

# ***Working at IOWA Survey Results***

***September, 2006***



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF IOWA

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## ***Appendix***

*Tables and figures are located in a separate file*

## Executive Summary

The University of Iowa invited all faculty and staff with a 50 percent or greater regular appointment to participate in an engagement survey in April 2006. The invitation included Faculty, Professional and Scientific, Merit, and Merit Supervisory Exempt/Confidential staff. Throughout this report, Merit Supervisory Exempt/Confidential (MSE/C) staff responses are included with those of Professional and Scientific (P&S) staff.

Researchers say that engagement is a blend of commitment, loyalty, productivity, and ownership. It is the illusive force that motivates employees to higher levels of performance (Wellins & Concelman, 2005).

Based on this concept of engagement, the Working at IOWA survey focuses on the University's effectiveness in fostering a work environment that demonstrates concern for faculty and staff well-being, nurtures capable leadership, and builds a dynamic organization.

Participants responded to the survey by indicating their level of agreement with 53 statements in eight categories:

- Engagement
- Cooperation/Collaboration
- Supervisory Effectiveness
- Communication
- Confidence in Leadership Vision
- Commitment To Employee Well-being
- Customer Focus
- Flexibility

In addition, two global statements addressed overall work experience at the University. Faculty and staff were asked to respond to these statements in regard to their specific job, their workplace, and the University as a whole.

For the purpose of this survey, the terms "All Position Classifications" refer to Faculty, P&S and MSE/C staff, and Merit staff. Responses were weighted, as closely as possible, by position classification to approximate population percentages.

Of the 14,590 faculty and staff who were sent the survey, 6,217 responded, for an overall response rate of 43 percent. Faculty comprised 11.5 percent of the respondents, 58.5 percent of respondents were P&S and MSE/C, and approximately 30 percent of respondents were Merit staff.

### **Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement**

The University of Iowa's strengths and opportunities for improvement were judged to be those that elicited the largest percentage of positive or negative responses to each statement, based on a six-point scale. (Response categories ranged from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree," plus a No Opinion/Not Applicable option.)

For "All Position Classifications," the five statements that respondents most often agreed or disagreed with are shown below:

#### **Statements with Highest Level of Agreement**

- I look for more effective ways to do my work. 99%
- I know what is expected of me in my job. 95%
- I understand how my job fits into the overall mission of the UI. 94%
- My workplace has a strong focus on providing excellent service. 90%
- I have the basic resources I need to do my job. 90%

#### **Statements with Highest Level of Disagreement**

- Poor performance is managed appropriately. 45%
- I am kept informed of our workplace budget status. 38%
- Work-related conflicts are managed constructively. 36%
- Workloads are distributed fairly. 34%
- I am confident there is a clear plan to strengthen the UI. <sup>1</sup> 30%

### **Commitment to Action**

University-wide action plans resulting from this survey will be linked to the *Iowa Promise: A Strategic Plan for The University of Iowa 2005–2010* (2005). At University-wide and division/collegiate levels, action plans will be developed to respond to the recommendations in this report.

These plans will be communicated to central HR leadership, who will report progress to the University president on an annual basis. UI Human Resources has committed to resurvey in fall 2008.

### **Recommendations:**

- 1.) Have top leadership (VP Group) make a statement that people are the University's most important asset and encourage division/collegiate units to continuously recognize faculty and staff efforts.
- 2.) Improve communication by supervisors/leaders regarding organizational priorities, performance expectations, budget and process improvement. Specific strategies include:

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<sup>1</sup> The committee notes that the survey was distributed shortly after President Skorton announced his departure from The University of Iowa.

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- a. Ensure accountability of leadership to act on the results of this survey at all levels of The University of Iowa.
  - b. Ensure that division/collegiate strategic plans are readily accessible to everyone.
  - c. Communicate regularly about progress being made related to the UI Strategic Plan: The Iowa Promise.
  - d. Encourage divisions/collegiate units to use shared governance models as vehicles for communication.<sup>2</sup>
- 3.) Involve supervisors, leaders, and staff in continuous improvement of business processes to address workload issues.
    - Encourage all units/departments to examine processes that create extra or unnecessary work for employees and undue burden on customers.
  - 4.) Provide opportunities to improve skills of supervisors and leaders in the areas of conflict resolution, workload distribution, and performance management.
  - 5.) Hold supervisors and leaders accountable for the management of conflict, workload, process improvement, and poor performance.
  - 6.) Encourage individual participation in performance reviews and goal discussions throughout the year.
  - 7.) Encourage and support departmental and collegiate recognition programs.
  - 8.) Encourage all campus units to recognize organizational successes and share that information.
    - Hold annual focus groups, coordinated by central HR, to determine what is working well and what could be improved.
  - 9.) Encourage all faculty and staff to continue to upgrade their skills and learning.
    - Explore new technologies, while continuing to support proven educational and learning tools that enhance the workplace environment.
  - 10.) Work with supervisors/leaders to provide opportunities for all employees to attend and participate in University activities while maintaining appropriate staffing levels.
  - 11.) Provide administrative support and leadership to transfer the percentage of responses to survey statements in the “neutral zone” (Somewhat Agree and Somewhat Disagree) to the “positive zone” (Agree and Strongly Agree). (See page 11.) Research has shown that when this level of change is done at the local level, it will most directly impact turnover and productivity. Results of these efforts will be measured by a resurvey in 2008 (Earl, Lampe, & Buksin, 2006).

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<sup>2</sup> Division/collegiate - the terms division and collegiate units are used interchangeably in this report and refer to larger sections of the University such as the division of Finance and Operations or the Office of the Vice President for Research.

## Introduction

**Working at IOWA** is a survey that explores engagement among faculty and staff by asking how they feel about their job, their workplace and the University as an employer.

Researchers say that engagement is a blend of commitment, loyalty, productivity and ownership. It is the illusive force that motivates employees to higher levels of performance (Wellins & Concelman, 2005).

Based on the concept of engagement, the Working at IOWA survey focuses on the University's effectiveness in fostering a work environment that demonstrates concern for faculty and staff well-being, nurtures capable leadership, and builds a dynamic organization.

## Background

In the summer of 2005, President Skorton and the Vice-Presidents approved the administration of a campus-wide survey to examine employee engagement. UI Human Resources (HR) was charged with the task of accomplishing the project.

A committee of University faculty and staff designed, created, and disseminated the survey tool, and analyzed data results. A University-wide report was generated as well as individual reports for each organizational unit. Administrative support was provided by Organizational Effectiveness, a unit of Human Resources.

### Committee Members:

- Susan C. Buckley, Director of Human Resources and Associate Vice President for Finance and Operations
- Nancy Fick, Human Resources Director, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Lois Geist, MD, Associate Professor, Administration, College of Medicine
- Jane Holland, Family Services Coordinator, Organizational Effectiveness
- Susan Johnson, MD, Professor, Associate Provost
- Cynthia Joyce, University Ombudsperson, Office of the Ombudsperson
- Pat Kenner, Organizational Consultant, CQI/Organizational Effectiveness
- Richard LeBlond, MD, Clinical Professor, Internal Medicine, President of Faculty Senate
- Diana Leventry, Director of Hospital Human Resources, UIHC
- Marcus Mills, Vice President, University Counsel
- Jennifer Modestou, Director of Campus Relations, Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity
- Joyce Moore, Director, Evaluation and Examination Service
- Dorothy Persson, Librarian IV, Psychology Library, University Libraries
- Laura Reed, Chair, Director of Organizational Effectiveness, Associate Director of Human Resources

## 2006 Working at IOWA survey

- Heather Schnoebelen, Office Coordinator I, Admissions, Staff Council Representative
- Jan Warren, Program Associate II, Administrator for Student Programs, Belin-Blank Center
- Carlette Washington-Hoagland, Librarian II, Coordinator of Assessment and Staff Development, University Libraries
- Bridget Zimmerman, Clinical Associate Professor, College of Public Health

The survey results will be shared with the President, Provost, and leadership at the division/collegiate level by Susan Buckley and Susan Johnson. It is expected that the appropriate Dean/VP will determine who in their organization is best suited to develop action plans, manage change, and make improvements based on the results of the survey. Senior HR Leadership at the division/collegiate level will be asked to assist with this effort.

## Survey Design, Dissemination, and Communication Process

After a review of literature on the principles of engagement, the committee selected eight categories relevant to the UI campus climate as a focus of the survey. The eight categories are:

- Engagement
- Cooperation/Collaboration
- Supervisory Effectiveness
- Communication
- Confidence in Leadership Vision
- Commitment To Employee Well-being
- Customer Focus
- Flexibility

To measure agreement with the behaviors within each category, the committee created and reviewed 53 statements. The categories provided one way to organize statements about particular ideas.

The statements were grouped according to "My Job," "My Workplace," and "The University as an Employer" to ensure that respondents could give information about how they felt about their individual job, how they related to their workplace, and how they see themselves as part of the University. Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (as cited in Macey & Schneider, 2006, p. 56) provide the following insight:

... that the items focus in on issues directly or indirectly controlled by the work unit immediate supervisor and seem to be modestly related at the work level unit level of analysis to such issues as unit turnover, profits, productivity, and customer satisfaction.

For complete information about how Faculty, P&S and MSE/C staff, and Merit staff responded to each of the statements, please see tables A-D in the Appendix.

Respondents to the survey were asked to evaluate each statement according to a six-point rating scale, ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." In addition, a "No Opinion/Not Applicable" option was provided for each statement.

The resulting differences in the number of respondents to each statement can be attributed to the ability of people to choose this "No Opinion/Not Applicable" option. This option was added due to feedback comments received at four focus groups held during the testing phase. During this phase, 30 staff and 4 faculty members provided feedback to the committee about the items, the online process, and the survey directions.

As a result, the directions were revised to read: "If you are unsure of how to answer, have no opinion, or feel that the statement does not apply to you, select Not Applicable."

## 2006 Working at IOWA survey

No Opinion/NA responses were not included in any report totals. See Table A in the Appendix for the number of respondents by statement.

### **Demographic Items**

Demographic information was collected relating to respondents' employing organizational unit, position classification, and years of service. Participants accessed the survey electronically using their HawkID, at which point the additional demographic information was added to the data file.

In addition, three optional demographic questions were included: race/ethnicity, age, and gender.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality was maintained in three important ways:

- The UI Evaluation and Examination Service (EES) disseminated the survey, collected the data, and then deleted personal identifiers from the data file.
- Professor Bridget Zimmerman, the faculty member completing the data analysis, had access only to the amended EES files.
- Only anonymous data was received by Central Human Resources and the Working at IOWA Committee.

### **Survey Respondents**

Faculty, Professional and Scientific (P&S), Merit Supervisory Exempt/Confidential (MSE/C) Staff, and Merit Staff having at least 50 percent or greater regular appointments received the survey electronically. Throughout this report, Merit Supervisory Exempt/Confidential (MSE/C) staff responses are included with those of Professional and Scientific (P&S) staff. Although paper copies of the survey were available, none were requested.

