

August 17, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The start of the academic year is fast approaching, while the university strives to keep WSU students, faculty, staff and visitors safe, we fully recognize that many WSU employees continue to face uncertainties beyond the workplace.

It has become abundantly clear that a global pandemic knows no boundaries and the lines between personal responsibilities and professional obligations are intersecting. Many of you are navigating uncharted territory as you juggle multiple roles often under one roof at the exact same time. I am continually impressed by the perseverance and compassion I have seen across the WSU community, and at the same time, know that the demands many of you may be feeling take a toll. University leadership is asking the WSU community members to take a moment to pause and reflect on what lies ahead so you can take inventory on what your world may look like, personally and professionally, as we move into and through the fall term.

In light of recent K-12 school district announcements, faculty and staff will receive a brief survey from Human Resource Services later this week to help gauge the familiarity of resources and to determine additional areas employees may need assistance. Please take the time to complete the survey when you receive it.

HRS will continue to reach out to supervisors and ask them to proactively engage employees in a conversation about their personal and professional needs to identify resources and workplace solutions to help employees navigate work-life balance. Likewise, I want to encourage you to reach out to your supervisor to collaboratively discuss and explore options based on your personal circumstances. Now is the time to be creative and flexible as we seek out solutions utilizing all available options such as [remote-work and flexible-work schedules](#). Together, you and your supervisor can seek a workplace arrangement that meets your and the university's needs. I have included a list of resources at the end of this letter that may help inform your discussions.

We fully recognize that many of our employees are working parents and the uncertainties for school-age children this upcoming school year presents unique challenges. Please reach out to your supervisor to discuss your needs and collaborate on a plan in light of recent K-12 school district announcements. If you need to update any information previously submitted to your supervisor or department, please do so without concern. Having the most up-to-date information about employee availability only improves the planning process. Connect with your supervisor to determine how best to proceed.

Finally, I want to reaffirm that we are in this together and reinforce principles outlined in previous communications about employee engagement—take care of yourself and take care of one another.

The combined strength we bring to our community and the power we hold collectively to face anything that comes our way.

Taking a moment to remember and appreciate that we are part of a larger WSU community is important.

Take Care,



Theresa Elliot-Cheslek, SPHR, SHRM-SCP  
Vice President and Chief Human Resource Officer  
Washington State University

#### Resources

- [Human Resource Services](#) | [Contact HRS](#), (509) 335-4521
- [COVID-19 Leave and Work Information](#)
- Parent/Caregiver
  - [COVID-19 Resources for Parents and Caregivers](#)
  - [Creating a Backup Childcare Plan](#) (*accessed via the "Parenting" section of the EAP site*)
  - [Navigating Change in Challenging Times Webinar](#)
  - [Parent/Caregiver Caring for Your Family During COVID-19 Guide](#)
  - [Strategies for supporting learning at home](#)
  - [Family resources for remote learning](#)
  - [Supporting families during COVID-19](#)
- [Employee Assistance Program](#)
  - Resources that specifically address COVID-19 impacts on emotional and mental health and wellbeing, including live and recorded webinars, handouts, and links to resources.
    - [COVID-19 Resources](#)
    - [On Demand Webinars](#)
    - [Suicide Prevention and Intervention Resources](#)
- [WSU Benefits](#)
  - Mental Health Services/Wellbeing
    - The employee insurance plans offered through WSU cover mental health services see your plan's [Certificate of Coverage](#) for specifics about your plan, including whether a referral or pre-authorization is required.
  - [Employee Wellbeing](#)