SANTA MONICA COLLEGE
Institutional Research

SANTA MONICA COLLEGE
2017 College Employee Satisfaction Survey

Results and Findings

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Santa Monica College (SMC) administered the Ruffalo Noel Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS) in Fall of 2017 to identify SMC's strengths and weaknesses as a workplace. The survey results will be used by the Office of Human Resources and the District Planning Advisory Council (DPAC) Human Resources Planning Subcommittee to make recommendations on how to improve the workplace for SMC.

A total of 367 of 2026 employees responded to the survey for a response rate of 18.1%. The following list provides a high-level summary of the results of the survey:

- A large majority of employees (69%) reported that they were satisfied with their employment at SMC;

- Employees rated campus culture and policies and work environment as being important to them rating each item with an average scores of important (4) or higher;

- In terms of campus culture and polices, SMC employees were most satisfied with the college's reputation, level of faculty and administrator pride in the work, the college's promotion of employee-student relationships, and its ability to meet the needs of administrators;

  - SMC employees were least satisfied with the level of orientation/training provided to new employees, staffing levels, openness to employee feedback, and quality of communication between departments and constituency groups.

  - The open-ended comments reveal many opportunities for the college to improve campus culture & policies, for example, increase collaboration between departments, more equitable hiring practices, hiring of more full-time faculty, and clearer processes and goals;

- Employees indicated that the college's top goal should be to retain and ensure more students graduate (28.9% said it should be the first priority);

- Senior administrators were perceived to have the most involvement in planning and decision making (average rate of 3.86; 3 = just right involvement and 4 = more than just enough). Staff were perceived to be least involved (average rating of 2.29; 2 = not quite enough);

- In terms of work environment, employees were most satisfied with the employee benefits and the work they do on campus (work is valuable and appreciated);

  - Employees were least satisfied with budget and staffing levels in their departments;

  - The open-ended responses reveal several factors that negatively impact the work environment, for example, lack of leadership, low morale, and lack of civility and respect among employees. Factors that positively impact work include strong leadership and centering students and their needs.

BACKGROUND

Santa Monica College (SMC) is committed to providing a supportive and collegial environment for its diverse employees. In order to assess whether SMC is meeting this goal, the Office of Human Resources, in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research, administered a campus-wide survey of college employee satisfaction in October 2017. The survey provided an opportunity for all employees to identify SMC's strengths and weaknesses as a workplace. The results of the survey will be used by the Office of Human Resources and the District Planning Advisory Council (DPAC) Human Resources Planning Subcommittee to make recommendations on how to improve the workplace for SMC.

To ensure confidentiality, SMC partnered with Ruffalo Noel Levitz, a trusted and independent organization and one of the nation's leading provider of technology-enabled solutions and services in higher education and nonprofit communities, to administer the College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS) instrument to all employees employed during the Fall 2017 semester.

The survey was administered online for two weeks starting on October 16, 2017. A paper version of the survey was made available for employees who preferred to respond to the survey on paper; however, all employees opted to complete the survey online. A total of 367 of 2026 employees responded to the survey for a response rate of 18.1%.

SURVEY FORMAT

The CESS includes a total of 68 items measuring four distinct sections:

Section 1: Campus culture and policies (30 items)

Section 2: Institutional goals (9 items)

Section 3: Involvement in planning and decision making (8 items)

Section 4: Work environment (21 items)

In addition to these sections, the survey included a global satisfaction item ("Rate your overall satisfaction with your employment here so far"), demographic questions, and three open-ended questions.

SURVEY ITEM RATINGS

For each set of questions in Sections 1 and 4, employees were asked to rate both the importance and satisfaction levels for each statement using a five-point Likert scale.

Importance Rating	Satisfaction Rating	Numerical Value
Very important	Very satisfied	5
Important	Satisfied	4
Somewhat important	Somewhat satisfied	3
Not very important	Not very satisfied	2
Not important at all	Not satisfied at all	1

For items in Section 2, employees were asked to rate how important it is to them that SMC pursues each of the goals. In addition, employees were asked to choose a goal they believe should be the college's first priority.

For items in Section 3, employees were presented with a list of constituency groups (faculty, staff, deans, trustees, alumni, etc.) and asked to rate the level of involvement each group has in the planning and decision-making process at the institution.

