

Faculty and Staff Attitudes

Large employers recognize the value of continuously monitoring employee attitudes and perspective on the workplace. Level of satisfaction with compensation, benefits, supervisor behaviors, and work-life support play an important role in an individual's decision to stay or leave. With this monitoring goal in mind, the Pulse Survey was commissioned by the University's central administration and conducted in partnership with the Human Resources Research Institute of the Carlson School of Management.

The first Pulse Survey was conducted in April 2004. Over 6,000 faculty and staff responded to the survey. The survey asked a variety of questions about employees' job experiences and attitudes about their jobs, departments, and the University. The survey examined the following areas:

- job satisfaction
- pay and benefits
- supervisor and departmental support
- University climate
- retention and considerations in leaving
- Life Outside of Work
- Characteristics of the Respondents

Taken as a whole, the survey results suggest that faculty and staff at the University of Minnesota are satisfied with a variety of features regarding their employment and the University.

Faculty Results: Across a number of indicators, results suggest that faculty respondents feel quite good about their jobs at the University. Some of the most favorable results were in the following areas:

- overall job satisfaction and satisfaction with the University as an employer
- satisfaction with co-workers
- satisfaction with department chair or responsible administrator
- intentions to remain at the University
- general well-being outside of work

Despite the generally favorable results for faculty, some areas showed more moderate degrees of favorability. This is not to say that results were unfavorable, but rather when considered in the context of the overall positive results, individuals were more moderately favorable or neutral:

- satisfaction with pay
- work family conflict
- support from department chair or responsible administrator

There was a tendency for faculty on the Crookston campus to report slightly less favorable responses in several of the areas. However, the Crookston sample size is small and caution must be taken in making inferences about these differences.

Staff Results: With respect to staff, some of the most favorable results were in the following areas:

- overall job satisfaction and satisfaction with the University as an employer
- satisfaction with co-workers
- satisfaction with supervisors
- intentions to remain at the University
- general well-being outside of work

Despite the generally favorable results, some areas showed more moderate degrees of

favorability. Respondents were more moderately favorable or neutral:

- satisfaction with promotion
- satisfaction with pay
- supervisor support for career development
- perceptions of job security

Conclusions: The results from this first survey suggest the University must continue to address the issue of salary levels. Retention of faculty and staff will depend on increasing the University's competitive position in this area. While University benefits programs are viewed as a positive feature of employment, good benefits cannot compensate for erosion of base salaries against peer institutions.

Efforts to better prepare supervisors and managers appear to be paying off, as the survey indicates many employees feel positive about the quality of their supervisors and managers. More attention to career development opportunities seems particularly important for staff employees, many of whom remain at the University for their careers.

The Pulse Survey will be an ongoing University-wide effort to "take the pulse" of University employees. In the years to come, similar surveys will be administered to track changes in the experiences of University employees.