### **Communication Process**

The Communications Sub-Committee created a comprehensive communication plan to make the campus aware of the activities surrounding the Working at IOWA survey. As a part of this plan, they created the Working at IOWA website (<http://www.uiowa.edu/hr/working/index.html>) where faculty and staff can learn about:

- Survey development
- Survey dissemination
- Survey results
- Development of action plans
- Implementation of change management.

## 2006 Working at IOWA survey

University-wide survey results are available on the website. The site provides an overall communication plan, toolkits to assist with change management, and action plan templates. As reports are completed, the site will provide updates to action plans.

### **Important Dates in the Working at IOWA Survey Development Timeline**

- Fall 2005 through Winter 2006 - The committee finalizes the survey design and informs the campus.
- January 2006 - Organizational Effectiveness (OE) staff facilitate four focus groups on campus to test statements and gather feedback about the survey.
- Spring 2006 - The survey is electronically disseminated to eligible faculty and staff.
- Late Spring to Summer 2006 - Reports are written after data analysis is completed.
- August 2006 - The overall report for the University is posted on the Working at IOWA web site.
- Fall 2006 - Reports are shared with organizational leadership.
- Fall 2006 - Meetings occur with University constituent groups reviewing the University-wide report.
- Fall 2006 - Each division or collegiate unit begins the process of reviewing its report and determining how best to use the information.
- Spring 2007 - Website is updated and "Working on Results" activities are communicated to campus.
- Fall 2007 - Annual progress report is provided to President and available on the Working at Iowa web site.

## Data Analysis

### Process

Associate Professor Bridget Zimmerman, College of Public Health, compiled and analyzed the anonymous raw survey data from the UI Exam and Evaluation Service. After consultation with the Data Management Sub-Committee, Professor Zimmerman developed multiple reports to illustrate key findings. These are included in their entirety in the Appendix.

Frequency counts were run for each statement, as well as the eight engagement categories, according to employing organizational unit, position classification, gender, age, years of service, and ethnicity. Reports were run for each organizational unit and some departments. Department reports were run for only those departments having at least 30 respondents, to ensure confidentiality.

Data was analyzed according to position classification, gender, age, years of service, and ethnicity; by category; and by grouping ("My Job," "My Workplace," and "The University as an Employer"). The committee looked for meaningful interpretations, variations, and results that would lead to themes, and finally to recommendations.

Response trends were identified by examining the percentage of respondents either agreeing or disagreeing with each statement within a category. These results were used to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.

### Statement Data Review Methodology

The statements were grouped according to "My Job," "My Workplace," and "The University as an Employer" to ensure that respondents could share information about how they felt about their individual work, how they related to their workplace, and how they see themselves as part of the University. Two additional methods were used to review the data:

"Agree/Disagree" scale: The six potential responses were collapsed into two measures: Agree (including "Strongly Agree," "Agree," and "Somewhat Agree") and Disagree (including "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," and "Somewhat Disagree"). This scale is used for the University-wide findings on pages 19-20.

"Agree/Neutral/Disagree" scale: Following basic analysis process, the six potential responses were collapsed into three zones: a positive zone (including "Strongly Agree" and "Agree"); a neutral zone (including "Somewhat Agree" and "Somewhat Disagree" or those who do not seem to feel as strongly about the items); and a negative zone (including "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree") (Johnson, 2006). This scale is used for all other analyses of statement responses.

### Interpretation of Statement Data

There was little variation to indicate that strengths or opportunities for improvement were related to position classification, demographic factor, or statement data analysis method. Given the lack of statistical difference, this report reflects recommendations based solely on the overall strengths of agreement or disagreement with statements rather than any other factors.

The two-point scale was used to determine which were the top five statements for both agreement and disagreement for all position classifications, and additionally for each individual position classification (Faculty, P&S and MSE/C, and Merit). While most of the statements were the same, there were some differences by position classification. They will be discussed further in "University-wide Findings." (See page 19.)

The three-point scale provided a different type of insight into the level of agreement and disagreement with the various statements. In those statements with the highest level of agreement (positive zone), the agreement equals or exceeds the neutral and negative zones.

In the statements showing the highest level of disagreement, those in the neutral zone ("Somewhat Disagree/Somewhat Agree") is quite large, as noted below.

| Statement  | Strongly Disagree/ Disagree % | Somewhat Disagree/ Somewhat Agree % | Agree/ Strongly Agree % |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Poor performance is managed appropriately.               | 24%                           | 45%                                 | 30%                     |
| I am kept informed of our workplace budget status.       | 22%                           | 40%                                 | 38%                     |
| Work-related conflicts are managed constructively.       | 18%                           | 46%                                 | 35%                     |
| Workloads are distributed fairly.                        | 16%                           | 45%                                 | 39%                     |
| I feel included in decisions that are made about my job. | 16%                           | 38%                                 | 46%                     |

These statements (with a larger group in the neutral zone) are areas to target for improvement. Action planning and change management implementation at the University-wide and division/collegiate unit level will be used to encourage movement into the "Agree/Strongly Agree" column (positive zone) between now and the next campus survey.

For a complete listing of responses by all position types and individual constituent groups, please see tables A-D in the Appendix.

### My Job, My Workplace, and the UI as an Employer

For a graphic representation of responses to all statements based on "My Job," "My Workplace," and "The University as an Employer", including position classification, please see figures AA-LL in the Appendix.

## **Comparison of Respondents to Total Population**

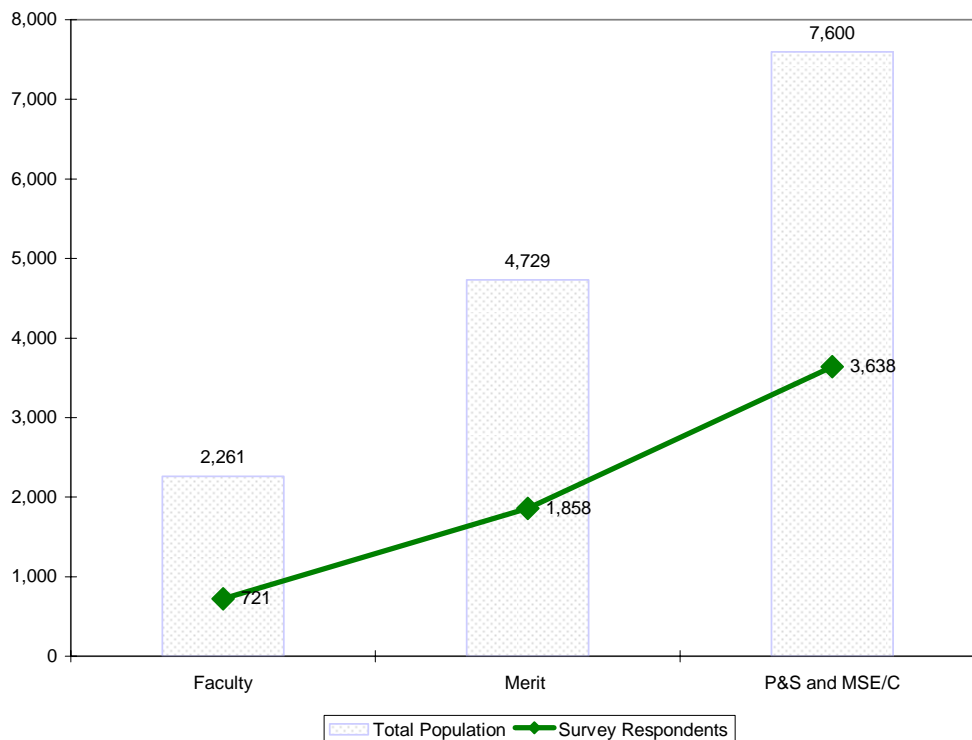
### **Survey completion**

A total of 6,217 completed surveys were received out of a potential 14,590 in the total population, representing a 43 percent response rate. Analysis of responses by subgroups (position classification, gender, race, age, and years of service) revealed that the responses were largely representative of the population surveyed.

The committee used data from the Human Resources Information System (HRIS) for the total ranges. The data for the respondents is taken from their responses to the demographic statement on the survey.

Figures on pages 16-20 represent the breakdown of respondents compared to the total population by position classification, gender, race/ethnicity, age, and years of service.

**Figure 1. Comparison by Position Classification**

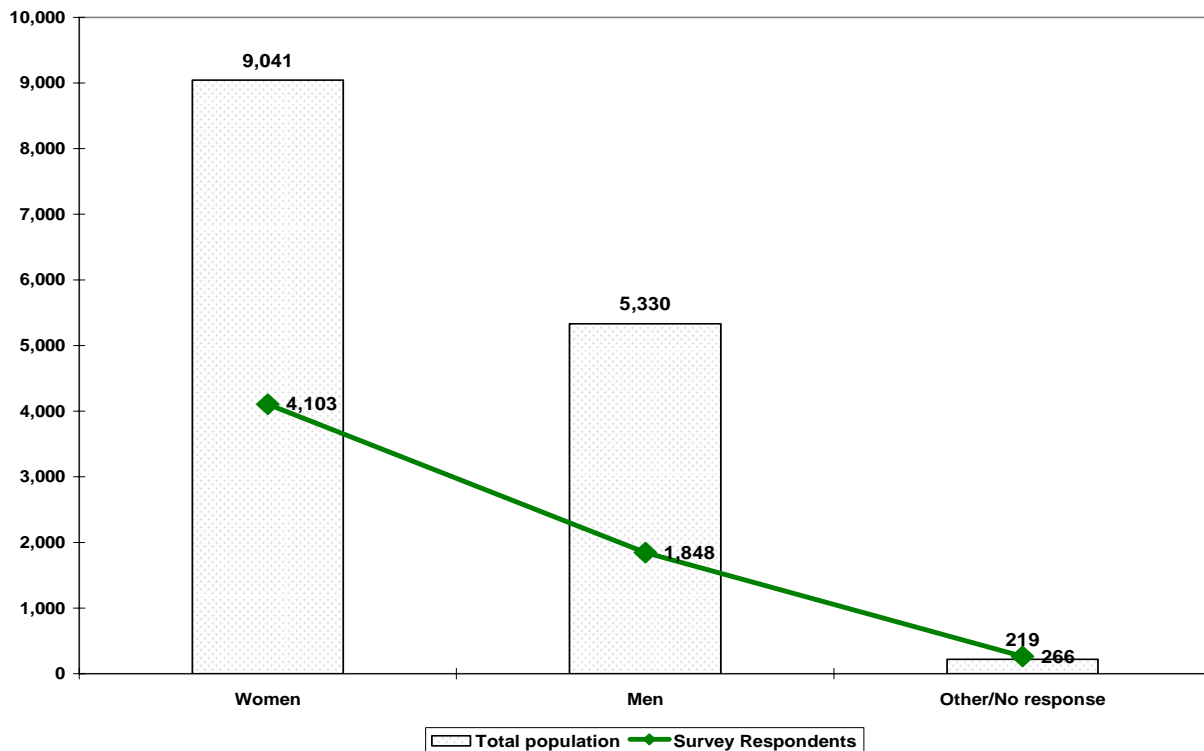


Comparison of Respondents to Total Population:

Professional and Scientific staff (P&S and MSE/C) made up 58.5 percent of the respondents and 52 percent of the total population. Merit staff made up about 32 percent of the respondents and 29.9 percent of the total population. Faculty made up 11.6 percent of respondents and 16 percent of the total population.