Involvement Rating	Numerical Value
Too much involvement	5
More than enough involvement	4
Just the right involvement	3
Not quite enough involvement	2
Not enough involvement	1

CALCULATING MEANS, GAPS, AND STATISTICAL LEVELS

Means for importance, satisfaction, and involvement ratings for individual items were calculated by summing the respondents' ratings and dividing the sum by the number of respondents. Performance gap means were calculated by taking the difference between the mean importance rating and the mean satisfaction rating for items in Sections 1 and 4:

Average Importance Rating – Average Satisfaction Rating = Performance Gap

SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

POSITION

The largest group of the survey respondents were faculty, over 55%. When compared to their representation among all employees in Fall 2017 (70.8%), faculty were underrepresented in the survey sample (55.9%). Staff were overrepresented in the survey sample (37.2% in survey sample vs. 24.1% in employee population). Managers/administrators were slightly overrepresented in the survey sample (7.0% in survey sample vs. 5.1% in employee population).

Figure 1. Position of Survey Respondents (N = 358)
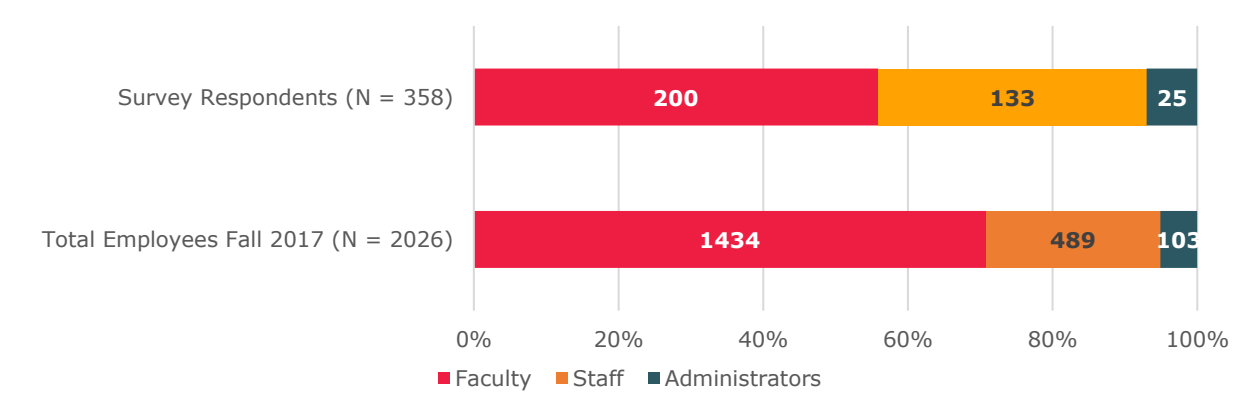
LENGTH OF SERVICE

The largest group of survey respondents indicated that they had worked at SMC for between 1 and 5 years (31.7%), followed by 11 to 20 years (27.5%), and 6 to 10 years (19.2%). Employees who had worked at the institution for less than 1 year represented the smallest group of survey respondents (6.1%).
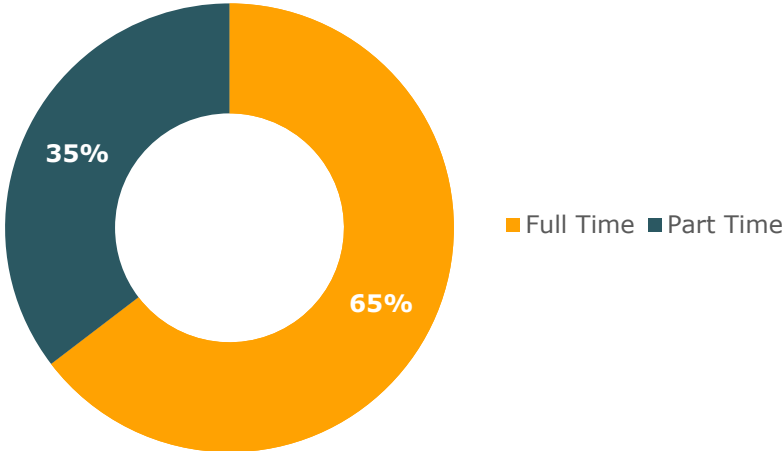
Figure 2. Length of Service at SMC (N = 360)
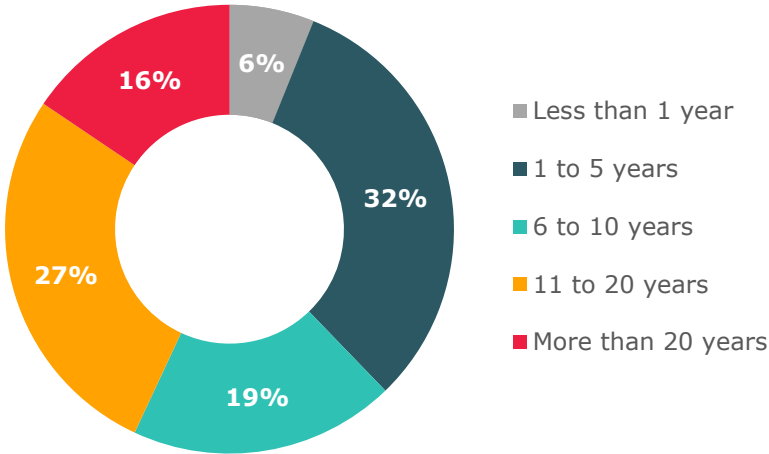
FULL TIME/PART TIME STATUS

