

## Readjusting to the old “normal”

*Eliane Markoff- June 2021*

Having been away from the office and with little or no physical contact with colleagues, some managers have expressed concern about face to face reunification of their groups.

Many of us miss personal interactions and collaboration with our colleagues. We miss the personal conversations during coffee breaks and over lunch. We miss seeing each other on campus. But it's complicated.

Many of us have also enjoyed our independence. We have enjoyed the ability to control our work schedules. We have enjoyed the “easy commute” to our home office. We have enjoyed our ability to focus on our work with less interruptions associated with being in our Bentley office. We have enjoyed the quiet time alone to reflect and think of creative solutions and new initiatives.

The time away, therefore, could be viewed as a mixed blessing.

To ensure a positive and cohesive experience as we come back to campus and revive our traditional methods of communication with colleagues, some managers have scheduled retreats for their teams. The Ombuds office had the opportunity to help facilitate the planning of such meetings. The questions raised to prepare for the retreats are listed below and may be of interest to your group.

The first set of questions listed below 1-5 are ice breakers and then the focus turns to mission and goals:

1. What have we missed during this past year? What have we enjoyed during the past year?
2. Please share a favorite email you received from a student or an experience you feel especially good about that made your day.
3. Have you become aware of anything new while working from home, or were you surprised about something that you didn't expect while working from home?
4. Do you have any concerns about coming back on campus and working in the same manner prior to the pandemic?
5. Is there anything you would like to share with your team members?
6. What have we done well as a team?
7. What can we do better as a team?
8. Do we understand the role each of us plays and how we perform our respective responsibilities?
9. What other initiatives and programs should we consider for the group?
10. Are there any programs or projects that need to be reevaluated?

I look forward to seeing you on campus and helping in any way I can.

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