UWL Employee Engagement Survey

Fall 2022 Survey Report

Driving positive change in the UWL work experience

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Executive Summary

The UWL Employee Engagement Survey was conducted as part of the 'Investing in Our People' strategic initiative with the purpose of assessing current employee perceptions and informing ways UWL could improve as an employer. The survey was administered to all current employees in September, 2022. 410 employees took the survey, yielding a 31% response rate.

What was measured?

The survey captured employee perceptions regarding engagement (how connected and involved employees are with their work), satisfaction, and 6 'drivers of engagement': *work itself, recognition & value, support from supervisor/chair/division head, opportunities for growth & development, communication & decision-making,* and *well-being*. In addition, the survey collected ideas regarding solutions for increasing employee engagement and supporting work-life balance of employees, as well as open feedback. Survey results are analyzed for all employees together as well as by work role and college/division. Results are also explored by demographic characteristics.

Results and Insights

An average employee engagement score of 5.98 and an average general satisfaction score of 4.97 (both on a scale of 1-7) indicate employees are generally engaged in and somewhat satisfied with their work. Yet, results on the 6 'drivers of engagement' dimensions suggest neutral and negative employee perceptions regarding more specific aspects of their work experience and of UWL as an employer. Many people are feeling overworked and undervalued/underpaid, with insufficient support for their well-being. This combination is likely to lead to burnout and turnover, as well as a climate of cynicism and employees feeling disconnected from UWL. Additionally, most scores on this survey were slightly lower (by 0.2-0.5 points on a 7-point scale) than in 2018, and no scores increased during this time frame.

Recommendations for Consideration

These data suggest the following areas should be targeted for positive change:

- Prioritizing employee compensation, with consideration of both internal and external pay equity
- Addressing experiences of work overload and inequitable workload
- Providing resources, policies and support for employee work-life balance
- Creating and supporting opportunities for professional growth and knowledge/skill development
- Signaling employee value at the university level and department/unit level
- Increasing transparency in the roles and decisions of upper-level administrators

The UWL Employee Engagement Survey is best viewed as one aspect of a multi-faceted initiative to 'invest in our people' and continually improve the UWL employee experience.

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About the Survey

As a continuation of the work aligned with UWL strategic initiative to 'Invest in our People', a survey of employee satisfaction and engagement was conducted in September, 2022. This was the second survey of its kind at UWL, with the first conducted in March, 2018. The purpose of this survey was two-fold:

1. To assess the current state of employee engagement and work-related attitudes

2. To inform actionable change that positively impacts employees' experiences, engagement, and job satisfaction

Employee engagement refers to the connection employees feel with their jobs; how invested employees feel in the success of their work teams and UWL more broadly. Research has found that engaged employees get more satisfaction and fulfillment from their work, are less likely to quit, and are more likely to 'give their all' at their jobs (see Byrne et al., 2011; Cook, 2008; Harter et al., 2009; Rich et al., 2010).

In addition to asking questions in order to evaluate current levels of engagement and satisfaction of UWL employees, we also asked questions about 6 '*drivers of engagement*' (perceptions and experiences that research has shown to impact engagement), '*engagement solutions*' (employee ideas on programs or initiatives that they believed would positively impact their own engagement at work), and additional suggestions employees have related to increased support for work-life balance or the general betterment of their work experience.

The survey was built based on a review of the existing employee engagement research and publicly available survey measures related to employee engagement. The systematic survey development process and initial analysis of the item/dimension properties support the internal reliability and construct validity of the survey measure (Devellis, 2003). A copy of the original survey as well as more information about the psychometric properties of the survey, including preliminary reliability and validity support, are available upon request.

The survey consisted of 69 total items: 14 items assessing employee engagement and satisfaction, 41 items assessing the 6 drivers of engagement, 6 items assessing employee ideas for engagement solutions and work-life balance support, and 8 demographic items. The survey took about 10 minutes to complete. The survey was administered online within Qualtrics, with a unique link to the survey emailed to each UWL employee (preventing any employee from taking the survey more than once). The survey was open September 20-30, and reminder emails were sent to employees who had not yet completed the survey 3 days prior to and the morning of the closing date. Distribution of the survey was approved by the UWL Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects.

Who Participated?

The survey was sent to all 1322 UWL employees (current as of September 15, 2022). **410 employees took the survey, yielding a 31% participation rate.**

Work Roles

359 participants provided information on their work roles, and 29 indicated a preference not to answer this question. Distribution of work roles across participants generally resembles the distribution of all employees at UWL, with the exception of graduate/teaching assistants (who are severely underrepresented in the survey). Across all work role categories, **16% of participants indicated that they hold a supervisor position**.

Work Role	# Participants	# Employees Total	Participation Rate
Academic Staff	93	315	30%
Faculty/IAS	193	537	36%
University Staff	71	242	29%
Graduate/Teaching Assistants[1]	2	68	3%
Prefer not to answer	29	--	--

Participants by Work Role

Legend: ■ Academic Staff ■ Faculty/IAS ■ University Staff ■ Graduate/Teaching Assistant ■ Not Provided

(Pie chart values: 24%, 50%, 18%, 1%, 7%)

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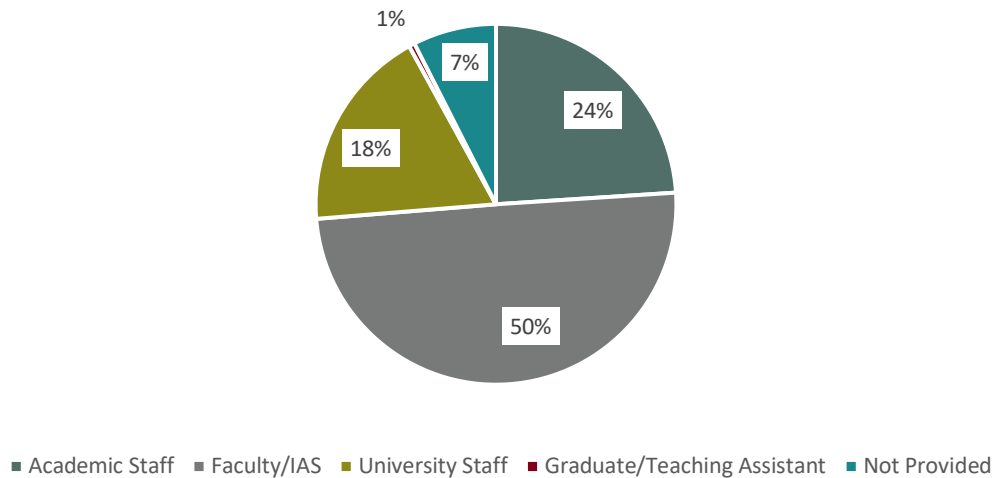
[1] As this participant group was under 10, it was not included in work role comparisons.

