

CAFE Faculty and Staff March 2021 Feedback Survey Report

28 May 2021

The College of Agriculture, Food and Environment conducted a survey of faculty and staff in the college to assess perceptions among themes of effectiveness and well-being in March 2021 as compared to the end of 2019, and to identify potential ideas for helping people. The following report is provided to summarize for interested readers the methods used, results found, and potential next steps.

Executive Summary

A brief (~3-minute) survey designed to assess faculty and staff perceptions was deployed March 15 – 26, 2021. This was conducted in part as a mid-point follow-up to the UK@Work survey deployed every two years university-wide—and in part as a college investigation of work perceptions during the pandemic. The College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Office of Faculty Resources, Planning and Assessment staff met with college Faculty and Staff Councils to investigate appropriate and timely themes to frame survey questions, and collaborated with staff from the college business office, UK Human Resources, UK Work-Life, and UK Institutional Research for technical consultation on survey design and analysis.

Of 2,094 employees who received a unique invitation link to the survey by email, 555 (26.5%) responded. SAP™ Employee data were used to create the contact list for survey invitations and were used as embedded data for survey responses in order to reduce effort on the part of the survey respondent and speed analysis. Respondents included faculty and staff, who were grouped by SAP™ employee category, demographics, work location, or other criteria available through SAP™ records without personally identifying the respondent. In creating the contact list care was taken to separate personally identifying information so that specific individuals/departments could not be associated with any specific response.

The survey instrument (Appendix A) was designed and deployed using Qualtrics™ with primary goals to 1) anonymously collect quantitative and qualitative information, 2) require no more than five minutes to complete, 3) use embedded data of employee demographics from SAP™, and 4) aggregate results to aid decision-making and communication internally as the university transitions to the next phase(s) of university operations. More specifically, the survey instrument asked respondents to indicate their perception across themes of individual and team effectiveness, sense of work community, and personal well-being as compared to the end of 2019 through four prompts designed for quantitative analysis of survey results. In addition, two open text responses were used for qualitative analysis with prompts directing the respondent to provide information concerning things that are working better than at the end of 2019 and suggestions for enhancements going forward.

The survey results indicate that although there are common themes of specific challenges and improvements found over the past year, individual experiences and perceptions vary widely—making development of simple solutions common across all employees challenging. In general, college employees report similar levels of individual and team effectiveness as compared to the end of 2019, decreased levels of sense of community and well-being, along with impacts from communication and internet issues. Of the well-being themes investigated, anxiety and stress are self-reported at the highest levels among the five dimensions of well-being as compared to end of 2019. Faculty report less effectiveness and well-being than non-faculty employees in the college overall, while female and remote

work employees report higher levels of effectiveness and well-being than male employees and non-remote work employees respectively. The open text responses identified common themes of caregiving, remote work, communication, sense of community, time management and workload, technology, and well-being. These responses further clarified perceptions of improved effectiveness from greater access to technological resources/training and more distraction-free working time, while also clarifying the need for equitable structures and clear communication of expectations.

The college may deploy the survey again at times appropriate to understand changes in perception as we transition over the coming months, and in alignment with the 2021 UK@Work survey dates to allow for enhanced interpretation of results concerning college faculty and staff perceptions of work engagement.

Methods

Prior to developing the survey instrument, the CAFE Office of Faculty Resources, Planning and Assessment (OFRPA) met with college and university partners to gain insight and form a partnership for this project. These partners include employees from the college business office, university HR, and university Institutional Research. OFRPA met with focus groups of the CAFE Faculty and Staff Councils to gain insight into common themes potentially affecting employee engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic. Information gained from these conversations was used to design a survey intended to solicit meaningful feedback from college faculty and staff. A test pilot survey administration was completed to test deployment and solicit feedback on the survey instrument.

SAP™ Employee data were used to create the contact list for survey invitations and were used as embedded data for survey responses in order to reduce effort on the part of the survey respondent and speed analysis. In creating the contact list care was taken to separate personally identifying information so that specific individuals/departments could not be associated with any specific response.

The survey instrument (Appendix A) was designed and deployed using Qualtrics™ with primary goals to 1) anonymously collect quantitative and qualitative information, 2) require no more than five minutes to complete, 3) use embedded data of employee demographics from SAP™, and 4) aggregate results to aid decision-making and communication internally as the university transitions to the next phase(s) of university operations.

The survey asked respondents to:

- indicate their perceptions of the sense of work community, personal well-being, and personal and team effectiveness at the time of response (March 2021) as compared to the end of 2019;
- indicate level of personal and team impact from caregiving responsibilities, communication with supervisor and/or colleagues, software/hardware resources, internet speed and stability, and physical work space; and
- provide open text feedback concerning things that are working better than at the end of 2019 and solutions for enhancing effectiveness in the current climate.

Communication to inform CAFE faculty and staff about the survey was conducted through four contacts as a modified Don A. Dillman et al. - The Tailored Design Method approach. The first contact was an announcement from Dean Cox in the March edition of the College Monthly clarifying the purpose and scope of the feedback survey. The second contact was the survey invitation, automated through Qualtrics, providing a unique link for each potential respondent (n=2,094). The invitation went to all college employees as a list generated from SAP employee records with the exception of student employees. Contact three consisted of an automated reminder invitation after one week. The fourth contact was on the final day of the survey window. Only potential respondents who had not yet completed the survey were included in the third and fourth contacts. The survey was open from March 15 – 26, 2021.

