

Loyola Faculty and Staff Views on Returning to Campus for Fall 2020 in Context of COVID-19

Office of Institutional Effectiveness Research Report, July 2020

July 14, 2020

In March 2020, in response to the worldwide public health crisis around the COVID-19 pandemic **and keeping our community safe**, Loyola moved all classes to an online format and asked students to return to their homes off campus. This environment continued for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester and all summer 2020 sessions. On July 8, 2020, faculty and staff were invited again to participate in another important survey - the *Returning to Campus for Fall 2020 Survey*.

This survey specifically asked faculty and staff about their comfort level with returning to campus in the fall given the recent state and national COVID-19 public health situation developments. These questions were asked to help inform the challenging decisions needing to be made in relation to the shape of the fall 2020 semester including decisions about Fall 2020 communicated yesterday to students, faculty and staff. More than 2,000 faculty and staff participated in the survey providing important information.

This report summarizes some of the candid and rich information participants shared in their survey responses. We thank faculty and staff for their continued feedback and participation in surveys and willingness to share their insights and opinions. The response rate was 51%. Given that the survey was administered over a three-day period, we are pleased with this response.

Over the course of the summer as more information has been learned from scientists and public health officials about COVID-19, there has been a shift in sentiment about returning to campus. In May, faculty and staff were asked about their comfort level with returning to campus in the fall. Since that survey both faculty and staff expressed significantly more discomfort with returning to in-person, on-campus work than they did in the related survey conducted in May.

On July 13th, Loyola University leaders made key decisions for the upcoming fall 2020 semester based on this survey, together with feedback solicited from the Loyola community through other surveys [three reports listed at: <https://www.luc.edu/oie/>], calls, emails, the faculty advisory group, deans, chairs, and the Management, Policy, and Command team (comprised of students, faculty, and staff).

Survey respondents

Over 2,000 faculty and staff participated in the early July *Returning to Campus for Fall 2020 Survey*. Of those, 1,003 identified as faculty or graduate instructors teaching in the fall, and 1058 identified as staff. Among faculty, every school, college, and institute are represented in the data with College of Arts and Sciences faculty comprising roughly 48.8% of respondents. See Table 1 for a breakdown of respondents by college, school, or institute.

Table 1: Faculty responding to survey

In which school, college, or institute do you primarily teach?		
	N	%
College of Arts and Sciences	481	48.8
Arrupe College	18	1.8
Quinlan School of Business	95	9.6
School of Communication	45	4.6
School of Continuing and Professional Studies	17	1.7
School of Education	49	5.0
Parkinson School of Health Sciences and Public Health	38	3.9
School of Law	61	6.2
Stritch School of Medicine	46	4.7
Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing	71	7.2
School of Social Work	33	3.4
Institute of Pastoral Studies	9	0.9
Institute of Environmental Sustainability	21	2.1
John Felice Rome Center	1	0.1