Additional detail was provided by participants regarding their work role. The vast majority (70%) of Faculty/IAS survey participants identified as tenure-track or tenured faculty.

Faculty/IAS by Appointment	# Participants	% Faculty/IAS Participants
IAS: Teaching Prof. Series	25	13%
IAS: Lecturer	15	8%
Tenure-Track Faculty	41	22%
Tenured Faculty	91	48%
Prefer not to answer	17	9%

University Staff by Division	# Participants	% Univ. Staff Participants
Professional Services	6	9%
Administrative Support	36	55%
Facilities/Maintenance	8	12%
Prefer not to answer	16	24%

The majority (55%) of University Staff survey participants held a role in the Administrative Support division.

College/Division

307 participants indicated their college or division. CASSH (including the School of Arts and Communication) had the most employees participate, followed by CSH and Academic Affairs.
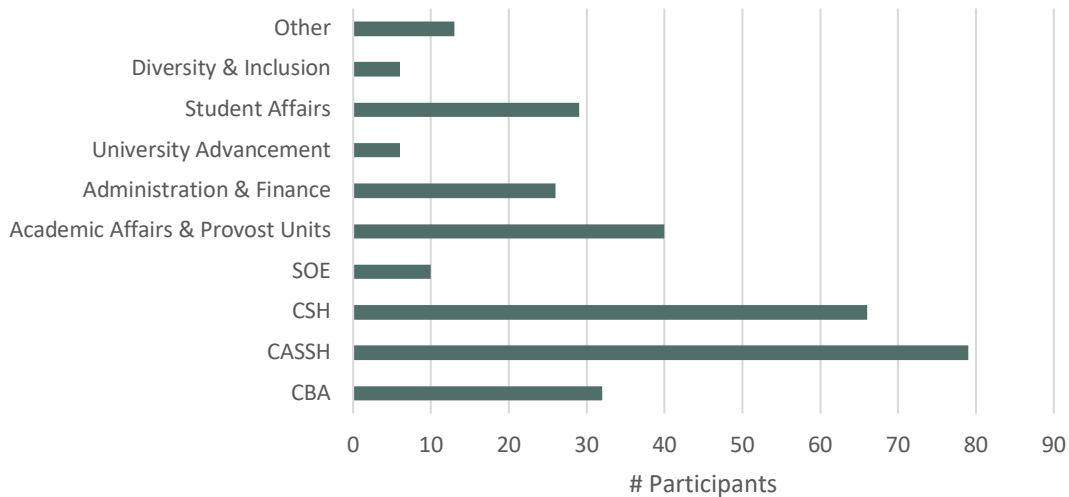
The distribution of participants across college/division somewhat resembles the distribution of all employees (keeping in mind that not all participants indicated their college/division). Specific groups who are relatively under-represented in the survey data are School of Education, Administration & Finance, and Student Affairs. Specific groups who are relatively over-represented in the survey are Academic Affairs & Provost Units, and to a lesser extent the College of Business Administration.

College/Division	# Participants	# Employees Total	Participation Rate
CBA	32	89	36%
CASSH, with School of Arts & Communication	79	238	33%
CSH	66	304	22%
SOE	10	59	17%
Academic Affairs & Provost Units	40	80	50%
Administration & Finance	26	199	13%
University Advancement	6	26	23%
Student Affairs	29	187	16%
Diversity & Inclusion	6	27	22%
Other[2]	13	113	12%

Years at UWL

341 participants indicated how many years they had worked at UWL. The majority (58%) of participants who provided this information have worked at UWL for 10 years or less.
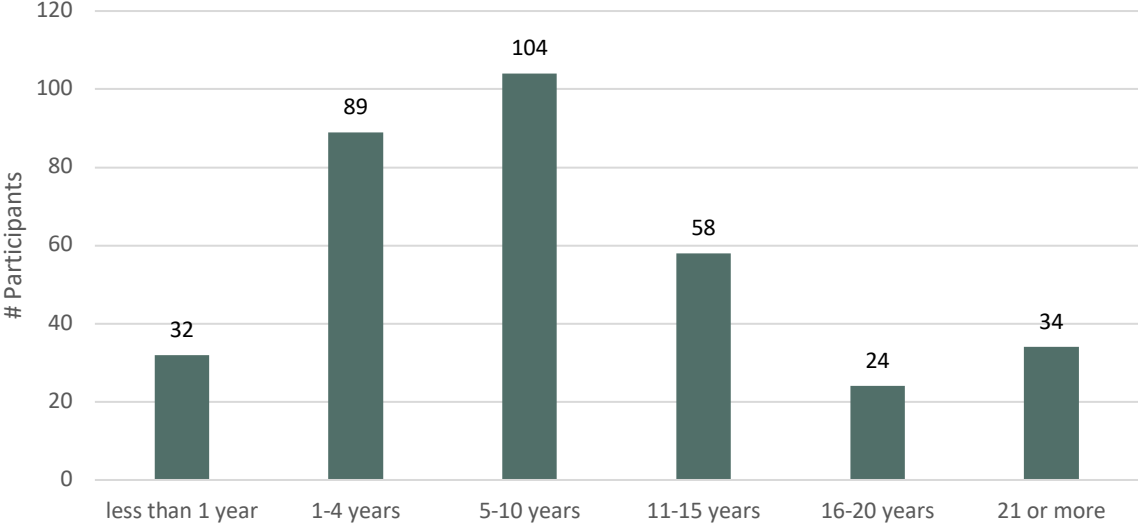
Personal Demographics

293 participants indicated their age category, 296 indicated gender, and 295 indicated racial/ethnic identity. Based on this data, participants represent a wide range of ages, the majority (65%) of participants who provided gender information identified as female, and the overwhelming majority (93%) identify as White.

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[2] Chancellor's division is included in the 'Other' category as the number of employees in this group is under 10.

Guidance on Interpretation of Results

For all engagement, satisfaction, and drivers of engagement items and dimensions, scores are provided on a scale of 1 to 7, where 7 is highest/most positive rating, 1 is the lowest/most negative rating, and 4 indicates a neutral rating. Any alternative response scales are noted within the report.

Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Meaning	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

In all results sections, mean scores are provided along with a standard deviation (SD) for that mean score. Mean scores represent the mathematical average response. Standard deviations are an indication of the amount of variation in responses, with higher values indicating more individual-level variation and lower values indicating more agreement across employees. A general rule of thumb suggests approximately 66% of responses fall within 1 SD above and below the mean response for each item/dimension.

