

## Virtual Staff Recognition Event Q&A

### Aug. 11, 2020

*Questions were answered by UNT President Neal Smatresk unless otherwise noted.*

#### **1. Do the buses have social distancing worked out so that students can be comfortable riding on the bus in the Fall?**

We do have a plan for social distancing. I'm sure Bob Brown could elaborate, but basically they'll have to sit only in certain seats and we'll try to be running the routes as to make sure that we can pick up all the kids so that they can get to their classes, if they're having face-to-face classes, on time. So the answer is yes, we will be social distancing on our transportation services, but we will expect masks to be worn.

#### **2. Why are staff members not consistently provided with mechanisms to give feedback to their supervisors or about their supervisor's performance to their supervisor's supervisor? It seems as though this would be any easy way to identify staff who need more training or are not falling UNT policies.**

That's a really great question. And I don't know the details within every single vice-presidential division. What I do know is that we make sure that staff members and faculty members, for that matter, get to have input into evaluating supervisors and to talking about their units. So what I'm going to say is, this is something I'll take up with cabinet. We'll talk a little bit more detailed about because I don't want to answer without knowing the details of what each of you do, to allow for ground-up grassroots evaluation of how our supervisors are doing and what the spirit of the unit is.

I just want to take a moment to say, having feedback is really important, getting ground truth is really important. I think most of you probably know that the information that comes up to me is fairly heavily filtered. But I think that the kind of information that we get from our rank and file employees who are out there doing the hard work of making sure our university's operational is really important. As we move into a period where we'll be doing Gallup assessments this October, I want to make sure people feel like they're being heard, listened (to), and respected, and I want to make sure they also are able to engage in productive dialogues with their supervisors about their job expectations, how they're doing and getting great feedback. That feedback should go both ways. So it'll be something that we talk about and maybe engage the Faculty and Staff Senate on, particularly the Staff Senate on.

#### ***Additional information provided by Bob Brown, senior vice president of facilities and administration:***

As we work to improve our evaluation process, we will add more opportunities for feedback of staff members and supervisors.

#### **3. When will staff see their next evaluation?**

Oh, that's a great question. So we've had a delayed evaluation period during COVID. The normal staff evaluation period begins April 1 of each year, which coincided with the impact of the pandemic to our campus operations this spring, so we postponed the evaluation period to ensure that our resources were focused on supporting our staff, faculty, and students during the rapid transition to a mainly virtual environment. We like being on an annual evaluation. We like our evaluation period to end in May. However, to ensure that staff receive timely feedback in between last year's spring evaluation and next spring's evaluation, we'll be giving a midterm evaluation in fall, to be administered between Sept. 15 – Nov. 15. We'll also lay out expectations for work, especially for those who may have experienced changed working conditions, particularly since March 1 with the onset of the pandemic situation. For example, they're telecommuting or they have other issues with being inserted into face-to-face. We'll lay those out and then we'll come back for a full formal evaluation in May. But for anybody who's being evaluated, feel free to include the kinds of things that you've done and accomplished over the past year. We'll be sure to take those into consideration as we formulate the next set of plans for you.

***Answer updated for accuracy and clarity by Katy McDaniel, director of human resources:***

Because the normal staff evaluation period coincided with the impact of the pandemic to our campus operations this spring, we postponed the evaluation period to ensure that our resources were focused on supporting our staff, faculty, and students during the rapid transition to a mainly virtual environment. While we prefer being on an annual evaluation period in April and May, to ensure that staff receive timely feedback in between last year's spring evaluation and next spring's evaluation, we'll be giving a midterm evaluation this fall, to be administered between Sept. 15 – Nov. 15.

The questions below were submitted but not answered during the Staff Recognition Event due to time limits.

**4. Thank you for finding a way to recognize these wonderful employees in these unusual times. Will the other award nominees be notified? I'm sure the ones who didn't win would still like to know they are appreciated. *Question answered by Katy McDaniel, director of human resources:***

Recognition of the excellent contributions of our staff members is important, particularly during this unprecedented time where staff have provided essential support to student success and university operations throughout the pandemic situation. Each year, all nominees receive written recognition of their work to go above and beyond their job duties to support our mission. HR is in the process of sending the written recognition to the nominees this week, following the event.

**5. With the rental bicycles possibly be leaving campus in December due to the changes in the company. Is this perhaps a good time to consider allowing scooters in campus to allow students to get to and from opposite ends of campus while maintaining social distancing and avoid crowded buses? *Question answered by Bob Brown, senior vice president of facilities and administration:***

The university is concerned with the interplay of cars, motorcycles, trucks, pedestrians, skateboards, hoverboards and bikes. At this time, we do not believe that scooters can safely be added to that mix.