Survey results were exported from Qualtrics to IBM SPSS v. 27 for descriptive statistical and tests for differences analysis of quantitative data by Brian Lee and to Tableau for quantitative visualization by Tricia Coakley. In addition, there were a rich set of data intended to identify potential solutions and operations that were working better, which were collected through two open ended text questions and analyzed via qualitative analysis.

Two slider bar types of questions in the survey (question 1 and 4) created many null response results being exported from Qualtrics. We understand this to be a result of the respondent not realizing that the bar must be “touched” to record a response, and choosing to leave the bar in the starting position of “same as the end of 2019” when the mid-point adequately described their response. Based on this assumption, nulls were replaced for the following statistical and quantitative analyses. If the respondent answered any of the themes in the same question where a null appears for one or more of the themes, the null values were replaced with 50 (the numeric equivalent of “same as end of 2019” on the 1 – 100 scale) for that respondent. If the respondent answered none of the themes, producing a null value for all themes in a single question, the nulls were not replaced for that respondent and treated as such in subsequent analysis. When testing for statistically significant differences between groups, the nonparametric tests of the Mann-Whitney U Test, Kruskal-Wallis H Test, and the Pearson Chi-Square Test were used.

Qualitative Methods

The survey included two free text response boxes asking the questions:

- 1. Given the current conditions, please enter any solutions you recommend that would help faculty/staff be most effective or have the greatest positive impact on the work experience.*
- 2. Please enter any comments concerning things that are working better than they were at the end of 2019, for you as an individual employee or for your work group as a whole.*

To analyze responses to these questions, Tricia Coakley first read the text responses and drafted a list of first impression "themes." Megan Lucy then read the same text responses as well and made amendments to the themes list based on her observations. Having read all of the responses, Coakley and Lucy agreed that respondents did not express a substantial difference in approach to the two questions and in fact often continued thoughts from their first response into their second. Because of this, the two responses were treated as one continuous text for the remainder of the analysis and results presented. For the second qualitative analysis stage, Megan Lucy took the previously identified

themes and operationalized each text response opportunity with the terms "positive," "negative," "mixed," and "no response" in regards to each theme. The terms were then used in Microsoft Excel pivot tables to determine the proportion of positive and negative (mixed & no response) comments regarding each theme within groups of respondents.

Of potential interest based on what people were concerned about and thought might be potential effects of the pandemic we prepared to be able to analyze with these considerations in mind. Unfortunately, the following analyses do not investigate some possible and valuable between group comparisons that may be of interest, including race/ethnicity demographics, because the individual group respondent populations were too small to assess significance of differences and/or to prevent accidental inferences about individual respondents relative to the overall group sizes in the college.

Results

The results will be presented from the quantitative portion first followed by the qualitative response themes. The survey collected 555 (26.5%) responses out of 2,094 college faculty and staff invitations. Of the 555 respondents, 509 were from full-time employees and 90.3% were from employees in the categories of Executive/Administrative/Managerial, Office & Clerical, Ext. Agent, Technical/Paraprofessional, and Faculty. These data collected resulted in a 99% overall confidence level with a 5% margin of error.

Survey Respondents Descriptive statistics

PAYSCALE TYPE	HOURLY = 217 (39.1%)	SALARIED EXEMPT = 338 (60.9%)
GENDER	Female = 362 (65.2%)	Male = 193 (34.8%)
SUPERVISOR	Yes = 189 (34.1%)	No = 363 (65.4%)
MAIN CAMPUS NORMAL WORK LOCATION	Yes = 284 (51.2%)	No = 269 (48.5%)
REMOTE WORK ADDRESS ENTERED	Yes = 131 (23.6%)	No = 419 (75.5%)
UNDER REPRESENTED MINORITY	Yes = 22 (4.0%)	No = 533 (96.0%)
FACULTY (PRIMARY ROLE)	Yes = 83 (16.3%)	No = 426 (83.7%)

Question Response

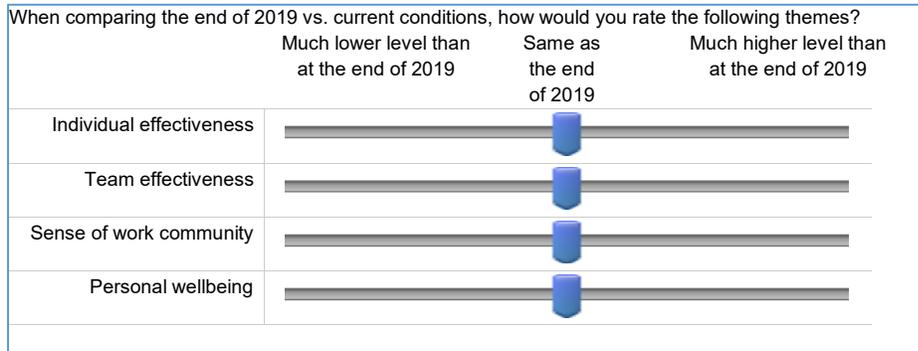
Each question typically resulted in a full response range across the quantitative question scale (*i.e.*, 0-100) range, indicating that faculty and staff respondents are experiencing the conditions in potentially very different ways.

Individual and Team Effectiveness

Overall, when analyzing median responses, CAFE employees perceive individual and team effectiveness similar to that at the end of 2019, while perceiving a decrease in sense of work community and personal

well-being. Additionally, results indicate that the greatest actions/resources sources impacting individual and team effectiveness are communication issues as well as internet speed and stability.

