

Higher Education WORKPLACE

TREND SUMMARY 2019



2019 GREAT
COLLEGES
TO WORK FOR®

PREPARED BY
ModernThink

“The leadership and overall culture of fairness and diversity are outstanding.”

- Employee, 4-year large institution



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How the Survey Was Conducted

The Great Colleges to Work For survey received responses from over 56,000 people at 236 institutions: 152 four-year colleges and universities and 84 two-year colleges. All accredited institutions in the United States with an enrollment of at least 500 were invited to participate, at no cost to them.

The survey was sent to 124,349 employees, with an overall response rate of 45 percent. Of the responses received, 7,926 of them were administrators, 18,342 were faculty, 16,850 were exempt staff, 10,995 were non-exempt staff, and 2,397 were adjunct faculty.

Each institution was asked to submit a list of full-time employees randomly selected across four job categories: administration, faculty, exempt professional staff, and non-exempt staff. Adjunct faculty members were included for two-year colleges. The sample size, as large as either 400 or 600, was based on the number of employees in those categories. Institutions with fewer than 500 people in the designated categories were invited to survey the entire employee population.

The assessment had two components: a questionnaire about institutional characteristics and a faculty/staff questionnaire about individuals' evaluations of their institutions. The assessment also included an analysis of demographic data and workplace policies, including benefits, at each participating college. The questionnaires were administered online in the spring.


In the faculty/staff questionnaire, people responded to 60 statements using a five-point scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The statements were categorized into various dimensions and from those the Great Colleges recognition categories, such as collaborative governance and work/life balance, were determined.

To determine the colleges to be recognized in each category, we divided the applicant pool into two classifications: four-year institutions and two-year institutions. Within each, there were three groups, based on total enrollment: small (500 to 2,999 students), medium (3,000 to 9,999), and large (more than 10,000).

Recognition in each Great Colleges category, except for diversity, was given to the 10 highest-scoring institutions in each size for four-year colleges, and the four highest-scoring institutions in each size for two-year colleges. In the diversity category, three four-year and three two-year colleges were recognized.

Honor Roll status, for four-year colleges, was given to the 10 institutions in each size that were cited most often across all of the recognition categories. For two-year colleges, Honor Roll status was given to the four institutions that were cited most often in each size category.

- The Great Colleges Survey Team

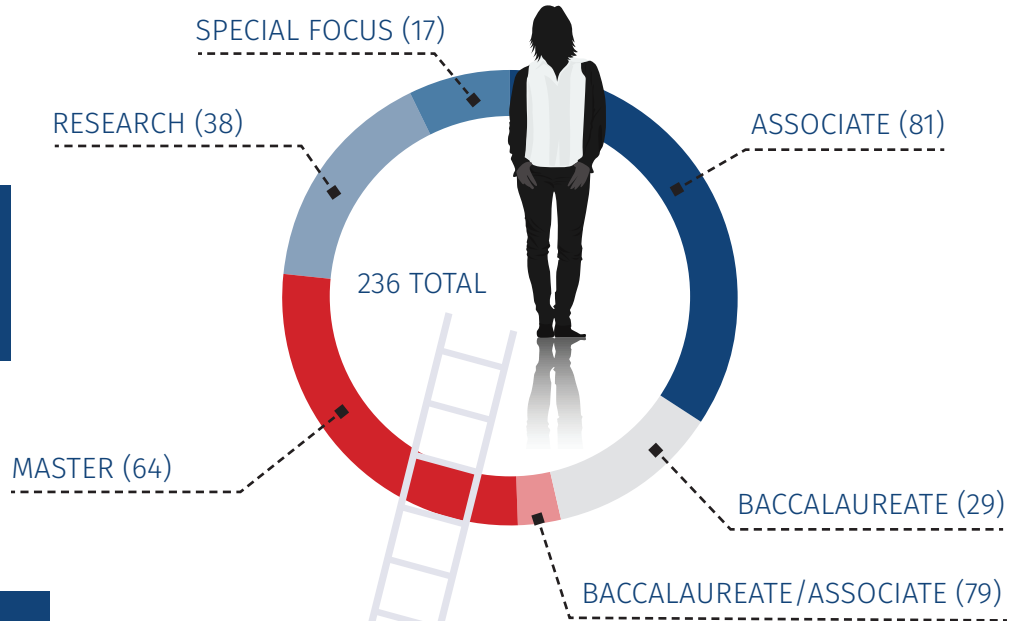


“I love that I am treated as a whole person, not just another employee. They really have been supportive with work/life balance as my family went through several changes in the last year.”

