

# Physical Sciences Workplace Life Committee (PSWLC)

Perspectives on *Work Life Balance*

Dan Kasen and Brian Quiter, NSD representatives to PSWLC  
October 31, 2023

# The Physical Sciences Workplace Life Committee

Two members from each PS division + HR representative. NSD members:

- Brian Quiter (chair)
- Dan Kasen - new Summer, 2023

We explore issues affecting workplace quality of life for the four Physical Sciences Divisions

We report to Physical Sciences ALD, Natalie Roe and occasionally brief at the PS Division Directors' meetings.

We've been around for awhile:

- Mike Johnson was the chair in 2012.



Brian Quiter  
Committee Chair  
Nuclear Science  
[BJQuiter@lbl.gov](mailto:BJQuiter@lbl.gov)



Ina Reichel  
ATAP  
[IReichel@lbl.gov](mailto:IReichel@lbl.gov)



Dan Kasen  
Nuclear Science  
[DKKasen@lbl.gov](mailto:DKKasen@lbl.gov)



Qing Ji  
ATAP  
[QJi@lbl.gov](mailto:QJi@lbl.gov)



Richard Bonventre  
Physics  
[rbonventre@lbl.gov](mailto:rbonventre@lbl.gov)



Alessandra Ciocio  
Physics  
[a.ciocio@lbl.gov](mailto:a.ciocio@lbl.gov)



Roxana Wilkinson  
Engineering  
[RoxanaWilkinson@lbl.gov](mailto:RoxanaWilkinson@lbl.gov)



Mike Naus  
Engineering  
[mnaus@lbl.gov](mailto:mnaus@lbl.gov)