Among the four themes of individual and team effectiveness, sense of work community, and well-being, the median value of responses indicate individual and team effectiveness being the same as the end of 2019 (value = 50), with a greater proportion of respondents indicating more than before than those indicating less than before. Personal well-being and sense of work community, however, resulted in median responses indicating less than at the end of 2019. The question as presented in the survey is below.



The results from the question are presented in the following table.

THEME	MEDIAN	ST. DEV.	N	MEANING (AS COMPARED TO 2019)
INDIVIDUAL EFFECTIVENESS	50	24.5	469	Same
TEAM EFFECTIVENESS	50	24.6	398	Same
SENSE OF WORK COMMUNITY	45	27.0	417	Less
PERSONAL WELL-BEING	49	25.3	417	Less
OVERALL COMPARISON (4-ITEM CRONBACH'S ALPHA = 0.823)	49	20.5	313	Less

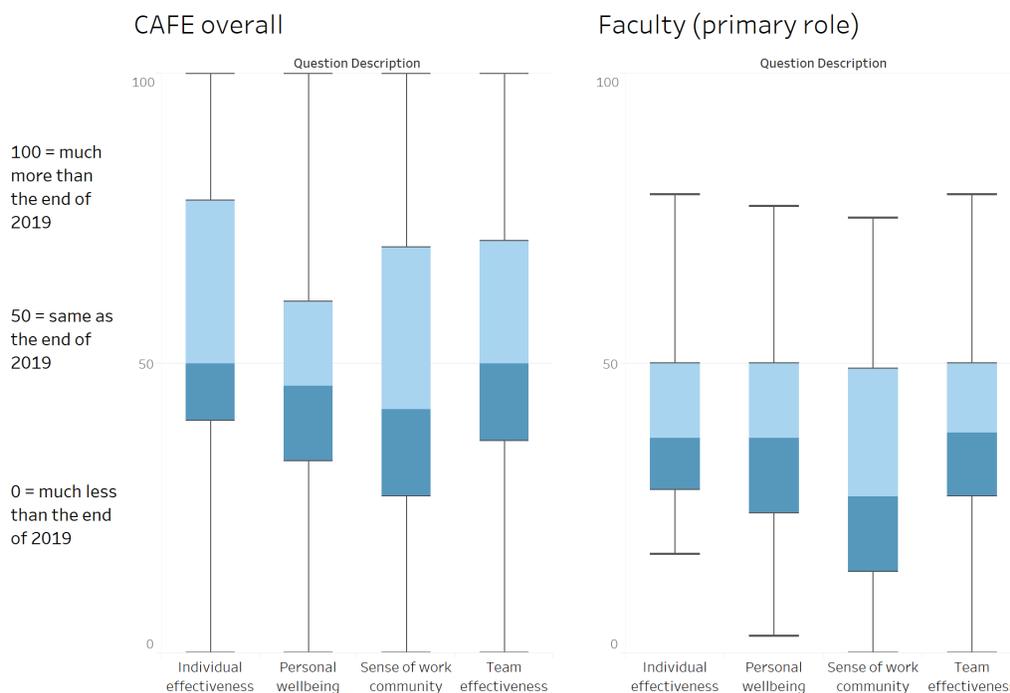
*ANALYSIS RUN ON REGULAR FULL-TIME (EMPLOYEE PERSONNEL SUBAREA) ONLY

When considering that conditions might be affecting different employee categories differently, between group differences for the overall responses among themes (4-item aggregation across themes) were tested using non-parametric tests for differences (Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H). No significant differences were found based on supervisory responsibilities, payscale type, pre-pandemic work location being on main-campus, or faculty DOE (20% threshold). In contrast, statistically significant group differences were found when testing on gender, employee category (faculty), and having a remote work address entered in SAP with resulted presented in the following table.

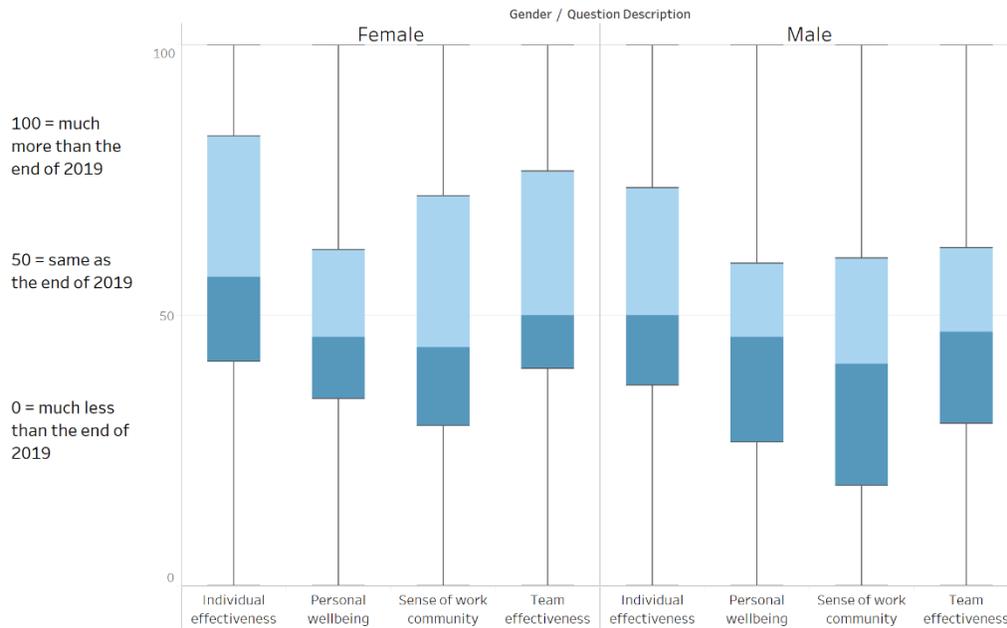
GROUPS	TEST	SIGNIFICANCE	CATEGORY (MEAN RANK) N	CATEGORY (MEAN RANK) N	MEANING
GENDER (F/M)	M-W U	.007	Female (167) 205	Male (138) 108	More positive perception among females
	K-W H	.000	Female (254) 300	Male (201) 169	
REMOTE WORK ADDRESS ENTERED	M-W U	.023	Yes (176) 83	No (150) 230	More positive perception among respondents with remote work address
	K-W H	.007	Yes (264) 121	No (225) 348	
FACULTY (PRIMARY)	M-W U	.000	Yes (103) 48	No (167) 285	Less positive perception among faculty than non-faculty
	K-W H	.000	Yes (165) 76	No (248) 393	