When color coding is used in results tables, red shading indicates negative perceptions (<4.0), yellow indicates somewhat neutral perceptions (4-4.9), white/gray shading indicates moderately positive perceptions (5-5.9) and green shading indicates more strongly positive perceptions (>6.0).

Negative Perceptions	Neutral Perceptions	Moderately Positive Perceptions	Strongly Positive Perceptions

Engagement Results: All Employees

In this initial section of survey results, data for all employees are examined holistically and provide insight into employee perceptions campus-wide. Mean scores for all employees on each dimension and also on each item indicate areas of strength and opportunities for improvement for UWL as an employer, regardless of employee work role, college, or division. Results are presented first for engagement and satisfaction, and then for the 6 drivers of engagement examined in the survey.

Current Levels of Engagement & Satisfaction

Across all employees who completed the survey, the average engagement score is 5.98 and the average satisfaction score is 4.97. This indicates that **generally speaking UWL employees are engaged in their work and have moderate levels of overall satisfaction**. UWL employees are more engaged in their work than they are satisfied with their jobs and UWL as an employer. There is also considerably more variation in employee satisfaction than there is with engagement.

	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Mean (SD)
Engagement	2.5%	7.5%	90%	5.98 (0.77)
Satisfaction	23.4%	13.5%	63.1%	4.97 (1.43)

Engagement Items

The following item-level results provide more depth into current employee engagement levels. These items are meant to capture the more emotional aspects of engagement (feeling inspired and excited about one's work), the more physical aspects of engagement (putting a lot of effort and energy into one's work), and the more cognitive aspects of engagement (being completely focused and attentive to one's work). Ratings on these engagement items are 0.1-0.3 points lower than in 2018 yet all remain above 5.0, with most above 6.0.

Item Text	Mean	SD
My job inspires me.	5.14	1.44
I am excited about my job.	5.13	1.49
I am proud of the work I do.	6.11	1.01
I find my work interesting.	5.81	1.11
I try my hardest to perform my job well.	6.43	0.78
I devote a lot of energy to my job.	6.49	0.83
I put my full effort into my job.	6.36	0.91
At work, I focus a great deal of attention on my job.	6.38	0.85
At work, my mind is focused on my job.	6.09	1.03
At work, I am absorbed by my job.	5.80	1.18

Satisfaction Items

The following item-level results provide more depth into current employee satisfaction levels. These items are meant to capture employees' general satisfaction with their jobs and with UWL as an employer. While all items indicate moderate levels of satisfaction, it is noteworthy that these results indicate not all employees would recommend UWL to others as a good place to work. Ratings on these satisfaction items are approximately 0.5 lower (i.e., approximately ½ point more negative) than in 2018.

Item Text	Mean	SD
Overall, I am very satisfied with my job.	4.80	1.61
In general, I don't like my job. (*reverse-coded*)	5.42	1.53
In general, I like working at UWL.	5.03	1.61
I would recommend UWL to others as a good place to work.	4.64	1.75

Drivers of Engagement

In addition to assessing overall employee engagement and satisfaction, this survey captured employee perceptions regarding 6 established precursors of engagement and satisfaction – 6 'drivers of engagement'. These 6 dimensions, and the items within them, allow for a more accurate and fine-grained understanding of employee experiences at UWL and ultimately can inform opportunities for positive change.

1. The Work Itself	• Having work that is clear, interesting, and autonomous
2. Recognition & Value	• Feeling appreciated and valued by UWL as an employer
3. Support from Supervisor/Chair/ Division Head	• Feeling appreciated and supported by one's direct supervisor, chair, or division head
4. Growth & Development	• Seeing adequate opportunities for professional growth
5. Communication & Decision-Making	• Perceiving fair processes for decision-making across UWL and in one's 'unit'
6. Well-Being	• Believing that UWL supports employee well-being in policy and daily practice

Drivers of Engagement: Dimension Level Results

Dimension	Mean	SD
Work Itself	5.26	1.20
Recognition & Value	4.55	1.28
Support from Supervisor/Chair/Division Head	5.69	1.46
Opportunities for Growth & Development	4.44	1.50
Communication & Decision-Making	3.89	1.39
Well-Being	4.03	1.44

Scores on the drivers of engagement are noticeably lower than scores on engagement and satisfaction, with three of the six dimensions yielding mean scores considered to be in the 'neutral' range, one dimension yielding a mean score in the 'negative' range, and no dimensions yielding a mean score considered 'strongly positive'. The standard deviations across all 6 dimensions are also fairly high given the 7-point scale, indicating there is considerable variation across employees for each driver of engagement. All dimension-level ratings are slightly lower (by 0.2-0.5 points) than in 2018, with the exception of the 'Support from Supervisor' dimension, which yielded a nearly identical mean rating across the time points.

Dimension Scores: All Employees
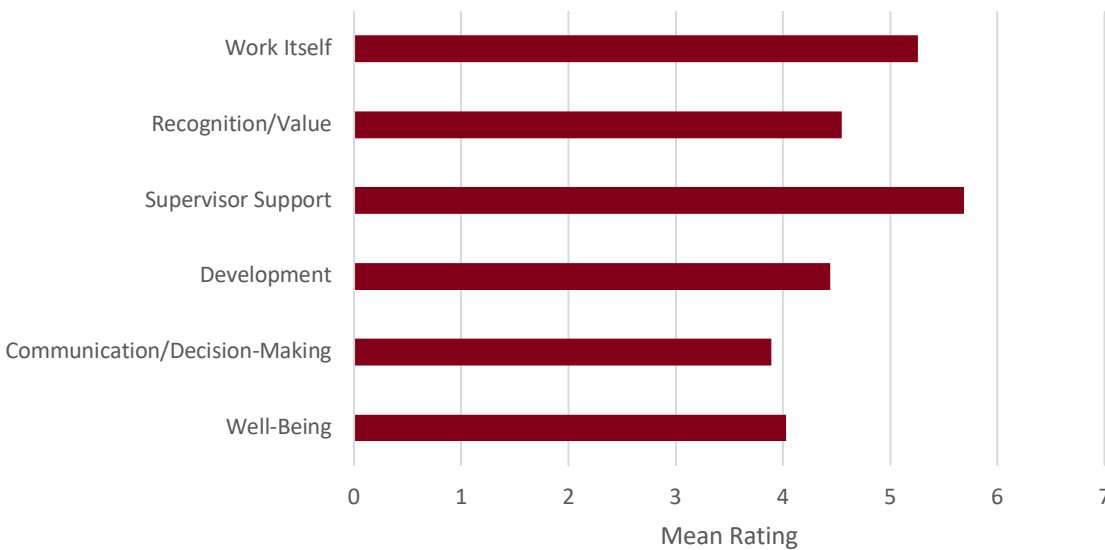
Drivers of Engagement: Item Level Results

'Drivers of Engagement' results for all employees, by item, are presented in the following tables. The colored shading of scores may serve to indicate current areas of relative strength and potential problem areas, campus-wide. Following the patterns apparent in dimension-level results, the majority of lower ratings occur within communication & decision-making, well-being, and growth & development. In addition, two items within the recognition & value dimension yielded markedly lower responses (on average).

