

**Montana State University Accreditation Self-Study
Report on Contract Professional Staff Survey
January 27, 2009**

Introduction

In November, 2008, a random sample of MSU contract professional staff was drawn. The sample was sent an email invitation to participate in an online survey about a host of issues to be addressed in our self-study document in preparation for NWCCU accreditation. In all, we sampled 600 professional staff and received 300 responses, for a strong response rate of 50%.

Respondents had about two weeks to complete the survey. In addition to the initial email invitation, sent over Senior Vice Provost Joseph Fedock's signature, we sent two reminder emails. We offered no incentives for participation, so the strong response rate reflects professional staff interest in the self-study process.

The survey was fairly long and detailed, with sections on supervision, workloads, resources, governance, finance, and planning, facilities, institutional integrity, job satisfaction, salaries and benefits, as well as a series of free-text responses in which respondents could address other issues. We also included a few demographic items to use in analyzing the survey.

Respondents

The tables below shows the percent of respondents in each of the demographic categories included in the survey. Women are overrepresented in the survey responses compared to their proportion of the professional workforce at MSU. Self-reported organizational placement appears to over-represent Research, Creativity, and Technology Transfer. Many of those employees are likely engaged in research but technically report to Academic Affairs.

1. What is your gender?

	Sample	Population
Female	66.2	57.0
Male	33.8	43.0

2. How many years have you been employed at MSU (please enter a whole number)?

Mean	9.57
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3. Organizationally, under which of the following executive officers does your position fall:

President Geoff Gamble	7.6
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs David Dooley	30.0
Vice President for Administration and Finance Craig Roloff	5.3
Vice President for Communications and Public Affairs Cathy Conover	3.8
Vice President for Planning and CIO James Rimpau	3.8
Vice President for Research, Creativity, and Technology Transfer Thomas McCoy	33.1
Vice President for Student Affairs Allen Yarnell	16.3

Analysis

In each section of the survey, contract professional staff members were asked to respond to a series of Likert items, where a statement was presented and respondents chose whether they strongly agree (assigned a value of 1), agree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), disagree (4), or strongly disagree (5) with the statement. Averages above three indicate disagreement, an average right around three suggests neutrality, and averages below three indicate agreement. A few other question formats appear in the survey where appropriate. The valid percentages of the survey respondents in each category appear below, along with the mean response value.

Statistically significant differences in the mean responses ($p < .1$) are described for gender and longevity. Employees are divided roughly evenly at the 7 year mark, so comparisons are presented for those who have been here seven or more years and those who have not. Differences by gender and longevity are reported only where they are statistically significant.

Supervision

1. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about supervision at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean Response (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
My job expectations are made clear to me.	33.1	49.8	8.7	6.7	1.7	1.94
I have opportunities to discuss job-related concerns with my supervisor.	51.8	38.1	5.0	4.0	1.0	1.64
My supervisor gives me the flexibility to respond to personal and family emergencies during regular work hours.	75.9	21.4	1.7	1.0	0.0	1.28
I have the opportunity to take on added responsibility when appropriate.	58.2	34.4	4.0	3.0	0.3	1.53
My supervisor treats me with respect.	63.0	26.0	6.3	3.7	1.0	1.54
I am given the opportunity to be creative in my work.	55.2	32.4	8.7	3.0	0.7	1.62
My supervisor is able to accurately judge my performance.	32.8	47.5	11.0	6.7	2.0	1.98
My supervisor gives me necessary guidance so I that I may perform my job effectively.	29.1	44.5	16.1	8.7	1.7	2.09
My supervisor recognizes the contributions I make to the institution.	45.1	39.7	8.8	4.0	2.4	1.79
The process used to evaluate my work performance is fair.	29.2	40.3	23.7	5.1	1.7	2.10

Majorities of contract professionals agree and even strongly agree with the statements on supervision. The most agreeable statement concerns flexibility to deal with family and personal emergencies, where three-fourths of the respondents strongly agree that they are allowed flexibility. Majorities also strongly agree that they can discuss job-related concerns with their supervisors, that they can take on additional responsibilities, that their supervisors treat them with respect, and that they can be creative in their work. Respondents are not as strong in their agreement, though they still agree on average, with statements about the clarity of expectations, their supervisors' ability to judge their performance, their supervisors' guidance, and the evaluation process. Almost one quarter of the respondents were neutral on that last statement.

There are no statistically significant differences between women and men on the items on supervision. Contract employees who have been at MSU seven or more years have a statistically significantly lower (more agreeing)

average score on the statement about taking on added responsibility, 1.43, compared to their newer colleagues, who average 1.63.