Faculty and Merit staff are somewhat under-represented, while P&S/MSE/C staff are somewhat over-represented.

**Figure 2. Comparison by Gender**



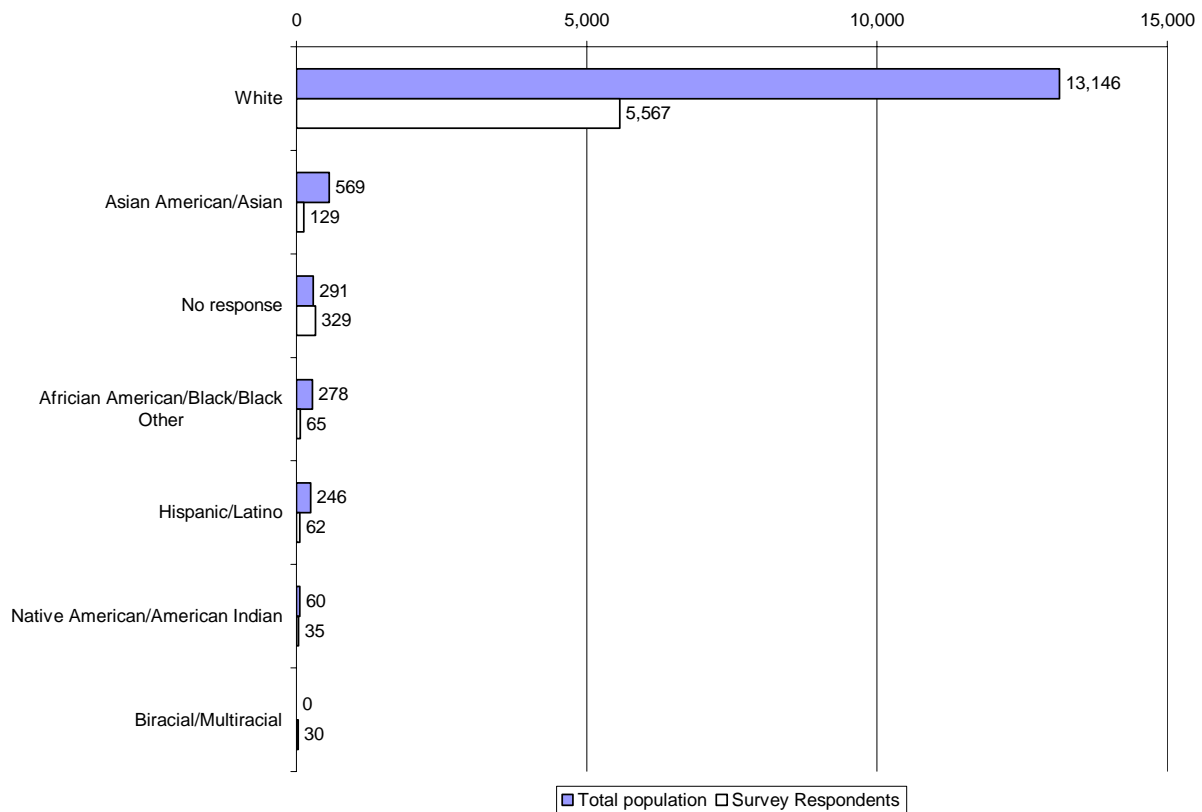
Comparison of Respondents to Total Population:

Women made up 66 percent of the respondents and 62 percent of the total population. Men made up about 30 percent of the respondents and 37 percent of the total population. There were no gender data for 4.28 percent of respondents (who chose “Other,” or not to reveal their gender) and there were no HRIS gender data for 1.5 percent of the total population.

Respondent Characteristics:

Women are slightly over-represented and men are slightly under-represented in the respondent sample.

**Figure 3. Comparison by Race/Ethnic Origin**



Comparison of Respondents to Total Population:

- White/Caucasian make up 89.5 percent of respondents and 90.1 percent of the total.
- Asian American/Asian make up 2.1 percent of respondents and 3.9 percent of the total.
- Missing/Unknown make up 5.3 percent of respondents and 2.0 percent of the total.
- African American/Black/Black Other make up 1.0 percent of respondents and 1.9 percent of the total.
- Hispanic/Latino make up 1.0 percent of respondents and 1.7 percent of the total.
- Native American/American Indian make up 0.6 percent of respondents and 0.4 percent of the total.
- Biracial/Multiracial\* make up 0.5 percent of respondents and 0 percent of the total.

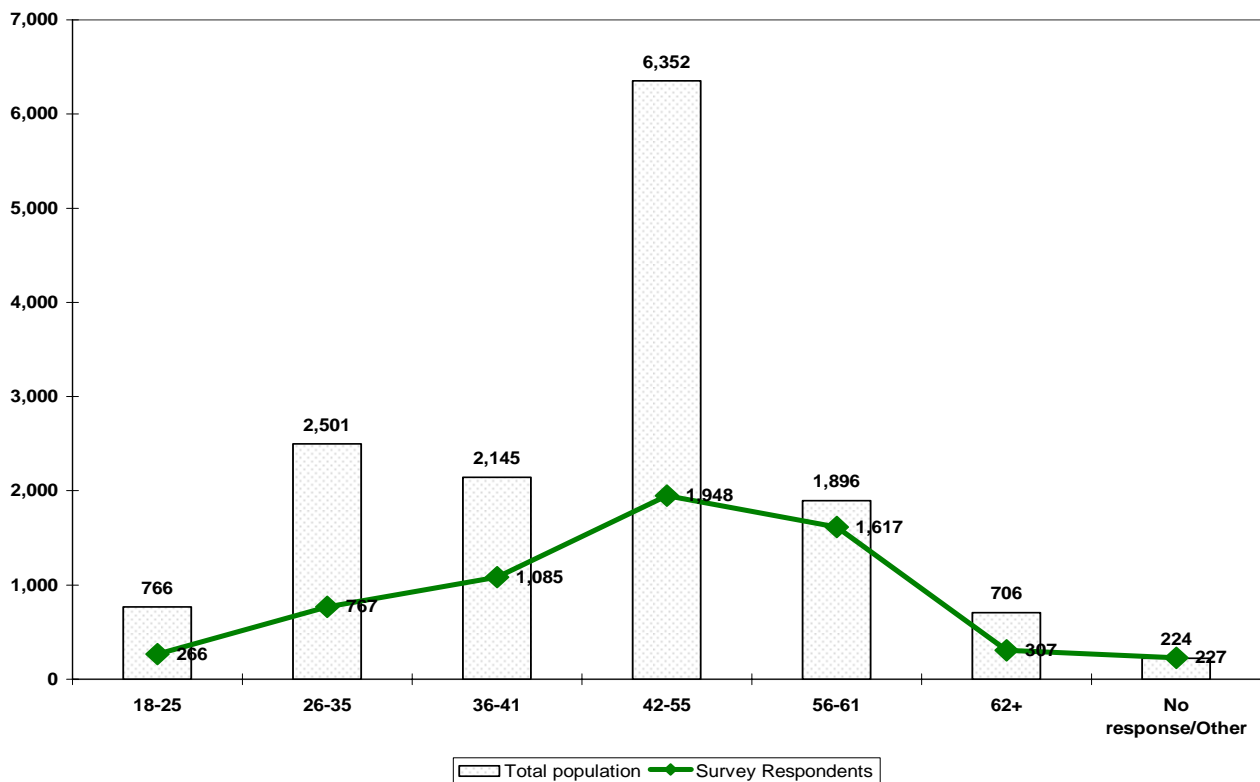
Respondent Characteristics:

Missing/Unknown appears to be overrepresented in the respondent sample.

Complete definitions for each of the racial/ethnic options is included in page 6 in the Appendix. More information is found in Table I in the Appendix.

\* Biracial/multiracial is not an option in the HRIS database, so there are no members of this total population.

**Figure 4. Comparison by Age**



Comparison of Respondents to Total Population:

The committee used data from the Human Resources Information System (HRIS) for the total ranges. The data for the respondents is taken from their responses to the demographic statement on the survey.

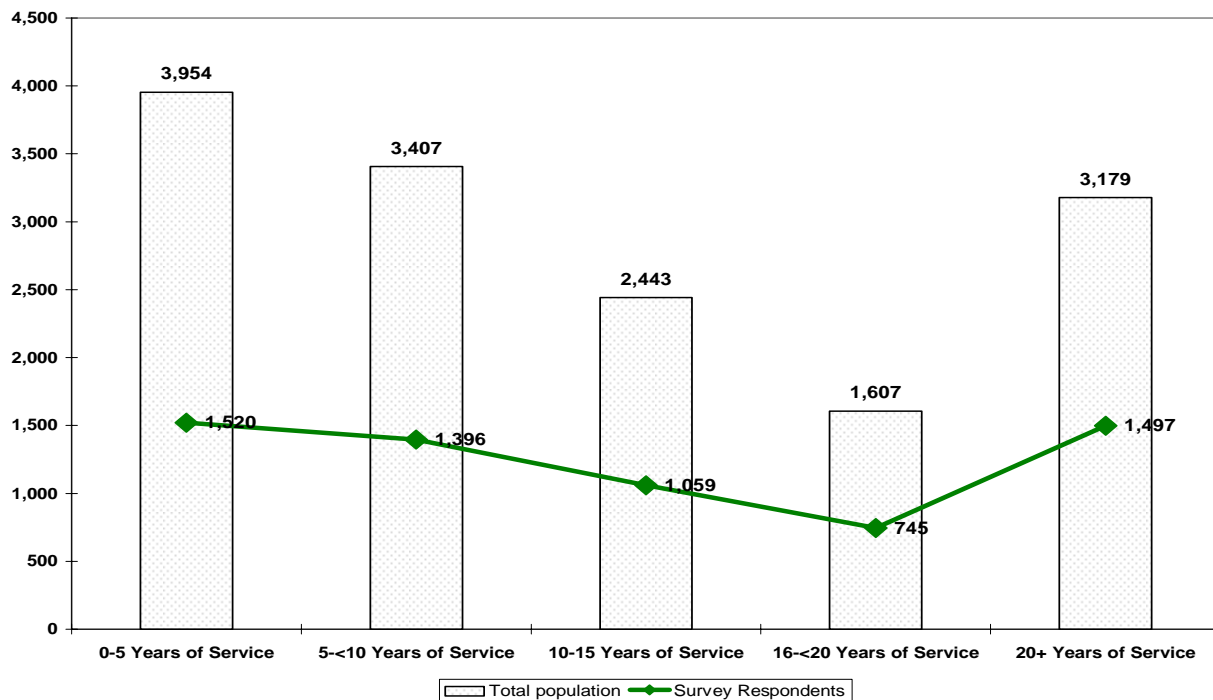
Respondents in the:

- 18-25 range made up 4 percent of respondents and 5 percent of the total.
- 26-35 range made up 12 percent of respondents and 17 percent of the total.
- 36-41 range made up for 18 percent of respondents and 15 percent of the total.
- 42-55 range made up for 31 percent of respondents and 44 percent of the total.
- 56-61 range made up for 26 percent of respondents and 13 percent of the total.
- 62 plus range made up for 5 percent of respondents and 5 percent of the total.
- The percent for whom there is no data in HRIS is 4 percent, while those who didn't select an age range are about 1.5 percent of the total.