The Work Itself

Item Text	Mean	SD
Working at UWL, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.	4.90	1.53
I have appropriately stimulating and challenging work.	5.37	1.39
I know what is expected of me at work.	5.60	1.41
I have the authority to do my job as I see fit.	5.13	1.70
I have freedom in how I accomplish my work objectives.	5.32	1.56

Recognition & Value

Item Text	Mean	SD
The mission of UWL makes me feel my job is important.	4.62	1.59
I feel very useful in my job.	5.51	1.42
Doing my job well really makes a difference.	5.59	1.42
I feel like a key member of UWL.	4.19	1.78
The work I do is very valuable to UWL.	5.30	1.59
I rarely feel my work is taken for granted.	3.63	1.88
UWL recognizes the significance of the contributions I make.	3.46	1.77
In the past month, I have received praise and recognition for a job well done.	4.11	1.99

Support from Supervisor/Chair/Division Head

Item Text	Mean	SD
My [supervisor] generally appreciates the way I do my job.	5.79	1.43
My [supervisor] makes me feel my contributions are valued.	5.61	1.60
My [supervisor] is supportive of my ideas and ways of getting things done.	5.66	1.52
My [supervisor] backs me up on decisions I make at work.	5.69	1.54
My [supervisor] recognizes the value of my work.	5.68	1.62

Growth & Development

Item Text	Mean	SD
In the last 6 months, someone at work has talked to me about my own development.	4.40	2.00
I have opportunities to learn and grow at work.	4.99	1.68
I feel that UWL encourages my development.	4.39	1.79
I receive appropriate training and development to help me do my job well.	4.49	1.67
There are sufficient opportunities to network and learn from one another at UWL.	4.41	1.76
I am excited about the opportunities for professional growth I have at UWL.	3.94	1.82

Communication & Decision-Making

Item Text	Mean	SD
At UWL, my opinions seem to count.	3.90	1.71
I feel appropriately involved in decision making at work.	4.20	1.75
I feel comfortable voicing my ideas in meetings.	4.89	1.74
Decisions and policies at UWL are applied consistently across employees.	3.27	1.81
Explanations for decisions and policies at UWL seem reasonable.	3.50	1.73
I am treated with respect at work.	5.21	1.60
There is good communication between faculty, staff, and administration at UWL.	3.52	1.81
UWL allocates appropriate budgetary resources toward achieving important objectives.	3.25	1.74
UWL allocates appropriate staff resources toward achieving important objectives.	3.27	1.76

Well-Being

Item Text	Mean	SD
UWL promotes the health and well-being of employees.	4.04	1.73
I am happy with my work-life balance.	4.14	1.93
UWL has appropriate family-friendly policies.	4.24	1.67
UWL really cares about my well-being.	3.67	1.74
I am not overloaded with work to do.	3.36	1.95
I have the appropriate resources to do my job well.	4.16	1.77
I feel supported by others at work.	4.88	1.64
I rarely feel required to do tasks that fall outside of my formal job responsibilities.	3.74	1.94

Engagement Results: Comparisons by Work Role and Division/College

In this section, dimension scores for engagement, satisfaction, and the 6 drivers of engagement are examined by work role and then by division/college. In the work role comparison for all employees, the three groups compared are Faculty/Instructional Academic Staff (IAS), Academic Staff, and University Staff. Faculty/IAS are then further divided into 3 appointments: IAS (including both Teaching Professor Series and Lecturer appointments), Tenure-Track Faculty, and Tenured Faculty. Finally, all employees are examined by comparing across 8 divisions and colleges (collapsing University Advancement, Diversity and Inclusion, and 'Other'). The University Staff categories did not have sufficient participation to compare within this employee group.
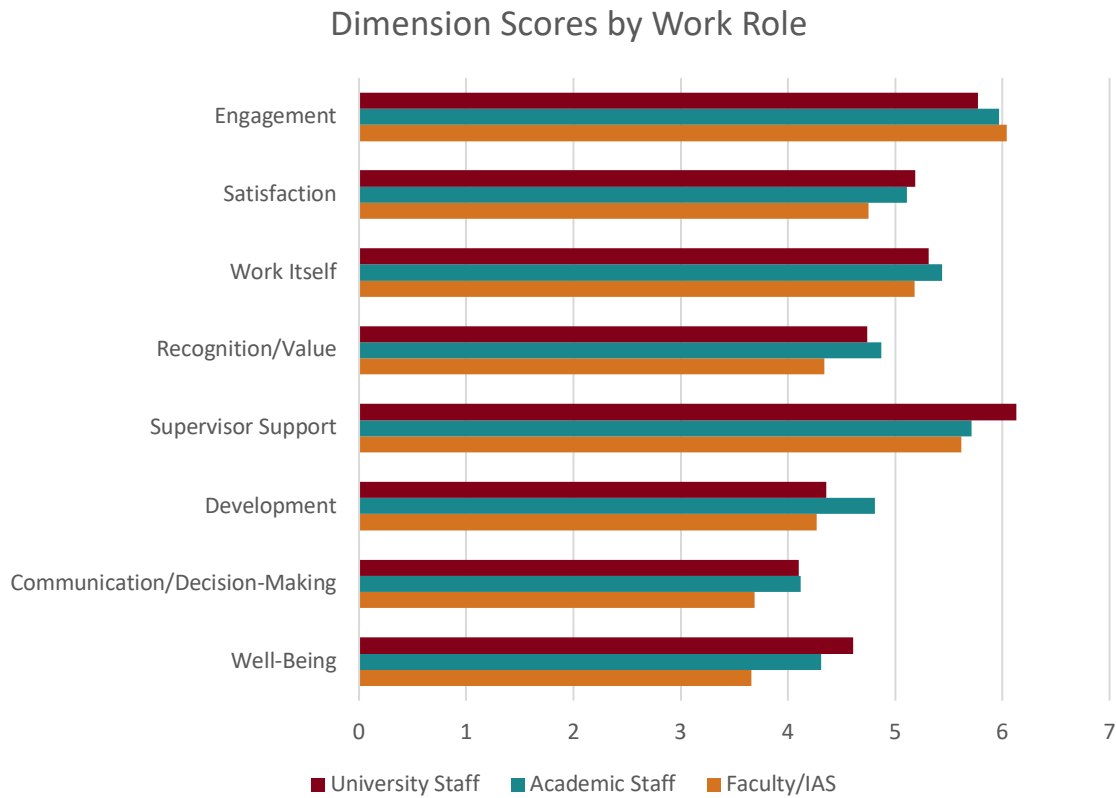
Work Role Comparison

A comparison of dimension scores for all employees by work role categorization reveals statistically significant differences for all dimensions except 'Support from Supervisor/Chair/Division head' indicating that there may be fundamentally different employee experiences based on work role. In general, Faculty/IAS reported the most negative perceptions. However, 54 respondents did not indicate their work role, which detracts from the validity of apparent group differences. These results are presented in the table below and graph on the following page.

