



## **Institutional Research and Assessment Report**

August 15, 2013

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2013 UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO STAFF SURVEY**

The 2013 University of Idaho Staff Survey was intended to help identify issues of concern among a broad spectrum of staff members and generate discussions to determine and meet the needs of staff. The survey includes questions on job satisfaction, working environment and conditions, organizational communications, and campus climate. The Staff Survey is conducted every three to four years. Of the 1,825 staff members invited to complete the survey, 1,053 were completed. Approximately fifty-eight percent (58%) of staff responded, down ten percent (10%) from the previous survey in 2008. The survey was conducted in the spring of 2013, during March and April.

Staff were significantly more satisfied with “health benefits” (61% were “satisfied” or “very satisfied,” up 27% from 2008) and “retirement benefits” (76% were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” up 15%). Conversely, only forty-three percent (43%, down 10%) of respondents were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with “salary,” and “job security” (also 76%, down 2%). Seventy-two percent (72%, no change) were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their “work load,” and ninety percent (90%) were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their “working conditions (hours, location)” an increase of twenty-four percent (24%).

Three new items on the survey this year were: “My supervisor operates with openness and transparency when making decisions (76%); “My supervisor acknowledges my professional successes (81%); and, “My supervisor encourages me to be innovative and proactive in my position” (88%).

In a series of items about the climate on campus, eighty-four percent (84%, up 7%) reported the “U of I provides a comfortable atmosphere for students faculty and staff.” Additionally, sixty-seven percent (67%, up 2%) reported they “agree” or “strongly agree” that “My department gives attention to the needs of individuals with disabilities in the workplace.”

Two new items regarding campus climate were included this year. Fifty-percent (50%) of respondents reported that “Units across campus are encouraged to cooperate in a coordinated manner,” and fifty-five percent (55%) that “it is a high priority for UI to develop a sense of community among staff, faculty and students.

In another new question this year, staff were asked if they had experience unwanted, uncivil and/or aggressive behavior from someone the workplace. This behavior was identified as inappropriate comments, unprofessional expectations, aggressive or unreasonable behavior. One-third (33%) of staff responded “yes.”

## **UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO REPORT OF THE 2013 STAFF SURVEY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The University of Idaho Staff Survey was designed in response to a variety of comments and concerns expressed during the 1995 and 1996 President's Forums for Staff, and was first administered in 1996. The survey was intended to help identify issues of concern among a broad spectrum of staff members; generate discussions to determine and meet the needs of staff; expand the university's insight into staff perceptions, attitudes and opinions in a variety of areas; and develop an information base to help the university set some goals and priorities for staff development. The survey includes questions on job satisfaction, working environment and conditions, organizational communications and campus climate. Data are used in the aggregate only.

The survey is web-based, and employees were notified, through personal emails from the Chair of the Staff Affairs Committee, of the web address for the survey. The survey is conducted using software designed for this purpose. *At no time are any individuals' ID numbers connected to their responses.* A pre-letter was sent notifying staff of the upcoming survey as well as an initial message inviting participation and two follow-up messages. All of these messages were sent via email.

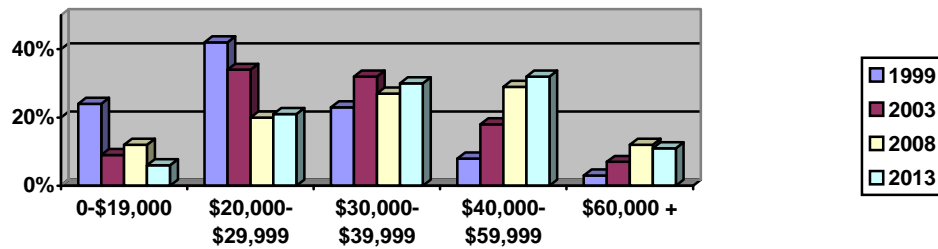
Of the approximately 1,825 staff members invited to complete the survey, 1,053 were completed. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of staff responded, down ten percent (10%) from 2008.

### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

As is typical of this type of survey, a greater number of women than men responded, sixty-two percent (62%, up 2% from the 2008 survey) being female. This is slightly more than the overall staff population of fifty-five percent (55%) women and forty-five percent (45%) men. Fifty-one percent (51%) of respondents are between the ages of 35 and 54, no change from 2008; while twenty-six percent (26%, also no change) of respondents are age 55 or older. This year respondents were asked to report on all races that apply to them. Ninety-four percent (94%) of respondents are "Caucasian", two percent (2%) "Asian American", two percent (2%) "American Indian/Alaskan Native", and one percent (1%) "African American/Black" and "Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander", respectively. Three percent (3%) reported "Hispanic or Latino" ethnicity.