Respondent Characteristics:

Those in the 36-41 and the 56-61 age ranges are over-represented while those between 26-35 and 42-55 are under-represented in the respondent group.

**Figure 5. Comparison by Years of Service**



Comparison of Respondents to Total Population:

The committee used data from the Human Resources Information System (HRIS) for the total ranges and data supplied by the login process for the survey.

Those with:

- <5 years of service made up 24 percent of respondents and 27 percent of the total.
- 5-<10 years of service made up 23 percent of respondents and 23 percent of the total.
- 10-15 years of service made up 17 percent of respondents and 17 percent of the total.
- 16-<20 years of service made up 12 percent of respondents and 11 percent of the total.
- 20 plus years of service made up 24 percent of respondents and 22 percent of the total.

Respondent Characteristics:

Those with less than 5 years of service are slightly under-represented, while those with 20 or more years of service are slightly over-represented in the respondent sample.

## University-wide Findings

### Strengths: Positive Responses on the Agree/Disagree Scale

#### Analysis Method

Statements were ranked by the percentage of respondents who selected "Strongly Agree," "Agree," or "Somewhat Agree". The levels of agreement ranged from 87 to 100 percent.

#### Statements Scoring the Highest Level of Agreement By Position Classification

The top five statements showing the highest level of agreement for all position classifications are shown below along with the percentage of agreement for each.

All respondents (Faculty, P&S and MSE/C, and Merit staff) agreed most with:

- I look for more effective ways to do my work. 99%
- I know what is expected of me in my job. 95%
- I understand how my job fits into the overall mission of the UI. 94%
- My workplace has a strong focus on providing excellent service. 90%
- I have the basic resources I need to do my job. 90%

Faculty agreed most with:

- I look for more effective ways to do my work. 99%
- I know what is expected of me in my job. 94%
- I have the authority to make decisions as defined by my job. 92%
- I understand how my job fits into the overall mission of the UI. 91%
- The UI does a good job informing faculty of policy changes. 87%

P & S/MSE/C staff agreed most with:

- I look for more effective ways to do my work. 100%
- I know what is expected of me in my job. 95%
- I understand how my job fits into the overall mission of the UI. 94%
- My workplace has a strong focus on providing excellent service. 93%
- I have the basic resources I need to do my job. 92%

Merit staff agreed most with:

- I look for more effective ways to do my work. 99%
- I know what is expected of me in my job. 96%
- I understand how my job fits into the overall mission of the UI. 95%
- I have the basic resources I need to do my job. 93%
- My workplace has a strong focus on providing excellent service. 91%

#### Differences in the Top 5 Statements Agreed with, by Position Classification

Faculty selected "I have the authority to make decisions as defined by my job" as their third choice. This statement does not show up in the top five for either P&S and MSE/C or Merit staff. Both Faculty and P&S and MSE/C staff selected "I understand how my job fits into the overall mission of the UI," while Merit staff did not. P&S/MSE/C and Merit staff selected "I have the basic resources to do my job" while Faculty did not. Only faculty chose communication about policy issues in their top five.

## Opportunities for Improvement: Negative Responses on the Agree/Disagree Scale

### Analysis Method

Statements were ranked by the percentage of respondents who selected "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," or "Somewhat Disagree".

### Statements with the Highest Level of Disagreement by Position Classification

The top five statements showing the highest level of disagreement for all position classifications are shown below along with the percentage of disagreement for each.

All respondents (Faculty, P&S and MSE/C, and Merit staff) disagreed most with:

- Poor performance is managed appropriately. 45%
- I am kept informed of our workplace budget status. 38%
- Work-related conflicts are managed constructively. 36%
- Workloads are distributed fairly. 34%
- I am confident there is a clear plan to strengthen the UI. 30%

Faculty disagreed most with:

- I am confident there is a clear plan to strengthen the UI. 52%
- Poor performance is managed appropriately. 49%
- Overall, I think the UI is moving in a positive direction. 41%
- My workplace provides support help faculty balance work/personal responsibilities. 39%
- Workloads are distributed fairly. 39%

P&S and MSE/C staff disagreed most with:

- Poor performance is managed appropriately. 43%
- I am kept informed of our workplace budget status. 33%
- Work-related conflicts are managed constructively. 33%
- Workloads are distributed fairly. 29%
- I am confident there is a clear plan to strengthen the UI. 29%

Merit staff disagreed most with:

- Poor performance is managed appropriately. 47%
- I am kept informed of our workplace budget status. 45%
- Work-related conflicts are managed constructively. 40%
- Workloads are distributed fairly. 39%
- I feel included in decisions that are made about my job. 35%

### Differences in the Top 5 Statements Disagreed with, by Position Classification

Faculty chose "I am confident there is a clear plan to strengthen the UI" as the item they most disagreed with while P&S staff ranked it as fifth. Merit staff did not select this statement. Faculty disagreed with "Overall, the UI is moving in a positive direction", while neither P&S and MSE/C nor Merit staff chose this. Both P&S and MSE/C and Merit staff disagreed that "Workplace conflicts are managed constructively", while Faculty did not. Only Merit staff chose "I feel included about decisions that are made about my job" as a statement they most disagreed with.

## Discussion of Findings

### Implications for Acting on Results

Differences in the top agree/disagree statements are noted to highlight the degree of difference among the respondents. Faculty, P&S and MSE/C, and Merit staff tended to focus their agreement on statements about their own jobs. Areas of disagreement showed more variation among the position classifications focusing on the workplace and the University as a larger entity.

In the end, recommendations were developed to address improvement at the personal level, the workplace, and the University as a whole.

### Relevance of the Neutral Zone (Somewhat Agree/Somewhat Disagree)

As noted in the Data Analysis section on pages 11-12, when focusing on statements sorted by “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree”, the neutral zone is much higher than when the statements are sorted by “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” responses. When viewing the figures on the next pages, the neutral zone is the white, central portion of each bar. *In other words, when respondents agree, the majority of them seem to agree, but when sorting statements by disagreement, there are many people whose responses fell into the middle of the range.* The neutral zone provides an opportunity to focus on those respondents who do not have as strong feelings about a statement or an issue. The best opportunities for improvement lie with changing the hearts and minds of those in the neutral zone.

For complete results of responses to each statement by position classification, see tables A-D in the Appendix.

## Category Results

After reviewing several different engagement surveys, the committee chose the following categories as a way to organize their efforts in developing the survey:

- Engagement
- Cooperation/Collaboration
- Supervisory Effectiveness
- Communication
- Confidence in Leadership Vision
- Commitment To Employee Well-being
- Customer Focus
- Flexibility

The Organizational Wheel (*Introduction to organizational development*, 2005) was used to determine that the categories balanced the needs of a good organizational development model.

While the categories provide structure for the statements, they are not the only way to analyze the data. The committee chose to focus recommendations on the levels of agreement with the individual statements, then further refined recommendations through the lens of responses to statements about "My Job," "My Workplace," and "The University as an Employer."

## Discussion of Statements by Category

Prior to presenting any results divided out by the eight categories, the committee examined the correlation among responses within each category. When responses to items about similar issues (e.g., ten unique items, all about issues of supervisory effectiveness) are highly correlated, they can be collapsed into a single average score. Survey researchers examine the magnitude of correlations among multiple items with a number called an “internal reliability coefficient.”

Cronbach's alpha is the coefficient the committee used to examine the Working at IOWA survey data. The value of alpha ranges from 0 to 1 and is interpreted the same way as a correlation coefficient, with higher numbers (approaching 1.0) indicating strong inter-statement correlations and lower number (approaching 0.0) indicating no inter-statement correlations. A general rule of thumb used in survey research is that an alpha below .70 indicates that the statements are not sufficiently correlated to interpret the average response. Note that an internal reliability coefficient cannot be calculated on a single statement scale.

The categories and the order in which they are listed in the table below do not quite match the categories as noted throughout the report as this analysis was done after the committee reviewed the results. The committee chose to retain the categories as developed prior to survey distribution.

**Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations by Category for all Respondents**

| Category                          | # of Items | Cronbach's Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------------|------|--------------------|
| Engagement                        | 5          | .85              | 4.6  | .94                |
| Cooperation/ Collaboration        | 6          | .86              | 4.4  | .96                |
| Supervisory Effectiveness         | 10         | .93              | 4.3  | 1.07               |
| Communication                     | 11         | .89              | 4.5  | .85                |
| Confidence in Leadership Vision   | 2          | .88              | 4.2  | 1.09               |
| Commitment to Employee Well-Being | 7          | .83              | 4.4  | .84                |
| Customer Focus                    | 1          | --               | 4.9  | 1.07               |
| Flexibility                       | 2          | .43              | 5.0  | .73                |
| Overall Job Satisfaction          | 1          | --               | 4.7  | 1.17               |
| Positive on Future                | 1          | --               | 4.3  | 1.31               |

*N ranges from 6,001 to 6,211*

Descriptive statistics by category for all of the respondents indicate category means are very consistent and responses range from 4.2 to 5.0 on a scale of 1-6.

Standard deviation, which captures the degree to which individual respondents vary from the mean, range from .73 to 1.31. Larger standard deviations indicate larger differences among respondents. So, across the all of the respondents, there was much greater difference in responses to “positive on the future” (SD = 1.31) than to “commitment to well-being” (SD = .84). While there are several categories with standard deviations greater than 1.0, “confidence in leadership vision” and “flexibility” only contain two items while “customer focus,” “overall job satisfaction,” and “positive on future” each contain only one item. Hence, the variability in these items is not as important.

With regard to reliability, this table indicates that all but the “flexibility” category meet the informal standard of having an alpha above .70. As a result, the average of items within these categories can be interpreted as a meaningful representation of the responses. Despite the low reliability of the “flexibility” category, results are presented for this category to be consistent with the committee’s initial plan. However, the mean and standard deviation for this particular category should be interpreted cautiously because the two items that comprise the category are not highly correlated.

### **Presentation of Data**

On page 25, the discussion regarding engagement statements is sorted by the largest percentage of respondents who selected "Strongly Agree" or "Agree." Engagement provided a major focus for the survey and the Committee determined that the relatively positive scores for engagement provided a baseline for future study and should be looked at differently than those of the other categories.

Beginning on p. 26, all figures in the "Statements by Category" section are sorted by the largest percentage of respondents who selected “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree.” The committee chose this method to highlight the statements where faculty and staff responses presented opportunities for improvement, which are the areas the committee examined before making recommendations. Suggestions regarding these opportunities for improvement are included in the Summary and Recommendations section of this report.

## Discussion of Statements by Category

**Engagement - a blend of commitment, loyalty, productivity, and ownership.** (As defined by the Working at IOWA Survey Committee.)