Dimension	Academic Staff	Faculty/ IAS	University Staff	No Role Indicated
Engagement*	5.97	6.04	5.77	6.05
Satisfaction*	5.11	4.75	5.19	5.24
Work Itself*	5.44	5.18	5.31	5.18
Recognition & Value*	4.87	4.34	4.74	4.51
Support from Supervisor/Chair/Division Head	5.71	5.62	6.13	5.24
Opportunities for Growth & Development*	4.81	4.27	4.36	4.52
Communication & Decision-Making*	4.12	3.69	4.10	3.93
Well-Being*	4.31	3.66	4.61	4.16
*differences between group scores are statistically significant				

Note: 94 Academic Staff, 190 Faculty/IAS, 71 University Staff, 54 did not indicate a work role.

The following graph provides another visualization of the differences in dimension scores by work role, including data only for those who indicated their work role.
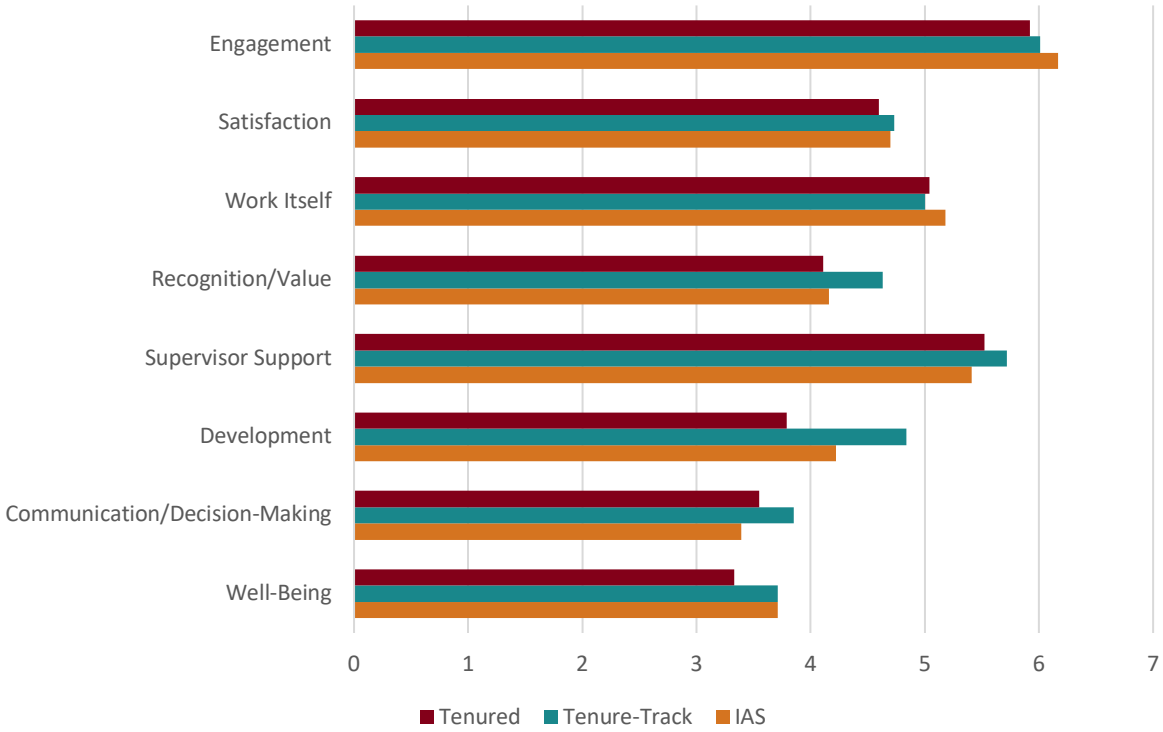
Dimension Scores by Work Role

Legend: University Staff, Academic Staff, Faculty/IAS

Faculty/IAS Appointment Comparison

Within the Faculty/IAS work role category, dimension scores for the 3 appointments are compared (IAS, including 'Lecturer' and 'Teaching Professor Series' roles; Tenure-Track Faculty; Tenured Faculty). While there are noticeable patterns in the data, only the difference in 'opportunities for growth and development' scores was statistically significant, with tenured faculty having the lowest rating of the three groups. For other dimensions, while scores vary by appointment, they vary at least as much at an individual level, within a given position. Still, tenured faculty tend to have the lowest scores in terms of engagement and satisfaction, as well as the lowest average scores on the well-being dimension. IAS had the lowest average score in terms of perceived support from department chairs and communication/ decision-making. These results are presented in the table and graph on the following page.

Dimension	IAS	Tenure-Track	Tenured
Engagement	6.17	6.01	5.92
Satisfaction	4.70	4.73	4.60
Work Itself	5.18	5.00	5.04
Recognition & Value	4.16	4.63	4.11
Support from Supervisor/Chair/Division Head	5.41	5.72	5.52
Opportunities for Growth & Development*	4.22	4.84	3.79
Communication & Decision-Making	3.39	3.85	3.55
Well-Being	3.71	3.71	3.33

*differences between group scores are statistically significant for this dimension
Note: N(IAS)=40, N(Tenure-Track)=41, N(Tenured)=90.

Dimension Scores by Faculty/IAS Appointment

Dimension Scores by College/Division

Results for all employees are compared according to participant college/division, for those participants who provided this information. University Advancement and Diversity & Inclusion divisions had fewer than 10 designated survey responses, so these divisions were collapsed into the 'other' category.