Forty percent (40%) of staff respondents have been employed at the UI for five years or fewer (down 2%); the median length of time is 6-10 years, as it has been in the past. As it was in 2008, the median salary range for UI staff is between \$35,000 and \$39,999, with over fifty percent (53%) of all staff making between \$30,000 and \$49,999. The chart below represents the change in salary distribution since the 1999 staff survey was administered.

**Change in Salary Distribution**



Fifty-eight percent (58%) of respondents were “classified”, thirty-three percent (33%) “exempt”, fewer than one percent (<1%) were “instructional”, and nine percent (9%) were “not sure” or “other.”

## **JOB SATISFACTION**

The questions in the survey on job satisfaction focus around several factors, such as satisfaction with job benefits, opportunities, and supervisors, and stress experienced over the last two years. In one item staff are asked to review and rate certain aspects of their jobs related to employee benefits.

Staff were significantly more satisfied with “health benefits” (61% were “satisfied” or “very satisfied,” up 27% from 2008) and “retirement benefits” (76% were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” up 15%). Conversely, only forty-three percent (43%, down 10%) of respondents were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with “salary,” and “job security” (also 76%, down 2%). Forty-seven percent (47%, down 4%) were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the “Employee Assistance Program.” Seventy-two percent (72%, no change) were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their “work load,” and ninety percent (90%) were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their “working conditions (hours, location)” an increase of twenty-four percent (24%).

However, satisfaction with opportunities available to staff decreased since 2008, with fewer than half of staff reporting they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with “career advancement opportunities” (41%, down 10%), “professional development opportunities” (64%, no change from 2008), “personal development opportunities” (63%, down 5%) and “training opportunities” (54%, down 8%). Likewise, “opportunities to influence UI governance” decreased, declining one percent (1%) to thirty-four percent (34%). It should be noted, however, that there was a large percentage (22%) of “not applicable/don’t know” responses to the question on influencing government.

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

In a series of questions about their general work environment, staff were asked to report how closely they agreed with statements involving their supervisors, departmental management processes, and performance evaluation processes. For the first time they were able to report

on more than one supervisor. While only about five percent (5%) reported on two supervisors and only four percent of those (4%) reported on three supervisors, overall ratings for second supervisors were significantly lower in all areas than for first supervisors, and even lower for those reporting on three supervisors.

Those areas in which three quarters or more of respondents reported that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statements provided regarding their *first* supervisor included:

- “My supervisor allows me to use University equipment (computer, printer) to look up my paycheck information on Vandal Web” (93%, up 3%);
- “My supervisor treats me with consideration and respect” (91%, up 3%);
- “My department is supportive of my needs to attend to my personal and family responsibilities” (92%, down 1%);
- “My supervisor has been adequately trained to conduct my performance evaluations” (76%, no change);
- “My supervisor is fair when giving criticism” (85%, up 2%);
- “My supervisor takes employee ideas into account when making important decisions” (83%, up 3%);
- “My supervisor is an effective and competent leader” (81%, up 4%);
- “My supervisor fosters good two-way communication” (81%, up 6%);
- “My annual performance evaluation is conducted in a timely manner” (81%, up 6%); and,
- “My supervisor provides clear explanations and instructions regarding my performance expectations” (80%, up 10%).

Three new items were on the survey this year, and these were also viewed favorably: “My supervisor operates with openness and transparency when making decisions (76%); “My supervisor acknowledges my professional successes (81%); and, “My supervisor encourages me to be innovative and proactive in my position” (88%).

Conversely, those areas in which fewer than three-quarters of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” were:

- “My supervisor supports and encourages me to take computer training classes that are relevant for me to do my job” (75%, up 7%);
- “My supervisor takes appropriate action on my problems and complaints” (74%, down 3%);
- “My work area is adequately staffed” (57%, up 5%);
- “My supervisor is fair in determining if courses taken during working hours should be work related release time” (64%, up 1%); and,
- “My evaluation is used to help plan my training and development in order to improve my performance” (63%, up 10%).

Twenty-eight percent (28%, down 10%) of staff reported that they have experienced an “extreme” level of stress over the past two years, while fifty-four percent (54%, no change) have experienced a “moderate” level. The sources of stress listed most frequently as

"extreme" were mostly consistent with those reported in 2003 and 2008: "work load" (2%, down 4%), "personal finances" (22%, down 1%), "finding a balance between work and home" (16%, down 3%), and "managing household responsibilities" (11%, down 1%). New in the top five stressors this year was "personal relationships", with eleven percent (11%, down 2%) of respondents reporting it had contributed to their stress. Other areas one-third of respondents reported were "extreme" or "somewhat" stressful were "institutional policies and procedures" (32%) and "concern about job security" (33%).