- Employee, 4-year medium institution

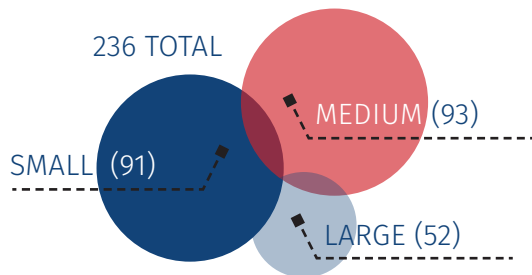
Applicant Pool Information

ALL APPLICANTS BY CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION

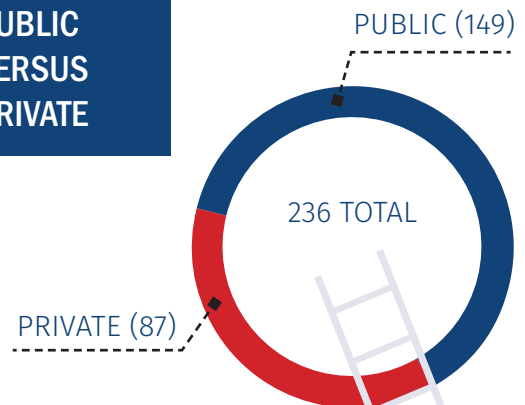


APPLICANTS BY ENROLLMENT SIZE

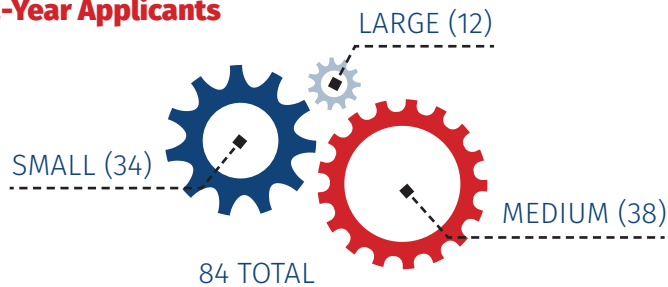
All Applicants



PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE



2-Year Applicants

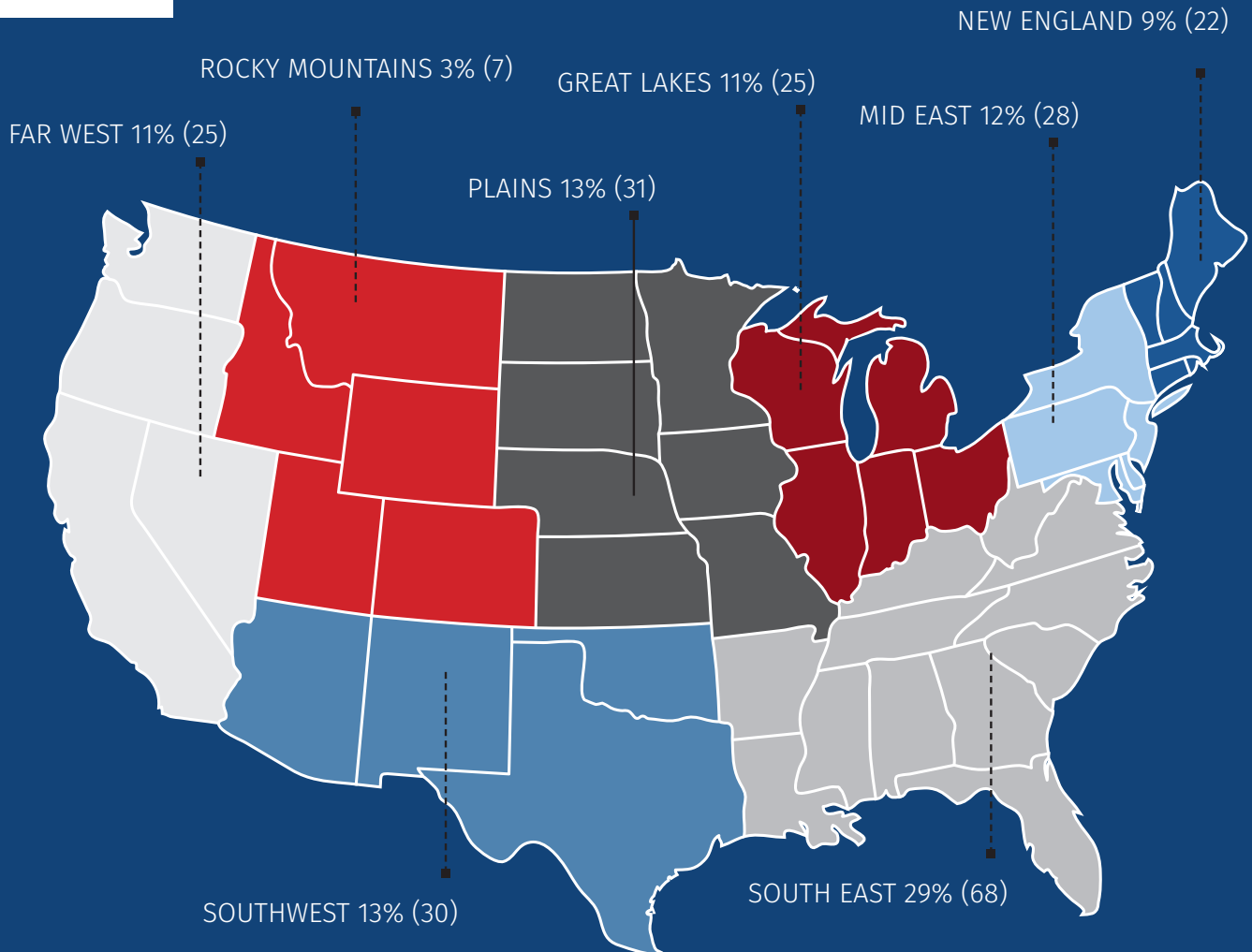


4-Year Applicants



Geographic Distribution

ALL APPLICANTS



2-YEAR / 4-YEAR

FAR WEST

2-YEAR 6% (5)
4-YEAR 13% (20)



ROCKY MOUNTAINS

2-YEAR 1% (1)
4-YEAR 4% (6)



SOUTHWEST

2-YEAR 12% (10)
4-YEAR 13% (20)



PLAINS

2-YEAR 15% (13)
4-YEAR 12% (18)



SOUTH EAST

2-YEAR 40% (34)
4-YEAR 22% (34)



GREAT LAKES

2-YEAR 6% (5)
4-YEAR 13% (20)



MID EAST

2-YEAR 10% (8)
4-YEAR 13% (20)



NEW ENGLAND

2-YEAR 10% (8)
4-YEAR 9% (14)



Courage At the Top

By Liz Flood and Suzi Schmittlein

INTRODUCTION

Through our survey, we've been able to identify a number of differentiating qualities of truly great workplaces. One overarching theme is the critical role senior leaders play in the stewardship of an institution's culture. This is particularly true for presidents just starting their tenure at an institution. Increasingly, we see presidential transition as an impetus for participation in Great Colleges, whether that is prior to a president arriving so they have data to work with, or after new presidents arrive so they can leverage our survey and program to provide a baseline assessment of culture and a communication tool for dialogue and transparency.

Within the Great Colleges program, successful cultures at recognized institutions are not achieved by accident. They are the direct result of senior leadership's commitment to the welfare of employees and the quality of their workplace experience. Both new and tenured leaders understand that stewardship of the culture is every bit as important as stewardship of financial resources. A key aspect of workplace engagement is not just the creation of an inclusive culture, but the courage to embrace change and challenge the status quo. We are highlighting two college Presidents who embody this approach to leadership.

“The vision expressed by the President - these are values I want us to live up to.”

- Employee, University of Mary Washington





University of Mary Washington

In our interview with Dr. Troy Paino, President of the University of Mary Washington (UMW), we focused on how the survey results and employee feedback from 2016 were used as part of the leadership transition, both as a communication tool as well as a platform for change and priority setting. Those changes lead to great results in 2019 – the University not only received improved scores, but also recognition status in the Great Colleges program.

We are complementing UMW's story alongside another spotlight article of a two-year institution. Both articles highlight the conjunction of smooth leadership transition and participation in the Great Colleges to Work For program.

Q & A

Q: Please share background on your experience with the Great Colleges to Work for survey. This could include your knowledge of it through COPLAC and/or having used it at another institution.

A: I became aware of the survey during my presidency at Truman State University. Both Truman and the University of Mary Washington are active members of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC).