Faculty respondents (excluding chairs and associate deans with a faculty appointment) indicated lower levels of effectiveness, sense of community, and well-being as compared to the end of 2019 than the college overall respondents. Female employees indicate higher levels of effectiveness than male employees, and employees who have entered a remote work address in SAP indicate higher levels than those who have not. These data are graphed in the following three figures.

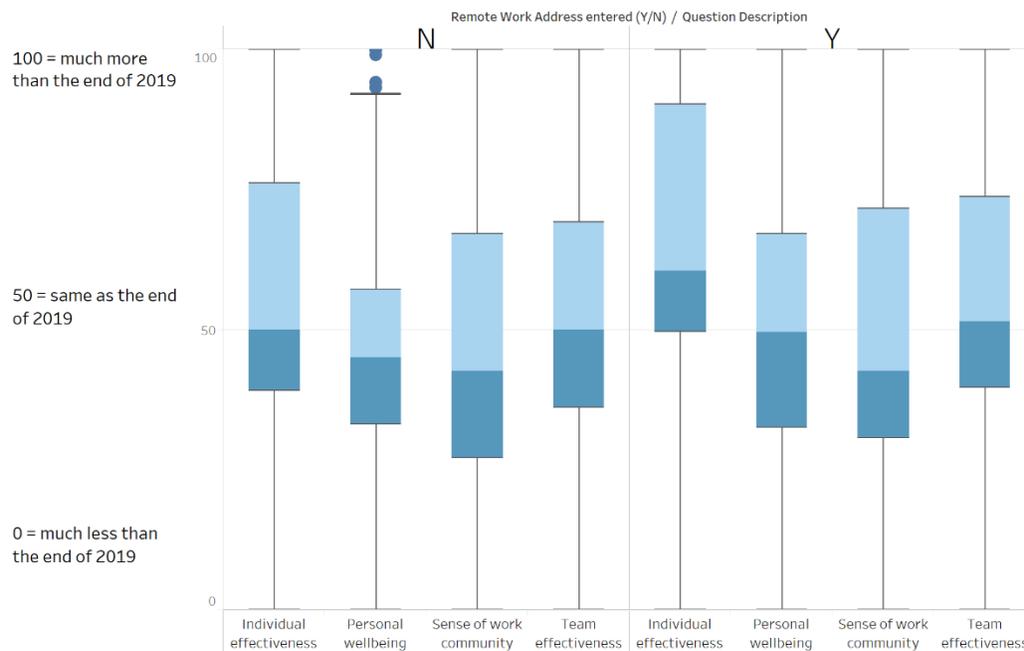
Survey responses concerning themes of effectiveness and wellbeing



Themes by gender



Themes by remote work address entered (Y/N)



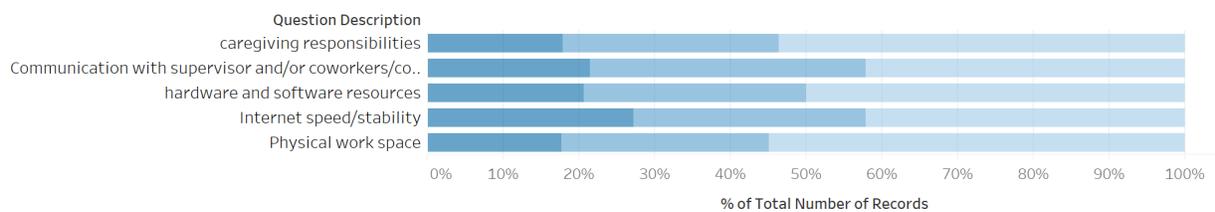
Hypothesized Sources of Work Related Impacts

During discussions with Faculty and Staff Councils focus groups, there were points of view expressed concerning five anticipated sources including—caregiving responsibilities, communication with supervisor and/or coworkers/colleagues, hardware and software resources, internet speed and stability,

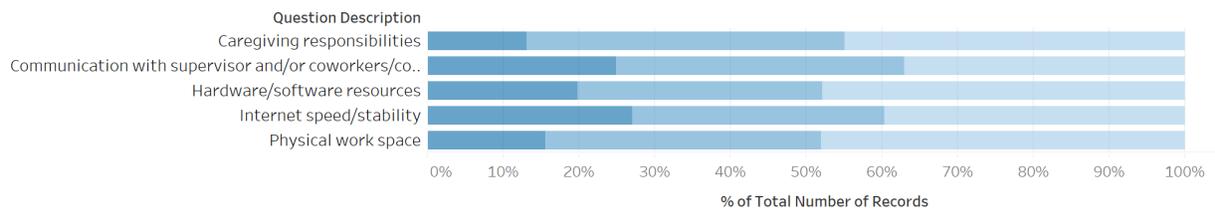
and physical work space. Question 2 asked the respondent to consider five factors that may impact them individually while question 3 asked the respondent to consider how those same five factors impact their team as a whole. The answer choices for each item were one of three categories described as “minimal to no impact,” “periodic impact,” or “substantial impact.”