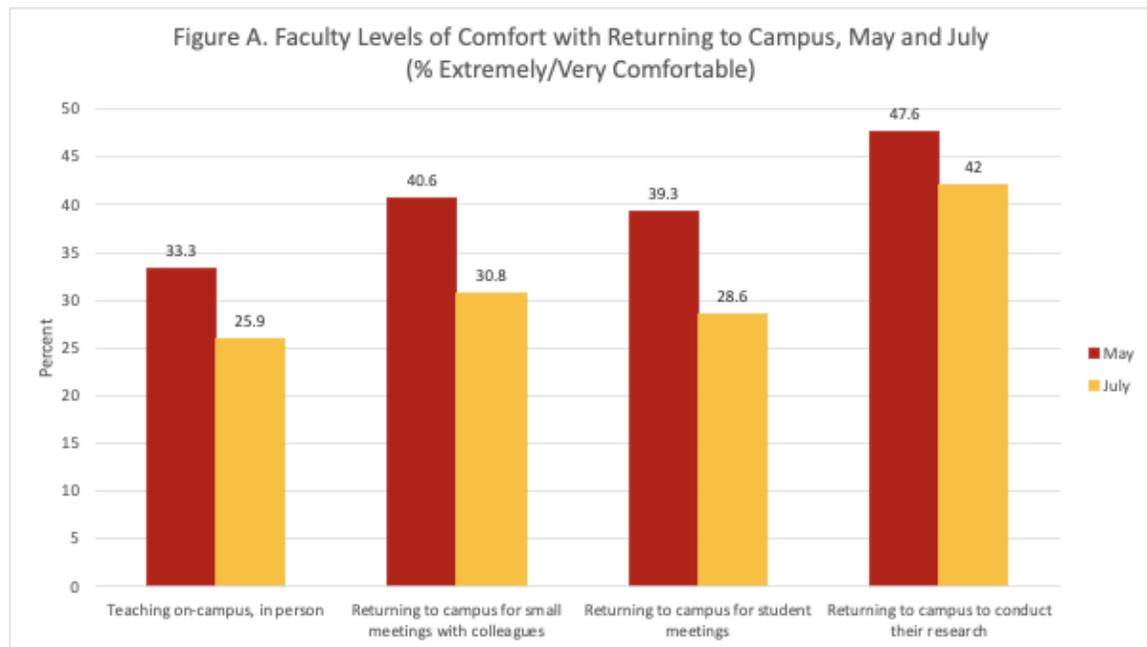
The vast majority of staff who participated in the survey identified as full-time employees (97.3%). Nearly three out of four staff who participated in the survey shared that they were salaried (72.1% compared with 27.9% who said they were hourly employees). Roughly half of staff said their primary campus is Lakeshore Campus. See Table 2 below for a breakdown of staff respondents by campus.

Table 2: Staff responding to survey

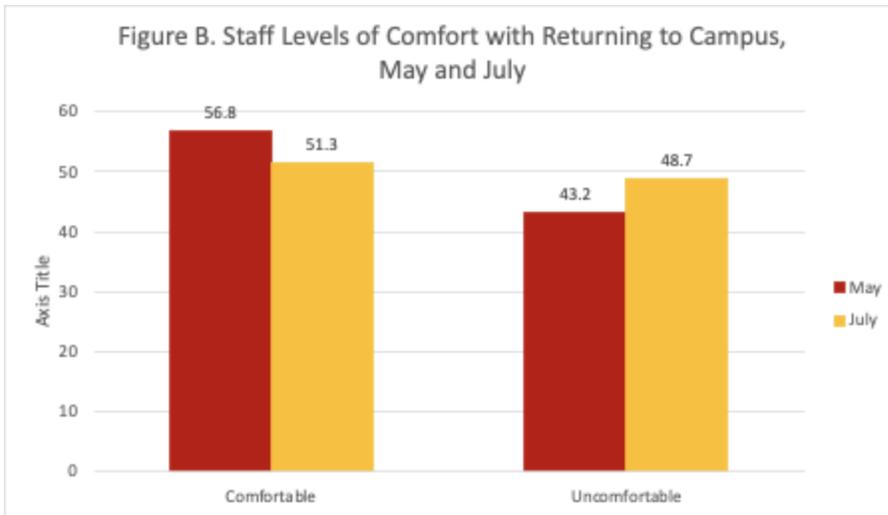
Which Loyola campus do you primarily work at?		
	N	%
Lakeshore Campus	529	50.3
Water Tower Campus	334	31.8
Maywood Campus	173	16.5
Other	15	1.4

Returning to campus in the fall

Faculty and staff were asked several questions about their comfort in returning to campus in the fall in light of the COVID-19 public health situation across the nation. Faculty were asked questions about their comfort with returning to campus for in-person aspects of their jobs for the fall which included: teaching on-campus, in person; returning to campus for small meetings with colleagues; returning to campus for student meetings; and returning to campus to conduct their research. Faculty were asked this same question in the *Faculty and Staff Well Being Survey* conducted in May 2020. Since the survey in May, faculty comfort levels with all four aspects of their jobs has decreased. See Figure A for details.



