

Carleton College

Carleton Digital Commons

[Covid-19 Archive: Documents](#)

[Covid-19 Archive: Items](#)

8-31-2020

Unanticipated changes....gained perspective and coping strengths

Phyllis Dixon

Carleton College Staff

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.carleton.edu/covid19archive_documents

Recommended Citation

Dixon, Phyllis, "Unanticipated changes....gained perspective and coping strengths" (2020). *Covid-19 Archive: Documents*. 11.

https://digitalcommons.carleton.edu/covid19archive_documents/11

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Covid-19 Archive: Items at Carleton Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Covid-19 Archive: Documents by an authorized administrator of Carleton Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons.group@carleton.edu.

Unanticipated changes....gained perspective and coping strengths

Phyllis Dixon

How has the pandemic changed your daily life?

Due to COVID-19 'work from home' order, the daily office routine rapidly became significantly different. Transition from never working at home to fully working from home was interesting to observe and experience.

Every employer has their own policies, Carleton hadn't permitted work from home as an option for my job role. Since I had worked from home prior to Carleton employment, the emotional transition with 'work from home order' was comfortable for me and an easy adjustment. I merely had to make certain all technical connections were secure and comprehensive to be able to deliver my work as needed. Full transition to home took a couple of weeks, but after that - all went smoothly.

What positive things or unexpected moments of joy have come out of this experience?

I revel in the quiet work atmosphere which allows me to be more focused on tasks. While working from home, there are zero interruptions from folks passing through our work space, no more colleagues having unintentionally 'loud' conversations with others via phone or in person, no more being distracted by colleagues playing their radio loud enough so they can hear (and due to building acoustics it's way too loud for me). Now, our interactions are handled electronically via Slack or email. I get to finish my current thought(s) before I read and respond to questions from my colleagues.

I also thoroughly enjoy a significantly improved work-life balance. With 'zero commute' my work day no longer consumes 11+ hours each M-F. I get to share lunch with my spouse every day at our own kitchen table. I find this change very energizing. Also, in my home office I have two windows...which makes me feel as if I've been sprung from life in a place of detention. (Mind you, my Carleton office is in a very beautiful building - it just so happens that to see out a window, I must look through someone else's office or down an open hallway.)

What has been the hardest aspect of this experience?

Our initial transition from fully working IN the office to fully working at home: Communication was the key to success. Our Dean and Director did a phenomenal job of 'going where no man has gone before.....' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6R3MiAv9ac>

While College leadership was doing an excellent job of communicating COVID-19 concerns and new rules/regulations campus-wide, our department Dean and Director had to scale it down to our work group. They had to answer questions that had never been asked before. I could only imagine the level of their exhaustion. They worked unending hours to take care of us during this unexpected transition.

Thankfully, our Dean and Director immediately connected our workgroup with Slack in order to carry out those "water-cooler" type of conversations -or- the chats we used to have by strolling into each other's office's. Secondly, we were quickly provided with Zoom in order to hold professional meetings with a visual component which lent itself to that feeling of 'connection' we had lost since being required to work from home. Both these software options were excellent solutions in the midst of an ever-changing landscape.

What are you nervous and/or excited about for the coming academic year?

I trust all students and colleagues will adhere to Carleton's covenant in order to allow for everyone's safety and health.

What is something you think should be preserved in public memory about this time?

Carleton leadership is very thorough. They faced the COVID-19 challenge head-on. They enlisted advice from experienced professionals and made educated decisions regarding campus-wide safety and health. If/when new data became available, Carleton leadership was willing to keep communication open and make adjustments as needed. I believe Carleton handled COVID-19 very well. I felt safe as a Carleton employee. I felt my health was never compromised or placed in jeopardy.