Respondents indicate that the greatest impacts to individual and team effectiveness are from “Communication with supervisor and/or coworkers” and “Internet speed / stability. Over 60% of respondents indicated team impacts from each of these sources. Overall, respondents indicated greater impacts to the team than to individual effectiveness across all sources and approximately 20% (1 in 5) of respondents identify substantial impact in any one or more of these areas. Caregiving was indicated as more than statistically expected for the respondents younger than age 50.

Individual Impacts



Team Impacts

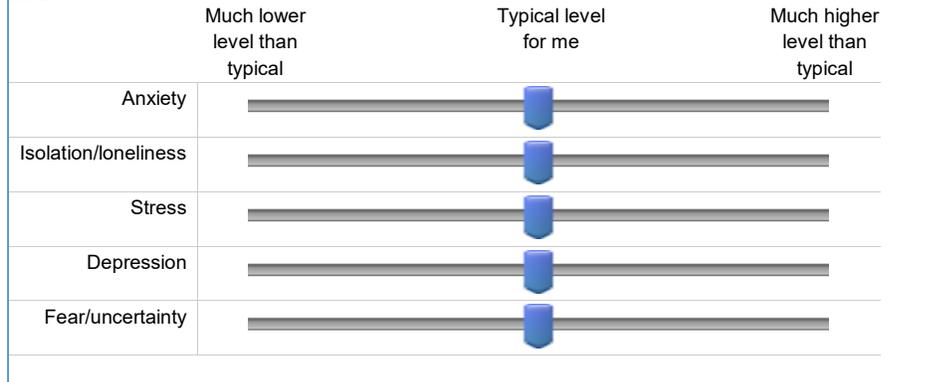


Textual Answer
 Minimal or no impact Periodic impact Substantial impact

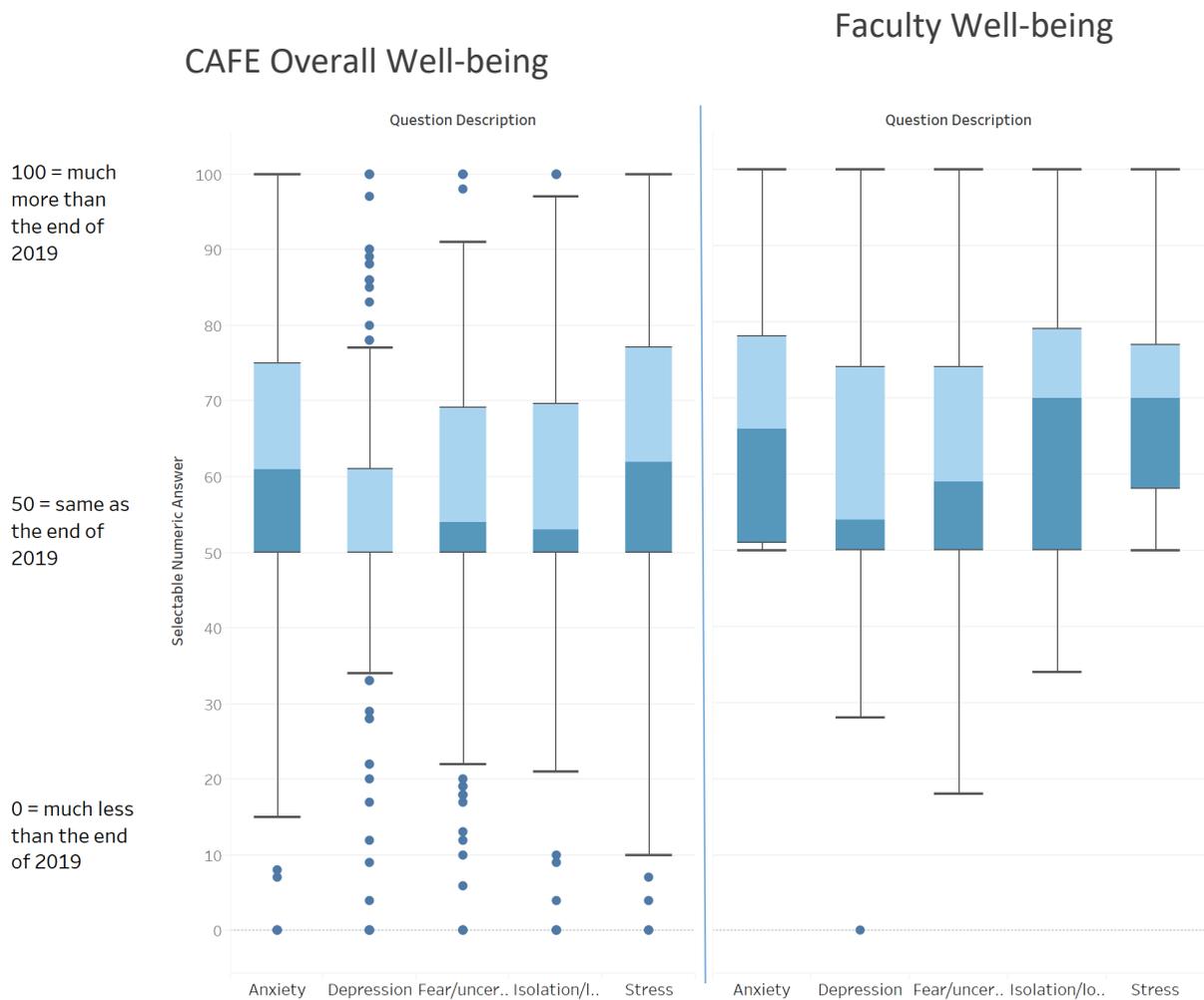
Personal Well-being

The fourth survey question investigated five dimensions of personal well-being—anxiety, isolation/loneliness, stress, depression, and fear/uncertainty. Overall college respondents indicate (as median) increased levels of anxiety, fear/uncertainty, isolation/loneliness, and stress as compared to the end of 2019, while indicating similar levels of depression as prior perceptions. Median results from faculty respondents indicate higher levels of each well-being dimension than end of 2019 perceptions, and higher levels than those indicated by the college overall results. The survey question is shown in the next figure while the descriptive graph and table follow on the next two pages.

Among the following dimensions of wellbeing, please rate your current level as compared to your typical level at the end of 2019. Note that you are not indicating your level of stress, but rather how your current level compares to previous levels.



The differences reported by faculty compared to the college overall are presented in the graph below and the table below provides greater detail on the overall college results.



WELL-BEING THEME	MEDIAN	ST. DEV.	N	MEANING
ANXIETY	61	22.8	439	More anxiety
ISOLATION/LONELINESS	51	20.4	325	More I/L
STRESS	63	23.4	400	More stress
DEPRESSION	50	21.4	303	Same level of depression
FEAR/UNCERTAINTY	55	21.1	344	More F/U
OVERALL WELL-BEING	58	18.1	219	Less well-being overall