Dimension	CBA (N=32)	CASSH (N=79)	CSH (N=66)	SOE (N=10)	Academic Affairs & Provost Units (N=40)	Admin. & Finance (N=26)	Student Affairs (N=29)	Other (N=25)
Engagement	6.2 (0.7)	6.0 (0.8)	6.0 (0.8)	6.2 (0.8)	5.8 (0.8)	5.6 (0.8)	5.9 (0.7)	6.2 (0.6)
Satisfaction	5.2 (1.8)	4.8 (1.4)	4.9 (1.5)	4.9 (1.8)	5.1 (1.3)	4.7 (1.5)	5.0 (1.4)	5.5 (1.2)
Work Itself	5.3 (1.4)	5.2 (1.2)	5.3 (1.2)	5.2 (1.5)	5.6 (1.0)	4.7 (1.3)	5.4 (0.9)	5.6 (1.1)
Recognition & Value	4.8 (1.6)	4.3 (1.3)	4.4 (1.2)	5.0 (1.3)	4.8 (1.2)	4.4 (1.5)	4.7 (1.1)	5.3 (1.0)
Support from Supervisor/ Chair/Division Head	6.1 (1.7)	5.6 (1.5)	5.8 (1.3)	6.2 (1.0)	5.8 (1.3)	5.0 (1.6)	6.1 (0.9)	6.2 (1.2)
Opportunities for Growth & Development	4.8 (1.8)	4.2 (1.5)	4.2 (1.4)	5.1 (1.7)	4.5 (1.4)	4.3 (1.6)	4.9 (1.3)	5.2 (1.4)
Communication & Decision-Making	4.4 (1.8)	3.7 (1.4)	3.8 (1.2)	3.9 (1.6)	3.9 (1.3)	3.9 (1.7)	4.1 (1.1)	4.6 (1.4)
Well-Being	4.5 (1.8)	3.5 (1.3)	3.8 (1.3)	4.0 (1.5)	4.3 (1.2)	4.3 (1.5)	4.3 (1.4)	4.8 (1.4)

Engagement Results: Comparisons by Employee Demographic Characteristics

In the following section dimension scores for engagement, satisfaction, and drivers of engagement are explored according to additional employee demographic characteristics including years at UWL and supervisor designation. Although the survey collected information on age, gender, and racial/ethnic identity, there was such a large portion of respondents who did not provide their information on these dimensions to yield the results inaccurate and potentially misleading. Similarly, although participants indicated if they were full-time or part-time there was not sufficient representation of part-time employees to allow for accurate and meaningful comparison of scores across the two groups. For all of the following demographically-based results, approximately 20-30% of participants elected not to answer each of the demographic questions (and were thus excluded from these results). This exclusion of participants from the analyses should be considered in interpreting the following results.

Results by Years at UWL

Plotting engagement and satisfaction scores by years at UWL, the results suggest that generally speaking satisfaction declines after the first year of employment and is lowest for employees who have worked at UWL for 11-15 years. Engagement levels remain relatively stable across years of employment.

Engagement & Satisfaction by Years at UWL
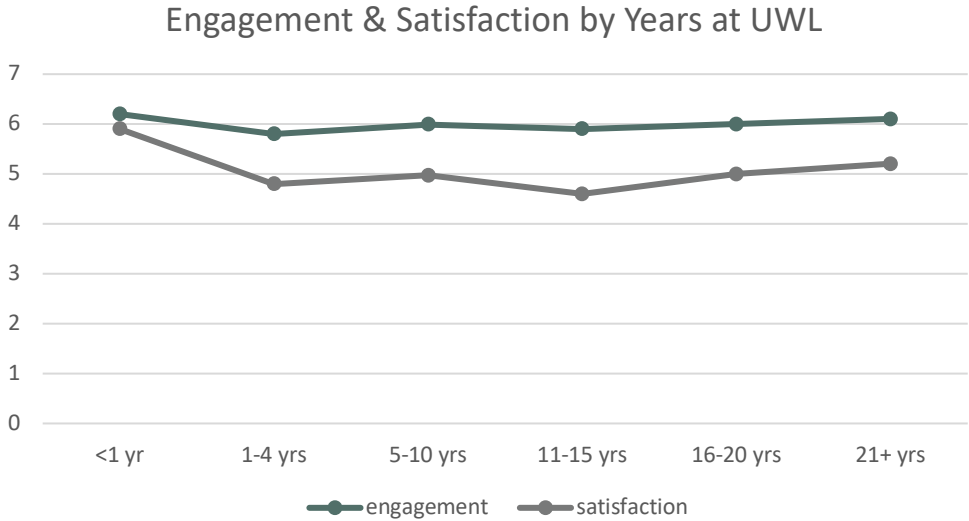
Results by Supervisor Designation

In comparing dimension scores for supervisors and non-supervisors, no clear differences in responses are apparent. Generally speaking, employee experience and perceptions do not seem to differ by supervisor designation.

Dimension Scores by Supervisor Designation
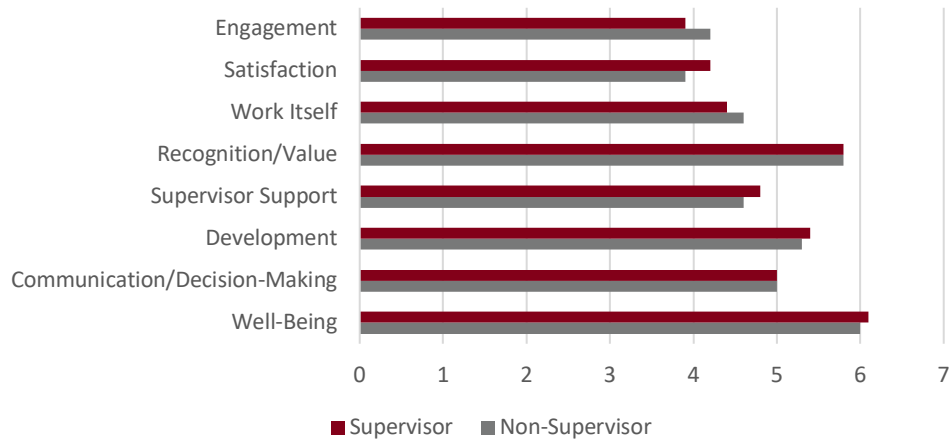
Dimension	Supervisor	Non-Supervisor
Engagement	6.1 (0.7)	6.0 (0.8)
Satisfaction	5.0 (1.3)	5.0 (1.4)
Work Itself	5.4 (1.2)	5.3 (1.1)
Recognition & Value	4.8 (1.3)	4.6 (1.2)
Support from Supervisor/Chair/Division Head	5.8 (1.2)	5.8 (1.4)
Opportunities for Growth & Development	4.4 (1.4)	4.6 (1.5)
Communication & Decision-Making	4.2 (1.3)	3.9 (1.4)
Well-Being	3.9 (1.3)	4.2 (1.5)

Engaging Solutions

In addition to collecting employee perceptions regarding current levels of engagement and satisfaction, as well as perceptions according to the 6 drivers of engagement, employees were asked to provide thoughts on the most impactful potential solutions UWL could enact to positively influence their own work experiences. Specifically, the survey provided a list of 12 potential 'engaging solutions' that research suggests have a positive impact on employee engagement, as well as ideas that emerged from the open-ended survey calling for such ideas conducted in Spring 2017 (all of these mirrored the options provided on the 2018 employee survey). Participants were asked to indicate what they considered their 'top 3' solutions, and also had the opportunity to write in an 'other' solution to capture ideas not included in the list of 12.