Staff were also asked in both May and July about their comfort level in returning to campus for in-person operations. Figure B shows that staff respondents also reported a decrease in feeling comfortable in returning to campus in the fall.



Prior to survey administration, Provost Norberto Grzywacz and Chief Human Resources Officer Winifred Williams sent emails to all faculty and staff informing them of safety precautions that would be in place for in-person, on campus work in the fall. Faculty and staff were asked about their comfort level working in-person, on campus given those safety precautions. Opinions on returning to modified, on campus operations for the fall were somewhat mixed. Approximately 41.5% of faculty felt extremely or very uncomfortable returning to campus to work in-person. However, staff seemed to have differing opinions on returning to campus in the fall. In comparison, fewer staff (31%) felt very/extremely uncomfortable returning to campus. See Table 3 for a full breakdown of both faculty and staff responses.

Table 3: Comparing comfort of faculty and staff with on-campus work given safety precautions

How comfortable would you feel working in-person, on campus given the new safety precautions				
	Faculty		Staff	
	N	%	N	%
Extremely Comfortable	97	9.7	72	6.8
Very Comfortable	141	14.1	193	18.2
Slightly Comfortable	190	19.0	278	26.3
Slightly Uncomfortable	155	15.5	187	17.7
Very Uncomfortable	202	20.2	213	20.1
Extremely Uncomfortable	213	21.3	115	10.9

Additionally, a survey item asked faculty and staff to rate how comfortable they felt returning to campus in comparison with how they felt a month ago. While a large percentage of faculty and staff felt roughly the same as they did a month ago (36.5%), nearly half (48.1%) felt less comfortable/much less comfortable returning to campus in the fall than they did a month ago. See Table 4 for more details.

Table 4: Faculty and staff reported comfort with fall return to campus

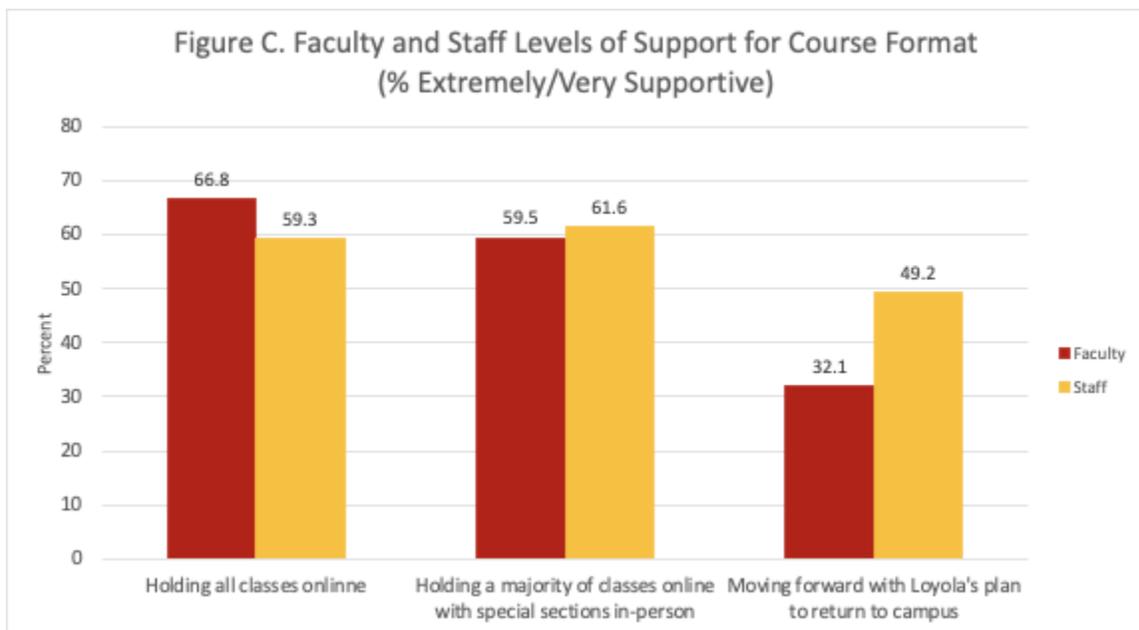
Compared to a month ago, how would you rate your level of comfort with returning to campus in the fall?		
	N	%
I am much more comfortable returning to campus than I was a month ago	107	5.2
I am more comfortable returning to campus than I was a month ago	209	10.2
I feel the same level of comfort returning to campus as I did a month ago	752	36.5
I feel less comfortable returning to campus than I did a month ago	582	28.3
I feel much less comfortable returning to campus than I did a month ago	408	19.8