5-ITEM CRONBACH'S ALPHA = 0.918(0.883)

Qualitative results

An iterative process with review by multiple analysts was used to code themes identified through the two open response questions in the survey—1) Given the current conditions, please enter any solutions you recommend that would help faculty/staff be most effective or have the greatest positive impact on the work experience and 2) Please enter any comments concerning things that are working better than they were at the end of 2019, for you as an individual employee or for your work group as a whole.

Overall, common themes expressed provide more clarity to the quantitative results from the matrix scale survey questions and include expressions covering a wide range between concern over systems not working well, to gratitude for things working better than before and anticipation of beneficial changes to come as a result of organizational and individual learning since the end of 2019.

Quantitatively the full range of responses were provided and a similar notion could be used to describe the qualitative responses, too.

Common themes identified include caregiving, remote work, communication, sense of community, time management and workload, technology, and well-being. The following graphics show a representational selection of comments on each theme, selected in proportion to the overall numbers of positive and negative comments submitted. The number of overall comments related to the theme is reflected in the comment theme heading. For example, on the next page there were 19 comments submitted regarding the theme Caregiving. Six of the comment were coded are negative while 12 comments were coded as positive and one comment was coded as mixed. In each callout, there is text that was provided by a survey respondent to provide more information and in relative proportion to all comments as selected by the team.

Comments Regarding Remote Work – 139 Total Comments



Comments Regarding Well-being – 102 Total Comments



Comments Regarding Time Management & Workload – 94 Total Comments



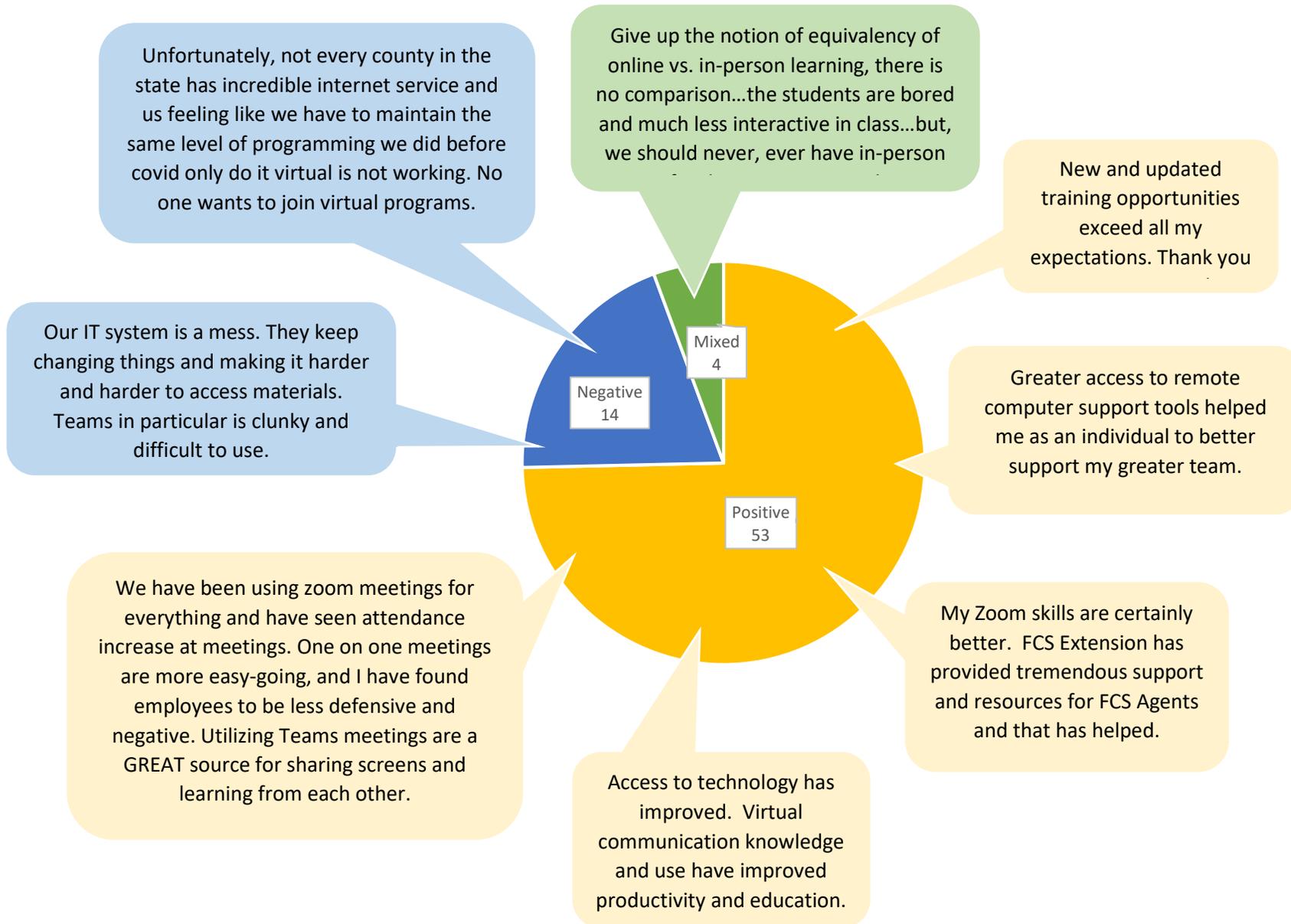
Comments Regarding Communication – 89 Total Comments