A large majority of the survey respondents indicated that they were employed at SMC full-time (64.6%).

Figure 3. Full Time/Part Time Status (N = 359)

- Full Time
- Part Time

35%
65%

SURVEY RESULTS

OVERALL SATSIFACTION

On average, SMC employees provided a rating of 3.89 (1 = not satisfied at all; 5 = very satisfied) when asked to rate their overall satisfaction with their employment at SMC. Of the 354 respondents, over two-thirds provided a "satisfied" or "very satisfied" rating (69%). An analysis by employee category reveal that administrators are most satisfied with their employment at SMC (83% are very/satisfied, satisfied) and staff are least satisfied (53%).

Table 4. Overall Satisfaction Rating by Employment Group

Satisfaction Rating	Faculty	Staff	Administrators	Total
Very satisfied/ Satisfied	156	70	20	247
	78.4%	53.4%	83.3%	69.4%
Somewhat satisfied	35	36	3	75
	17.6%	27.5%	12.5%	21.1%
Not very satisfied/ Not satisfied at all	8	25	1	34
	4.0%	19.1%	4.2%	9.6%
Total	199	131	24	356*
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Includes employees who did not indicate their employment group

A disproportionately larger percentage of part-time employees (76%) indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied with their employment when compared to full-time employees (66%).

Table 5. Overall Satisfaction Rating by Full Time/Part Time Status

Satisfaction Rating	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
Very satisfied/ Satisfied	151	96	247
	66.2%	75.6%	69.4%
Somewhat satisfied	49	26	75
	21.5%	20.5%	21.1%
Not very satisfied/ Not satisfied at all	28	5	34
	12.3%	3.9%	9.6%
Total	228	127	356*
	151	96	100.0%

*Includes employees who did not indicate their full-time, part-time status

SECTION 1: COLLEGE CULTURE AND POLICIES

The survey asked employees to rate the importance of and satisfaction with 30 items related to campus culture and policies. SMC employees provided an average importance rating of 4.11 to 4.71 for all 30 items, for an average rating of 4.49. The data reveal that all of the items in the section were important to them.

SMC employees indicated they were most satisfied with the following five aspects of campus culture and policies:

Table 6. Top Five Rated Items in Terms of Satisfaction

Top Five Rated in Terms of Satisfaction	Average Satisfaction Rating	Performance Gap
The institution is well-respected in the community	4.01	0.56
Faculty take pride in their work	3.90	0.78
The institution does a good job of meeting the needs of administrators	3.79	0.32
The institution promotes excellent employee-student relationships	3.67	0.91
Administrators take pride in their work	3.66	0.89

While the items above received the highest average satisfaction ratings in the section, four of the five items received an average score between "somewhat satisfied (3)" to "satisfied (4)" which does not indicate high satisfaction levels. Each of the top rated items in terms of satisfaction also experienced a performance gap which indicates that these items received average importance ratings that were less than one rating level above their satisfaction level.

