

2015 Staff Senate Survey Results

Overall Results

The 2015 results, for the most part, continue the increasing satisfaction levels shown in the 2014 survey results. Staff are proud to work for WCU, are satisfied with their work and feel that their work is important to the mission of the university. A strong majority of people state that WCU is a good place to work and that they look forward to coming to work. A majority of staff feel they can openly communicate with their supervisors, have the resources they need to do their jobs and feel supported and respected by their supervisors. Fewer staff responded that they have seriously considered leaving their job in 2015 than in 2014 (down 6%). Of continuing concern is the experience of minority staff members on campus. Responses for this population, while showing significant year to year improvement, continue to indicate lower satisfaction levels than the overall results in a majority of areas surveyed. Responses from female staff were consistent with overall responses. Salary, while staff understand and appreciate the progress being made, continues to be a significant issue with staff members. A growing concern is the increasing percentage of staff who indicate they feel they need more than 40 hours in the week to finish their work (up 8% from 2014).

Primary Results

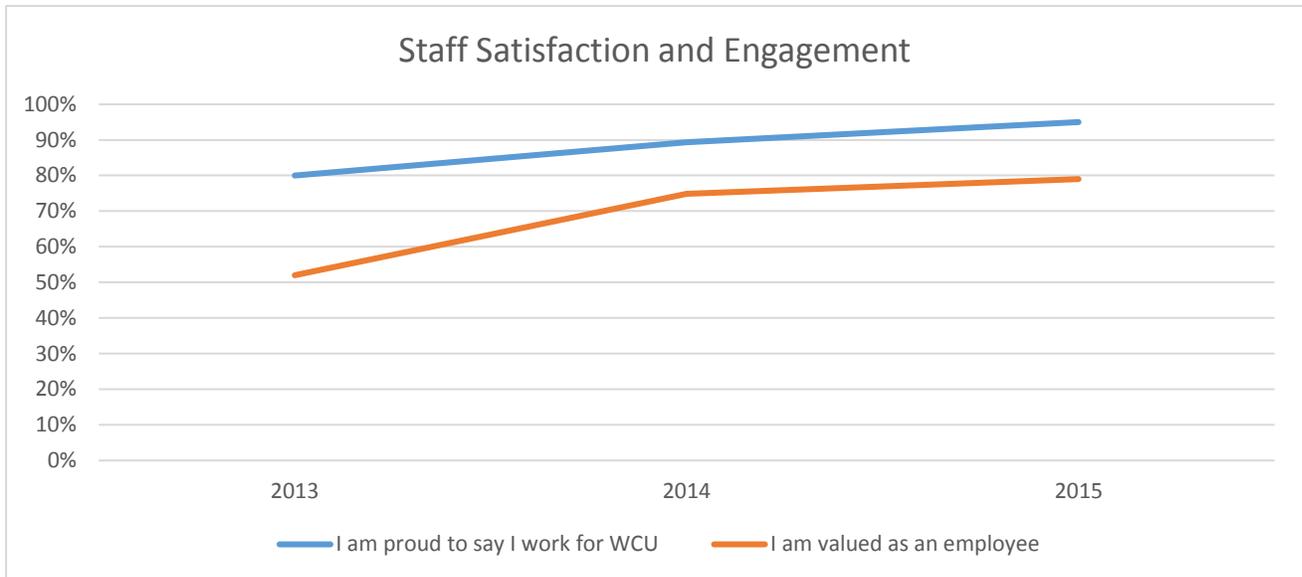
- Survey results continue to show improvement or hold steady from 2014 in most areas.
- Staff continue to show high satisfaction levels with their overall experience at WCU.
- There is a significant increase in the satisfaction levels of minority staff from 2014 in most sections; a 26% increase in respondents stating they agree or strongly agree they are valued as an employee.
 - o Minority satisfaction rates still lag those indicated in the overall results.
- There is a great deal of variability between divisions in regards to access to working flex schedules. Comments note a great deal of interest in having access to working flex schedules.
- There is an increase of staff indicating they need more than 40 hours in a week to complete their work. There are many comments echo this including references to outdated staffing models and understaffing.
- Salary remains a primary concern.
 - o Staff understand and appreciate that the administration is fully aware and committed to improving the depressed salaries for staff members. Staff also understand budget constraints and the impact of budget decision-making at the state level. A growing issue is the difference of opportunity between internal and external candidates and salary rates. Successful internal candidates are offered lower salaries than successful external candidates, at times lower or only minimally higher than their current salary. This is a significant problem for morale.

Discussion by Section

Section 1. Overall Satisfaction and Engagement

This section shows good growth in staff satisfaction with their role and engagement with the university. Increases are being made in staff feeling valued and whether they would recommend their departments as good places to work but these continue to be the lowest scoring in this section. It is important to note that, while the responses for minority staff continue to be lower than the general responses,

significant improvement has been made. There is a 26% increase in minority staff saying they feel valued as an employee since 2014. Of note in this section are the responses for those who chose not to indicate the division where they work. This group made up 8% of the respondents and consistently indicated lower satisfaction levels than the general staff population.



