

Report of the Staff Development Survey of the Division of Student Affairs University of Florida Spring 2006

At the request of the Vice President, the Student Affairs Employment Enrichment and Development Committee (SEED), developed a survey instrument to address the following interest areas coinciding with their mission foci:

- Satisfaction
- Learning and Development
- Community
- Recognition
- Scholarship
- Resources

The instrument was administered during the fall semester 2005, using an on-line web based tool. Of the 435 possible participants in the survey, 314 completed or partially completed the survey. Of the surveys collected, 297 respondents submitted usable data which resulted in a total response rate of the survey of 68%.

Demographics

The respondents to the survey in the Division of Student Affairs are 61.5% female and 38.5% male with approximately half of the respondents 40 years of age or older. Married or partnered individuals comprise 59% of the respondents and the majority (over 70%) of identify themselves as White/Caucasian (not Hispanic). Twenty percent (20%) identify themselves as African American/Black. Over 56% have an Associates Degree or above with 25% holding a Masters. Five percent (5%) of the respondents hold a Doctorate or Professional degree.

Satisfaction

In general, the staff of the Division of Student Affairs are positive about their work experience within the Division. In most instances, 70% to 75% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with statements that reflected satisfaction with their employment in the Division. Of special note, 90% of the respondents stated that they have a sense of personal accomplishment from their work and 79% stated that there was a supportive atmosphere in their department. The overwhelming majority of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Division of Student Affairs has a general respect for differences - ethnicity (86%), gender (91%), sexual orientation (85%), age (86%) and disability (88%).

Several areas scored lower than anticipated in the category of job satisfaction and will be explored further with follow-up assessment. Only 51% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the morale is high in their department and 30% stated that the amount of stress in their job was not healthy. There was also a belief by staff that some individuals are treated with favoritism (over 41% of the respondents). Additionally, 53% of the respondents were satisfied with their current workload in their department and slightly less (51%) with the management and leadership within their department.

Learning and Development

The typical respondent was positive about the opportunities to receive training and to have opportunities for additional learning within the Division. Significantly, 93% of the staff agreed or strongly agreed that they are provided time to participate in training and 90% agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisor encourages them to participate in learning and development opportunities. Between 40% to 50% of the respondents have typically sought out training sessions sponsored by either the Division, HR or the University. Approximately 57% sought out training sessions offered within their department. However, 15% to 20% of respondents across the Division do not think training at various levels (department, Division , etc.) applies to them and do not participate in these opportunities.

It appears that there is significant interest in training and staff development on the part of the Division but not all of staff members are taking advantage of the opportunities. A substantial number of staff (60%) would support a Division of Student Affairs requirement for a minimum number of hours in staff development and training each year. Further exploration is needed to determine what is limiting the staff participation (i.e., lack of interesting workshops, access to seats in training, visibility of offerings, proximity to worksite, etc).

Community

While 79% of the staff feels connected to their department, there is less connection to the Division as a whole. Fifty five percent (55%) have regular contact with members from other areas of the Division and 19% actively attend social activities sponsored by the Division. This offers SEED the opportunity to look further into this topic to develop opportunities for social and educational activities that would be more meaningful to the staff of the Division.

On a highly positive note, a consistent message regarding the vision of the Division of Student Affairs is understood and shared by 89% of the staff. When asked to comment, several staff specifically mentioned Dr. Telles-Irvin's initiatives since arriving at the University of Florida. It appears that the groundwork is there to continue to build a community of staff who share a common vision. The SEED Committee should be able to use this information to develop future programs.

Recognition

When asked about recognition from their supervisor, 85% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are recognized for a job well done, and 81% agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisor works with them to improve.

When asked about peers, 73% agreed or strongly agreed that they are recognized for a job well done by their peers and 69% felt there were ample opportunities to be recognized on a division-wide basis.

Conversely, only 44% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that performance incentives were clearly linked to merit. It is not clear if this response level accurately reflects a problem within the management of the division. Performance incentives have historically not been a part of salary decisions and merit pay was rarely available from the State Budget. In 2005, merit pay was allocated to staff and may or may not be available in the future. Since there is no history or culture of merit based incentives at the University of Florida, it will require additional years of merit allocations to determine if this is an anomaly or a trend.

Only 54% agreed or strongly agreed that recognition in their department was fair and unbiased, and only 49% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that employees in the department are rewarded and recognized based on merit. Again, this may be an isolated perception that will have to be reviewed in context of subsequent (if any) merit plans at the University of Florida.

Scholarship

The term “Scholarship” was used to describe items that focused on research and/or knowledge that guides and enhances our daily and/or long-term roles within the Division and university. Staff have a clear understanding of the mission of the Division and how their job contributes to the mission (92% and 90%). They appear to be at least partially concerned that they do not have enough support to remain current in their field or active in professional associations (about 55% agreed or strongly agreed). A portion of the staff (12% and 16% respectively) do not feel that this applies to them in their current position.

SEED may be able to address this issue as it applies to professional development issues and career development during staff training programs. Further review with staff with the different job classifications, may shed light on the reasons that staff felt that professional affiliations did not apply to them.

Resources

Use of human resources is recognized favorably by the staff in that 81% agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisor makes best use of their strengths. However, when fiscal resources are considered, only 46% agreed or strongly agreed that there is adequate budget available for the department to accomplish its goals. Discussions with

staff may be helpful to determine which specific areas, programs or materials are being impacted by this perception of a less than adequate budget.

Discussion/Recommendations

1. The majority of respondents to the survey feel positively about their work in the Division of Student Affairs. When examined as a whole, the staff has a strong level of satisfaction. However, there are specific areas of concern that center around supervisory skills, and fair/unbiased recognition by management. Additionally, a number of staff feel disconnected to the Student Affairs community. These issues provide substantial opportunity for the SEED Committee to develop future training and staff development workshops and resources.
2. The majority of respondents have a sense of personal accomplishment and understand their role in light of the Division's vision and mission. The Division will continue to move forward by collectively formulating goals consistent with the vision.
3. There was some variation within the Departments of the Division. While SEED will be focusing on the entire Division, each department will also address critical issues that are unique to their office. The Vice President for Student Affairs is working directly with the members of the Vice President's Council to develop and monitor the progress of plans to address these staff concerns at the departmental level.
4. Concerning salary levels, respondents spoke often about their compensation level both in absolute terms and in relation to other University of Florida offices. The Vice President will make this issue of compensation a priority for the coming years.
5. It is recommended that the Division use this survey as a "benchmark" to assess progress when addressing issues of concern and to monitor improvement along all six assessment areas. To assist in this assessment/evaluation of progress, it is anticipated that this survey will be administered again no later than spring 2007.