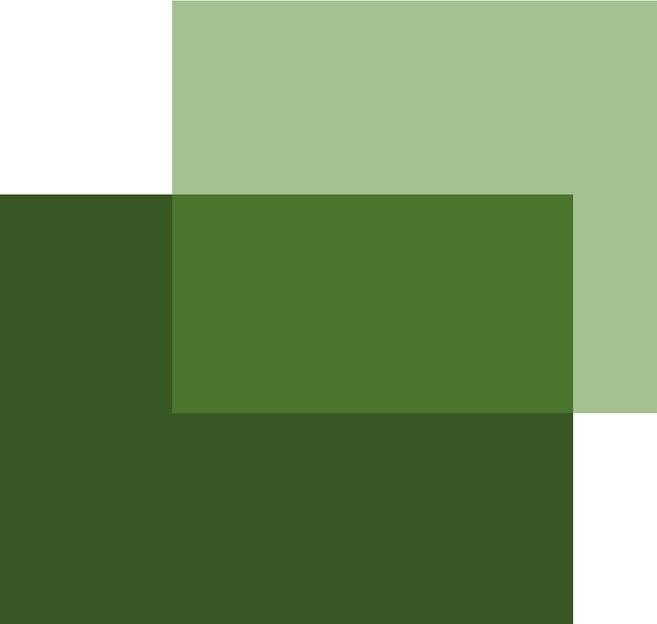


# YEAR IN REVIEW 2020

Each year, the WorkLife Office takes a reflective look back at the people impacted and the work accomplished.

**Vision:** MSU supports all its faculty and staff to connect and navigate multiple roles throughout workplace, career and life transitions.

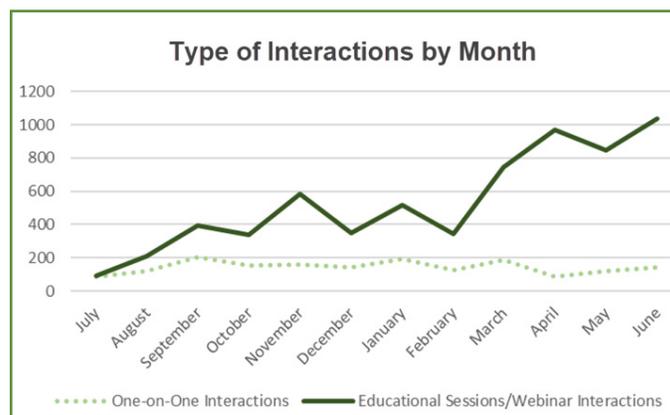
**Mission:** The WorkLife Office partners with the community to create an inclusive, responsive work environment where all faculty and staff are respected and supported toward well-being in work and personal lives.



## Who We Serve

The WorkLife Office is proud to have provided the MSU community with 150 educational opportunities. We had 6,570 interactions with faculty, staff and postdocs. In collaboration with units across the university and in the greater Lansing community, we have focused on parenting, work during COVID, breastfeeding, caregiving and a new approach to back-up dependent care, along with Women's Networking Association events, flexible work strategies, welcoming newcomers, retirement options and international newcomer onboarding. The WorkLife Office provided background education and consultation on workplace bullying not based on a protected class, and fostered equitable decision-making through a standard protocol.

Looking ahead to the coming year, with all the unknowns presented by the pandemic, we are excited to develop tools and support for employees returning to campus, remaining at home, or transitioning through job changes, layoffs and furloughs. We also look forward to continuing support for new parents, breastfeeding mothers and added educational sessions for multigenerational workplace, multigenerational families, diversity in families and diversity in the workplace. Helping units improve the work-life-fit for their employees with customized workshops or individualized information sessions remains bright on our radar, and bringing people and support together to find better work-life-fit across the life span remains our priority.

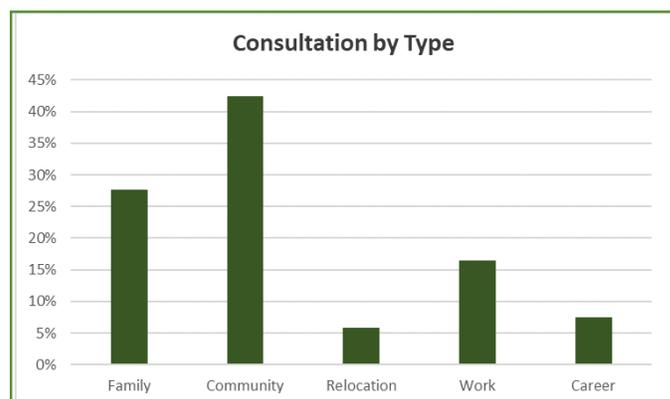


Interactions by Month Survey Results: 97% of educational session attendees (n=264) said they would "recommend (a) session to a friend or colleague" in 2019-2020.