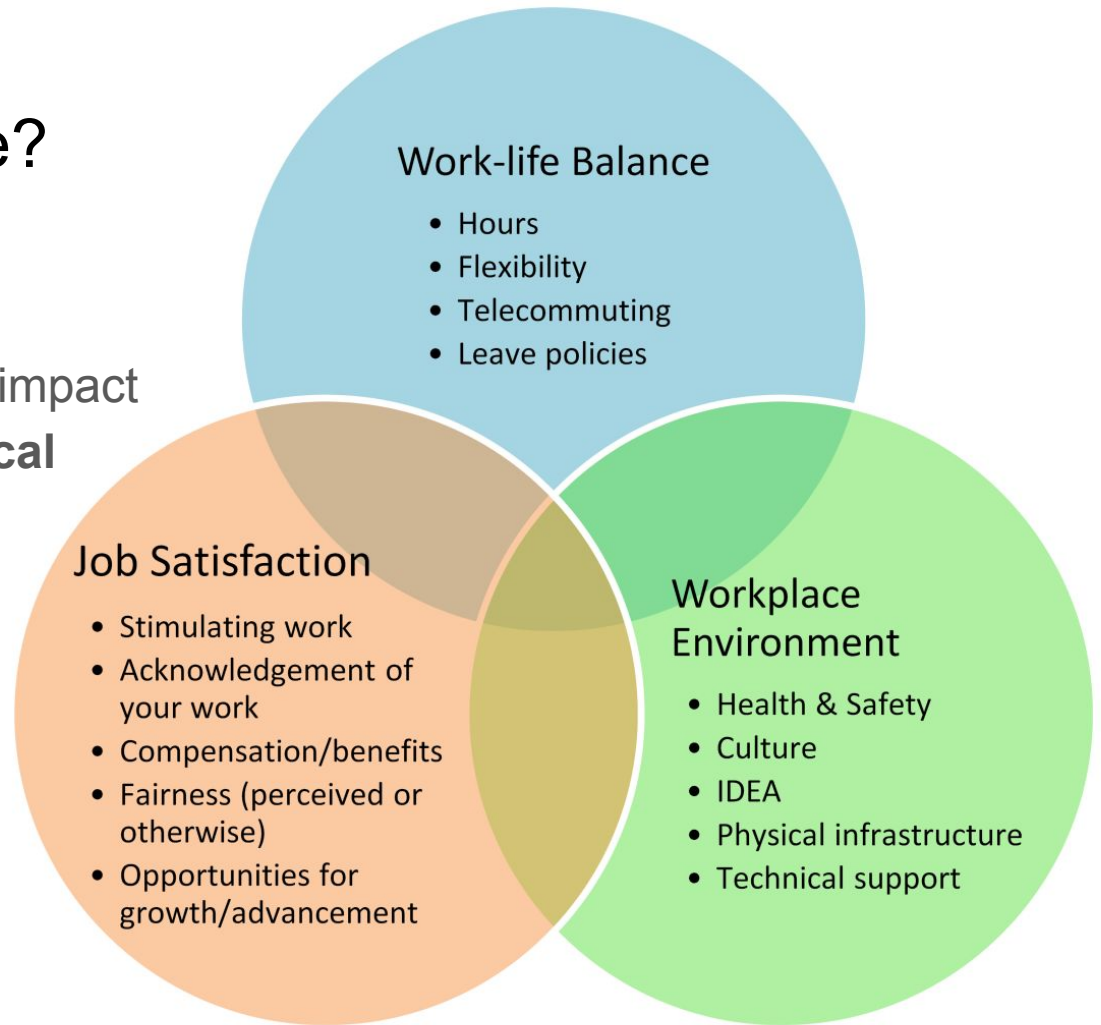


Dylan Bacon  
HR representative  
[dbacon@lbl.gov](mailto:dbacon@lbl.gov)

# What is Workplace Life?

PSWLC focuses on issues that impact workplace life across the **physical sciences**

We also coordinate with division IDEA committees



# Physical Sciences Area Statement on Work-Life Balance

## *Endorsed by PSWLC and PSA ALD*

- Work and Life intersect in many ways, and we advocate for a balance that is constructive and healthy, both mentally and physically
- Work-life balance has changed since the pandemic in ways both challenging (e.g., proliferation of zoom meetings) and beneficial (eg, more flexibility with hybrid schedules)
- To ensure all employees can achieve a healthy work-life balance, it is important that supervisors and managers:
  - Set realistic expectations that are achievable within a 40-hour work week
  - Empower employees to prioritize their work to meet their responsibilities
  - Are available to discuss work-life balance and provide extra support as needed during exceptional personal circumstances, which may be kept confidential
  - Lead by example - take vacation, don't expect email responses off-hours, etc.
  - Understand and apply LBNL's work policies fairly and flexibly as appropriate to the situation

# Updating Sick Leave policy to include Mental Health

## **Mental Health issues can have serious negative impacts on employees and workplace**

- Loss of focus, motivation, productivity, job turnover, etc.
- LBNL/UC recognize importance of mental wellness; resources are available such as “Healthy & Well at LBNL”
- Allowing sick leave for mental health is an effective workplace accommodation

## **The existing Sick Leave policy did not explicitly include mental health, leading to confusion and uneven application of the policy**

- NSD IDEA committee proposed changes to the Sick Leave policy to the LBNL IDEA office, which were then presented to UC HR last December

## **Result: UC Systemwide HR will update the Sick Leave Policy policy to explicitly include mental health as a valid reason to use sick leave**

- “The University provides paid sick leave to... employees who are absent from work because of **mental or physical** illness or injury...”

# Policies related to Work Life Balance

## **For exempt (monthly) employees, the emphasis is on meeting job responsibilities**

- General guidance is ~40 hours/week and to be “generally available” as business requires
- Supervisors can modify schedules to meet unusual work requirements

## **LBNL does not allow for ‘comp time’**

- Working extra hours one week does not bank leave for future weeks
- So long as your supervisor feels you’re meeting your job requirements, they may adjust your work schedule to acknowledge unusual circumstances including e.g., long workweeks for experiment support (locally or abroad). This applies only to exempt employees.
- If you are an hourly (non-exempt) employee, you must report overtime if you work >40 hours per week, and you must have supervisor approval prior to working overtime.