Q: What were your goals for 2019 Great Colleges participation?

A: UMW last conducted the survey in the spring of 2016, just a few months before I arrived. Its results indicated that with focused attention we could make a good workplace even better, and we have been intentional in our efforts to address the issues identified. As I finished my 3rd year as President, it was an excellent time to again listen to those faculty, staff, and administrators who commit themselves to our students' success. The survey provided us with an opportunity to identify both where we've made progress but also where there is still work to do.

Q: How did the 2016 survey feedback shape your first year priorities (i.e. vision)?

A: The survey gave me an important diagnostic tool to better understand how the people who work here felt about the state of the university. To move UMW forward, we needed the faculty, staff, and administrators to be fully invested in the school's strategic direction. To get this sort of investment, our senior leadership had to build trust and instill hope. The 2016 survey showed me that our priorities were to improve communication—and that includes listening; more clearly articulate a vision that resonates with the values, mission, and culture of UMW; and address salaries that had fallen behind the market.

Q: Share more about your process in using the data from 2016, i.e. tasking the Leadership Council with recommendations involving your high potentials in the ideation process, and then ultimately making the decision on what areas to move forward with? What worked – what didn't?

A: The results of the 2016 survey gave us a jumping off point to engage the UMW community around the challenges facing the University. Openly talking about the survey's results demonstrated our desire to have deeper conversations around how people were feeling about the workplace, whether they felt valued or not, and what their hopes and dreams were for UMW. These conversations laid the foundation for what would ultimately become our University's vision for the future. I really got a sense of the heart and soul of this place as people not only opened up about their disappointments and frustrations, but also about what gave their work meaning and why they invested so much of themselves in what they do for our students. It allowed the vision we created to be very organic, and frankly, made it easy to sell. I actually kept a summary of the 2016 survey results on my desk as a reference on and reminder of what leadership needed to do to build more trust. Did we always

get it right? No. As I start my fourth year here, I am still looking for the most effective way to communicate and have those critically important conversations with the UMW community about the difficult issues facing the University. While we have made progress on a number of dimensions, and our employees indicate we are moving in a positive direction, we still have a long way to go.

Q: In what ways did the survey results and process that followed shape your leadership team?

A: We regularly used the 2016 results to remind ourselves of opportunities for growth. It is important to remember that while some of what the faculty, staff, and administrators were telling us was difficult to hear, the leadership teams both before and after my arrival had the courage to listen. It would have been easy to become defensive or dismissive, but my leadership team chose the more difficult and courageous path. They listened, reflected, and then committed themselves to action.

It is also important to remember that the results of that survey gave us a glimpse of what is amazing about this University. Despite the challenges, the people who work here love this place, love each other, and love our students. Those relationships and their dedication are what really make Mary Washington a special place.



Q: Can you share more about the “values work” / ASPIRE and how that informs your and other stakeholder’s decision making and behavior?

A: In the wake of the 2016 survey results and the subsequent articulation of a vision, we felt it was important for our community to come together to

affirm our values and commitment to the work we do with students. While conversations about values can be perilous in some institutions, at UMW it was an inclusive and uplifting experience. The outcome of this intensive work is known as ASPIRE, which articulates what this community values. Now, when difficult issues arise on campus, as they inevitably do, our students, faculty, staff, and administrators use those values as a reminder of who we strive to be and how we “aspire” to work together. Because everyone had a chance to participate in the process of articulating these values, they carry weight and credibility when I or anyone else references them in our work together.

Q: What will you do the same/differently with your results this year?

A: As we did before, we will listen, learn and commit ourselves to action. While identifying the progress is gratifying, quite honestly I’m more interested in the work we still must do to make this an even greater college to work for. Those results present many opportunities for growth, and we will pursue them.

Q: What advice do you have for new presidents in terms of participation in the survey?

A: In order to improve their workplace and campus cultures, administrators and presidents must check their egos at the door. Employees will be forthright if they believe their input is genuinely desired. That honesty can point out blind spots and delve into shortcomings faster and more effectively than may be comfortable.

Q: How do you plan to celebrate your recognition this year?

A: One of the most helpful aspects of the survey is that we learned we should take more opportunities to celebrate what a unique and extraordinary institution we have. The external proof abounds—our graduates quickly secure roles with salaries well above the market averages, they carry little debt, and newest alumni lead giving to UMW. What’s challenging is that we’ve forgotten how exceptional our story is on the higher education landscape, and we need to do more to reinforce this message internally. Once the news can be shared, we intend

to make the most of it! From the initial celebratory internal and external messaging and events to ongoing recruiting/training communications, across the University we will highlight our progress and shine the spotlight on our faculty and staff. They deserve the recognition.



ABOUT PRESIDENT PAINO

Dr. Troy D. Paino took office as the tenth president of the University of Mary Washington, effective July 1, 2016. A personable, student-focused leader, Paino is deeply committed to Mary Washington's public liberal arts and sciences mission of providing academic excellence and social uplift in equal measure. Prior to coming to UMW, Paino served for six years as president of Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri.

Dr. Paino is a member of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) President's Trust for Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP). He is an executive committee member and past president of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC). He is a member of the NCAA Division III Chancellors/Presidents Advisory Group, the NCAA Division III President's Council, and the Campus Compact for VA Advisory Board. He also serves on the Growth4VA President's Working Group. Paino earned doctorate and master's degrees in American Studies from Michigan State University and a juris doctorate from Indiana University. His teaching and scholarly interests include American higher education, 20th-century cultural and social history and American legal history.

“President Paino has set a vision to move us into a new era where we can maintain our commitment to the liberal arts while also realizing our mission to provide access to all students. I am inspired by his leadership.”

- Employee, University of Mary Washington

Victoria College

David Hinds began his tenure in July 2015 as a first-time president with Victoria College. He, along with his leadership team, opted to participate in the Great Colleges program in 2016, during his first full year of presidency. Victoria College, a two-year community college in Victoria, Texas, leveraged the Great Colleges survey from that point, creating a baseline for measurement. The results were utilized as a scorecard by college leadership, the board and community.



Q & A

Q: What were leadership's initial goals for participating in the Great Colleges program in 2016 and how did it help you as a new leader?

A: Leadership had been examining ways to improve climate and culture. We felt the need for a third-party baseline to assess where we were. We needed a tool that had been tested and could provide a consistent look year-to-year. We also believed it was important to know where we stood among modern college cultural norms nationally. The Great Colleges survey accomplished all of those.

Q: How have your goals changed over time having participated and been recognized in 2017, 2018 and 2019?

