**Staff Senate Professional Development Survey Results**
**Fall 2018**

**Executive Summary**

The university's 2020 2.0 strategic plan Direction 5 centers on Employee Excellence. Goal 5.2 commits the university to "[c]ontinue support for professional development for all employees as a fiscal priority." According to fall 2018 survey results, 1 in 4 WCU staff have less than full financial support and an additional 7% don't participate in professional development at all. That equates to 1/3 of staff or over 330 people. We believe that additional investment in professional development funds for staff represents a significant opportunity to improve job performance and morale of employees across campus, and help the institution meet Strategic Plan objectives.

**Results**

The Staff Senate administered a survey October 10 – 19, 2018 to learn more about professional development needs among staff on campus. The survey, which garnered 268 responses (response rate of 26%) asked about support for professional development, average cost of professional development and training needs. The survey also offered respondents the opportunity to provide write in responses.

- Overall, staff feel that their professional development is supported by their department (79%).
- They are less satisfied (69%) with the investment – or the resources that are available – by their department for professional development.
- A majority (64%) of staff report satisfaction with their access to professional development opportunities.
- A sizable minority of respondents (25%) say they receive no, partial or varied financial support for their professional development activities.
- A significant portion of respondents (45%) state that the cost of their professional development is less than $500 annually. Sixty-five percent state that the cost of their professional development is under $1,000.
- Some respondents (7%) say they don't participate in professional development.

**Unmet Need for Professional Development Funding**

The following table shows the percentage of respondents receiving varied, partial or no financial support for their professional development by division and years of service:

| Division | % |
|---|---|
| All respondents | 25% |
| Academic Affairs | 30% |
| Admin & Finance | 23% |
| Advancement & Athletics | 28% |
| Chancellor's Div. | 6% |
| IT | 10% |
| Student Affairs | 26% |

| Years-of-Service | % |
|---|---|
| < 1 | 31% |
| 1-5 | 28% |
| 6-10 | 21% |
| 11-15 | 21% |
| 16-20 | 23% |
| 20+ | 4% |

A quarter of respondents state that they have only partial, varying or no financial support. An additional 7% don't participate in professional development. That means that almost a third of staff have less than full support for their professional development. Extrapolating that percentage across the full number of staff at WCU, that equates to more than 330 people.  Providing centralized financial support for WCU staff to engage in professional development could improve the job performance and morale of staff across campus, and help the University better align with strategic goals. It could, in particular, support staff early in their tenure at WCU who are reporting lower access to financial support and who may be at risk of not being retained as employees.

**Training Needs**

The top two training areas people are interested in is computer-related skills and leadership followed by specialized, job-specific training. In addition to these topics, respondents offered the following as potential training topics in their write in comments:

- Comprehensive training for new staff related to Banner, purchasing, finance, hiring and travel. Staff would benefit from both onboarding and continuing training in these areas.
- Problem solving, collaborative and professional skills
- Industry related events
- Grammar, communication, conflict resolution
- Teamwork, collaboration, hierarchy, upward mobility
- Advanced Banner training
- Managing others and budgeting
- Technical trainings
- Things specific to our department
- Empathy training
- Higher education in general and the way specific aspects work (ex. record keeping and retention, administration, organization, effectiveness, organizational performance assessment, etc.)
- Performance evaluation for supervisors
- Certified Microsoft training series and general support for computer skill development

**Write-in Feedback**

The themes in the written feedback mirrored the quantitative results. Respondents underlined that their supervisor or department was supportive of their professional development but that the funds available can't keep up with the need in their department. One respondent noted that the department had $2,000 available to support the professional development of 35 people. Others shared that their supervisor allowed them to participate in training but made it difficult for them to do so or only allowed them to participate in training on campus. Others shared that their department didn't provide financial resources to support their professional development. Some noted that while they had access to funded professional development, they needed a different type of training than what was supported by their department.