Recommendations

- WCU can continue to build on the momentum shown in this section. The new faculty/staff SharePoint portal will offer a new way for employees to connect with each other and access university and community resources. We recommend that the Staff Senate participate in the planning for the faculty/staff portal to leverage capabilities within SharePoint to enhance employee satisfaction and connectivity.
- Recognizing the significant growth in the satisfaction levels of minority staff, these levels continue to lag that of the overall respondent group. The recruitment, retention and meaningful inclusion of diverse employees is of utmost importance to our university.

Section 2. Overall Satisfaction and Working Relationship with Supervisor

The results in this section maintained or increased the gains exhibited in the results from 2014. Staff even indicated an increase in the helpfulness of their annual performance review (56% in 2015, up 4% from 2014). Of exception is the 4% drop in satisfaction in staff members being kept up to date on important developments by their supervisors. Showing significant improvement (increases between 4% and 33%), satisfaction for minority staff continues to trend lower in this section. While staff feel supported to take time off, there is a great deal of variability in access to flex scheduling across the various divisions. Only 62% of respondents stated they agreed or strongly agreed that their department allowed for a varied work schedule. Also of interest is the 8% increase in staff stating they often feel they need more than 40 hours in a week to finish their work. This, paired with comments on staffing models and staffing levels, indicates an area for possible review. The response on the wellness activity questions seems to indicate that, while a majority (77%) of staff feel that the campus culture supports health and wellness activities for staff, there is less support at the department level with only 60% of

respondents stating that their department supports them attending wellness activities during work hours.

Recommendations

- We urge divisional leadership to review the results of this survey and consider how varied work schedules could be adopted, without impacting productivity, within their divisions. With creativity, this can mean as much as a raise for employees and significantly improve morale.
- The comments regarding chronic understaffing, 'one deep' offices and the increasing number of staff working longer hours to accomplish what is expected of them seems to indicate a need for a review of staffing models across campus. It is important that our staff is positioned to meet the needs of the university and our students.

Section 3. Diversity on Campus

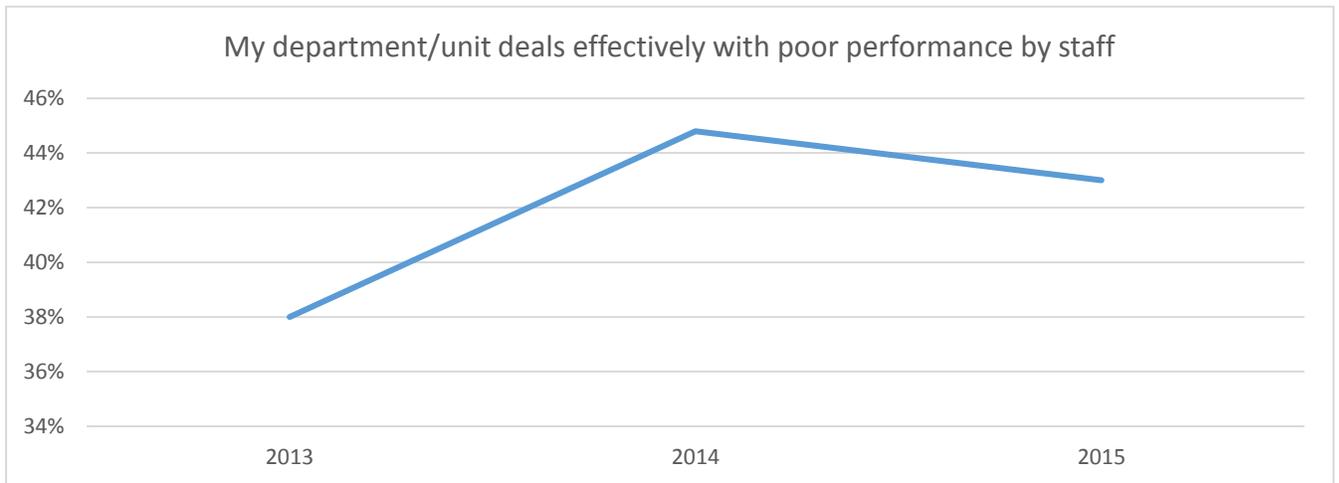
A majority of staff continue to feel that it is important for WCU to be committed to diversity issues (86%, same as 2014). However, other results in this section show that the university continues to struggle in this area. Most respondents (76%) state that their co-workers are aware of diversity issues, but staff feel less comfortable addressing diversity related issues in their departments (down 7% from 2014) and there is a 12% drop in staff (59%) responding that the university offers a variety of diversity related programs for staff as compared to the 2014. Responses for minority staff continue to indicate lower satisfaction than the general responses and satisfaction levels are primarily slipping in this area. There has been a slight increase in the percentage of staff indicating that they have experienced insensitivity while on the job since 2014 (up 3% to 28%). The minority staff response rate experienced a similar increase, bringing their response rate to 37%.