# Examples of WLB Scenarios

1. Employee (exempt) worked full day on Saturday. Supervisor may shift schedule to allow following Friday to be 'unscheduled'.
  - If job duties require attendance at a meeting on the Friday, employee could take meeting remotely but otherwise be off. (example of "generally available")
2. Staffing experiments overnight - supervisor may approve exempt employee to come in late during the days following the experiment shifts (example of ~40 hrs/week)
3. Employee resigns, co-worker(s) (exempt) need to cover extra responsibilities until replacement can be hired and trained. During this time, an extended workweek agreement would be appropriate, if working extra hours for > 4 consecutive weeks.

# Policies related to WLB, for reference

Three main policies: [Hours of Work](#), [Time and Labor Reporting](#), [Overtime and Extended Workweek](#)

*These policy excerpts only apply to exempt employees (those who do not receive overtime, nor report hourly time)*

## Hours of work policy for exempt employees:

- “The workweek for a full-time exempt employee is generally considered to be 40 hours, although greater emphasis is placed on meeting the responsibilities assigned to the position than working a specified number of hours.” “Exempt employees are expected to work their schedule and be generally available as business requires.”

## Time and Labor Reporting:

- “A supervisor can modify an employee's schedule of days off, workdays, and hours per day within the specified work period to meet unusual job requirements.”
  - ⇒ This implies that as long as an employee is able to meet their responsibilities, a supervisor may adjust a schedule, **including shifting days of work** or hours.

## Overtime and Extended Workweek:

- “An extended workweek is a planned schedule exceeding the normal 40-hour workweek for more than four consecutive weeks”
  - ⇒ Pending Division Director approval, extended workweeks can be subject to agreements that provide additional compensation



# PSWLC Outlook

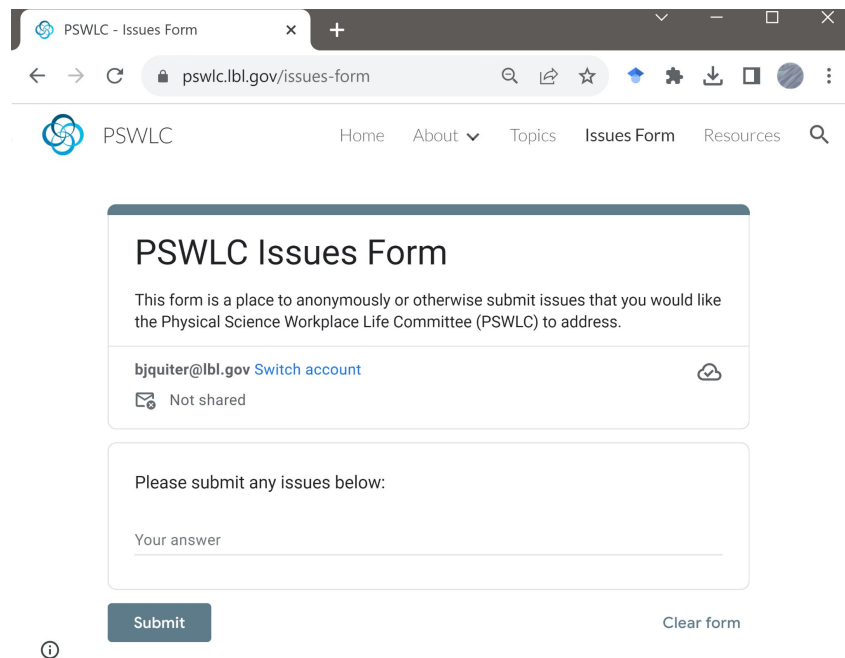
Feel free to reach out anonymously (or otherwise) with issues you'd like PSWLC to address.