According to Hewitt Associates (2006, paragraph 1), engaged employees consistently demonstrate three general behaviors. They:

- Say—consistently speak positively about the organization to coworkers, potential employees, and customers.
- Stay—have an intense desire to be a member of the organization despite opportunities to work elsewhere.
- Strive—exert extra time, effort, and initiative to contribute to business success.

When reviewing engagement, most organizations pay attention to specific items at the work unit level, department, or organizational levels. This allows the organization to zero in on specific strengths and weaknesses relative to engagement from an organizational perspective, down to individual work units and leaders (Wellins, Bernthal, & Phelps, 2005).

The data below shows the percentage of all faculty and staff who rated these engagement statements as either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree:”

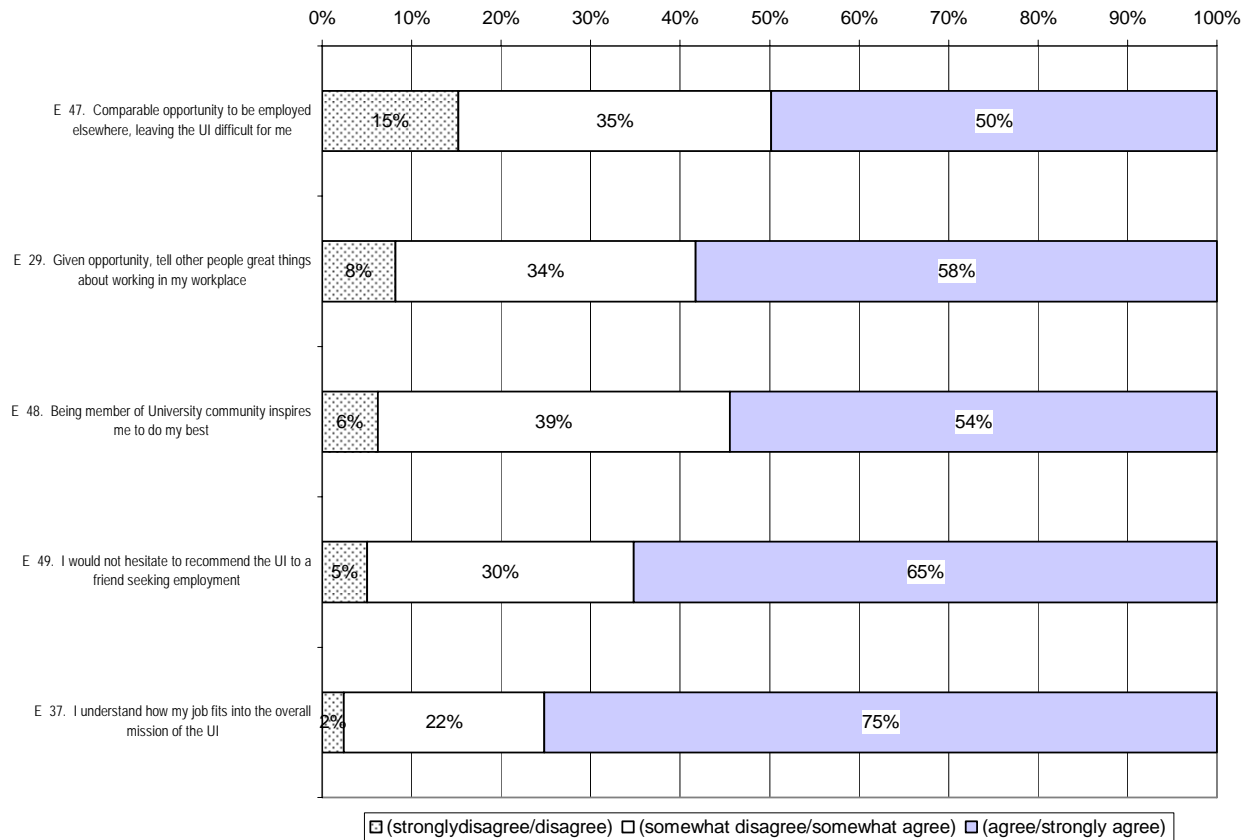
|   |     |
|---|-----|
| I understand how my job fits into the overall mission of the UI.                                      | 75% |
| I would not hesitate to recommend the UI to a friend seeking employment.                              | 65% |
| Given the opportunity, I tell other people great things about my workplace.                           | 58% |
| Being a member of the UI community inspires me to do my best work.                                    | 55% |
| If I had a comparable opportunity to be employed elsewhere, leaving the UI would be difficult for me. | 50% |

The level of agreement with these statements shows room for improvement in engagement.

The range in the neutral zone for engagement is smaller than it is for all other categories except flexibility, customer focus, and the overall statements. These categories contain the fewest items and do not have the same level of statistical validity as the other categories.

For a first-time survey, this data provides a baseline for future surveys.

**Figure 6. Engagement Weighted by Position Classification**



All figures in this section are sorted by the percentage of respondents who selected “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree.”

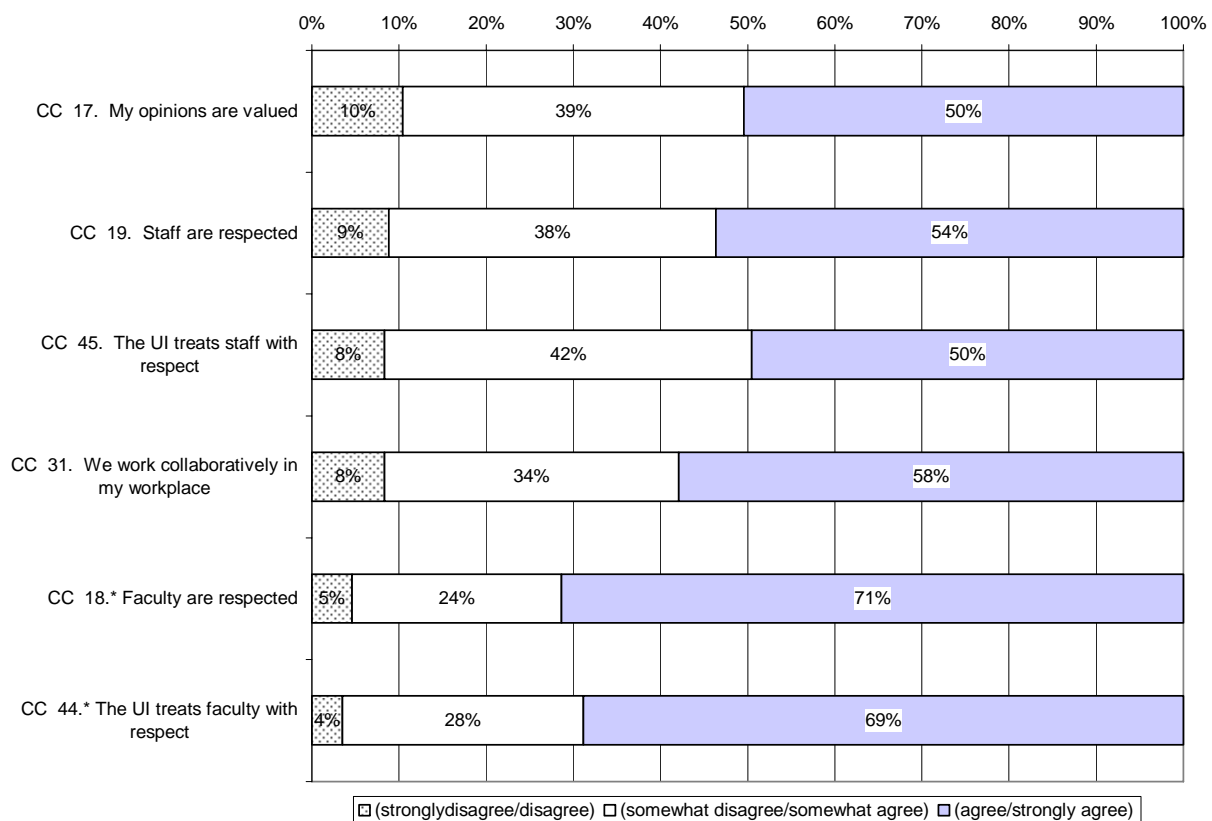
For complete information about response rates to each statement by position classification, see tables A-D in the Appendix.

**Cooperation/Collaboration - examining how we work together.**

Cooperation and collaboration statements measure how people work together in the workplace. The amount of disagreement never tops 10 percent, while responses in the middle or neutral zone range from 25 percent to 39 percent.

Several statements ask how faculty and staff are treated. Non-faculty members are under-represented in those statements that ask specifically about faculty issues. Based on comments received during the focus groups held during the design/implementation stage, the committee included the following text in the general directions for the survey: "If you are unsure of how to answer, have no opinion, or feel that the statement does not apply to you, select 'Not Applicable.'" As a result of staff not being sure how to respond to some statements about faculty, they either did not respond at all or chose "Not Applicable."

**Figure 7. Cooperation/Collaboration Weighted by Position Classification**



\* This statement had greater than 30 percent NA/no response rate.

All figures in this section are sorted by the percentage of respondents who selected "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree."

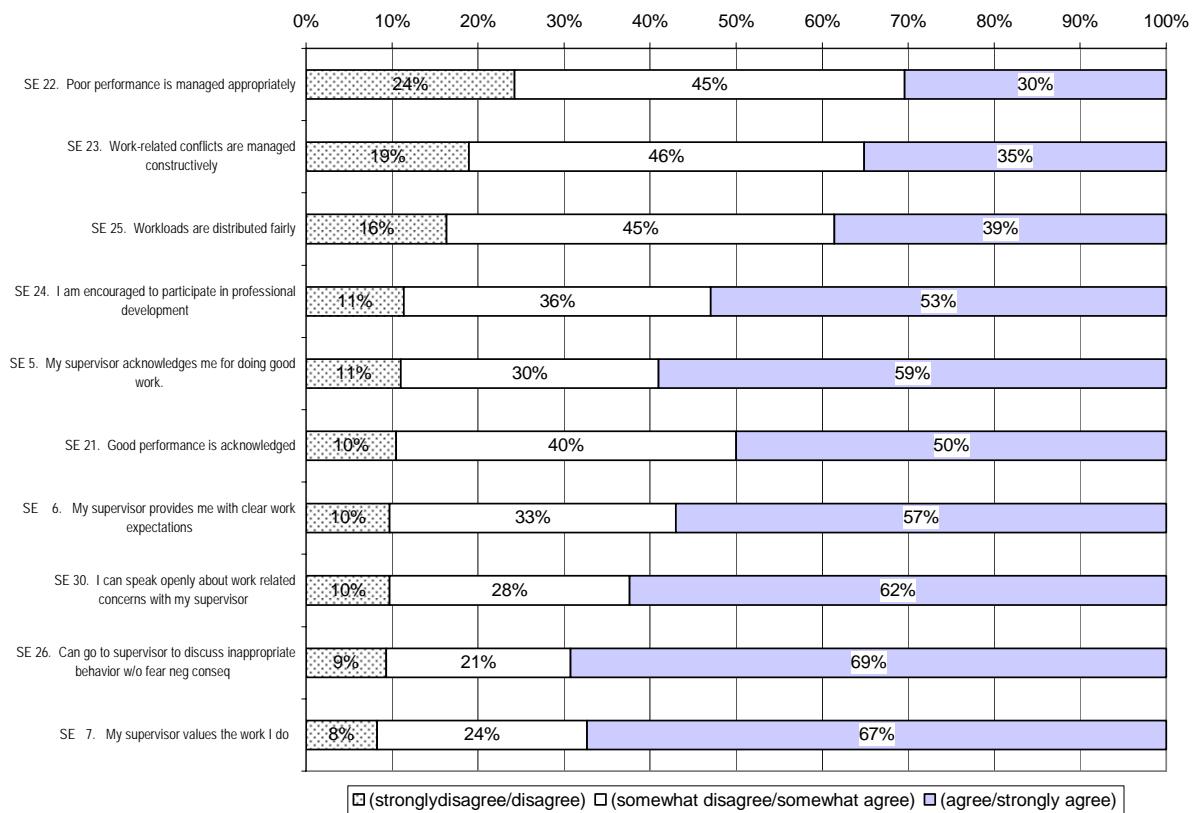
For complete information about response rates to each statement by position classification, see tables A-D in the Appendix.