A: The initial goal was to assess where we were for the purpose of establishing that baseline. Continuing the survey helps us do two things; 1) to continue to emphasize the importance of how we at VC feel

about where we work and the work we do, and 2) to hone in on areas where the college could improve in terms of employee satisfaction.

Q: How do you/ various stakeholders use the data from the Great Colleges program to help influence the campus culture?

A: Simply conducting the survey continues to communicate to employees that we believe the component areas of the survey are important enough to measure. If we receive good news (and we have so far), we use that to celebrate. Lastly, we pore over the results of the survey with a fine tooth comb looking for signs that we might need to focus on a particular area. We all keep that in mind and HR makes formal recommendations for change.

Q: How do you personally model and advocate for a culture in which people and ideas are welcomed in the spirit of creating a more inclusive workplace?

A: Trust first, listen, don't judge, and ask questions. I believe that's how you let people know that you care about them and their work. It seems simple, but this really means putting the other person's needs and priorities ahead of your own. These things are hard to do and I have to keep reminding myself how important they are.

Q: What role has Human Resources played in your ability to sustain a great workplace?

A: This role cannot be undervalued if you are serious about improving campus culture. Human Resources will be where you leverage the results of your survey for improvement. HR sets the tone for the entire enterprise on what is and is not acceptable in our workplace environment.

Q: What advice do you have for new presidents in terms of participation in Great Colleges?

A: It can't hurt (well it might hurt someone's ego, maybe yours). It is important to communicate

that you care about campus culture and then, do something with the results. This will do nothing but improve the workplace. It's simple; people do their best work when they are happy. Overall student experience will improve as your campus culture improves. And THAT'S the point!

Q: How do you plan to celebrate your recognition this year?

A: In the past, we have shared the results and celebrated during convocation. Though we do not have our celebration planned yet, we will certainly celebrate and will do so college-wide.



ABOUT PRESIDENT HINDS

Dr. David Hinds' career in education spans over thirty years – from teaching computer science to high school students, to serving as a faculty member and division chair at Brazosport College, Texas, to holding the position of Sr. Vice President of Instructional Affairs at Allegany College of Maryland. He has served as the President of Victoria College since 2015. Dr. Hinds holds a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from the University of Texas, a Master of Business Administration from the University of Houston, and a Bachelor of Science from Texas State.



“I appreciate that our input is truly valued and our president truly cares what we think. He asks for input because he wants input -- not just to appease us. We are all on the same team.” ■

- Employee, Victoria College

Listening: Transgender Voices

“Know your audience” is perhaps the primary tenet of effective communication, and the higher education audience for the Great Colleges to Work For program has changed a great deal in the 12 years since the program began. As our primary tool for listening to what faculty and staff have to say about employee engagement at their institutions, the ModernThink Higher Education Insight Survey® has changed over time. Among our recent upgrades to the survey instrument, ModernThink added “Transgender” as a demographic choice in 2017 to allow for more accurate responses from individual faculty and staff. This change has also provided ModernThink an additional lens through which we can examine trends in our data over time. This year, we were particularly struck by the precipitous drop in overall percent positive scores, as well as an increase in percent negative scores, from transgender respondents from 2018 to 2019. This change took place among a similar number of respondents, 64 in 2018 and 62 in 2019. Here is a closer look at what our transgender respondents had to say.

ALL GREAT COLLEGES PARTICIPANTS

ALL TRANSGENDER RESPONDENTS

Job Satisfaction/Support

The data in each column reflects the total difference in percentage points between 2019 and 2018 for each group (percent positive difference – percent negative difference).

1. My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.	0	-31
2. I am given the responsibility and freedom to do my job.	0	-31
4. I am provided the resources I need to be effective in my job.	1	-14

Shared Governance

38. The role of faculty in shared governance is clearly stated and publicized.	1	-18
39. Faculty are appropriately involved in decisions related to the education program (e.g., curriculum development, evaluation).	2	-30
42. Faculty, administration and staff are meaningfully involved in institutional planning.	0	-26

Communication

8. When I offer a new idea, I believe it will be fully considered.	1	-33
21. In my department, we communicate openly about issues that impact each other's work.	2	-34
22. Changes that affect me are discussed prior to being implemented.	-1	-29
43. At this institution, we discuss and debate issues respectfully to get better results.	0	-31

The most dramatic changes were in the “Communication” dimension – an area central to employee engagement, regardless of gender.

Year-to-year changes among other demographic choices, such as age, race, or department, rarely reach double digits... and no others did this year.

Supervisors/Department Chairs

3. My supervisor/department chair makes his/her expectations clear.	0	-15
7. I receive feedback from my supervisor/department chair that helps me.	1	-27
12. I believe what I am told by my supervisor/department chair.	1	-25
15. My supervisor/department chair regularly models this institution’s values.	1	-16
19. My supervisor/department chair is consistent and fair.	1	-20
20. My supervisor/department chair actively solicits my suggestions and ideas.	2	-16

Senior Leadership

27. Senior leadership provides a clear direction for this institution’s future.	0	-32
32. Our senior leadership has the knowledge, skills and experience necessary for institutional success.	1	-20
41. Senior leadership communicates openly about important matters.	0	-25
48. Senior leadership regularly models this institution’s values.	1	-15
56. I believe what I am told by senior leadership.	0	-23

Fairness

14. I can speak up or challenge a traditional way of doing something without fear of harming my career.	1	-33
16. Promotions in my department are based on a person’s ability.	0	-28
18. Issues of low performance are addressed in my department.	2	-16
44. This institution’s policies and practices ensure fair treatment for faculty, administration and staff.	0	-28

Statements specifically related to diversity are notably missing from this list – with the exception of statement 44.

STUDENT RETENTION, CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS, AND COFFINS

Creative Parachutes for the Enrollment Cliff

By Karen Kukulka

It is easy to feel that the Great Recession is well and truly behind us: the economy has strengthened, the stock market has rebounded, unemployment has been steadily falling and the housing market has recovered from the bursting of the bubble caused by poor lending practices. However, another bubble is poised to burst, one that has the potential to change higher education across the country.

During the Great Recession, individuals and families took steps to cut costs and save money: they stopped eating out or tried to squeeze more miles out of their cars. Some also decided that it was not the best time to have children, since those bundles of joy often come with a significant yearly price tag. Between 2006 and 2011, the birth rate per 1,000 people dropped from 14.3 to 12.7.¹ Those children that were born around the time of the Great Recession are now reaching middle school and will be preparing for college in 2025. The lasting economic impact of these decisions to postpone having children or to have fewer children, in conjunction with an already declining birth rate, means that the pool of potential college attendees is shrinking rapidly.