Recommendation

As the university seeks to recruit and enroll a more diverse student body, employees of the university must be prepared to support and meet the needs of these students. While Campus Conversations are ongoing, it will be important to seek and implement new ideas and solutions for campus from the Diversity Conversations. Inclusion must also be part of the conversation as we consider diversity – it is not enough to recruit diverse individuals to Cullowhee, we must be prepared to include them in a meaningful way to the Catamount community of students and staff.

Section 4. Work Environment

The responses in this section are fairly steady as compared to 2014 showing slight gains or losses in percent satisfaction rates for each question. In general, a majority of staff have the supplies they need to do their job effectively and, while dropping slightly from 2014, a strong 93% of respondents get along well with their co-workers. Staff are less satisfied with their access to continuing education or training but satisfaction levels are increasing (80% in 2015, up 4% from 2014). The exception is minority staff where satisfaction with access to additional training dropped 8% from 2014. Staff continue to feel that their department or unit does not deal well effectively with poor performance by staff. Only 43% of respondents believe that their departments deal effectively with low performing staff. Comments in the survey show the negative impact this has not only on morale but on the ability for units to perform effectively and efficiently.



Recommendation

Implement a training program for supervisors to help them more effectively manage their units. This training could include skills training on using personnel computer systems, coaching to improve management skills as well as HR policies pertaining to respond to low performing employees. Currently, new supervisors do not receive any training on HR systems or business processes. This training program could be mandatory for new supervisors.

University Awards

The responses in this section seem to indicate a fairly low understanding of the university awards selection process and low trust in the fairness of the selection process. A little over half (56%) felt well informed about the award nomination time period and only 43% of respondents know who received staff awards. While 65% of respondents feel that any staff member meeting award requirements can be nominated for an award regardless of where they work on campus, only 36% believe that the awards selection process is fair. A majority of staff feel that it's important recognize high performing staff (89%) and a smaller majority (82%) feel that it's important to recognize staff for longevity. Of particular interest in this section is the difference in responses for staff with less than 1 year of service and the responses for staff with 16 year or more of service. The differences in responses seems to indicate an understandable difference in the connectedness of junior vs. senior staff members. General comments in this section indicate staff feel torn on the relevancy of the awards when they are underpaid while at the same time they want awards to be meaningful rather than arbitrary and reflect the awardee's contribution to WCU.

Themes from Comment Sections

Q4. Section 2 – Staff Senate priorities comments from Other selection:

- Overwhelmingly focused on improving salaries. Staff know and appreciate that this is a priority for the administration but people would like to see more progress.
- Workload and staffing is another theme. People are feeling like their workload has significantly increased. This is echoed in the responses for why people are looking for another job. Staff are

feeling that we're top heavy with administrators (who are disconnected from the front line employees) and there aren't enough people actually doing the work.

- Staff would like more meaningful evaluations and have the opportunity to evaluate their supervisor
- Staff would like the freedom to work a flexible schedule. This shows as a weakness in the comparison data as well.

Q6. What do you like about working at WCU.

- People overwhelmingly like the community feel on campus and take pride in and enjoy working with students. Respondents love WNC and generally really enjoy their work and the people they work with.

Q10. Stress levels comments from Other selection:

- Workload and staffing show up here as well
- Salary and salary equity (salary of new employees vs. the flat salaries of current employees) are a significant problem

Q11. What do you like least about working at WCU?

- Staff are unhappy about their salaries
- Long commutes is another theme and affordable housing is also mentioned and the two may go together
- Staff also have issues with ineffective or inefficient administrative processes and the WCU bureaucracy as a whole. We're in our own way and it takes a long time to get things done.
- Staff feel a disconnect between upper administration and their (the staff) roll on campus.

Q12. How can we improve?

- Performance based salary increases
- Improve communication across campus – interdepartmental, interdivisional and across divisions and departments. People feel silo-ed and left out.
- Create training manuals or handbooks for common business processes.
- Flexible work schedules for all employees, not just for those in a certain department or HR classification.
- Affordable child care. Kneeder is known but is not seen as an affordable option.
- Improve staffing – adopt thoughtful staffing models, regular reviews of workload and work responsibilities and adjust job descriptions and salary accordingly. Don't let open positions go unfilled. Many offices or roles are '1 deep' with no one else trained to do that job.

Q21. What changes would you suggest for the university awards process?

- A great many of the respondents aren't familiar with the award process or didn't have any suggestions for improvements.
- A significant number noted that the awards felt political or like a popularity contest.
- A good number mentioned there should be equal number of awards for faculty and staff with a monetary component.
- Many feel that longevity should be recognized.

Q25. Other comments on university award system.

- These comments are a mixed bag for and against having university awards. Of primary concern is having equal access to being recognized with an award and the relevancy of the award when staff feel underpaid.

Q28. Comments on recognizing staff for longevity.

- A real concern about rewarding longevity vs. the quality of a staff member's performance while an employee. Kind of 'don't reward dead weight' or people who haven't been assets to the university.
- Others felt 30 years was arbitrary – why not 15, 20 or 25?

- Others thought that longevity could be awarded with a pay raise.