Comments Regarding Sense of Community – 84 Total Comments



Comments Regarding Technology – 71 Total Comments



Comments Regarding Caregiving – 19 Total Comments



Conclusions

The survey results crystalize themes heard during focus group discussions with the CAFE Faculty and Staff Councils, while further clarifying that the perceptions of individual experience around current work and well-being themes vary. In general, college employees report similar levels of individual and team effectiveness as compared to the end of 2019, decreased levels of sense of community and well-being, along with impacts from communication and internet issues. Of the well-being themes investigated, anxiety and stress are self-reported at the highest levels among the five dimensions of well-being as compared to end of 2019. Faculty report less effectiveness and well-being than non-faculty employees in the college overall, while female and remote work employees report higher levels of effectiveness and well-being than male employees and non-remote work employees respectively. The open text responses further clarified perceptions of improved effectiveness from greater access to technological resources/training and more distraction-free working time, while also clarifying the need for equitable structures and clear communication of expectations.

Best practices information

There is benefit to be gained from sharing remote work best practices with others, specifically to address communication issues. Simple steps, such as setting office phones to forward to a number where the call will be received, ensuring the ability to check voicemail without going to the office, standardizing a 24 hour reply time for email and voicemail messages unless an out of office message is set, regular staff meetings with the entire team to enhance awareness of each other's work, and embracing the full functionality offered by Outlook calendar features and MS Teams can make a big difference in intra- and inter-office communication. The college employee resources and university Work Anywhere pages are useful for investigating options and sharing suggestions with others.

Well-being engagements

The college is working with UK Work-Life to communicate and/or develop and implement workshops or engagements for faculty and staff in CAFE covering specific themes identified through the survey results. These may include components to address personal well-being and/or individual and team effectiveness. Listservs and the College Weekly are being used to promote these resources as much as possible.

Presentations and Report

A short PowerPoint based presentation has been developed and present to the college's EOC, Chairs/Directors, as well as Staff and Faculty Councils in order to disseminate early findings. This report is intended to more fully document the process and results for people wanting more information that can be presented in a 15-minute conference style presentation.

Proposed Ideas for Next Steps

Longitudinal analysis

The college could deploy the survey again at a frequency appropriate to determine how perceptions across these themes are stable or change over time and in context of the UK@Work survey and/or similar efforts. We recognize that the university central administration has begun releasing information on returning to campus plans to be phased in in July 2021 and in place by August 2, 2021. In order to assess for changes, the survey should be run before and after any major changes to assess how faculty and staff perceptions are impacted by the change. An example would be to run the survey in July and

again in second half of September to identify perceptions before and after the start of the fall semester. Alternatively, a modified survey could be developed to assess the feasibility of potential changes. We may want to consider a later survey deployment to better understand how the return to campus is working for the faculty and staff.

Note that the much more comprehensive UK@Work survey, which assesses employee engagement across all colleges and non-academic units, is scheduled to run again in September 2021 and may serve as an additional resource for interpreting CAFE survey results if they occur around the same time.

Survey administration technical updates

The survey instrument will be updated to request responses when no response is registered on the slider scale questions. This will clarify for respondents that the slider bar must be “touched” to register their response, and eliminate our need to replace nulls with assumed responses after the fact, although the analyses with and without null replacement did not indicate different overall conclusions.