## Consultations and Referrals

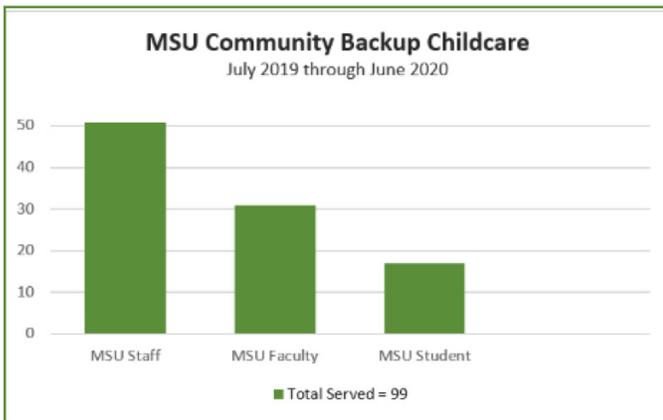
The WorkLife Office offers guidance and education in five areas: Family, Career, Workplace Assistance, Community Connections and Relocation, and Research. This year, there were 345 consultations. We served 162 staff and 175 faculty and post-docs in individual consultations (8 Uncategorized).

Many of these consultations resulted in 775 referral requests for additional information and resources to these top five focus areas:



## Family

A new model of back-up dependent care was launched with Kennedy Care providing both senior and child care at home (Safe At Home), and Bailey Preschool and Childcare Center providing drop-off center-based care. Both were well-received, with Bailey showing the greatest utilization, likely due to convenience, flexibility and lower cost, as well as some ongoing discomfort with in-home care provision. When work-from-home orders were issued, usage dropped off as Bailey closed and discomfort with a caregiver coming into their homes escalated. We served 31 faculty, 51 staff, and 18 students with this program.



The WorkLife Office shared knowledge and expertise with Human Resources and unions to promote parental leave. This year, a six-week paid parental leave policy was adopted into the APA and APSA union contracts.

The Michigan chapter of the Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) moved into the WorkLife Office this year. A dedicated Director, Maranda Holtsclaw, was hired. Membership and activity in the organization has shown an uptick with her leadership. Given the inability to host the annual membership meeting in person in 2019-2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, Maranda hosted a

virtual MI-HERC Advisory Board meeting in July, and is planning for a virtual membership meeting in October. Further data will be reported next year after dues and by-laws are updated. HERC continues to provide a rich addition to employment and career resources at MSU, working closely with the WorkLife Office and Academic Human Resources on dual career hires and employee partner support. The MSU WorkLife Office also assists in career development consultations with faculty, staff, and faculty spouses.



A presentation to IT leaders on Combating Stress at Work by Jaimie Hutchison.

## Workplace Assistance

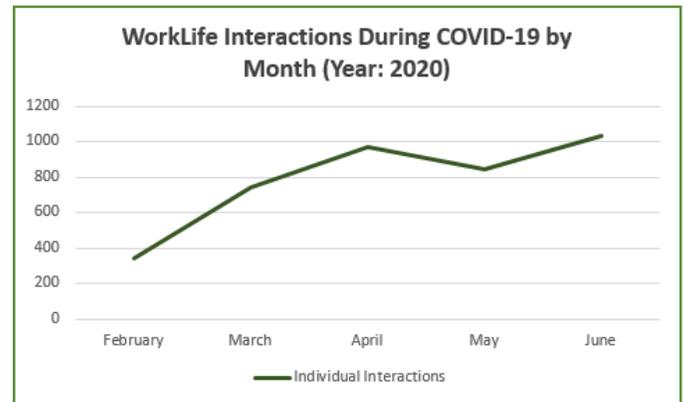
Who To Call is a new web page resource that serves as a single point of inquiry to help people find various resources on campus when there is more than one place to go with a question. We created a quick help guide, including information on where to go for return to campus information posted by the various committees and units responsible for safe

and equitable return to campus strategies. We also added a Workplace Culture page to address bullying with podcasts and other resources. There have been 150 presentations and educational sessions and 2,107 unique individuals reached. General content/topics include managing stress at work, strengthening collegial relationships, work-life fit, grounding strategies, support for family care, family changes, and more.

### ***Covid-19 Involvement***

With the onset of COVID-19 and orders to work from home, our team worked hard to foster connection with employees by hosting daily Coffee Conversations to touch base, teach and tend our community. The Conversations series helped people to feel connected, adapt, strategize, and learn from one another as we all shifted to working remotely. In response to the pandemic impacts on work settings, a prompt community survey in March informed our programming and remote work supports. Based on survey data, the most common challenges while working from home include maintaining work relationships, family commitments, productivity, work-life fit and technology. Thirty people said they like working from home. 87% of supervisors and 75% of non-supervisors agree that setting realistic expectations with your supervisor was very important. A follow-up survey was initiated four months into the pandemic, to update and elaborate evolving needs of the community. That survey gleaned 988

responses and significant insight to the experiences and needs of Spartans in the pandemic (see report, October 2020), which in turn informed our planning for 2020-21.