In conjunction with the shrinking number of potential students, college is beginning to look less appealing. A national survey in 2018 took stock of the current student debt crisis and the results weren't pretty.

Forty-four million Americans carry a total of over \$1.5 trillion in debt. Of those surveyed, 86% report student debt as a major source of stress, 80% say it has prevented them from saving for retirement, and 59% have avoided making a large purchase because of it.²

With such bleak outcomes, it's no wonder that a separate survey found that almost one third of millennials regret pursuing a college degree rather than working.³ Although various news outlets regularly question whether college is worth the cost, the answer continually comes back that yes, the investment does pay off because college graduates earn more in the long run than non-graduates.⁴ However, with student debt and the accompanying horror stories of the impact of that debt on the rise, students may look at colleges and universities with an increasingly critical eye and seek out institutions with lower tuition costs, more favorable financial aid packages, or shorter certification programs.

1 World Bank. (2018, July 06).

2 Summer & Student Debt Crisis. (2018, November 01). Buried in Debt: A National Survey Report on the State of Student Loan Borrowers in 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.meetsummer.org/share/Summer-Student-Debt-Crisis-Buried-in-Debt-Report-Nov-2018.pdf?t=1541171524>.

3 Touryalai, H. (2013, May 23). Student Loan Problems: One Third Of Millennials Regret Going To College. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/halahtouryalai/2013/05/22/student-loan-problems-one-third-of-millennials-regret-going-to-college/#4b2f5ff87797>

4 Newton, D. (2018, December 18). Please Stop Asking Whether College Is Worth It. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dereknewton/2018/12/16/please-stop-asking-whether-college-is-worth-it/#6b9aa13c30d2>

It's not just demographic trends in the United States that are playing a role in the decrease of potential college applicants: international students are also applying at lower rates.

For the 2017/2018 academic year, according to the Institute for International Education, the number of international students dropped by 6.3% for undergraduate programs and 5.5% for graduate programs.⁵ Approximately one third of prospective international students cite America's political climate as the main reason for their lack of interest.⁶

And there are other forces, beyond the current political climate, at play. Tuition has been rising moderately for domestic students, but the price hikes have been more drastic for international students. Since 2012, yearly tuition and fees for international students has risen by over \$5,000, ten times the change in cost to domestic students.⁷ On top of that, some governments, such as those of Brazil and Saudi Arabia, have reduced the amount of scholarship funding available for students wishing to study abroad. In other countries, like China, the

quality of domestic universities has been steadily improving and comes at a lower price tag than those in the United States.⁸ The falling number of international students poses a financial threat to colleges and universities across the United States since these students have typically paid the full sticker price for tuition. A 2016 study highlighted the financial importance of international students to state institutions since they have historically used international students as a financial buffer during budget cuts.⁹

These demographic and international shifts pose a significant and lasting threat to the American higher education system as we know it. Fewer students means less of, well, everything. Students and their tuition dollars are the lifeblood of colleges and universities, even those with a heavy research focus. Everyone - professors, administrators, and staff - will face tightening budgets and vanishing positions. Some institutions have already begun dealing with these challenges, and some have found them insurmountable.

Between 2016 and 2020, 35 colleges or universities have closed or are expected to close. Even more have merged or have consolidated with other institutions. All of those closed/closing are private institutions with small endowments who typically rely more heavily on student fees to fund their operations.¹⁰ However, despite public funding, state schools have been under ongoing pressure as states reduce that funding, and these institutions may soon find themselves coping with closures and/or consolidations.

5 Enrollment. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Data/International-Students/Enrollment>

6 Patel, V. (2017, March 13). Prospective International Students Show New Reluctance to Study in the U.S. Retrieved from <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Prospective-International/239468>

7 Cooper, P. (2018, November 16). The Real Reason International Students Are Fleeing U.S. Colleges (It's Not Trump). Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/prestoncooper2/2018/11/16/the-real-reason-international-students-are-fleeing-u-s-colleges-its-not-trump/#cf3075b7c1cf>

8 Fischer, K. (2017, November 13). International-Student Enrollment Is Slowing - and It Isn't All Donald Trump's Fault. Retrieved from <https://www.chronicle.com/article/International-Student/241737>

9 Bound, J., Braga, B., Khanna, G., & Turner, S. (2016, December). A Passage to America: University Funding and International Students. Retrieved from <https://www.nber.org/papers/w22981.pdf>

10 Busta, H. (2018, October 18). Tracker: College and university closings and consolidation. Retrieved from <https://www.educationdive.com/news/tracker-college-and-university-closings-and-consolidation/539961/>

But the threat will look different for every institution. While college presidents of some state and smaller institutions will sweat it out trying to pull together funds from existing coffers, the nation's top universities, buffered by cushy endowments, high rankings, and elite brand recognition, will remain largely insulated from these concerns. According to Demographics and Demand for Higher Education, demand across the country for elite institutions is actually expected to increase through 2029.¹¹

In contrast, student growth for most two year institutions and four year regional and national universities is forecasted to dip as much as 15% or more through 2029.

The northeast, with its high concentration of higher education institutions, will be hit particularly hard. The midwest will also suffer. However, given shifting populations, many institutions in the mountain states are actually forecasted to see student growth up to and beyond 7.5%.¹²

It is worth noting that this isn't the first time a drastic drop in college enrollment has been predicted; the 1980's were also supposed to present financial challenges for institutions. With the benefit of hindsight, we know that wasn't the case. More women decided to enroll in higher education and earning a college degree became more critical to finding a well-paying job for everyone, and so the predicted drop in enrollment never materialized.¹³ As institutions look to the future, there is no way to predict if this projected crisis will come to fruition, but it is prudent for colleges to prepare now for that possibility.

This contingency planning is critical and, as with any initiative, employee communications can never be clear, or frequent, enough. Since the problem is likely to be a significant one that has drastic effects on employees' jobs and well-being, it is important to make sure your faculty and staff feel confident you have a plan for what's coming, and understand at least the broad strokes of that plan. This approach allows for two key benefits. First, the earlier communication lines are opened, the more proactive the administration looks. Challenging times are when confidence in senior leadership is most critical to keeping your faculty and staff engaged, focused and not jumping ship. Second, early communication allows institutions to tap into the wealth of knowledge that is their employee base. The most effective communication plans are not all about telling your employees what you need them to know - they're also about listening to what your employees have to say and understanding where they're coming from. Dialoging with employees about the challenges facing your institution can help dampen the fear of layoffs and quell the rumor mill. It also allows employees to more effectively share in the challenge of coming up with creative solutions, and then owning the process of implementing those solutions. After all, it's their own jobs they'll be saving with solutions they'll have to live with.