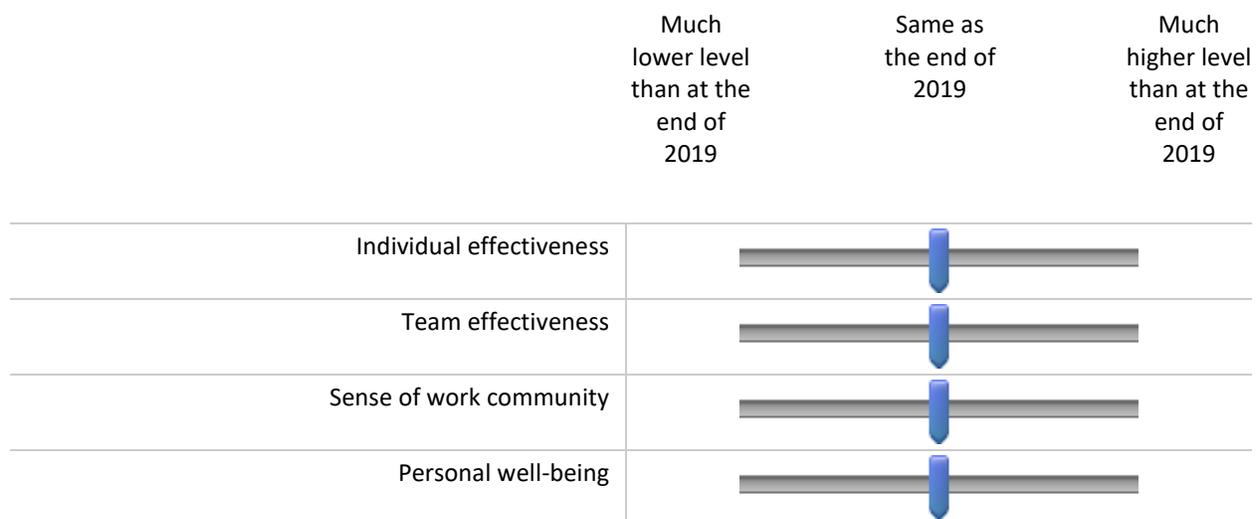
Another helpful edit will be to add a question concerning frequency and duration of remote vs. in-person work location. This will allow us to investigate between group differences with more accuracy as the SAP entry may not be accurate across time as respondents transition their work arrangements.

Appendix A

CAFE Faculty Staff Feedback Survey

Survey responses will be confidential and will not be linked to your name. Coded demographic information, such as your SAP employee category, will be combined with your answers to help us understand how to support unique populations in the college. If you have any questions, please contact tricia.coakley@uky.edu. Thank you for your time to provide feedback to the college.

When comparing the end of 2019 vs. current conditions, how would you rate the following themes?



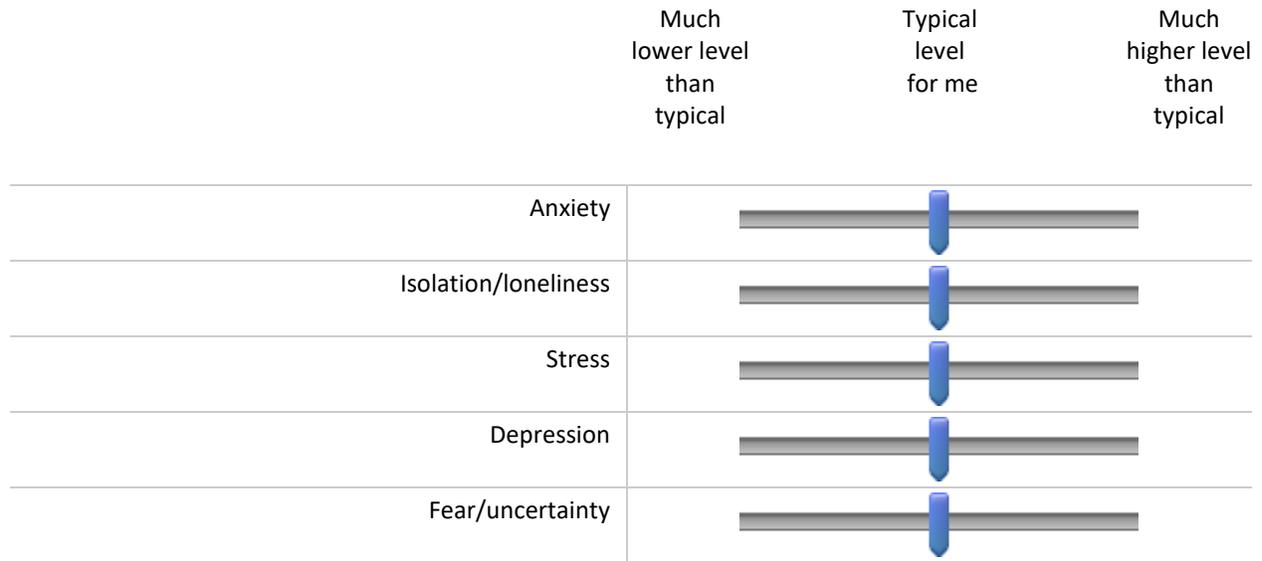
Please indicate how each of the factors below impact **your individual effectiveness** in your current work environment.

	Minimal or no impact	Periodic impact	Substantial impact
Internet speed/stability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
hardware and software resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
caregiving responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical work space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication with supervisor and/or coworkers/colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate how each of the factors below impact **your work team's effectiveness** in the current work environment.

	Minimal or no impact	Periodic impact	Substantial impact
Internet speed/stability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hardware/software resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Caregiving responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical work space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication with supervisor and/or coworkers/colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Among the following dimensions of well-being, please rate your current level as compared to your typical level at the end of 2019. Note that you are not indicating your level of stress, but rather how your current level compares to previous levels.



Given the current conditions, please enter any solutions you recommend that would help faculty/staff be most effective or have the greatest positive impact on the work experience.

Please enter any comments concerning things that are working better than they were at the end of 2019, for you as an individual employee or for your work group as a whole.