Working with the staffing working group of the Return to Campus Task Force, Human Resource subcommittee, the WorkLife Office helped shift the conversation about returning to campus to consider first what work comes on campus and why, and second who does that work and how. The committee work resulted guidance to supervisors distributed campus-wide to help determine what work returns to campus. Staffing Decision Guidance: A Decision Making Guide for Returning Work to Campus (On WLO website).

Many common areas of interests, goals, expertise and actions resulted in involvement in the Mobilization, Health, and Innovation Subcommittee. Recommendations for better coordinated and enhanced support for wellbeing across the campus were submitted to the Return to Campus Task Force and the Provost.

## ***Community***

Michigan State University received the Gold Award for support of nursing mothers through the Michigan Breastfeeding Network. This achievement marked concerted and successful efforts to move MSU from Silver status to Gold; one of the few universities to achieve this level of distinction.

Engagement with the Age Alive initiative also resulted in MSU named Age-Friendly University. This honor reflects the fostering of opportunities, research, range of engagement and focus on participation of people throughout the lifespan. MSU is one of approximately 40 Universities in the United States out of less than 80 Universities in the world that have been designated as Age Friendly! Alongside East Lansing as an Age Friendly City, and Michigan as an Age Friendly State, MSU supports our aging population with creative, concerted and innovative means of engagement.

International newcomer welcome resources were consolidated and marketed to better connect the now-virtual networking “breakfast”, the community partner matching program, updated website and new listserv. We look forward to a more cohesive welcome for our international newcomers this fall.

An emergency employee support fund “MSU Cares” proposal continues in development to help support MSU community members facing emergency situations. This was a result of

multiple calls for financial support due to unforeseen situations. Implementation mechanisms will be identified in the coming year.



## ***Research***

Each year the WorkLife office hosts a conference to disseminate research on a topic arising in the community. The event enables participants to learn from current researchers in work-life, gather resources and join discussions to educate and empower faculty and staff across campus. The 2019 theme was Strengthening Community Together with a keynote by Dr. Sharon Fries-Britt, faculty member at the University of Maryland, College Park. Dr. Fries-Britt focused on how the stresses and challenges of an increasingly intense work environment, as well as escalating societal tensions, create traumas that confine our energy and ability to produce our best work. Some sessions included Creating Community at MSU and The Web of Inclusion. Unless we are intentional

in our personal practice to thrive and soar, we will fall short individually and collectively in strengthening our community together. At every level, our freedoms must be restored for wellbeing to be fully realized. We must be free to act, think and speak-up.

Together with the College of Family Medicine, Grand Rapids, the WLO is coordinating research on positive workplace environments and bullying. Collaborators include College of Human Medicine, Department of Psychology and other collaborators. The project is funded in part by a grant from MSU's Science+Society@State (S-3) seed grant program and explores positive workplace dynamics and what interventions or supports are helpful to improving workplaces. This work includes:

- COVID-19 highlighted issues of harassment, retaliation, equitable treatment, particularly in online work environments, so focus pivoted to include these workplace environments
- Includes work on bullying outside of protected classes, characteristics of positive work environments, and interventionist curriculum that will be based on survey results.
- International collaboration on anti-bullying educational website to launch in August 2020, *Toward a Respectful Workplace*

A proposal recommending a policy to allow pooling sick leave was created and submitted to Employee Relations for consideration, in accordance with the CTU Collective Agreement, to be used

by employees who run out, and/or need to cover FMLA time for a family member. Watch for further developments in the coming year.

## ***Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)***

Values and goals in the WLO strategic plan specify intentional incorporation and use of inclusive language, strategies, content and events of multiple perspectives and needs in programming design. After hiring three new employees in the past year, we expanded our team's participation in affinity groups and committees to include Women of Color Community, IDEA Coordinators, Multicultural Center Planning, White Anti-Racist Affinity Group, MSU Dialogues Training, MLK Commemorative Celebration Planning Committee, Women's History Month Planning Committee, collaboration with the Black Faculty and Staff and Administrators Association, Women's Networking Association, Age Alive, and the LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff community. Exploration of diverse family structures and family needs through focus groups and thematic analyses identified the needs of different family constellations. We hosted family focus groups, found common stressors and identified what topics, groups and speakers would be helpful to understand the needs of MSU employees to develop programming surrounding families. We found that families would like more opportunities to meet, including a parents affinity group.

The WorkLife Office has developed a DEI webpage with our statement of commitment and action steps including the following:

- Commitment to individual learning using 1 hr/week of work time, followed by group discussion in staff meetings.
- Commitment to training as a team and/or as individuals with MSU diversity training opportunities and sharing resources.
- Commitment of time and infrastructure support for diversity-focused Coffee Conversations to touch base, teach and tend our community on these issues through discussion.
- Multiple sessions on WorkLife impacts from different cultural, racial, and other perspectives.



A podcast on IDEA Coordinators and Jaimie Hutchison.