Ninety-one percent (91%, up 10%) report they do not believe "there are toxins in my work area that need to be removed (e.g. asbestos, chemicals, fumes)." For the first time this year, those that reported "yes" on this question were offered the opportunity to report a safety concern with a link to a form that is submitted directly to the Environmental Health and Safety Office. Seventy-two percent (72%) of respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that "health and safety concerns I express are effectively resolved."

When asked specifically about campus facilities, sixty-seven percent (67%, up 3%) reported that "lighting on campus is adequate," and fifty percent (50%, up 7%) "agree" or "strongly agree" that "I am satisfied with my ability to park on campus."

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE**

In an attempt to understand the working environment and conditions within departments, as well as at the university level, the survey contains a series of elements specific to the organizational climate. Nearly nine out of ten staff members responding to the survey "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that "most faculty with whom I interact treat me with respect" (86%, down 2%), "most administrators with whom I interact treat me with respect" (88%, down 1%), and "my department provides me with adequate equipment and/or materials with which to do my job" (88%, up 3%).

In a series of items about the climate on campus, eighty-four percent (84%, up 7%) reported the "U of I provides a comfortable atmosphere for students faculty and staff." Additionally, sixty-seven percent (67%, up 2%) reported they "agree" or "strongly agree" that "My department gives attention to the needs of individuals with disabilities in the workplace." Only ten percent (10%, no change) report having been discriminated against because of their gender, three percent (3%, up 1%) because of ethnic status, eight percent (8%, down 4%) because of age, and two percent (2%, no change) because of sexual orientation or religious affiliation. As in previous years, employees were asked if they have been sexually harassed at the UI within the last five years. Again this year, and consistent with previous years, ninety-eight percent (98%, up 2%) responded that they have not been sexually harassed.

Two new items regarding campus climate were included this year. Fifty-percent (50%) of respondents reported that "Units across campus are encouraged to cooperate in a coordinated manner," and fifty-five percent (55%) that "it is a high priority for UI to develop a sense of community among staff, faculty and students."

In another new question this year, staff were asked if they had experience unwanted, uncivil and/or aggressive behavior from someone the workplace. This behavior was identified as inappropriate comments, unprofessional expectations, aggressive or unreasonable behavior. One-third (33%) of staff responded “yes.”

## TECHNOLOGY

A section on technology asked staff to comment on whether or not they had access to a variety of technology in their workplace, and how much they agreed with certain statements about the technology used in their job. Nearly all staff have access to most of the technology listed in the survey:

	Yes %	Change from 2008 %
I have access to University email in my workplace.	100	+1
I have access to Vandal Web in my workplace.	100	+2
I know how to access Vandal Web.	98	+3
I have access to a computer printer that I can use during my workday.	99	+1
I am aware of the variety of information on Vandal Web.	97	NEW

Ninety-six percent (97%, no change) of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that “I have the necessary skills to use the computer effectively to complete my job,” eighty-nine percent (89%, up 5%) that “my department keeps the work computer assigned to me adequately upgraded so I can do my job effectively,” and eighty-seven percent (87%, up 6%) that “the UI provides sufficient computer technical support for me to do my job.”

## ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Finally, for a series of statements regarding organizational communication at the UI, staff were asked to rate how strongly they agreed. The area with the highest response rates in “agree” or “strongly agree” was “There is a high degree of open, two-way communication in my work area” (81%, up 8%). Other areas in which one-half or more of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” were:

- “I have access to information about Staff Affairs Committee such as subcommittee, representatives, and officers” (58%, down 7%);
- “I am aware of the purpose and functions of the SAC” (54%, down 5%);
- “I have adequate information about the staff ombudsman” (52%, down 3%);
- “I have adequate information about how to file a grievance” (51%, down 4%); and,
- “UI administrators are effective and competent leaders” (50%, no change.)

Areas in which fewer than one-half of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” include:

- “UI administration uses staff input and recommendations” (39%, down 4%); and,

- “The Staff Affairs Committee (SAC) has been responsive to my input or inquiries” (23%, up 2%).

However, it should be noted that many of these questions had high response rates of “not applicable/don’t know.” When numbers are adjusted for these, responses to “agree” and “strongly agree” increase to above fifty-percent (50%) in all areas.

## COMMENTS

The remainder of the survey solicited, through open-ended comments, data where further professional development should be offered as well as other suggestions that respondents might have. The bulk of the comments around professional development were related to increasing opportunities for staff to take computer training courses, (for example, Excel.) A number of staff also requested that sensitivity/civility training be offered campus-wide, and funding for conferences and outside training be made available. The greatest number of comments offered for additional consideration centered around salaries and benefits. Complete results of the survey, including the frequency distribution and open-ended comments, can be found on the Institutional Research and Assessment website <http://www.webs.uidaho.edu/ira/assess/surveys.htm>.

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