**Supervisory Effectiveness - having quality and skilled managers.**

This category had the highest level of those in the neutral zone, ranging from 21 percent to 46 percent, and provides the greatest potential for improvement.

"Poor performance is managed appropriately" was noted as one of the top five statements of disagreement by All Position Classifications and provides a tremendous opportunity for change.

**Figure 8. Supervisor Effectiveness Weighted by Position Classification**



All figures in this section are sorted by the percentage of respondents who selected “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree.”

For complete information about response rates to each statement by position classification, see tables A-D in the Appendix.

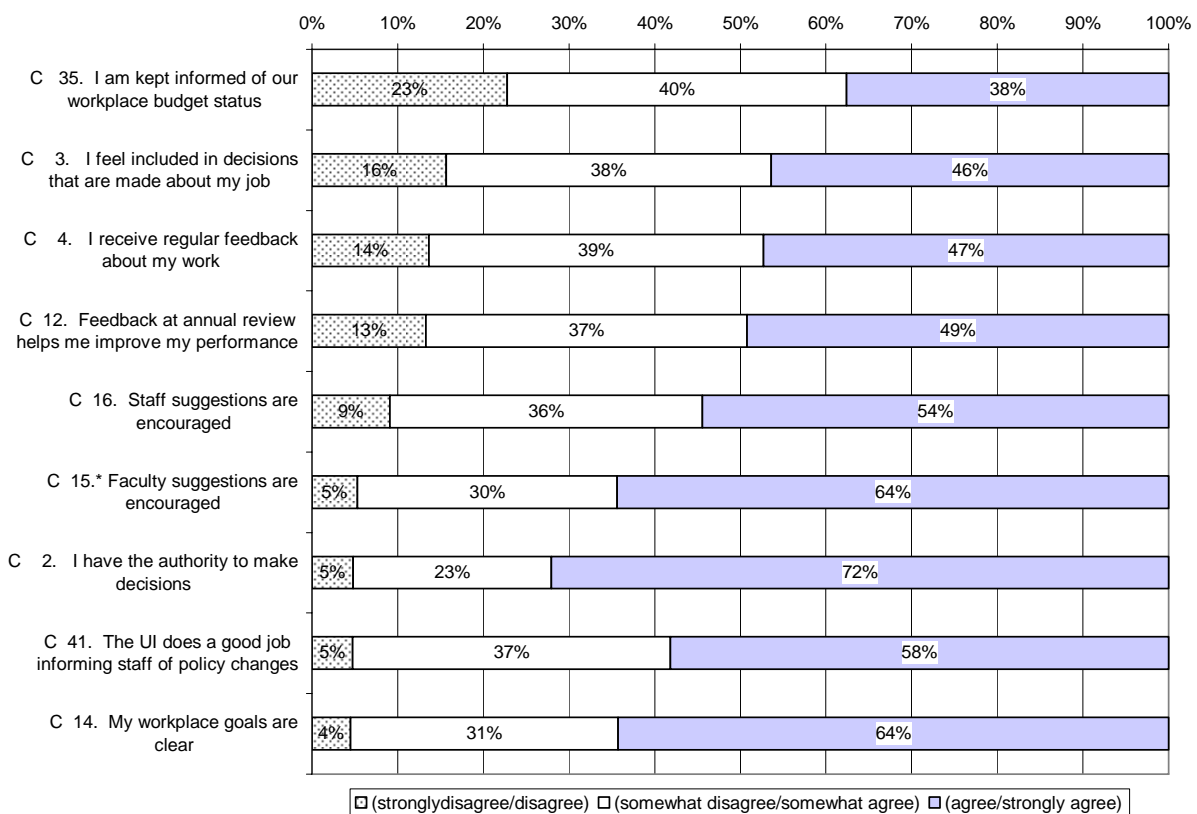
**Communication - seeking input, sharing information, and participating in decision-making.**

A majority of All Position Classifications strongly agreed or agreed with the statements in this category; however, this area includes statements with a large number of respondents in the neutral zone.

Two of the top five statements with which All Position Classifications disagreed came from this category. Clearly, these areas provide opportunities for improvement. For example, more people were in the neutral zone (40 percent) than in the positive zone (38 percent) for the statement, "I am kept informed of our workplace budget status."

A review of the numerical data shows that in many cases, faculty did not respond to items about staff, nor did staff respond to items about faculty. For example, "The UI does a good job of informing staff of policy changes," has the lowest faculty response rate in the survey at 66 percent.

**Figure 9. Communication Weighted by Position Classification**



All figures in this section are sorted by the percentage of respondents who selected "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree."

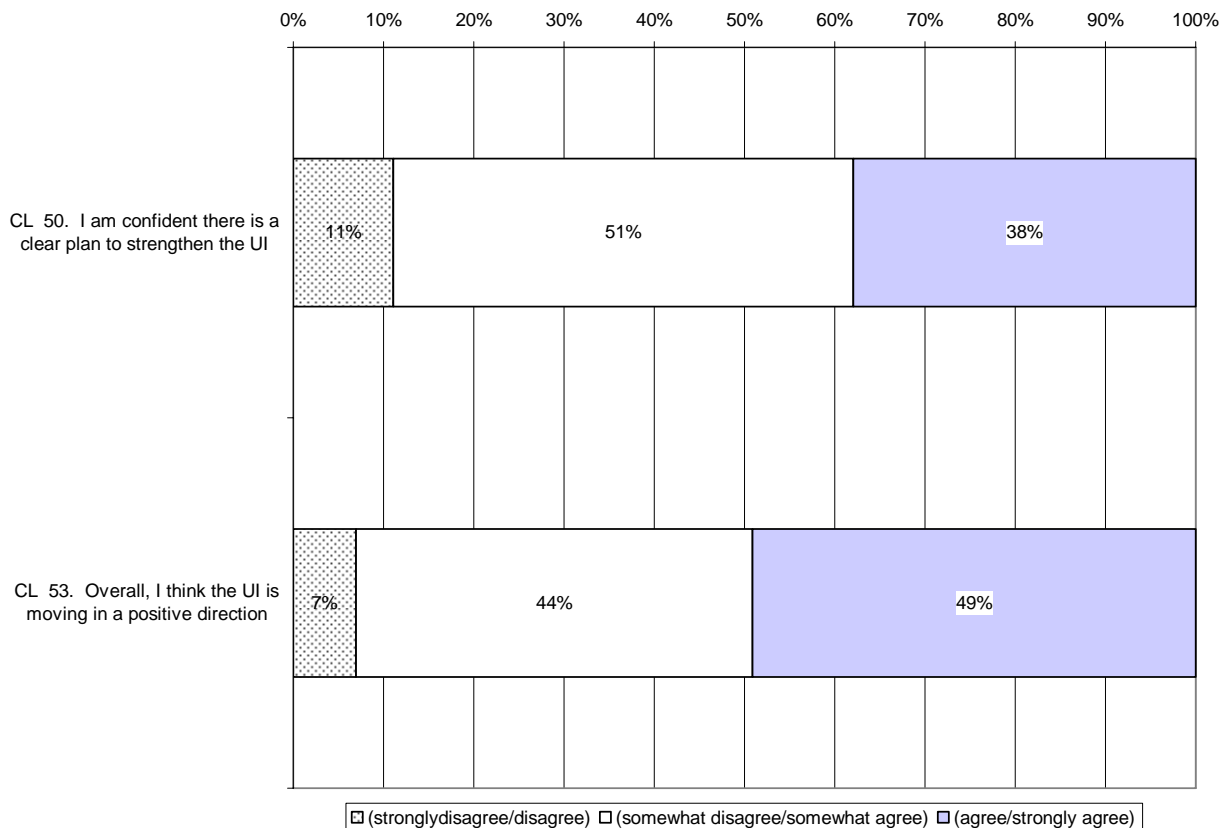
For complete information about response rates to each statement by position classification, see tables A-D in the Appendix.

**Confidence in Leadership Vision - having confidence that leadership knows where it is going and how to get there successfully.**

“Confidence in leadership vision” stands out as an opportunity for improvement as more people are in the neutral zone than either the positive or negative zones for statement #50, "I am confident there is a clear plan to improve the UI." The committee notes that the survey was distributed shortly after President Skorton announced his departure from The University of Iowa.

Increasing the agreement with the statement, "Overall, the UI is moving in a positive direction" is another opportunity for improvement.

**Figure 10. Confidence in Leadership Vision Weighted by Position Classification**



All figures in this section are sorted by the percentage of respondents who selected “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree.”

For complete information about response rates to each statement by position classification, see tables A-D in the Appendix.

**Commitment to Employee Well-being - caring about faculty and staff well-being, development, diversity, work life balance, and recognition.**

Statements about staff were not always responded to by faculty, nor did staff respond to items about faculty. For example, only 70 percent of faculty responded to: "My workplace provides support to help staff balance work/personal responsibilities." Just 53 percent of Merit staff and 44 percent of P&S and MSE/C responded to "My workplace provides support to help faculty balance work/personal responsibilities."

