

**Report of the Staff Development Survey of the Division of Student Affairs  
University of Florida  
Spring 2008**

## **Methodology**

At the request of the Vice President for Student Affairs, a staff satisfaction survey was distributed to TEAMS employees within the Division during Fall 2007. This instrument was originally developed through the Student Affairs Employment Enrichment and Development Committee (SEED) and was administered in Fall 2005. The interest areas of the survey included satisfaction, learning and development, community, recognition, scholarship, and resources. Some revisions were made to the instrument for the Fall 2007 survey, but the vast majority of questions and topics remained the same to allow for longitudinal analysis between the two sets of results.

The instrument was administered during the fall semester 2007, using an on-line web based tool. Paper copies of the survey were also administered through Housing and Residence Education and the J. Wayne Reitz Union for employees who do not have computer access, and those responses were submitted into the online web based tool. Of the 426 TEAMS employees in the Division of Student Affairs, 353 completed or partially completed the survey. Of the surveys collected, 311 respondents submitted usable data which resulted in a total response rate of the survey of 73%. This response rate is slightly higher than the Fall 2005 survey, which had a response rate of 68%.

## **Demographics**

The respondents to the survey were 55.8% female, 38.6% male, with 5.3% preferring not to answer and 1 respondent indicating transgender. While the majority remained female, the Fall 2005 respondents were 61.5%.

Several aspects of the demographics remained approximately the same as in Fall 2005:

- age of the respondents remained the same, with about half of the respondents being 41 years or older;
- married or partnered individuals comprised about 56.9%;
- 82.7% indicated that they are heterosexual, with 12.1% preferring not to answer, and 13 individuals self-reporting as gay lesbian, bisexual, or queer;
- the majority (64.3%) identify themselves as White/Caucasian (not Hispanic), with about 18.2% identifying as African American/Black;
- 55.5% of the respondents had an associate's degree or higher, with 24% holding a Master's degree and 5.7% hold a doctorate or professional degree.

## **Satisfaction**

In general, the staff of the Division of Student Affairs is positive about their work experience within the Division, similar to the responses in Fall 2005. In both surveys, more than 90% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they have a sense of personal accomplishment from their work. More respondents strongly agreed or agreed in 2007 that there was a supportive atmosphere in their department—85.2% up from 79%. In both surveys, the overwhelming majority of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Division of Student Affairs has a general respect for differences in all areas, with slight increases in the areas of ethnicity (2007: 91.8%; 2005: 86%); gender (2007: 91.8%; 2005: 91%); sexual orientation (2007: 93.1%; 2005: 85%); age (2007: 90.3%; 2005: 86%); and disability (2007: 93.7%; 2005: 88%).

Job satisfaction was expressed as an area of concern expressed in the Fall 2005 survey. Areas of greatest improvement within the Division of Student Affairs include satisfaction with the work load was higher in Fall 2007 with 70.9% stating that they were “very satisfied or satisfied,” compared to 53% in Fall 2005, and satisfaction with management/leadership within their department was 64.4% compared to 51%. Other areas of satisfaction with positive results include “job functions” (85.5%); “work environment” (74.4%); “number of hours I work” (81.9%); and “my supervisor (79.1%)”. Further, as compared to Fall 2005, more respondents in Fall 2007 indicated that morale in their department was high (63.8% “agree or “strongly agree” v. 51%). 79.2% report that they are committed to a long-term career within the Division.

Other Division-wide results from the Fall 2007 survey showed improvement, but they should still remain as areas of concern for the Division of Student Affairs. Slightly fewer respondents stated that staff members within their department were treated with favoritism (38.3% v. 41%), and fewer respondents reported unmanageable or unhealthy levels of stress at work (24.2% v. 30%). In addition, some concerns with leadership within the department were voiced: 29.1% reported that actions and behaviors were inconsistent with words, and 31.1% reported that their voice is not heard in the decision-making process. 23.4% stated that they have witnessed instances of unethical behavior in their department. Further, respondents indicated that they are somewhat satisfied or dissatisfied in several areas: “communication within my department” (39%); “management/leadership in my department” (35.3%); and “customer service delivery within my department (19.7%)”.

## **Learning and Development**

The typical respondent was positive about the opportunities to receive training and additional learning opportunities within the Division. Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisor supports and encourages them to participate in learning and development opportunities (87.1% in Fall 2007 v. 90% in Fall 2005) and gives them time to participate in available training (90% v. 93%). However, 21.2% stated that they are not encouraged to stay aware of current issues and research within student affairs or higher education.

As compared to Fall 2005, more respondents in Fall 2007 indicated they sought out opportunities to enhance learning and development—68.8% through the department (compared to 57% in Fall 2005); 50.2% through the SEED committee, and 68.5% through UF Human Resource Services (Fall 2005 reported that between 40% and 50 used either the SEED Committee or UF HR). Similar to Fall 2005's results, there was a substantial number of staff members who stated that employees should be required to participate in a minimum number of hours of training per year (70.7% in Fall 2007 v. 60% in Fall 2005).

