Continuous Improvement Review Process for COVID Response

Supporting Department-Embedded Support during COVID-19

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COVID Review Overview

1. Teaching and Learning
   i. Survey faculty (university wide)
   ii. ThoughtExchanges UG students, graduate students, UG and Grad Chairs, and Heads (FAS)
   iii. ThoughtExchange Educational Developers
   iv. Environmental scan of teaching resources, practices, supports and services, and policies and procedures
COVID Review Overview

1. Mental Health and Remote Learning Environment
   1. Partnership with UFLOURISH Survey for UG and Grad students
   2. Developed UFLOURISH for Staff and Faculty

2. Organizational
   a) ThoughtExchange with Heads (FAS)
Department-Embedded Support Personnel
ThoughtExchange
ThoughtExchange Question

“How could Queen’s University better support you in your role as a department-embedded support person during the COVID-19 pandemic?”
ThoughtExchange Process

Electronic Invitation
- Sample of department-embedded support personnel

Thought Exchange
- Exchange open for 8 days
- Sharing and rating of thoughts

Data Analysis
- Themes generated by artificial intelligence
- Themes reviewed and refined
ThoughtExchange Participants

27 Participants
30 Thoughts
210 Ratings
ThoughtExchange Results
Sample Demographics

What is your role?
- 48% Staff
- 44% Faculty
- 8% Graduate Student

Do you have any children or dependents?
- 44% Yes
- 56% No

Do you have access to childcare?
- 87% None
- 4% Part Time
- 9% Full Time
Percentage of respondents who feel: Supported to do current role and embedded support: supported by the FAS; timelines are appropriate; communication has been effective; mental health been disrupted?
Compared to before COVID-19: How many hours a week do you work; To what extent do you feel like you could take a vacation/sick day?

- Weekly Hours:
  - Less: 26%
  - About the Same: 74%

- Sick/Vacation Day:
  - Less: 20%
  - About the Same: 55%
  - More: 25%
Effective Communication
Create Resources
Support Well-being
Facilitate Course Delivery
Recognize and Value Work
Provide Clear Timelines

Average Ratings of Themes

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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Weighted Average Rating</th>
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Theme: Provide Clear Timelines

What's coming next? As soon as Q anticipates fall semester plans, it would help us to plan. I would like not to learn this from students.

There were multiple times through the summer when unrealistic timelines and multiple competing deadlines were set for deliverables to the faculty. At the departmental level, single individuals were often responsible for delivering on all of these deliverables = no time away.
Theme: Recognize and Value Work

Our department got on task quickly, but we relied heavily on the team at onQ. They deserve special recognition for heroic efforts. Because it's the right thing to do.

The faculty is only offering term contracts, as opposed to continuing to those staff members on contracts that are coming up for renewal. It appears that the faculty office is trying to balance the budget, on the salaries of those working harder than ever to keep departments afloat.
Theme: Facilitate Course Delivery

Faculty or University deadlines on course design could have helped to create complete, cohesive and accessible courses. Little time for courses to be reviewed, between completion and the course beginning. Could have used a review process to ensure student success.

We were told no synchronous sessions that are mandatory, no grading of attendance -- colleagues in other departments ran seminars as usual (with Zoom) The impact: (a) students do not learn public speaking or same exchange with students; (b) attendance has been less than 30% in our seminars.
Theme: Support Well-Being

FAS 'check ins' are of minimal help. What actions will FAS take to meaningfully help overburdened staff and faculty? The army of staff and faculty are unhappy, exhausted, and given the burden of constantly supporting students, without getting support themselves.

HIRE more support staff to help with the greater administrative burden. Faculty and staff are BURNED OUT. There will be more of us taking sick leave, possible suicides and greater mental health issues.
Theme: Create Resources

How-to videos on linking different assessments to auto-grade

Saving time in term

Been more on top of this earlier: (a) streaming systems; (b) how to produce captions efficiently; (c) how to protect intellectual property. Other universities have learning systems that do not allow students to download lectures. My course materials (notes, PPT, audio) given away.
Theme: Effective Communication

The radio silence has been odd. Regular contact and encouragement/acknowledgement from senior administration would have made a difference. This experience has changed my relationship with Queen’s.

I would like senior administration to communicate directly with faculty (before students) & more regularly. I found it difficult last spring/summer when students would email me asking about changes - I was out of the loop- students told me what was going on.
Key Findings

● Department-embedded support expressed a need for clear communication around timelines and expectations.

● Participants want more resources to help facilitate course delivery.

● Department-embedded support personnel are stressed and would benefit from mental health and childcare support.
Next Steps

- FAS is creating an action plan with concrete next steps, metrics, and timelines to address concerns in short term and long term
- Monitoring and assessing progress on proposed actions will continue
- A webpage will be created where progress can be viewed
Take Home Messages

● We are in this together

● These are challenging times for all and we recognize that!

● Committed to supporting and are responding with concrete actions

● Grateful for the work you do every day

● Critical learning to help us in time of COVID but also opportunity to understand what we do well and how we can do better moving forward
Thank you for making a difference by sharing your thoughts