

Working at Iowa Progress Report Summer 2007

Purpose: The purpose of the Working at Iowa (WAI) survey was to assess employee perception of campus climate, and to use the survey information to make changes to promote a highly engaged and successful organization.

It was critical for UI faculty and staff to believe that their survey responses made a difference, and served as a catalyst for change on campus.

Finance and Operations Associate Vice President Buckley, Associate Provost Johnson, and Director of Organizational Effectiveness Reed met with all deans and senior HR Representatives to discuss trends in the data, ideas for acting on results, and distribution of data to colleges and departments.

Deans, department heads and directors with the assistance of their Senior HR Representatives, helped to clarify issues of concern, and to develop creative and positive solutions. Senior leaders in Human Resources have assumed responsibility in distributing reports, responding to questions, and facilitating focus groups to clarify survey data and comments. These leaders have been essential in facilitating local-level change.

Over the next year, our organizational response to the WAI survey data and communication of our actions will be vital in improving perceptions on identified issues.

University Human Resources efforts to respond to the WAI results to date:

- 1) Conducted a meeting in March 2007 with Senior HR Representatives to determine what central administration could do to improve perceptions of faculty and staff.
- 2) Conducted a meeting in May 2007 with all HR representatives to update them as to what other departments and colleges are doing. HR representatives were asked what support they needed to follow up on survey responses.
- 3) Initiated discussions on campus related to a health and leave management philosophy supporting the health, wellbeing and worklife balance of faculty and staff.
- 4) Reviewed percentage compliance with performance reviews, and offered workshops to improve the quality of performance conversations and goal setting.
- 5) Partnered with the Office of the UI Ombudsperson to offer conflict management sessions and mediation skill training to specific work groups.
- 6) Offered business process improvement and workplace consultation to address workload concerns.
- 7) Initiated UI LEAD project, including a 360° assessment for leadership development and succession planning.
- 8) Targeted supervisory effectiveness as an area for improvement, and communicated to campus the training opportunities for supervisors.

Shared ideas from organizational units include:

- Implementing various models of shared governance in colleges and administrative departments to improve staff opportunities for input on decisions.
- Implementing specific workshops through UI Learning and Development and the Office of the Ombudsperson on supervisory effectiveness, communication, managing poor performance and conflict.
- Leading focused discussions by departments concerning budget issues and process.

Working at Iowa Committee future focus

- The WAI committee debriefed strengths and weaknesses of the survey tool, the survey process and communication.
- After consultation with individuals involved with the climate survey at UIHC, the WAI survey committee designed and implemented a survey ambassador model to help increase overall response rate for the 2008 survey. Staff and faculty chosen to serve as a survey ambassador will: assist in communication with their designated faculty or staff group, encourage participation in the survey, clarify issues related to confidentiality, assist employees with special needs related to the survey, and follow up locally as appropriate.
- Participants and leaders requested that the N of 30 respondents required for distribution of department survey reports be lowered to 10 or 15 to provide more specific feedback to individual leaders for the 2008 survey report. The WAI committee will make a final decision Fall 2007 regarding the N for report distribution.
- Three subcommittees were formed for the WAI committee- Data, Communication and Promotion, and Acting on Results. The Statistical Consulting group in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences reviewed all elements of the survey for validity and reliability.
- Recommendations to simplify the presentation of survey data will be considered by the WAI committee fall 2007.
- Efforts over the next 6-12 months will be to continuously communicate what is happening throughout campus, and to link survey results to action taken.

Summary

As a university community, we will continue to seek solutions that engage all faculty and staff to help make a difference in the climate at The University of Iowa. Please continue to check our web link for updated information <http://www.uiowa.edu/hr/working/index.html>.