

Working at Iowa – Survey 2018

University Report - December 2018

Executive Summary

University of Iowa faculty and staff continue to report a high level of engagement with their work in support of the university's mission and strategic goals, according to the 2018 Working at Iowa Survey. This year's Working at Iowa Survey was administered to 18,635 regular faculty and staff over the period of October 5–19, 2018; 11,148 or nearly 60% of the eligible population responded, making it a highly reliable representation of the overall employee population. This level of participation matches that of the 2016 survey.

Responses to the twenty survey items used in previous surveys continue to identify the strengths of the university workforce and culture, as identified by the highest levels of agreement with individual survey items. These strengths continue to include:

- I know my work expectations
- I understand how my job fits into the overall mission of the university
- My supervisor treats me with respect
- I would recommend the UI to a friend seeking employment
- My unit provides a supportive environment to retain individuals from diverse backgrounds
- Individuals in my unit are civil and respectful to each other

New in 2018 was the use of a validated scale¹ for measuring engagement. Engagement behaviors reflect how people personally invest their energy in their jobs in terms of:

- Physically giving their full effort
- Mentally paying close attention to their work, and
- Emotionally caring about what they do.

To measure the engagement of the university workforce, nine additional survey items asked individuals to anonymously self-report how much physical, mental and emotional energy they invest in their work at the university. The aggregate responses to these survey items will be used to compare individual colleges and divisions with the university results as a whole, and will provide a better way to compare how our faculty and staff populations report their engagement at future points in time.

In addition to providing a validated method to gauge the engagement level of the university workforce, the correlation of this new data with other Working at Iowa survey responses identifies those workplace practices or conditions that are most likely to support future faculty and staff engagement with work. For example, looking at the current areas of strengths listed above, those practices having the strongest relationships with faculty and staff engagement, include:

- I know what is expected of me in my work

¹ Crawford, E.R., LePine, J.A., & Buckman, B.R. (2013). Job engagement scale short form items adapted from Rich, B.L., LePine, J.A., & Crawford, E.R. (2010). Job engagement: Antecedents and effects on job performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53, 617-635.

- I understand how my job fits into the overall mission of the UI
- My unit has a strong focus on providing excellent service

The positive correlation between these items and engagement suggest that continuing actions to reinforce these practices will help maintain high levels of engagement across all employee groups. If focus on these efforts waver and perceptions decrease, we might expect a corresponding decrease in engagement.

Using the same correlation analysis, one can also identify those areas showing the greatest opportunity for improvement and most likely to result in future engagement and productivity. These areas, where faculty and staff report lower levels of agreement with items that are more strongly related to engagement, include:

- There are opportunities for faculty/staff promotion within the UI
- The UI does a good job of recognizing the accomplishments of faculty/staff, and
- I receive work feedback regularly.

The positive correlation between these items and engagement suggest that taking new actions to improve opportunities for promotion, recognition and effective feedback for faculty and staff will most likely improve future engagement and productivity across all employee groups.

Survey results for each college and division (including the new index and correlation analysis), as well as additional break out reports of the 2018 data will provide additional opportunities for leadership, faculty and staff within colleges, division and departments to gain perspective and meaning from the data. With this information, leadership, working with faculty and staff, can identify areas of focus that are consistent with their strategic priorities, and develop action plans to create positive change.

Human Resource leaders on campus are available to assist individual units in communicating and utilizing the Working at Iowa results in their respective work units. University Human Resources and the Office of the Provost will also utilize the data from the survey to develop strategies for both short- and long-term improvements that serve to support the engagement and productivity of all faculty and staff across the university.