SMC employees indicated they were least satisfied with the following five aspects of campus culture and policies:

Table 7. Lowest Five Rated Items in Terms of Satisfaction

Lowest Five Rated in Terms of Satisfaction	Average Satisfaction Rating	Performance Gap
This institution consistently follows clear processes for orienting and training new employees	2.96	1.57
This institution makes sufficient staff resources available to achieve important objectives	2.95	1.56
Employee suggestions are used to improve our institution	2.93	1.50
There is good communication between staff and the administration at this institution	2.91	1.52
There are effective lines of communication between departments	2.73	1.73

SMC employees were least satisfied with communication between departments. Each of the lowest rated items scored between "not very satisfied (2)" to "somewhat satisfied (3)". Each of the least rated items in terms of satisfaction also experienced a performance gap which indicates that these items received average importance ratings that were at least 1.5 rating levels above their satisfaction level.

For a full list of importance and satisfaction ratings for the 30 items assessing campus culture and policies, refer to Appendix A.

Survey respondents were provided an opportunity to respond to an open-ended question to provide additional feedback they may have regarding the college's campus culture and policies. A total of 167 employees responded to the question. The major themes of the responses are summarized below:

- A large number of employees reported a negative campus culture. Words that were used to describe the campus culture and environment include "uncivil", "conflicted", "siloed", "resistance to change", "low morale", "censored", "fractured", "dismissive", "toxic", and "combative". Several mentioned that SMC breeds a culture of "nepotism", "favoritism", or "cronyism".
- There is a need for increase in collaboration and communication among colleagues and departments in order to improve relations between constituency groups while eliminating duplication of efforts.
- Employees from all groups expressed feelings of being left out of decision-making processes, not feeling valued by the college, and/or being marginalized.
- Employees feel burnt out, particularly adjunct faculty.
- Some employees are dissatisfied with senior leadership who they cite as "lacking direction" and being "non-responsive".
- Several employees used the open-ended questions to provide negative feedback about their direct supervisor ("lazy", "ineffective", "incompetent", has "self-interest").

Several themes about hiring processes and colleague relationships emerged, including:

- There is a perception that there are few consequences or accountability for ineffective employees.
- Several employees reported the college used inequitable and elitist hiring practices. For example, faculty reported that doctoral degrees were favored over work experience.
- The college offers limited or no opportunity for job advancement. There is a perception that jobs are created and given based on relationships with board members, managers, and/or department chairs.
- Suggestions were made to improve employee relations and productivity, including succession planning, a more comprehensive employee orientation, more focused training and other professional develop opportunities, and the development of a mentorship program.
- The institution is too "top-heavy"; there are too many administrators compared to faculty or staff.

The college planning and processes are not clear or transparent:

- The participatory governance process is not authentic; politics and the loudest dissenting groups drive the college agenda.
- Campus policies are unclear or outdated. Often, policies are implemented based on opinion or bias or policies do not match practice.
- Adjunct faculty reported that time was the primary obstacle in fully participating in the campus planning processes.

The employees mentioned that the following areas impact campus culture and environment:

- Lack of parking; one employee suggested offering more flex schedule opportunities to combat the challenges of parking on campus
- No smoking policy is not enforced consistently
- Poor condition of buildings
- Low full-time to part-time faculty ratio
- Not enough support for students of color and/or evening students

Several employees had positive feedback about the campus culture:

- SMC is a great place to work. They are proud to work at SMC.
- Some reported feeling supported by the college and that the college had a "family" climate.
- Others reported a culture of respect, comradery, and excellence.
- Some employees reported being satisfied with the leadership of senior administration.

SECTION 2: INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

Employees were asked to rate the importance that SMC pursue each of the 9 institutional goals with an opportunity to rate a 10th "some other goal". Employees were then asked to indicate which goal should be the college's first priority. Table 8 lists the institutional goals by average importance rating in descending order.

Table 8. Importance Rating and Percentage Indicating Goal as First Priority

Institutional Goals	Average Importance Rating	% of Respondents Indicating Goal as First Priority
Retain more of its current students to graduation	4.66	28.9%
Improve the quality of existing academic programs	4.59	13.8%
Improve employee morale	4.55	11.0%
Improve the academic ability of entering student classes	4.44	8.7%
Increase the enrollment of new students	4.37	23.6%
Develop new academic programs	4.06	5.9%
Improve the appearance of campus buildings and grounds	4.02	2.2%
Increase the diversity of racial and ethnic groups represented among the student body	3.98	2.5%
Recruit students from new geographic markets	3.69	1.1%
Some other goal	3.30	2.2%

The institutional goal that received the highest importance rating was to "retain more of its current students to graduation" with an average rating of 4.66 (important to very important). Nearly 29% of

survey respondents indicated that this goal should be the college's first priority. While receiving an average importance rating that was in the middle of the list (4.37), the goal to "increase enrollment of new students" was identified by nearly one-quarter of the survey respondents as being the first priority goal of the college.