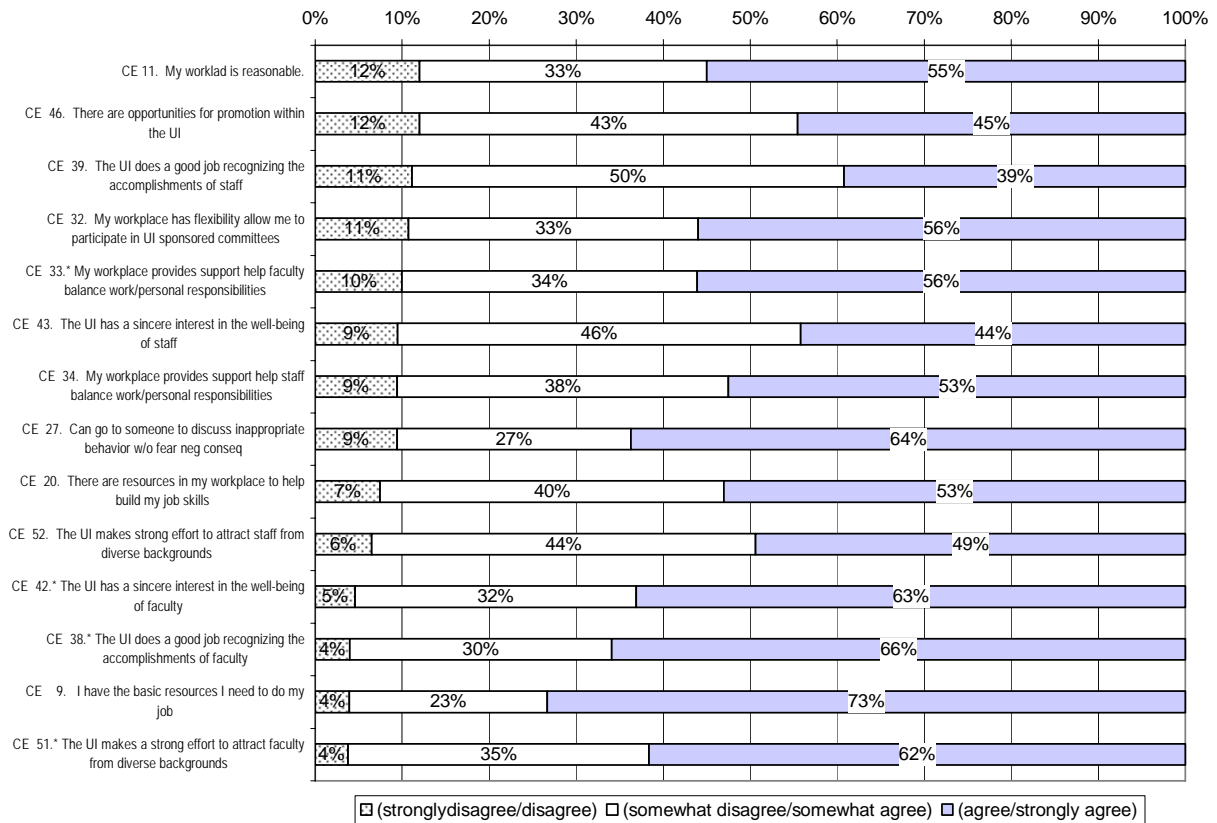
The committee cannot confirm why people chose to not respond to these statements, but surmises that:

- people did not understand what they were being asked
- they don't know how different position classifications feel
- they have no opinion

There are several statements in this category where the neutral zone provides opportunities for improvement. While staff may not have felt it possible to rate their agreement with statements about faculty, they were reticent to show their agreement with the statements about staff. For example, there are many respondents in the neutral zone to "The UI does a good job of recognizing the accomplishments of staff" and "The UI has a sincere interest in the well-being of staff." Clearly, this provides an opportunity for raising the level of commitment of staff.

For complete information about response rates to each statement by position classification, see tables A-D in the Appendix.

**Figure 11. Commitment to Employee Well-Being Weighted by Position Classification**



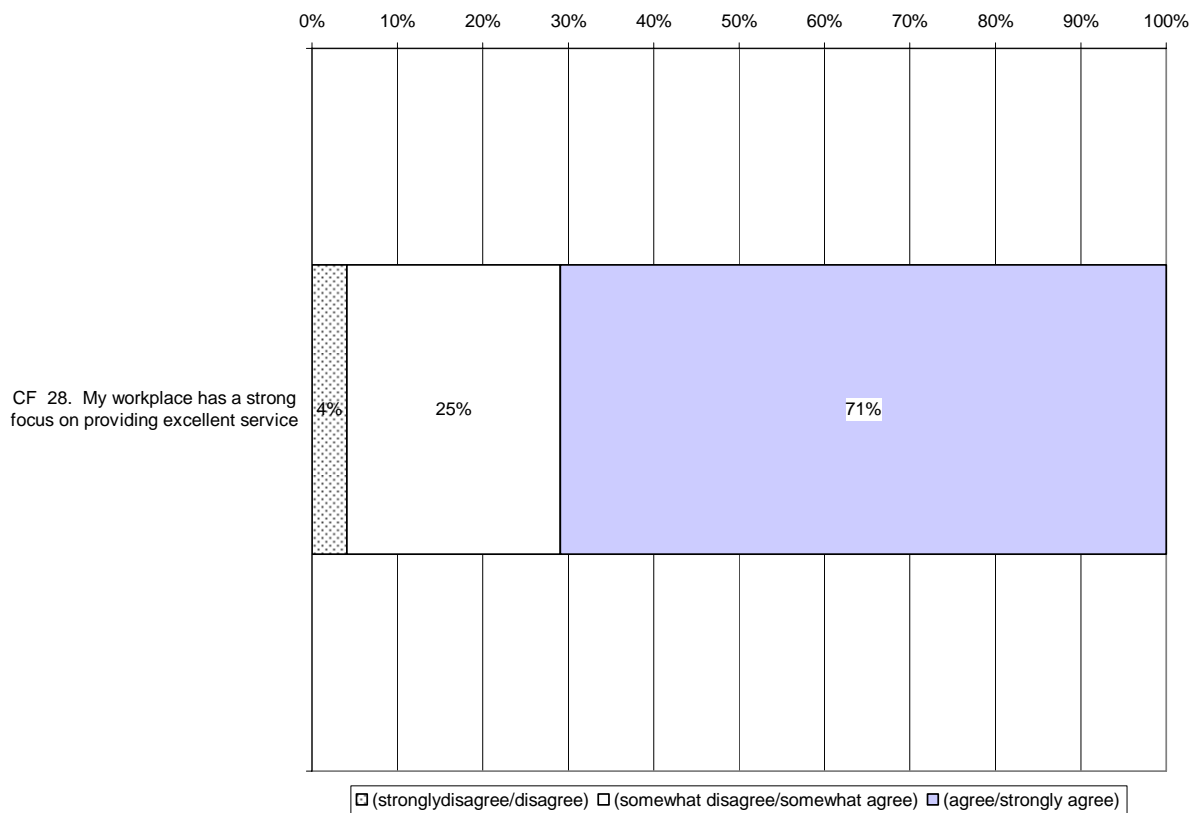
All figures in this section are sorted by the percentage of respondents who selected “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree.”

\* These staff-specific statements received a response rate of less than 80 percent.

**Customer Focus - providing high-quality, high-value service to internal and external customers, which may include students, patients, vendors, colleagues, and fellow coworkers.**

The one statement about “customer focus” provides very strong agreement, yet 25 percent of respondents are in the neutral zone. It is difficult to speculate why that is so, but the committee may use this as a topic for a future focus group.

**Figure 12. Customer Focus Weighted by Position Classification**



For complete information about response rates to each statement by position classification, see tables A-D in the Appendix.

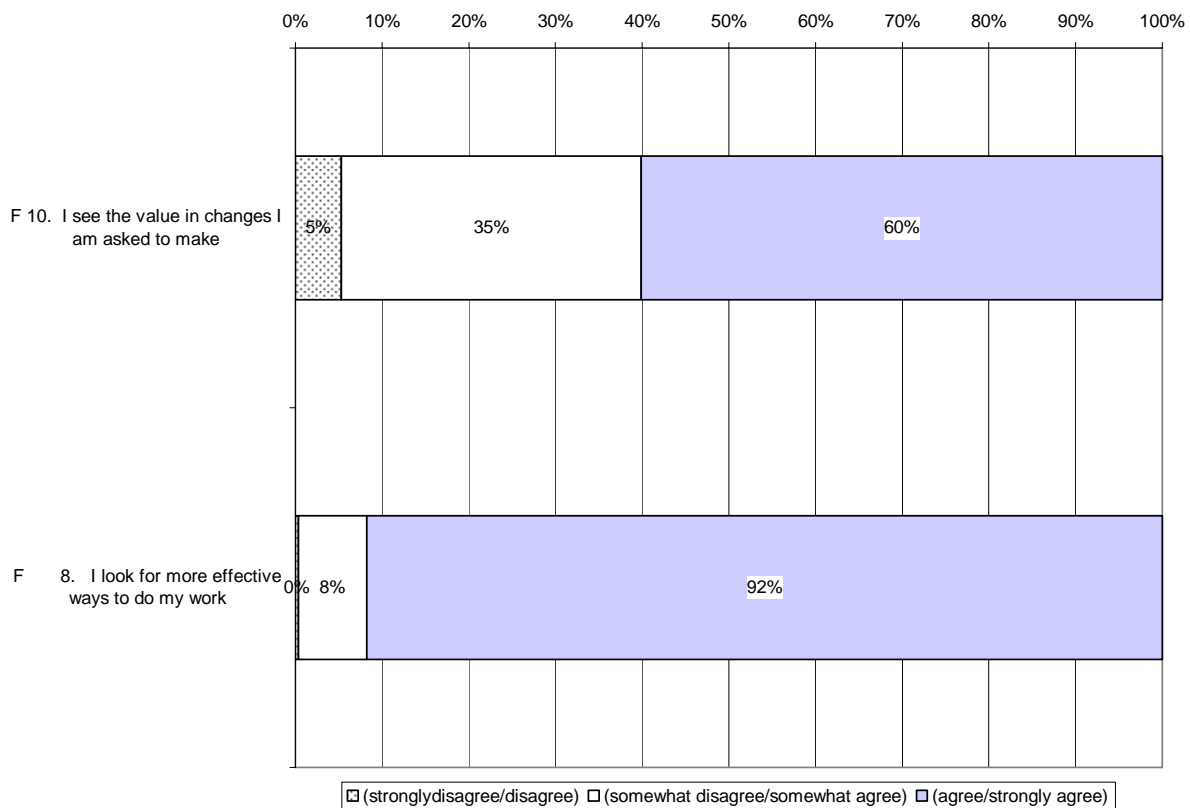
**Flexibility - adapting to change and sensitive to continuous improvement.**

All Position Classifications (including Faculty, P&S and MSE/C staff, and Merit Staff) overwhelming agree with the statement, "I look for more effective ways to do my work." This is the highest-rated statement on the survey.

In the data analysis of the categories, it was determined that the flexibility statements measure two different things and perhaps they do not fit together in the same category. Information about mean, standard deviation, and percentiles are shown by category in the Appendix.

There is a large group in the neutral zone regarding the statement, "I see value in the changes I am asked to make," providing another opportunity for improvement.

**Figure 13. Flexibility Weighted by Position Classification**



All figures in this section are sorted by the percentage of respondents who selected "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree."