Additional concerns

In July 2020, faculty and staff raised additional concerns through their quantitative and qualitative responses to the *Returning to Campus for Fall 2020 Survey*.

The public health landscape regarding COVID-19 is changing drastically every day. Since the *Faculty and Staff Well Being Survey* in May until this most recent July survey administration, Illinois and the city of Chicago moved from Phase 3 into Phase 4 of the Restore IL plan. The metrics used by public health officials in the city and state had been trending in positive directions. The same cannot be said for the rest of the country. The city of Chicago is now taking steps to attempt to protect people from the public health situation that exists across many areas of the U.S. by requiring people from states with surging COVID-19 rates to quarantine for 14-days when they come to Chicago. Approximately 2,000 Loyola students come from states that are currently under the quarantine travel order. The fact that many of our students come from out of state, means that the national public health situation continues to impact Loyola's fall planning.

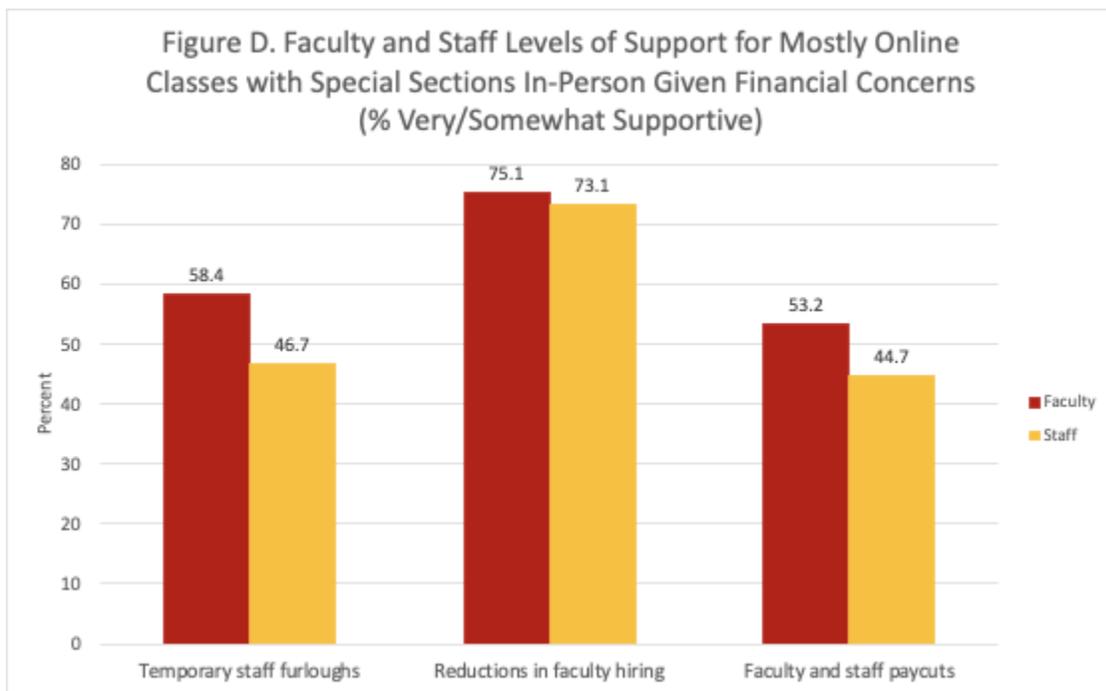
Therefore, faculty and staff were asked about their support to move all classes online, move the majority of classes online with small special sections (e.g., labs, clinicals) allowed to meet in-person, or move forward with Loyola's previous plan to return to campus. The majority of faculty and staff were supportive of holding all classes online or holding the majority of classes online with special sections in-person. However, it is important to note that almost one-third of faculty were supportive of moving forward with plans to have an in-person experience in the fall and almost half of staff were also supportive of that option as seen in Figure C.