All but "recruit students from new geographic markets" and "some other goal" received an average rating of "important (4)" or higher.

Employees were provided an opportunity to identify other institutional goals that SMC should be pursuing in an open-ended question. The most frequently cited goals include:

- Increasing employee morale
- Hiring more full-time faculty
- Closing the student equity gaps, equitizing the college, and eliminating racism
- Improving the safety, appearance, cleanliness, and condition of buildings and classrooms
- Improved technology solutions
- Improving relationships with the industry and community
- Improving marketing, outreach, and recruitment

SECTION 3: INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING

Senior administrators received the highest average rating of involvement in planning and decision-making at the college, scoring an average rating of 3.86, between "just the right involvement (3)" to "more than just enough involvement (4)". All groups in management or department chair positions received an average involvement score between 3 and 4. All other groups (faculty, alumni, students, staff) received an average involvement score of less than 3 but above 2 (not quite enough involvement).

Table 9. Involvement Rating

RATE: INVOLVEMENT (1 = "Not enough involvement" / 3 = "Just the right involvement" / 5 = "Too much involvement")	Average Involvement Rating
How involved are: Senior administrators (VP, Provost level or above)	3.86
How involved are: Trustees	3.65
How involved are: Deans or directors of administrative units	3.58
How involved are: Deans or chairs of academic units	3.39
How involved are: Faculty	2.86
How involved are: Alumni	2.66
How involved are: Students	2.36
How involved are: Staff	2.29

SECTION 4: WORK ENVIRONMENT

The survey asked employees to rate the importance of and satisfaction with 21 items related to work environment. SMC employees provided an average rating of 4.18 to 4.73 for all 21 items, for an average rating of 4.53. The data reveal that all of the items in the section were important to them.

SMC employees indicated they were most satisfied with the following five aspects of work environment:

Table 10. Top Five Rated Items in Terms of Satisfaction

Top Five Rated in Terms of Satisfaction	Average Satisfaction Rating	Performance Gap
The employee benefits available to me are valuable	4.25	0.48
I am proud to work at this institution	4.20	0.42
The type of work I do on most days is personally rewarding	4.12	0.54
The work I do is valuable to the institution	3.93	0.68
The work I do is appreciated by my supervisor	3.87	0.61

Employees were most satisfied with their employee benefits and being proud to work at SMC. Each of the top rated items in terms of satisfaction also experienced a performance gap which indicates that these items received average importance ratings that were less than one rating level above their satisfaction level.

SMC employees indicated they were least satisfied with the following five aspects of campus culture and policies:

Table 11. Lowest Five Rated Items in Terms of Satisfaction

Lowest Five Rated in Terms of Satisfaction	Average Satisfaction Rating	Performance Gap
It is easy for me to get information at this institution	3.31	1.25
I am empowered to resolve problems quickly	3.23	1.21
I have adequate opportunities for advancement	2.83	1.65
My department has the budget needed to do its job well	2.75	1.87
My department has the staff needed to do its job well	2.73	1.92

SMC employees were least satisfied with the level of staffing in their department, followed by the departmental budget, with average satisfaction scores between "not very satisfied (2)" to "somewhat satisfied (3)". Each of the least rated items in terms of satisfaction also experienced a performance gap which indicates that these items received average importance ratings that were at between 1.2 to 1.92 rating levels above their satisfaction level.

For a full list of importance and satisfaction ratings for the 21 items assessing campus culture and policies, refer to Appendix B.

Survey respondents were provided an opportunity to respond to an open-ended question to provide additional feedback they may have regarding the college's work environment. A total of 108 employees responded to the question.

