Mason Science Community

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May 2021

What is your new normal?

On March 12, 2020, I walked out of my office, a bit early since we were told we were going into lockdown (for three to four weeks max they estimated). I haven't set foot in that office since. Actually, I got a new job here at Mason that started just over a year ago, which I have largely done remotely.

With changing CDC guidelines and vaccine availability, our society can start to think more about what a healthy and sustainable ‘New Normal’ might look like.

Let's face it, the initial disruption was not easy. Yet, after a while, many of us found ways to leverage this new flexibility (no more commute around here is a big deal and saves tons of time). Yet it was also quite real (has it kicked in for you too?).

For most of us, our lives were upended by COVID-19. After the initial shock and concerns regarding health, safety, and daily livelihood were established and better understood, we collectively pivoted to a new environment.

The first week was also quite real (my mind is still going in circles for this one). I was suddenly working from an old office in the Plant Sciences Building on a research project that was funded by the DOE. On the first day I got a call from a DOE person asking what I was working on and if I was working the research in an office or at home. I said, ‘I’m working from home [since Mason campuses were closed].’

The idea that I could work on a DOE-funded project completely remotely was an eye-opener. I must admit that I did most of the presentations at our first poster session from my home office.

In the beginning, it was a whole new way of communicating. It was more challenging and a bit overwhelming to have to speak to 100 research scientists at once (at our first DOE poster session). However, everyone who was involved in the DOE-funded project at Mason had a great time. It was a great experience.

I would have never thought that I could have a collaborative project with 100 research scientists from DOE labs across the country, where we presented the results of our research and had a discussion about our research. I have never thought that I could have a collaborative project with 100 research scientists from DOE labs across the country, where we presented the results of our research and had a discussion about our research. I have never thought that I could have a collaborative project with 100 research scientists from DOE labs across the country, where we presented the results of our research and had a discussion about our research. I have never thought that I could have a collaborative project with 100 research scientists from DOE labs across the country, where we presented the results of our research and had a discussion about our research. I have never thought that I could have a collaborative project with 100 research scientists from DOE labs across the country, where we presented the results of our research and had a discussion about our research.