

## **Departmental Strategies to Promote Workplace Flexibility During COVID-19**

### **Residency**

As we faced the challenges of COVID, many aspects of our world had to press pause, but the residency program could not simply be put on hold. Everyone collectively came together to reorganize schedules in response to the University's mandate to shelter-in-place. Due to the unprecedented times we were thrown into, we hosted two town halls in the month of March and April so that residents could come together as a whole group to hear about major updates, important news, and clear communication on new policies and procedures.

The University and GME played an integral part during this stressful time and offered support including UBER/Lyft reimbursements, dedicated webinars like the "Emotional Well-Being During the COVID-19 Crisis for Healthcare Providers Webcast Series" (with recordings forwarded to trainees each week), as well as regular reminders for residents that of counseling opportunities like the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FSAP). Our department specifically hosted a "Counseling and Support during the COVID-19 Outbreak" webinar that invited speakers from the UCSF FSAP to give a special talk last April.

To ensure that residents would have continuity in their education, we quickly moved to an all virtual format for 8am and noon conferences. We worked with our AV and IT groups to make sure that faculty could smoothly present via Zoom to adhere to social distancing policies. To support the residents working from home, our education team encouraged trainees to purchase equipment and materials to help them be ergonomically situated to work from home comfortably.

We've continued to have townhalls every month in May, June, July, and August with dedicated time to discuss COVID topics and communications. We have an anonymous online submission where residents can safely enter comments or concerns to be addressed at these townhalls, as well as open forum in a judge-free environment. Drs. Cha and Talbott always have an open-door policy where they can call, Zoom, or make arrangements to personally discuss any problems trainees may be facing.

This June, due to social distancing, we hosted our first virtual graduation via Zoom. Close to 200 attended this special event. Though it was disappointing not to celebrate our senior graduates' four-year accomplishments in person, we tried our best to make it just as memorable. We offered each graduate DoorDash Gift Certificates, as well as hosted a graduation virtual "after-party" on Zoom so they could continue to celebrate with each other.

July was just as equally challenging to welcome our new trainees. We implemented an all virtual orientation, where we sent trainees mini informational vignettes to review prior to coming to UCSF. We allowed the residents to continue to get to know each other by the social chairs coordinating another virtual "Happy Hour" with DoorDash Gift Certificates.

Our next step is to tackle resident review virtually in January to help prepare them to take the boards in February. We continue to strive to move forward despite the challenges presented.

## **Sample Clinical Sections**

### *Neuroradiology*

Faculty have more options for how they can perform their clinical duties including home PACS stations, although most readouts still occur in person. There is improved flexibility in scheduling of clinical shifts with the option of an evening shift which can help to reduce the clinical burden for the team working the following day. Faculty have requested specific site rotations to facilitate child pick-ups and drop-offs and all requests have been honored. Faculty also are actively switching academic days with each other to accommodate childcare issues.

### *Musculoskeletal Radiology*

All faculty are equipped with an approved remote reading option, including PACS stations, dedicated department Windows laptops, and virtual machines. While attendings are encouraged to have in person readouts whenever feasible, there is inherent flexibility built into the daily schedule with one of the two ACC attendings able to work remotely if necessary. Faculty and trainees both share the use of faculty offices at the ACC in order to promote safe physical distancing when on site.

## **Staff**

### *Staff Personnel*

As mentioned, our department specifically hosted a "Counseling and Support during the COVID-19 Outbreak" webinar that invited speakers from the UCSF FSAP to give a special talk last April. The FSAP presentation was all-inclusive and both staff and faculty personnel were invited to gain helpful insight on how to help manage stress during the pandemic. Additionally, resources were distributed to encourage faculty and staff to seek out FSAP's voluntary confidential counseling services.

The department also encouraged employees to utilize the of Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, "Mental Wellness Apps" (free) to anyone with a UCSF email address. This allows employees free access to Sleepio and Daylight - two apps dedicated to mental health.  
<https://psychiatry.ucsf.edu/copingresources/apps>

Department supervisors and managers are encouraged to work directly with their staff direct reports to allow flexibility in their respective work schedules if business priorities permit. We acknowledge and recognize that working parents have increased levels of responsibility and stress in managing daily work demands as well as home schooling for their children during the shelter-in-place order.

Employee feedback indicates the ability to have flexible schedules, limited number of Zoom meeting demands, and the department's acknowledgement that parents are having difficulty balancing work and family demands.

Additionally, employees have expressed a desire to continue teleworking as an option to lessen the commute stress, expense, time, and in some instances the need to homeschool their children.

Some employees have expressed a desire to voluntarily reduce their work appointment effort in order to meet the demands of balancing work and home priorities. Each request will be taken into consideration and determined by management on a case-by-case basis.

Also, employees have requested additional paid leave by the University as well as daycare services. The University continues to review COVID related additional pay options and the department plans to consult with Human Resources regarding a daycare services option.