The continued significant interest of staff members in training and staff development should encourage the SEED Committee to use the results of this survey to bolster their efforts. Specifically, the Fall 2007 survey asked specific questions about the frequency, quality, and content as well as potential topics of SEED committee programs, and can provide direction to the Division.

### **Community**

There was a tremendous increase in those who actively attend division-wide social activities (69.2%), reflecting the successful efforts of the SEED Committee in response to the Fall 2005 (19%) results. Further, 83.2% report that their department includes all employees in workplace activities.

63% report that they are adequately informed about activities and accomplishments of other departments within the Division, but 25.3% disagree or strongly disagree that they are familiar with the functions of the other areas within the Division. About the same number stated that they have regular contact with members from other areas of the Division (56.2% v. 55%), and 66.2% agreed or strongly agreed that there is a sense of community within the Division, suggesting that more opportunities be created to serve on committees or other Division-wide efforts.

The mission of the Division of Student Affairs has remained highly understood Division-wide by staff: 97.5% in Fall 2007 agreed or strongly agreed v. 89% in Fall 2005), and 93.2% agreed or strongly agreed that departments are striving to fulfill that mission. Further, 82.9% reported that there is a clear sense of purpose and direction, roles, and responsibilities for their department. Slightly more respondents in Fall 2007 indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that they were part of a team in their department as compared to Fall 2005 (84.2% v. 79%).

### **Recognition**

In Fall 2007, more employees agreed or strongly agreed that recognition of employees in their department was based on merit (70.7% v 49% in Fall 2005), and 57.9% agreed or strongly agreed that recognition in their department was fair and unbiased (compared to 54% in Fall 2005). This perception of unfairness should be investigated further within the Division.

Recognition from co-workers was higher: 80.2% agreed or strongly agreed that they are recognized for a job well done (compared to 73% in Fall 2005), and 76.2% agreed or strongly agreed that the Division of Student Affairs provides ample opportunities to recognize staff accomplishments (compared to 69%).

### **Scholarship**

The term “scholarship” was defined in the Fall 2005 survey as items that focused on research and/or knowledge that guides and enhances our daily and/or long-term roles within the Division or the university.

Communicating or incorporating current research, trends, or best practices into meetings or regular emails at the departmental level was widely reported: 76.9% agreed or strongly agreed with that statement. However, 38.4% of respondents indicated that they do not have sufficient time to read current research pertaining to their functional area.

Adequate information about available conferences and other professional development opportunities is provided—78% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed. However, 61% reported that their supervisors encouraged them to participate in local, state, or national associations and/or conferences pertaining to their functional area.

### **Resources**

63.1% agreed with the statement that their department has sufficient resources (defined as tools, supplies, finances, or intangibles that enable us to carry out functions of our job). Specific areas described as “lacking in resources” were salaries (58.1%), budget (27%), physical working conditions (23.9%), and technology (18.7%). Close to 60% agreed or strongly agreed that their department has an adequate budget to accomplish its goals, and 75% felt that their departmental leadership was effective in allocating resources. At the same time, 88% of respondents reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that they are provided with the resources necessary to complete their job in a timely manner without having to make special requests for resources.

The use of human resources within the Division continued to be recognized favorably by staff, with 82% agreed or strongly agreeing that their supervisor makes best use of their strengths (81% in Fall 2005). Resource concerns related to staff indicated that the following types of staff were lacking in the Division: custodial and maintenance staff (14.9%), professional staff (12.5%), clerical staff (10.4%), and administrative staff (8%).

## **Discussion/Recommendations**

1. As in Fall 2005, the majority of respondents to the survey feel positively about their work in the Division of Student Affairs, and they indicate a strong level of satisfaction. The mission is clear to the staff, and their departments strive to accomplish that mission. Those results should be celebrated and shared throughout the Division.
2. The level of community within the Division of Student Affairs has grown significantly, and those efforts should be commended. The drastic increase in social opportunities for staff and the high level of inclusion of all staff in departmental events demonstrate great success on those efforts.
3. Specific areas of concern continue to exist, such as fair/unbiased recognition by management, and managing levels of stress at work. Those issues should be investigated further at the departmental level. It may require additional follow-up within the department to learn more about the source of those issues.
4. Resources, salaries, and budgeting continue to remain a concern within the Division. With the impending budget cuts, these issues are unlikely to be resolved within the short term. It is recommended that the Vice President for Student Affairs rely upon the sense of community within the Division to share budget constraints, issues, and challenges which are a result of state-level shortages. In addition, staff throughout the Division should be invited to submit their suggestions for allocating resources and ways to save funds.
5. Departments within the Division of Student Affairs have some isolation from each other, with a portion of the respondents reporting that they are not familiar with other functions or they do not regularly interact with each other outside of the department. It is recommended that more structured activities, such as committees, include a wider range of individuals from the department.
6. The Fall 2005 results recommended that this survey be administered in the future to benchmark the results and compare longitudinal data. These results are provided in this report, and it is recommended that a similar survey be conducted no later than Fall 2009 to continue to measure that success.