
Executive Summary

UH Staff Morale Survey Final Report

A survey of 1,146 staff on the UH Main campus conducted in November-December 2011 indicates that UH staff are generally satisfied with their jobs and committed to UH, but are less satisfied with specific facets of their job including pay, benefits, and communication. Moreover, satisfaction with these facets are linked to performance-related outcomes, including engagement, turnover intentions, and absenteeism. Staff attitudes appear to be driven primarily by low perceived support from their divisions, perceptions of unfairness, the presence of obstacles to performance, and job insecurity. These issues are especially pronounced among staff working in Technical and Service Craft positions.

The data suggest several strategies for improving staff morale including: 1) improve communication to clarify procedures and performance expectations, demonstrate concern and appreciation for staff, reduce perceptions of unfairness due to inaccurate or inadequate information, and reduce job insecurity; 2) examine training needs of supervisors; 3) identify and remove obstacles to performance; 4) monitor the work climate for employees working in Technical and Service Craft positions; and 5) ensure consistent application of policies that determine staff pay and promotion decisions.

In response to concerns about staff morale at the UH Main Campus, the UH Staff Council's Staff Affairs Committee - Survey Subcommittee with the help of Dr. Lisa Penney, Associate Professor of Industrial/ Organizational Psychology, developed and administered the Staff Morale Survey. The goal of the survey was to shed light on staff morale issues by assessing employee attitudes (e.g., how staff feel about their jobs and the university), as well as conditions in the work environment that may drive those attitudes (e.g., perceptions of support from above, organizational constraints, role clarity), and staff outcomes that may impact individual- and unit-level performance (e.g., turnover intentions, absenteeism).

The Staff Affairs Committee invited staff to participate in the survey via an email announcement, which included a link to the web-based survey, distributed at multiple time points during November-December 2011. Additionally, the Staff Affairs Committee also made paper surveys in both English and Spanish available to staff. Survey participants were asked to respond to a number of questions using a five-point scale (e.g., Strongly disagree to Strongly agree). All scales are reliable and valid measures of their respective constructs. Participants were also given the opportunity to provide open-ended comments at 14 points throughout the survey. Of the 3,511 staff on the main campus, 1,146 (33%) completed the entire survey, and 636 left at least one comment. The survey participants represent every division and college on the main campus, as well as positions ranging from technical service craft (e.g., electrician, groundskeeper) to executive (e.g., deans, associate vice presidents).

Results of the survey suggest that, in general, UH staff are satisfied with (70%) and engaged in their work (74%) and committed to UH (60%). However, staff are less satisfied with specific facets of their job, particularly pay (16%), promotions (20%), and communication (44%). Most

staff generally feel supported by their supervisors (69%), but less feel supported by their Divisions (51%). Approximately one-third or more staff expressed concerns about a lack of clarity regarding performance expectations (32%) and conflicting directions and procedures (37%). Results also suggest that staff have concerns about the fairness of the procedures regarding decisions that affect staff (41%) and reward distribution (53%). The qualitative data (i.e., comments) largely reflected the results of the quantitative data.

Subgroup analyses indicate that staff attitudes vary slightly based on job category. Specifically, compared to staff working in other jobs, staff working in Technical and Service Craft positions report significantly lower pay and communication satisfaction, receive less support from their divisions and supervisors, encounter more obstacles to performance, and have higher turnover intentions.

Because staff attitudes (i.e., satisfaction) were lowest for pay, promotions, and communication, additional analyses were conducted to identify the primary drivers of those attitudes. Results from multiple regression analyses indicate that those attitudes are primarily driven by division support, perceptions of fairness, obstacles to performance, and job insecurity.
