest of the operations were incredibly slow when we came back in fall of 2020 and spring of 2021. Whereas everybody at the [redacted building] was incredibly busy because almost everybody who was on campus had online classes. They were all just staying in the area and coming to the [redacted building]. We did not feel like we had that support because nobody was actually coming over to the building to see actually the [redacted building] is busy, as opposed to all these other operations that are really slow and they have nothing to do with their time.

Moderator: This is super helpful. Thank you. Is there anything else people want to share about communication before we move on? Okay great. Based on your experiences during the pandemic, what differences did you see between men and women and their experiences at work? Were the changes that were made different for men or women? Were they more difficult for one gender versus another? Were they more beneficial for one gender versus another? Just in general, were there any differences that you saw between genders? , go for it.

Participant: I had a lot of our male colleagues mention to us that they did not realize how much either the stay-at-home moms or moms who worked and now were back at home with the kids, how much work it took on a day-to-day basis to do their kids. I hope that is a positive result of this, but I do not know.

Participant: I do want to say I did see one or two males that had children on screen with them or in the background. The majority that I did see were females that would have the children there. I did have the same thing as .

People were expressing the difficulty of their children doing distance learning. I guess we are going to that. The caretaking of being able to have them distance learn and then doing their own work and just trying to navigate that responsibility to try to do both of those things, I could not wait for school to go back and for them to go back there. Their children needed that.

That was something I did see. There were more children on the laps of the moms or in the background – including my own kid – rather than the husband or male counterpart that we have on screen. I rarely would see as many children with the men when we were doing Zoom calls at least to have that happen.

Participant: I did learn that my husband does not multitask very well. He worked from home and could not multitask.

Participant: I was actually surprised how many of my male coworkers stayed home with their children when their children had Covid or whatever and needed to stay home. This was as opposed to their wives. I did not expect that. In my house, I was the one that stayed home with the kids. There were several of our staff members that they were the ones that stayed home with their kids. I do not know if that was just more balanced, or if I just happen to have really great coworkers. I do not know.

Moderator: Any other differences you saw between genders during the pandemic, since the pandemic, or with the changes? All right, that works. Based on pandemic decisions for work activities, what types of changes for your

work are still in effect? Has there been any change in equity in your job during the pandemic?

Participant: I think I am only speaking from my point of view. I do know that for a year and a half, the staff on campus facilities, maintenance people, dining, staff, assistance, and the people were holding the university together. We became very important to the university. The doorknobs were getting cleaned. The mail was getting taken care of. Emails were getting answered. Trying to keep the invisibility from coming back over at a higher education school in general, the professors are very, very important. We would not be here without it at the university. I think the recognition of the people who did keep the campus going has kind of wavered off a little bit since Covid.

Participant: I would agree with what said as well.

Participant: In our department, I just think people got more caring and more aware. We all went through a hard time together. Several people lost loved ones from Covid. Some people got hit with Covid like they were long-haulers and still are having problems with it. I just think, at least within our department, there is just more compassion. There is more flexibility in the sense that it is not these are what the working rules are. It is what is working out for your family. Several teams have gone to hybrid just because they are still efficient, they are still effective, and we have the technology and can do it. For example, our team that works physically on campus to keep the networks going. They never got the option to work from home. They had to physically be here, but there is more recognition now. People are always thanking them for their efforts.

Moderator: This is super helpful. Thank you. Do you think any of these changes that are still in effect, do they impact women and men differently?

Participant: I do not see any of that in our office. All of us have shouldered it together and moved forward. I am sure there is peripherally, but at least in the

registrar’s office everyone has been in the same boat.

Participant: I agree with for our department. Participant: I agree as well in housing.

Moderator: Awesome. We are actually wrapping up. I want to give [Researcher] a chance to see if there are any follow-up questions she wants to ask. First of all, is there anything else that you all would like to share with us?

Anything we should have asked that we did not? All right. This has been super helpful. Thank you. [Researcher], do you have any follow-up questions?

Researcher: I do not. This was incredibly helpful. It was so informative. Thank you so much everybody for your time. We appreciate it.

Participant: Thanks. Bye.

Moderator: Thank you. It was nice talking with you all. Everybody, have a great rest of your day.

Participant: Thank you.

Participant: Thank you.

Participant: Thank you. You too.