Solution Rankings: All Employees

The clear top 2 engaging solutions for all employees (regardless of work role or college/division) are self-identified (e.g., compensation) and support for work-life balance, followed by additional professional development opportunities.

	Frequency in Top 3	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice
Other (please specify) – *write-in responses for this category are discussed further on the following page*	240	113	62	65
Support for my work-life balance (e.g., flexible work arrangements)	186	92	65	29
Professional development opportunities	119	29	46	44
Support for my own well-being (e.g., increased access to healthy eating or exercise opportunities)	114	33	39	42
Loyalty/tenure-based recognition or gifts	94	32	31	31
Personal, specific recognition/appreciation from administration	83	24	32	27
Additional discounts on or off-campus	73	11	27	35
Networking within and/or outside of UWL	67	10	28	29
UWL community building events (e.g., 'UWL day at the park' or team-building activities	44	7	15	22
Personal, specific recognition/appreciation from my supervisor	42	12	15	15
Supervisor training programs	35	14	9	12
Personal, specific recognition/appreciation from my peers	27	6	9	12

Employee Generated Solutions

In addition to the solutions provided to employees on the survey, participants identified 240 'other' solutions they believed would positively impact their experience working at UWL. Of these solutions, the most popular 'other' solution by far was increased pay.

	Frequency in Top 3	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice
Increased pay (including pay to match peer institutions or market conditions; pay to recognize years of service and/or performance)	113	62	24	27
Reducing work (over)load, more equitable distribution of workload	28	14	7	7
Increased resources (including staffing)	16	7	4	5
Stronger leadership competency in administration roles	15	7	4	4
Increased opportunities for development and advancement (including offering and access)	13	3	6	4
Feeling more appreciated and/or empowered/trusted	12	4	4	4
Supporting inclusivity and addressing workplace bullying behavior	9	3	4	2
Wellness perks: physical, mental, emotional, financial (e.g., free parking, free access to rec center, tuition reimbursement for family)	9	2	4	3
Flexible work options (flexible schedule arrangements and/or hybrid/virtual work options)	4	2	1	1

Additional Feedback and Open Comments

There were two additional opportunities for employees to provide open comments, including ideas specific to work-life balance and also more general feedback. First, given the heightened awareness of work-life issues during the time of the survey (related, in part, to the return to work following the COVID-19 pandemic) and also in recognition of the lower ratings provided to 'well-being' items on the 2018 survey, respondents were asked: In what ways could work-life balance be better supported at

UWL? Second, to ensure that any and all feedback was encouraged from employees completing this survey, a general invitation for comments was included: If you have any additional comments you would like to make about your experience working at UWL related to the purpose of this survey, please provide those here.

Ideas for Work-Life Balance Support

252 respondents provided ideas on ways that work-life balance could be better supported at UWL. These responses were coded for emergent theme categories, summarized in the table below. The most common responses highlighted the desire for increased access and support for flexible work options. Reduced workload and increased pay were the next two commonly identified themes, followed by a range of ways employees would like to be better supported via tangible and intangible resources (e.g., as caregivers and/or with adequate staffing) and have barriers removed (e.g., with greater access to wellness time and resources and less 'frustration' at work).

Theme Category	Frequency	Sample Responses (Direct Quotes)
Flexible work options (including flexibility in schedule and/or location of work)	76	*Allowing remote work wherever practical, without the paperwork* *More flexibility in terms of scheduling, offering alternative modes of work*
Reduced or more equitable workload and/or performance expectations	67	*Address workload inequality in a meaningful way* *Reduce course load. Too many busywork service obligations* *Reduce/eliminate administrative and non-value added activities (e.g., certain reporting that is never used or acted upon)* *Evaluate current staff's responsibilities, and how they compare to the responsibilities before the pandemic… Now things are back to normal but I continue doing the job of 2 people, which affects my personal life as I often have to work at home after hours to keep up with my responsibilities.*
Increased pay	37	*If compensation was competitive or appropriate, myself and my colleagues would not have to work second jobs to pay bills.* *My work-life balance could be better supported through better compensation for the work I'm implicitly (sometimes explicitly) expected to do during the time when I'm not on contract.*

Increased resources (e.g., staffing)	36	*We never have enough resources, and I end up working so many hours to keep things going…I need people who can do the work. I need a day off. I need rest.* *Just give the department enough resources so I can do my job well without sacrificing my health.*
Parental and/or caregiving support	20	*Access to on-campus childcare for kids under 1, subsidized childcare costs, part-time childcare available in the summer, paid maternity leave the doesn't require sick leave time* *Childcare day "camps" for days that the La Crosse Public Schools are closed but UWL is in session.* *Living in a daycare desert meant I almost left this job because I could not secure daycare.*
Greater voice and autonomy at work	13	*Before major decisions are made that will impact offices and positions - talk and LISTEN to the people on the ground. It may or may not be helpful to our work and/or workload. Look at the whole picture not just the department implementing it.* *I think we need to give people more time and autonomy to do their job. Everyone is overloaded with responsibilities. The systems we have in place often dehumanize faculty, students, and staff in the name of efficiency, cost savings, or some related idea.*
Reduced 'red tape'	8	*A less rigid policy about remote working. The HR form for requesting remote work is defeating, insulting, and comes off as if I am not an adult capable of setting up my own environment to work effectively.* *Reducing death by a thousand tasks and layers of bureaucracy that seem to be increasing every year.*
Greater support from leadership or supervisor	8	*Loyalty and recognition from leadership, supervisors, and colleagues* *Train leaders better so that they know how to instill a sense of community rather than a battle against one another.*

Other (including 'perks')	48	*Faculty and staff could be given free or reduced access to exercise opportunities at the Rec, Mitchell Hall, or the new Fieldhouse… Also, affordable on-campus dining options for faculty/staff.* *Morale retreats; featured staff/faculty of the week; the campus morale is so low and people want to feel valued* *Free parking for employees and free coffee at work*

Additional Open Feedback from Employees

156 respondents provided open-ended comments via the request for any additional feedback on the survey. The content and focus of these comments varied greatly, as nothing specific was prompted in the survey question. Most of the respondents who provided additional open-ended comments expressed frustration about one or more aspects of their work experience, or with UWL as an employer. Common themes, as well as sample responses in direct quotes, are provided below. Consistent with responses provided to other open-ended items on the survey, frustration with pay and workload were in the top three themes for this set of comments. A lack of feeling valued, respected, and/or listened to was the second most frequent theme for this set of comments.