The solutions that some institutions have suggested, or have already started implementing, run the full gamut of creativity. At the most basic level, some institutions are deferring maintenance costs and selling assets in an effort to avoid less welcome measures like layoffs or furloughs.¹⁴ Similarly, there's the option of expanding course offerings to non-degree seeking students. This option allows institutions to tap into the growing senior population, who could provide a second wind to flagging liberal arts programs.

11 Grawe, N. (2017). Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education (Supplement). Retrieved from <https://people.carleton.edu/~ngrawe/HEDI.htm>

12 Ibid.

13 Barshay, J. (2018, September 10). College students predicted to fall by more than 15% after the year 2025. Retrieved from <https://hechingerreport.org/college-students-predicted-to-fall-by-more-than-15-after-the-year-2025>

14 Camera, L. (2019, March 22). College Closings Signal the Start of a Crisis in Higher Education. Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2019-03-22/college-closings-signal-start-of-a-crisis-in-higher-education>

A more strategic and lasting approach is to tackle the problem of student retention. An admitted student may only pay tuition for two or three years before choosing not to continue. By exerting a little extra effort to keep more students enrolled through graduation, colleges and universities can keep tuition funds rolling in without significantly restructuring their programs.¹⁵

Georgia State University, which does have a sizable 24,000 undergraduates enrolled, has found that a 1% improvement in retention pays out \$3 million in tuition and fees.¹⁶

Some colleges have decided to offer more programs, and certifications with flexible options, to attract more students (and their tuition dollars). Though an expansion like this requires an investment, many institutions have already capitalized on the online degree options that are technologically feasible and in higher demand. Additionally, rather than offer only traditional degrees, some institutions are offering faster, more flexible, and less expensive certifications tied to job-specific qualifications, such as cybersecurity or one-year specialized masters programs. Since 2012, colleges and universities across the country have added approximately 41,446 new degree or certificate programs.¹⁷

Some institutions have identified even more creative options to solve for the loss of revenue that could come with lower enrollment rates. Niagara University listed some of its dorms on Airbnb for \$129 a night and gave its hospitality students academic credit for running the program over the summer, a creative win for all parties involved.¹⁸ There's also the opportunity to capitalize on university brand equity. Institutions with a deeply loyal fanbase could profit from branding opportunities beyond the standard campus bookstore offerings. For example,

39 institutions have licensed funeral caskets available in school colors and with their logo emblazoned on the velvet interior.¹⁹

In the end, this could all go the way of the predicted enrollment drop-off crisis of the 1980s. The booming economy, with low unemployment and wage increases, could put higher education within reach of previously underserved populations. The current political focus on student debt relief could provide other financing options for students. But none of this is guaranteed to happen, and the scary truth is that the crisis could be full-blown. The time to be innovative is now. Prepare for the worst, hope for the best, and don't forget to keep your faculty and staff informed of, and engaged with, whatever plan you make.

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16 Camera, L. (2019, March 22). College Closings Signal the Start of a Crisis in Higher Education. Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2019-03-22/college-closings-signal-start-of-a-crisis-in-higher-education>

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18 Cornish, A., Hershops, S., Marcus, J., & Garcia, C. (2018, December 13). Facing Enrollment Declines, Colleges Seek Out New, Creative Ways To Make Money [Audio blog post]. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2018/12/13/676534628/facing-enrollment-declines-colleges-seek-out-new-creative-ways-to-make-money>

19 The Memorial Licensing Company. <http://www.collegiatememorials.net/>

Benefits Policy Data

2-YEAR

	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE
Work/Life Balance Programs	32%	30%	40%
Subsidized Childcare Assistance	0%	5%	10%
Eldercare Programs	3%	5%	0%
Paid Maternity Leave (beyond FMLA)	16%	24%	50%
Paid Paternity Leave (beyond FMLA)	16%	22%	50%
Lactation Facilities for Breastfeeding Mothers	58%	57%	80%
Domestic Partner Benefits	16%	30%	60%
Adoption Assistance	6%	0%	0%
Spousal/Partner Hiring Programs	3%	3%	0%
Housing Assistance Programs	6%	8%	0%
Tuition Reimbursement for Employees (including waivers)	90%	95%	80%
Tuition Reimbursement for Dependents	71%	76%	60%
Retirement Programs or Services	81%	84%	80%
Defined Benefit Pension Plan	77%	70%	100%
Cafeteria/Meal Subsidies	13%	22%	10%
Bereavement Policy	68%	70%	90%

Benefits Policy Data

4-YEAR

	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE
Work/Life Balance Programs	39%	38%	78%
Subsidized Childcare Assistance	10%	12%	17%
Eldercare Programs	8%	12%	33%
Paid Maternity Leave (beyond FMLA)	39%	24%	42%
Paid Paternity Leave (beyond FMLA)	29%	22%	42%
Lactation Facilities for Breastfeeding Mothers	67%	76%	83%
Domestic Partner Benefits	45%	40%	56%
Adoption Assistance	8%	14%	17%
Spousal/Partner Hiring Programs	4%	16%	47%
Housing Assistance Programs	20%	24%	28%
Tuition Reimbursement for Employees (including waivers)	92%	88%	94%
Tuition Reimbursement for Dependents	76%	76%	81%
Retirement Programs or Services	75%	80%	89%
Defined Benefit Pension Plan	29%	38%	72%
Cafeteria/Meal Subsidies	43%	42%	44%
Bereavement Policy	86%	84%	86%

Benefits Policy Data

CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION

	ASSOCIATE	BACCALAUREATE/ ASSOCIATE	BACCALAUREATE	MASTER	RESEARCH	SPECIAL FOCUS
Work/Life Balance Programs	33%	29%	24%	48%	72%	44%
Subsidized Childcare Assistance	3%	29%	8%	12%	16%	13%
Eldercare Programs	4%	14%	12%	10%	34%	6%
Paid Maternity Leave (beyond FMLA)	25%	14%	32%	33%	44%	25%
Paid Paternity Leave (beyond FMLA)	24%	14%	24%	28%	44%	19%
Lactation Facilities for Breastfeeding Mothers	60%	71%	56%	77%	81%	81%
Domestic Partner Benefits	27%	43%	40%	45%	47%	63%
Adoption Assistance	4%	0%	0%	12%	22%	19%
Spousal/Partner Hiring Programs	3%	0%	0%	18%	50%	0%
Housing Assistance Programs	7%	14%	32%	18%	31%	13%
Tuition Reimbursement for Employees (including waivers)	1%	86%	84%	93%	91%	100%
Tuition Reimbursement for Dependents	71%	57%	76%	82%	75%	81%
Retirement Programs or Services	81%	86%	68%	80%	88%	88%
Defined Benefit Pension Plan	76%	57%	40%	45%	59%	19%
Cafeteria/Meal Subsidies	17%	29%	40%	45%	38%	50%
Bereavement Policy	72%	71%	84%	83%	88%	94%