Engaging with Lab's new Learning and Culture office

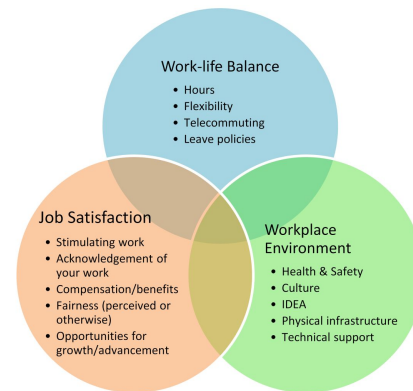
- *Pulse survey & PMP processes*

Feedback mechanisms for Lab support?

- *Facilities, IT, OCFO, HRSS*

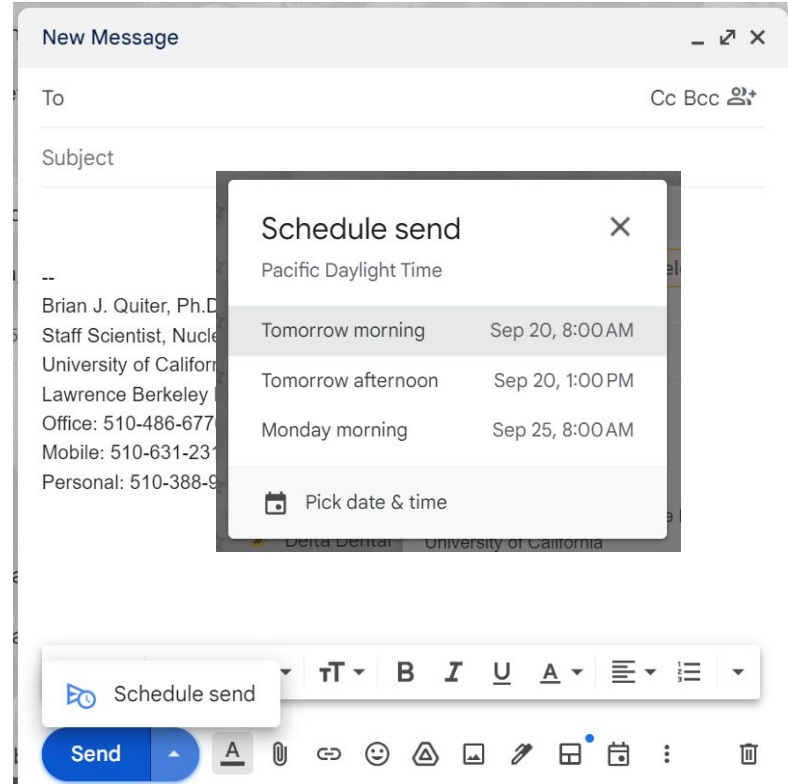


The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [pswlc.lbl.gov/issues-form](https://pswlc.lbl.gov/issues-form). The page title is "PSWLC Issues Form". Below the title, there is a description: "This form is a place to anonymously or otherwise submit issues that you would like the Physical Science Workplace Life Committee (PSWLC) to address." The user's email address is displayed as [bjquiter@lbl.gov](mailto:bjquiter@lbl.gov) with a "Switch account" link and a cloud icon. Below the email, it says "Not shared" with a lock icon. The main content area contains the text "Please submit any issues below:" followed by a text input field labeled "Your answer". At the bottom of the form, there is a "Submit" button and a "Clear form" link.



# Other WLB ideas

Use gmail “schedule send” feature, rather than pinging people's inboxes on the weekend



# Workplace life - lab support entities

1. Facilities
  - a. Building maintenance
  - b. Transportation
  - c. Shipping & Receiving
2. IT
3. OCFO
  - a. Procurement
  - b. Resource
4. HR Services
  - a. Hiring & Recruitment
  - b. Visa services