

Western Carolina University Fall 2017 Staff Senate Survey Results

Overall Results

The 2017 results show the strongest overall satisfaction and engagement numbers in the history of the Staff Senate survey. The results in all sections of the survey are trending up indicating continuing improvement in staff morale, connection to the university and perceived feelings of support. For the first time since the survey was initially administered in 2013, the results don't indicate a significant difference between minority and non-minority respondents. Only 39% of staff responded that they have seriously considered leaving their job in 2017 which is down 7% from 2015 and a 14% decline since the survey was first administered. The survey had strong participation with a record 43% response rate (419 respondents).

The overall 2017 results indicate that staff are satisfied by their work, understand how their work is connected to the university's mission and feel that WCU is a good place to work. Comments reflect a deep appreciation for the university's culture and commitment to the university's mission. Staff refer to the 'family feel' of the WCU community and genuinely appreciate their colleagues and co-workers. Dr. Belcher's leadership and commitment to the university and its employees are recognized strengths for WCU. Comments also indicate that staff value the importance of the university's work with students and their role in that mission.

Issues surrounding compensation continue to be the single largest issue for staff. Salaries are being adjusted to near market rate for new hires but incremental salary increases for current staff aren't making a significant impact. The raises, while appreciated, aren't keeping pace with the cost of parking and health insurance and, in many cases, aren't keeping up with the salaries of new hires which is creating salary compression or inversion. Adding to the problem are policies which prevent the university from compensating staff who successfully compete for promotions or advanced positions at the same rate as external candidates. Respondents also note personnel issues and lack of access to flex work schedules as other significant pressure points in their experience as WCU employees. Many respondents identify the ability to work an adjusted or flex schedule as a way to substantially improve their experience as employees and improve their work – life balance.

For Consideration

While the overall survey responses show impressive gains since 2013, the following are issues for consideration:

- When reviewing the data by years of service, there is a significant decrease in engagement and satisfaction for staff with 6-20 years of service. This can be imagined as an inverted bell curve and is persistent through all of the sections of the survey. In past surveys, a difference in the response rate was noted for these different service term populations but the difference was not persistent either across the populations or throughout the survey sections.
- Seventy-three percent of men, 67% of minorities and 56% of women respond that they have access to a flex schedule. This is a substantial difference in access and, quite possibly, a significant problem. Overall, the percentage of respondents agreeing that their department allows for a flex schedule has seen slow growth over the history of this survey and is currently at 63%.
- The percentage of respondents stating that they often feel the need to work over 40 hours a week to complete their work jumped by 8% between 2014 and 2015 and in 2017 decreased 2% to 55%.
- While improving, there remains a persistent gap between respondents' agreement that WCU is committed to diversity issues (84%) and that it is important for the university to be committed to diversity issues (91%).

Staff Senate Survey Results - Trend Data (% Strongly Agree/Agree)

Section 1. Overall Satisfaction & Engagement

	2013	2014	2015	2017
I am proud to say I work for WCU	80%	89%	95%	96%
I have access to the resources I need to do my job	75%	87%	89%	91%
I am valued as an employee	52%	75%	79%	84%
My work is personally satisfying	76%	86%	89%	91%
My work is directly connected to the university's mission	81%	91%	89%	94%
I enjoy my job and look forward to coming to work	72%	80%	85%	88%
I would recommend my unit/department as a good place to work	71%	77%	80%	84%
WCU is a good place to work	77%	88%	90%	93%

Section 2. Working Relationships & Supervision

	2013	2014	2015	2017
I can openly communicate with my supervisor about work-related issues	80%	83%	86%	90%
I am free to speak my mind without fear of retaliation	67%	71%	72%	77%
My immediate supervisor values my input	75%	80%	81%	88%
My supervisor is qualified to supervise me	73%	82%	82%	88%
I am satisfied with how my supervisor gives me feedback	n/a	74%	73%	80%
My supervisor respects me as an individual	79%	82%	85%	89%
My immediate supervisor keeps me informed on important developments at WCU	65%	76%	72%	85%
I am satisfied with the working relationship with my supervisor	n/a	78%	79%	85%
My annual performance evaluation is helpful	47%	52%	56%	66%

Section 3. Personal Life & Work Balance

	2013	2014	2015	2017
I am supported when I need to take time off for personal reasons (illness, doctor's visits, elder care, child care, etc.)	88%	92%	93%	94%
My department allows a varied work schedule (flex schedule, telecommuting, etc.)	49%	61%	62%	63%
I often feel the need to work over 40 hours in a week to finish my work	38%	49%	57%	55%

My department supports me when I want to attend a wellness program on campus during work hours	50%	56%	60%	66%
The WCU campus culture supports health and wellness activities for staff	n/a	74%	77%	82%

Section 4. Diversity on Campus

	2013	2014	2015	2017
My co-workers are aware of diversity issues	64%	75%	76%	82%
WCU offers a variety of diversity related programs for staff	48%	71%	59%	71%
I am comfortable in addressing diversity related issues in my department	60%	73%	66%	79%
My supervisor addresses diversity related issues in a timely and professional manner	54%	59%	59%	74%
Diversity is valued at WCU	60%	76%	75%	83%
WCU is committed to diversity related issues	60%	75%	72%	84%
I have experienced insensitivity to diversity issues while on the job	27%	25%	28%	32%
It is important for WCU to be committed to diversity issues	78%	86%	86%	91%

Section 5. Work Environment

	2013	2014	2015	2017
I have the supplies/ materials/ equipment I need to do my job effectively	n/a	87%	90%	91%
I have access to the necessary continuing education/training required to do my job	58%	76%	80%	88%
I get along well with the employees in my department/unit	88%	95%	93%	96%
My department/unit deals effectively with poor performance by staff	38%	45%	43%	56%
I know what resources are available to me if I have an issue with a co-worker, supervisor, or other university employee.	n/a	n/a	77%	80%