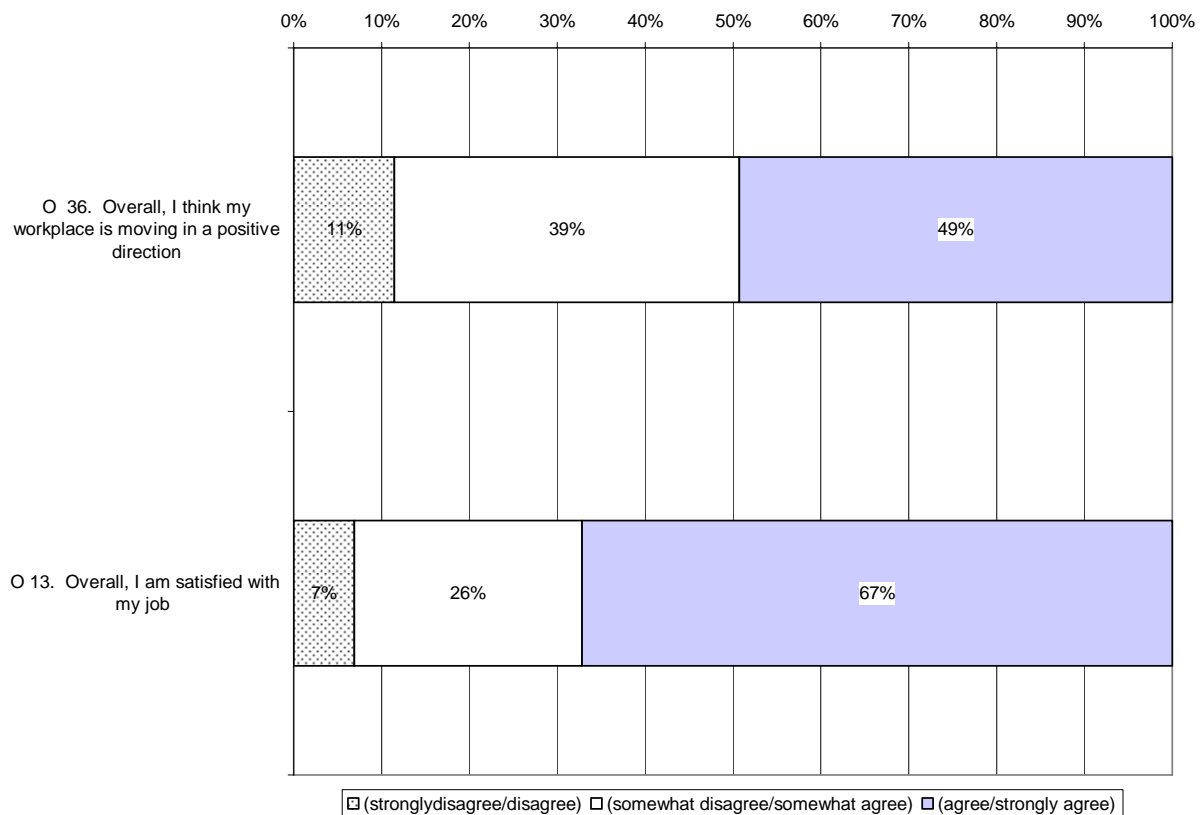
For complete information about response rates to each statement by position classification, see tables A-D in the Appendix.

**Overall statements - these statements are not included in category reports as they cross boundaries among statements.**

The means for these two items are very similar to that of the “engagement” category at 4.5 for all respondents, 4.3 for Faculty, 4.6 for P&S and MSE/C, and 4.4 for Merit. By this, the committee infers that overall statements are in agreement with the level of engagement for all participants and that they support the findings regarding engagement. Complete descriptive statistical information is included in tables A-LL in the Appendix.

Two-thirds of the respondents agree with the statement, "Overall I am satisfied with my job." About half agree that "my workplace is moving in a positive direction," while 39 percent are in the neutral zone providing another opportunity for improvement.

**Figure 14. Overall Weighted by Position Classification**



All figures in this section are sorted by the percentage of respondents who selected “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree.”

For complete information about response rates to each statement by position classification, see tables A-D in the Appendix.

## Summary and Recommendations

### Acting on Results

Survey results identified what the University is doing well, along with what can be enhanced. Action plans will be developed with assistance from HR leaders and Deans/DEO's. Completed actions will be reported through colleges and departments to Human Resources.

Based on the concept of engagement, the Working at IOWA survey focuses on the University's effectiveness in fostering a work environment that demonstrates concern for faculty and staff well-being, nurtures capable leadership, and builds a dynamic organization.

Participants ranked their level of agreement with 53 statements in eight categories:

- Engagement
- Cooperation/Collaboration
- Supervisory Effectiveness
- Communication
- Confidence in Leadership Vision
- Commitment To Employee Well-being
- Customer Focus
- Flexibility

In addition, two global statements were included that addressed everyone's overall experience at the University. Faculty and staff were asked to respond to these statements in regard to their specific job, their workplace, and the University as a whole.

Of the 14,590 faculty and staff who were sent the survey, 6,217 responded, for an overall response rate of 43 percent.

32 percent of Faculty responded; 39 percent of Merit staff responded; and 48 percent of Professional and Scientific (P&S and MSE/C) staff responded. (Merit Supervisor Exempt/Confidential (MSE/C) staff are included in the P&S staff results.)

According to Church and Waclawski (as cited in Rogelberg, p. 313), response rates to organizational surveys can vary from 30 to 85 percent. Fowler (as cited in Rogelberg, 2006, p.314) notes "There is no agreed upon standard for a minimum acceptable response rate."

For the purpose of this survey, the terms "All Position Classifications" refers to Faculty, P&S and MSE/C staff, and Merit staff. Responses were weighted by position classification to approximate population percentages as closely as possible. Utilizing best practices in designing, deploying, and then acting on the results of a strategic survey, the Committee analyzed the results to highlight strengths and

opportunities for improvement across the organization, with a focus on improving overall performance (Shiemann & Morgan, 2006).

### **Selection of Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement**

Strengths were identified by the percent of respondents who selected "Strongly Agree," "Agree," or "Somewhat Agree" with a statement on a six-point scale. Opportunities for improvement were identified by the percent of respondents who selected "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," or "Somewhat Disagree" with a statement on a six-point scale.

### **Strengths: Positive Responses on the Agree/Disagree Scale**

For "All Position Classifications," (Faculty, P&S and MSE/C, and Merit staff) the five statements with which respondents most often agreed and the total percentages are shown below:

#### **Statements with Highest Level of Agreement**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| I look for more effective ways to do my work.                    | 99% |
| I know what is expected of me in my job.                         | 95% |
| I understand how my job fits into the overall mission of the UI. | 94% |
| My workplace has a strong focus on providing excellent service.  | 90% |
| I have the basic resources I need to do my job.                  | 90% |

### **Opportunities for Improvement: Negative Responses on the Agree/Disagree Scale**

Campus and workplace opportunities for improvement were measured by respondents selecting "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," or "Somewhat Disagree" with each the statements. Complete results for each statement are found in the Appendix. For "All Position Classifications," (Faculty, P&S and MSE/C, and Merit staff) the five statements with which respondents most often disagreed, and the percentages, are shown below:

#### **Statements with Highest Level of Disagreement**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Poor performance is managed appropriately.                              | 45% |
| I am kept informed of our workplace budget status.                      | 38% |
| Work-related conflicts are managed constructively.                      | 36% |
| Workloads are distributed fairly.                                       | 34% |
| I am confident there is a clear plan to strengthen the UI. <sup>3</sup> | 30% |

### **Differences in the Response Range to Agree and Disagree Statements**

Between 90 and 99 percent of all faculty and staff agreed with the top five statements shown above; however, when it came to the statements the respondents disagreed with, the level of disagreement was not as compelling as the level of agreement. In fact, the statements faculty and staff most disagreed with have a large percentage of the population residing in the neutral zone. It is these people in the neutral zone and these statements that the committee feels provide the best opportunities for improvement. For more information about the neutral zone, please refer to the Data Analysis section, pages 11-12 of this report.

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<sup>3</sup> The committee notes that the survey was distributed shortly after Present Skorton announced his departure from The University of Iowa.

### **Commitment to Action**

University-wide action plans resulting from this survey will be linked to the *Iowa Promise: A Strategic Plan for The University of Iowa 2005–2010* (2005). At University-wide and division/collegiate levels, action plans will be developed to respond to the recommendations in this report.

These plans will be communicated to central HR leadership, who will report progress to the University president on an annual basis. UI Human Resources has committed to resurvey in fall 2008.

### **Recommendations:**

- 1.) Have top leadership (VP Group) make a statement that people are the University's most important asset and encourage division/collegiate units to continuously recognize faculty and staff efforts.
- 2.) Improve communication by supervisors/leaders regarding organizational priorities, performance expectations, budget and process improvement. Specific strategies include:
  - a. Ensure accountability of leadership to act on the results of this survey at all levels of The University of Iowa.
  - b. Ensure that division/collegiate strategic plans are readily accessible to everyone.
  - c. Communicate regularly about progress being made related to the UI Strategic Plan: The Iowa Promise.
  - d. Encourage divisions/collegiate units to use shared governance models as vehicles for communication.<sup>4</sup>
- 3.) Involve supervisors, leaders, and staff in continuous improvement of business processes to address workload issues.
  - Encourage all units/departments to examine processes that create extra or unnecessary work for employees and undue burden on customers.
- 4.) Provide opportunities to improve skills of supervisors and leaders in the areas of conflict resolution, workload distribution, and performance management.
- 5.) Hold supervisors and leaders accountable for the management of conflict, workload, process improvement, and poor performance.
- 6.) Encourage individual participation in performance reviews and goal discussions throughout the year.
- 7.) Encourage and support departmental and collegiate recognition programs.
- 8.) Encourage all campus units to recognize organizational successes and share that information.

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<sup>4</sup> Division/collegiate - the terms division and collegiate units are used interchangeably in this report and refer to larger sections of the University such as the division of Finance and Operations or the Office of the Vice President for Research.

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- Hold annual focus groups, coordinated by central HR, to determine what is working well and what could be improved.
- 9.) Encourage all faculty and staff to continue to upgrade their skills and learning.
    - Explore new technologies, while continuing to support proven educational and learning tools that enhance the workplace environment.
  - 10.) Work with supervisors/leaders to provide opportunities for all employees to attend and participate in University activities while maintaining appropriate staffing levels.
  - 11.) Provide administrative support and leadership to transfer the percentage of responses to survey statements in the “neutral zone” (Somewhat Agree and Somewhat Disagree) to the “positive zone” (Agree and Strongly Agree). (See page 11.) Research has shown that when this level of change is done at the local level, it will most directly impact turnover and productivity. Results of these efforts will be measured by a resurvey in 2008 (Earl, Lampe, & Buksin, 2006).

## Acknowledgements

The committee would like to thank all of the individuals who took time to participate in the focus groups and to those who completed the 2006 Working at IOWA survey.

- Keqin Huang, of Evaluation and Examination Services who provided programming and support of the on-line survey.
- Pat Cowles, webmaster for the Working at IOWA website, who provided valuable and timely support and updates.
- Ken Brown, Associate Professor in the Tippie College of Business, who provided assistance regarding correlation of statements within categories.
- The members of the Senior Human Resources Leadership Council and the local HR Reps who have assisted in communicating about the survey process and who continue to assist the committee in sharing the results, developing actions plans, and who will report actions implemented to Organizational Effectiveness.

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