Theme Category	Frequency	Sample Responses (Direct Quotes)
Insufficient pay	46	*I am considering other employment because of the pay. A 1% increase once a year is not enough to even cover the increase in health coverage. But yet I am expected to take on more responsibilities. It's very disappointing because I love my job and the people I work with but it's not enough to make me stay.*
Not feeling valued, respected, listened to	37	*I certainly don't expect to be showered with praise just for showing up and doing my job, but I often feel unseen by the broader UWL community. I focus so much of my time on [performing my job at a high level] who actually knows? Who sees me? Who appreciates the sacrifices I make to go above and beyond every day? If no one sees me, should I even bother?* *The only appreciation I receive is from students. I am treated as a cog in the wheel by all other persons in the university.*

Workload	34	*The administration of UWL seems unconcerned with the rapid explosion of our workload, the ever-increasing demands on our time due to high faculty turnover and new committee work, and the unconscionable freeze on our pay at a time when inflation and the cost of living are skyrocketing.* *We should spend time talking about the things we should STOP doing, to make space for the things we should be doing.*
Issues related to a leader's style, communication or decisions	33	*I don't have faith in higher administration caring about the results or making changes, based on my work on other committees and interactions with higher administration.*
Career Progression and Professional Development	14	*I think meaningful attention should be paid towards title progression for academic staff. Its a main feature for faculty, but recent TTC changes make it seem like afterthought for academic staff. Please work on this.* *There are many opportunities presented to employees regarding professional development. The issue is that there is no time to put into professional development. I fear that the University is focusing on providing massive amounts of professional development, but not allowing the employees to have time to put into it.*
Policies (and equity in policy implementation)	11	*System keeps rolling out bad systems/policies and we keep pretending they're fine. (Shop@UW being the best example of this.) Maybe our Administrators could visibly push back some to show they actually care about the rank and file that have to endure these increases in frustration/workload?*
Lacking benefits/perks	7	*Little things that improve employee morale go a long way. Like being able to provide cookies/snacks at a meeting; offering an employee discount day at the bookstore; allowing personal items in your workspace; sincere appreciation communicated on a regular basis from supervisors/managers; pay increases based on length and quality of service.*

Employee Confidence in Post-Survey Action

In addition to asking employees what they felt would most positively impact their experience at UWL, a question was included to gauge employee confidence in this survey process and what results might follow. Specifically, one question was asked: Do you believe the results of this survey will be used to make positive changes at UWL? Responses ranged from 1 (definitely not) to 5 (definitely yes), with 3 indicating a neutral response (might or might not).

The mean score for this item across all employees is 3.33 (SD = .94), indicating that while there is noticeable variation in employee confidence at the individual level, **employees on average feel the results might or might not be used to make positive changes in their work experiences**.

Key Takeaways

Insights to be drawn from the results may best be understood according to the 2 set goals of the survey: to assess the current state of employee engagement and work-related attitudes, and to inform actionable change that positively impacts employees' experiences, engagement, and job satisfaction.

What is the current state of employee engagement and work-related attitudes?

Generally, UWL employees are engaged in their work and are satisfied with aspects of the work itself, as well as the people with whom they work directly (including direct supervisors). Most UWL employees feel their work makes a difference, has clear performance expectations and is valued by their direct supervisor. Most employees also feel they have autonomy and freedom to do their job as they see fit, and that they and their ideas are supported and respected by their supervisors. Based on the responses available, employees in the CBA and Student Affairs division appear to have among the most positive perceptions – particularly when it comes to the 6 specific 'drivers of engagement'. However, these college/division comparisons, as well as comparisons by role, should be interpreted with caution as a high proportion of respondents elected not to provide this information on the survey.

Areas of potential concern regarding employee perceptions are represented by low scores on specific drivers of engagement, namely communication/decision-making, well-being, and opportunities for growth and development. In particular, most employees perceive UWL to *not be* allocating appropriate budgetary or staff resources toward achieving important objectives, further supported by a consistent theme in open-ended comments of frustration with pay and workload. Put simply, many employees feel overworked and underpaid, limiting their satisfaction with their work experience and with UWL as an employer.

While employees generally feel supported and valued by their direct supervisors, they may not feel supported and valued by UWL as a whole – as indicated by high levels of *disagreement* on the item 'UWL recognizes the significance of the contributions I make' as well as persistent themes in the open-ended comments. Well-being remains a priority for UWL employees, and the majority feel that UWL could be doing more to support them in this realm.

What do results suggest regarding what to do next?

The results of this survey suggest a number of ideas to explore in order to drive positive change in the UWL work experience. Specifically, improvements aligning with the following goals are supported, which may serve as the basis for more detailed investigation and discussion of post-survey action:

- **Prioritizing employee compensation**
- **Addressing experiences of work overload and inequity**
- **Providing resources, policies and support for employee work-life balance**
- **Creating and supporting opportunities for professional growth and knowledge/skill development**
- **Signaling employee value at the university level and department/unit level**
- **Increasing transparency in the roles and decisions of upper-level administrators**

Conclusion

Although current levels of engagement and general satisfaction are slightly to moderately positive, the relatively low employee scores across many of the 6 drivers of engagement indicate the current levels of engagement are not sustainable, and satisfaction appears to be decreasing from 2018. These results suggest employees will likely experience burnout, contribute to a more cynical work environment, decrease their engagement and performance levels on the job, and ultimately will be more likely to leave UWL (see Griffeth et al., 2000; Macey et al., 2009).

The results from this UWL Employee Engagement Survey should be viewed as a launching point for targeted, continuous improvement to the employee experience. The perspectives and ideas gathered from survey participants provide a 'finger on the pulse' and indicate key areas of strength and opportunities to improve for UWL as an employer. Further, this survey provides direction for actionable change to sustain and increase employee engagement in the long term.

Contact Information

For additional analyses, questions about the development and validation of this engagement survey, and to discuss the results of this engagement survey further, please contact Christa Kiersch: ckiersch@uwlax.edu.

The UWL Employee Engagement Survey and this report were conducted and produced in collaboration with members of the Human Resource Advisory Council (HRAC).

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