The following issues were reported to negatively impact work environment:

- Lack of leadership and/or poor supervision
- Politics
- Outdated technology
- Low morale
- High cost of living near college/low pay
- Lack of civility, respect, trust, and professionalism
- Understaffed departments
- Budget constraints
- Few professional development opportunities
- Limited opportunity for growth or advancement
- No AC in buildings/poor condition of buildings
- No consensus building

The following issues were reported to positively impact work environment:

- Strong leadership and effective supervisors
- Departments with a familial, warm, and open culture
- Departments that are student-centered
- Feeling supported by supervisor and other leaders

APPENDIX A

CAMPUS CULUTRE AND POLICIES

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	IMPORTANCE		SATISFACTION		GAP
	Mean	Count	Mean	Count	
This institution is well-respected in the community	4.57	347	4.01	348	0.56
Faculty take pride in their work	4.68	345	3.90	340	0.78
This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of administrators	4.11	342	3.79	335	0.32
This institution promotes excellent employee-student relationships	4.58	352	3.67	349	0.91
Administrators take pride in their work	4.55	341	3.66	337	0.89
Staff take pride in their work	4.62	344	3.65	344	0.97
This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of students	4.71	351	3.63	348	1.08
This institution treats students as its top priority	4.71	349	3.62	349	1.09
The goals and objectives of this institution are consistent with its mission and values	4.4	349	3.61	347	0.79
Most employees are generally supportive of the mission, purpose, and values of this institution	4.38	349	3.51	347	0.87
The reputation of this institution continues to improve	4.52	347	3.5	348	1.02
The mission, purpose, and values of this institution are well understood by most employees	4.35	351	3.44	348	0.91
This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of its faculty	4.47	345	3.32	339	1.15
Efforts to improve quality are paying off at this institution	4.5	344	3.32	347	1.18
The leadership of this institution has a clear sense of purpose	4.58	349	3.24	345	1.34
There is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation at this institution	4.52	347	3.11	349	1.41
This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of staff	4.52	350	3.1	347	1.42
This institution plans carefully	4.53	343	3.08	344	1.45
This institution has written procedures that clearly define who is responsible for each operation and service	4.35	345	3.08	348	1.27
This institution consistently follows clear processes for selecting new employees	4.52	342	3.04	347	1.48
This institution involves its employees in planning for the future	4.5	350	3.03	346	1.47
There is good communication between the faculty and the administration at this institution	4.46	344	3.02	339	1.44
This institution consistently follows clear processes for recognizing employee achievements	4.29	345	3.01	349	1.28
Administrators share information regularly with faculty and staff	4.48	347	3.00	347	1.48
This institution makes sufficient budgetary resources available to achieve important objectives	4.51	347	2.98	344	1.53
This institution consistently follows clear processes for orienting and training new employees	4.53	344	2.96	345	1.57
This institution makes sufficient staff resources available to achieve important objectives	4.51	345	2.95	342	1.56
Employee suggestions are used to improve our institution	4.43	343	2.93	346	1.5
There is good communication between staff and the administration at this institution	4.43	343	2.91	342	1.52
There are effective lines of communication between departments	4.46	345	2.73	344	1.73

APPENDIX B

WORK ENVIRONMENT

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	IMPORTANCE		SATISFACTION		GAP
	Mean	Count	Mean	Count	
The employee benefits available to me are valuable	4.73	347	4.25	351	0.48
I am proud to work at this institution	4.62	347	4.20	352	0.42
The type of work I do on most days is personally rewarding	4.66	345	4.12	351	0.54
The work I do is valuable to the institution	4.61	349	3.93	350	0.68
The work I do is appreciated by my supervisor	4.48	348	3.87	350	0.61
My supervisor pays attention to what I have to say	4.62	344	3.85	349	0.77
I learn about important campus events in a timely manner	4.18	348	3.78	352	0.40
My job responsibilities are communicated clearly to me	4.59	345	3.72	348	0.87
My supervisor helps me improve my job performance	4.52	345	3.70	349	0.82
I have the information I need to do my job well	4.65	347	3.66	350	0.99
I am comfortable answering student questions about institutional policies and procedures	4.26	349	3.59	353	0.67
I am paid fairly for the work I do	4.68	346	3.56	350	1.12
My department meets as a team to plan and coordinate work	4.48	344	3.47	351	1.01
My department or work unit has written, up-to-date objectives	4.32	344	3.47	349	0.85
I have adequate opportunities for professional development	4.50	345	3.41	350	1.09
I have adequate opportunities for training to improve my skills	4.55	346	3.35	350	1.20
It is easy for me to get information at this institution	4.56	349	3.31	351	1.25
I am empowered to resolve problems quickly	4.44	346	3.23	351	1.21
I have adequate opportunities for advancement	4.48	346	2.83	352	1.65
My department has the budget needed to do its job well	4.62	346	2.75	346	1.87
My department has the staff needed to do its job well	4.65	340	2.73	347	1.92