Focus on Fit

By Christina Worth

Crafting the ideal work environment for employees is a forever evolving art. Not only is the world of higher education constantly changing, but so are employee perceptions of their workplaces. Year after year, the trends evolve to reveal new ways to engage employees and increase their workplace satisfaction, from free campus gym memberships to providing snacks within the workplace. But what happens when these trendy engagement strategies time out?

Two of the most commonly discussed stressors relating to employee dissatisfaction are compensation and workload. The ModernThink Higher Education Insight survey assesses compensation satisfaction in statement 11, *I am paid fairly for my work*.

11: I am paid fairly for my work



The overall positive average was 49%, neutral average was 22%, and negative average was 29%. Realistically, who doesn't want to make more money? While compensation is essential in ensuring an employee's financial needs are being met, the trend of relying upon compensation alone to measure employee satisfaction does not tell the whole story. Statement 28, *My department has adequate faculty/staff to achieve our goals*, reveals employees' opinions on staffing in relation to workload.

Fit is an essential factor when it comes to retaining top talent.

28. My department has adequate faculty/staff to achieve our goals.



The overall positive average was 45%, neutral average was 24%, and negative average was 32%. Employees who feel overworked are more likely to contribute to turnover rates due to burnout. Employee responses to the two open-ended questions asked within the survey can also be revealing of their perceptions of workload:

1. *What do you appreciate most about working at this institution?*
2. *What would make this institution a better place to work?*

But are these the only two factors at play when it comes to employee satisfaction?

Luckily, no; employee satisfaction can be linked to other workplace factors beyond compensation and workload. Fit is an essential factor when it comes to retaining top talent. Fit relates to how well employees and their workplace are matched in needs, skills, and culture. These areas of fit influence how positively, or negatively, an employee views their workplace. The person-environment fit theory focuses on how well the employee and the workplace fit together, like puzzle pieces. This theory focuses on the balance of a job's requirements and culture against an employee's skills and values.

Averages have been rounded and may not total 100%.

+	Positive
+/-	Neutral
-	Negative

The connection between a job's requirements and an employee's skills or abilities, is captured within statement 1 of the ModernThink Higher Education Insight Survey, *My job makes good use of my skills and abilities*.

1. My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.



The overall results of the 2019 Great Colleges program revealed that most employees feel confident in the application of their strengths within their job role. The overall positive average was 81%, neutral average was 14%, and negative average was 5%. An employee whose strengths are applied within their job role will feel their contributions and expertise are valuable. Ensuring that employees' unique skills and talents are highlighted allows them to showcase their abilities, feel as though they are heard, and find new and creative ways to contribute to their institution. Matching an employee's skills with functions of their job role increases the likelihood that an employee will enjoy the work they do and perform at a higher level of quality and productivity. Employees who perform tasks they enjoy and are good at take greater care and pride in the work they do.

The survey also captures cultural fit through institutional pride and connection to mission. Statement 36, *I am proud to be part of this institution*, is revealing of employee fit.



36. I am proud to be part of this institution.



Employees who are proud of their workplace are more likely to be engaged. The overall positive average of statement 36 was 80%, the neutral average was 15%, and negative average was 5%. Employees' pride in their institution increases the likelihood that they are engaged, motivated, and productive. Pride can be a natural result of an employee's pre-existing opinion of an institution – this could be true, for example, of alumni who later become employees of their alma maters. Likewise, pride can be built by an institution through its mission, vision, and values.

Employee satisfaction can be greatly impacted by how connected an employee feels he or she is to an institution's mission or values. Statement 5 of the survey, *I understand how my job contributes to this institution's mission*, shows the level of impact individual employees feel they have from within their roles.



5. I understand how my job contributes to this institution's mission.



The overall positive average was 90%, neutral average was 7%, and negative average was 3%. Employees' recognition of their role and connection to their institution's mission impacts satisfaction and fit by ensuring they have an understanding of how their role contributes to the function of the institution. A clear understanding of how a job role provides value to an institution results in greater institutional pride and has the potential to increase employee retention.

Averages have been rounded and may not total 100%.

+	Positive
+/-	Neutral
-	Negative

Measuring an employee's perception of institutional culture reveals how well an employee and institution fit together. An employee's perception of workplace culture is telling when it comes to whether or not they relate to and support the culture, which can be influenced by mission, values, and leadership. Cultural fit is crucial to retaining talent and reducing turnover. Statement 59 of the survey, *This institution's culture is special - something you don't find just anywhere*, assesses employees' perception of culture at their institution.