In the *Faculty and Staff Well Being Survey* conducted in May, participants were asked to rank various budgetary reduction strategies to help with Loyola's current and potential future financial shortfalls. Resoundingly, faculty and staff chose furloughs

and pay cuts as their last and least desirable option. Further, many of the qualitative comments echoed the sentiment that faculty and staff wanted the administration to do everything they could to avoid pay cuts and furloughs. In an additional survey administered to students during the first week of April, *Loyola Student Experiences During the Spring 2020 COVID-19 Transition*, students overwhelmingly indicated that they would prefer an in-person, on-campus experience. An additional, 30% of student said they would not attend Loyola this fall if they were not able to take classes in-person. Given these complex realities, in July faculty and staff were asked again to think about the financial implications to offer a totally online experience to students in the fall.

The Figure D graph below show levels of faculty and staff support for holding most classes online considering three different potential financial implications.



We asked respondents if they had anything else to share with us. There were over 800 people who submitted comments. Through this survey, many expressed new concerns about support for international students, concerns about child/family care and working in the context of the ongoing pandemic, and hopes that the university would avoid furloughs and paycuts.

Even though the survey did not ask about the recent ICE ruling, many respondents used this opportunity to express their strong support for our international students.

While faculty and staff differed on some subjects of concern, they were united in terms of their reaction to the early July new temporary ruling by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) that F-1 and M-1 students not be permitted to maintain their students visas if their programs and schools are fully online for the fall semester. There was consensus that the university needed to strongly support these students. On the open-ended survey response option, views like that of the following faculty member were expressed:

I was scheduled to teach fully online in my graduate program in the Fall. When this policy change was made, I immediately contacted my dean and insisted we offer classes (for which I volunteered) in-person for international students to protect them from possible deportation, if no other options existed.

Another common area of concern raised was in terms of familial care. In the *Faculty and Staff Well Being Survey* conducted in May, faculty and staff also answered questions about sources of their stress during the COVID-19 public health situation. The topic of familial care emerged as an issue of importance in both the staff and faculty surveys. Slightly less than half of staff respondents (47%) reported that familial care responsibilities were extensive/somewhat a source of stress. An even larger percentage of faculty respondents (65%) reported that they felt extensive/somewhat stress due to familial care responsibilities during this time. Not surprisingly, when asked in this survey about concerns they anticipate for the fall 2020, faculty and staff continued to identify childcare and schooling as critical.

A big part of my concern is uncertainty about whether my young children will be in school or at home in the Fall. I also worry that I wouldn't be able to keep up with my mortgage and other family expenses if I had to take a pay cut. I realize that the solution to these two worries are in friction with each other.

All survey questions are framed within concerns about health and safety aspects of Covid-19 which of course is justified. However childcare issues for the fall (whether public schools will be open and children can be in school for most of the day and whether other daycare options will be available) are also a major source of concerns for many University faculty and staff. My preference for online teaching in the fall is based on concerns about the lack of available childcare, and much less on concerns about health and safety.

Finally, there were many comments in this survey consistent with the survey in May where respondents urged university leaders to use furloughs and pay cuts as a last resort to budget reduction strategies.

During a time of global pandemic, I hope that Loyola will consider every option to get through this issue. While I realize that it may be inevitable that some people may need to be furloughed or have pay cut, this is such an unprecedented time that I would hope that every consideration is on the table, including a slight dip into the endowment, holding on renovations, land sale, etc. I have faith that the Board of Trustees and leadership will do all they can, and I appreciate the care and thoughtfulness that has been in evidence to date.