59. This institution's culture is special - something you don't just find just anywhere.

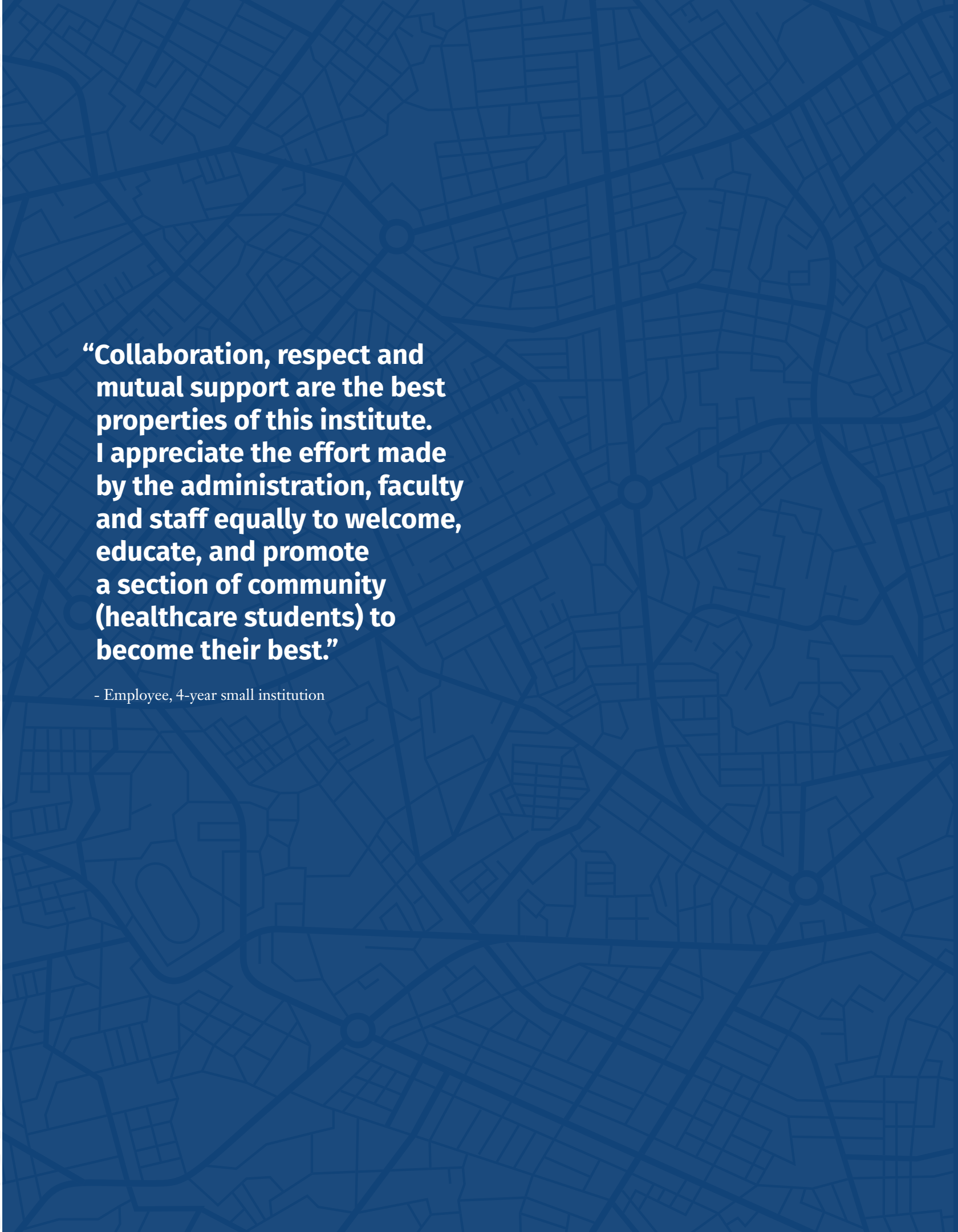


The overall positive average of statement 59 was 67%, the neutral average was 19%, and the negative average was 14%. Cultural fit is an area of opportunity across the board. Institutions can enhance the culture of their workplace through policies, leadership practices, and collaborative opportunities.

Fit between employees and their institutions ultimately influence their satisfaction and decisions to stay. The link between an employee's needs and skills, and an institution's culture and support of social dynamics among employees, are inextricably connected to the strength of fit between that employee and his or her workplace.

Averages have been rounded and may not total 100%.

+	Positive
+/-	Neutral
-	Negative



“Collaboration, respect and mutual support are the best properties of this institute. I appreciate the effort made by the administration, faculty and staff equally to welcome, educate, and promote a section of community (healthcare students) to become their best.”

- Employee, 4-year small institution



In Their Own Words

2-YEAR SMALL

“The fact that all are treated like family, senior leadership goes out of their way to keep all those affiliated with the school well informed of any direction or changes to operations.”

“I have a supervisor who genuinely cares about the people who work in our department.”

“The institution’s commitment to work/life balance.”

4-YEAR SMALL

“That I can make a big impact. My department, chair, and management take my views seriously...”

“Work life flexibility and strong support for innovation!”

“Communication, transparency and respect from the senior leadership, dean and chair.”

2-YEAR MEDIUM

“I appreciate the mission of the institution to serve the community.”

“Support of my work life balance! The culture of positivity and empowerment from administration. There is a family feel among employees.”

“Cooperative culture, good benefits, faculty are included in important decisions and respected by administration.”

4-YEAR MEDIUM

“It’s a special community of people with a shared interest of student success.”

“Commitment to mission and values through teaching, research, and service.”

“Leadership has the University headed in the right direction; shared passion for the industries we serve.”

2-YEAR LARGE

“The openness of faculty and staff to work together on solutions.”

“The sense of community and support across departments.”

“I appreciate the diversity of employees and the candidness of the workplace.”

4-YEAR LARGE

“The benefits are the best in the area and the opportunity to continue my education as an employee is supported.”

“The leadership and overall culture of fairness and diversity are outstanding.”

“A culture that supports the institution as a whole, and a president who clearly communicates her vision for the institution.”



The 2019 Honor Roll

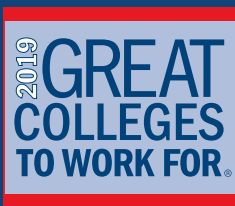
While recognition in any category is indeed noteworthy, a special distinction is awarded to those institutions that are cited most often across all of the recognition categories. This Honor Roll recognition was given to ten four-year institutions in each size, and four two-year institutions in each size:

THE 2019 HONOR ROLL FOR **TWO-YEAR** SCHOOLS:

SMALL (500-2,999 STUDENTS)	MEDIUM (3,000-9,999 STUDENTS)	LARGE (10,000 OR MORE STUDENTS)
North Florida Community College	Blue Ridge Community College	Collin College
Panola College	Central Lakes College	Lone Star College System
Southwest Mississippi Community College	Lord Fairfax Community College	Miami Dade College
Western Dakota Technical Institute	Victoria College	Santiago Canyon College

THE 2019 HONOR ROLL FOR **FOUR-YEAR** SCHOOLS:

SMALL (500-2,999 STUDENTS)	MEDIUM (3,000-9,999 STUDENTS)	LARGE (10,000 OR MORE STUDENTS)
College of the Ozarks	Biola University	Angelo State University
John Brown University	Bryant University	Baylor University
Lake Forest Graduate School of Management	Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University – DB and PR	Florida International University
Lubbock Christian University	Endicott College	Illinois State University
Marietta College	Francis Marion University	Mississippi State University
McPherson College	Loma Linda University	Quinnipiac University
Mississippi University for Women	Regent University	Southern New Hampshire University
Nebraska Methodist College of Nursing and Allied Health	Rollins College	Texas Christian University
Roberts Wesleyan College	Slippery Rock University	University of Mississippi
Texas Lutheran University	University of the Incarnate Word	University of West Florida



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