Workloads

1. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about workloads at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean Response (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
My workload is consistent with other employees at MSU who have similar jobs.	11.1	42.1	30.6	11.8	4.4	2.56
I have the time to complete my work in a quality way.	16.4	57.7	11.1	12.8	2.0	2.26

Contract professionals are more likely to agree than disagree that their workloads are consistent with others at MSU and that there is time to complete work in a quality way. However, three in ten are neutral about the consistency of workloads across campus, and 15% disagree. Gender and longevity have no significant impact on responses to the workload statements.

Resources

1. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about resources at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean Response (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
MSU has adequate professional development opportunities for people like me.	9.1	32.4	26.7	25.3	6.4	2.87
My department/office has sufficient resources so I can perform my job.	14.1	52.3	14.4	14.8	4.4	2.43
My department/office provides sufficient travel resources so I can meet my job expectations.	15.2	46.1	21.5	11.8	5.4	2.46
I have sufficient equipment to satisfactorily perform my job.	23.8	58.7	8.4	7.4	1.7	2.04
I have sufficient support staff to satisfactorily perform my job.	18.5	38.4	20.9	17.5	4.7	2.52
Sufficient opportunities are provided so I can learn the skills I need to do my job.	16.8	49.2	19.9	12.1	2.0	2.33

The statements about professional and support resources drew higher (more disagreeing) averages than the prior sets of statements. Professionals are slightly more likely to agree (41.5%) than disagree (31.7%) with the adequacy of professional development opportunities, with over one-fourth of the respondents neutral about that statement. Majorities agree or strongly agree that their departments have sufficient resources, travel, equipment, and skill-

learning opportunities. A bare majority agrees that there is sufficient support staff, with one-fifth neutral and 22% disagreeing.

Women are neutral about professional development opportunities, averaging 2.95, while men are slightly more likely to agree on average, at 2.70. Longer-serving professionals are more likely to agree that they have sufficient equipment with which to perform their jobs, with an average score of 1.93 compared to their shorter-tenured peers at 2.15.

2. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about computing resources at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean Response (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
I have adequate access to a computer.	71.8	25.2	2.0	0.7	0.3	1.33
I have adequate e-mail access.	70.1	26.5	3.0	0.3	0.0	1.34
I have adequate access to the technical/computing assistance I need.	48.0	36.6	8.4	6.0	1.0	1.76
Computer troubleshooting is provided in a timely fashion.	44.0	35.2	13.4	6.7	0.7	1.85
Repair work required to keep my computer running is provided in a timely fashion.	40.3	34.6	17.6	6.4	1.0	1.93

Very few respondents disagree with the adequacy of access to computers and email. Slightly larger groups don't think there is adequate access to computing assistance, timely troubleshooting, or timely repair work, but large pluralities strongly agree with these three items. As a whole, these statements elicit some of the most positive responses in the professional employee survey (with supervision a close second).

Gender has no significant effect on responses to computing resources. Longevity does matter, however, with lower (more agreeing) averages for the longer-serving professionals on every statement. While both the seven-year-plus group and the shorter-term employees agree on average, longer-serving professionals average about 0.2 lower on the five-point scale on each item.

Governance, Finance, and Planning

1. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about governance, planning, and budgeting in your department.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean Response (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
Professional staff have adequate representation in long-range planning and goal-setting in my department.	15.6	41.2	24.9	14.2	4.2	2.50
Professional staff have adequate opportunity for input into the budgeting process in my department.	13.4	27.9	30.0	20.7	7.9	2.82
I have an opportunity to participate in decision-making in my department.	19.0	37.0	21.1	15.6	7.3	2.55
My department's budget and planning processes are integrated.	9.4	27.5	44.3	15.0	3.8	2.76
My department's budgeting process is an open process.	8.3	24.0	39.6	19.4	8.7	2.96

Responses to departmental governance items produce less positive results overall. A majority agrees that professionals have adequate representation in departmental planning and that there is individual opportunity to participate in departmental decision-making. Pluralities are neutral on professional input into departmental budgeting, the integration of departmental planning and budgeting, and the transparency of the departmental budgeting process. More than one in five respondents disagree with statements about professional input into departmental budgets, individual opportunity to participate in decision-making, and the openness of departmental budgeting.

Women (2.90) are less sanguine than men (2.63) about professional input into departmental budgets. Women are neutral on average (3.05) about the transparency of departmental budgets, compared to men's average agreement (2.76). There is no difference according to longevity on these items.

2. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about governance, planning, and budgeting at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean Response (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
Professional Council represents the interests of contract professional employees.	5.6	32.4	57.8	3.1	1.0	2.62
Professional staff have adequate representation in long-range planning and university goal-setting.	3.1	24.1	58.4	11.5	2.8	2.87
Professional staff have adequate opportunity for input into the university budgeting process.	2.1	14.7	59.6	18.6	4.9	3.09
I have an opportunity to serve on campus committees.	12.9	49.7	26.6	9.4	1.4	2.37
Professional staff participation in MSU governance is effective.	3.2	19.8	65.0	10.2	1.8	2.88
Decision-making at MSU is guided by the Five Year Vision document.	3.2	20.0	68.4	5.6	2.8	2.85
MSU's budget and planning processes are integrated.	2.8	17.7	67.1	7.8	4.6	2.94
MSU's budgeting process is an open process.	3.2	12.6	61.1	17.9	5.3	3.09

Large, in some cases, majorities are neutral about the institutional governance items. Those who fall on one side or the other of neutral are more likely to disagree than agree that professionals have adequate input into the university budgeting process and that the university's budgeting process is open. One item, individual opportunity to serve on campus committees does generate majority agreement, and Professional Council's representative role garners 38% agreement, but the remaining items do not garner more than one-quarter agreement.

Longer serving professionals are more likely to agree than are shorter-term professionals that Professional Council represents the interest of professional employees, that they have opportunities to serve on campus committees, and that decision-making is guided by the Five Year Vision document. Gender has no significant impact on these items.

3. In the last 5 years, I have participated in

	Never	Occasionally	Regularly	Mean Response (1=Never, 3=Regularly)
Professional Council and/or its standing committees	87.0	10.2	2.8	1.16
Other college or university committees	47.6	31.8	20.6	1.73

Most professionals never serve on Professional Council or its committees, while about one-fifth of the respondents report regularly serving on other college or university committees. Professionals with seven or more

years at MSU are more likely to report serving in both capacities, with an average score of "occasionally" on other college or university committees. Gender has no statistically significant impact on either service role.

4. Please mark the level of information you have access to about governance and administration at MSU.

	Too little	About as much as I want	Too much	Mean Response (1=Too little, 3=Too much)
Information about contract professional staff input into university decisions	47.5	52.5	0.4	1.53
Information about major decisions in my department	37.8	61.2	1.0	1.63
Information about major decisions at MSU	54.4	45.6	0.0	1.46
Information about the Commissioner's Office and the Board of Regents	53.2	46.8	0.0	1.47

Virtually no respondents receive too much information. Majorities receive about as much as they want to know about professional input into university decisions and about major decisions in the department. Respondents are split almost in half between receiving too little information and about the right amount about decisions at MSU and about the Commissioner and Regents.

Women are more likely to report receiving too little information about decisions in the department and about the Commissioner and Regents compared to men. Longevity also affects responses on all but departmental decisions, with those serving fewer than seven years at MSU reporting lower levels of information on average than those with more experience.

Facilities

1. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about facilities services at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean Response (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
The physical environment of my workplace is adequate for the job I need to do.	23.4	47.9	6.9	17.6	4.1	2.31
Custodial Services keeps my workplace adequately clean.	21.4	42.4	11.7	16.9	7.6	2.47
Furnishings/equipment in my workplace are adequately maintained.	17.9	54.8	11.7	11.7	3.8	2.29

Sixty to seventy percent of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statements on facilities, however, more than 20% disagrees that the physical environment is adequate for the job and that Custodial Services keeps their workplaces adequately clean.

Men are more likely to agree on average than women that Custodial Services adequately cleans. Longevity does not have a statistically significant impact on any of these items.

Institutional Integrity

1. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about institutional integrity at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean Response (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
Institutional regulations are consistently applied.	7.7	40.4	37.3	11.8	2.8	2.62
MSU appropriately supports ethnic and gender diversity on this campus.	14.6	49.3	25.7	8.7	1.7	2.34
MSU acts appropriately when fraud is reported or discovered.	13.0	33.5	46.8	6.3	0.4	2.48
MSU acts appropriately when sexual harassment is reported or discovered.	10.9	26.8	58.1	3.2	1.4	2.54
MSU acts appropriately when discrimination is reported or discovered.	5.2	44.6	26.3	20.1	3.8	2.58

A large group of respondents is neutral on each item about institutional integrity. For those who fall on one side of the scale or the other, agree-ers vastly outnumber disagree-ers in every case. Well over half agree that MSU appropriately supports diversity. Pluralities agree with the remaining statements.

Men report more agreement with the statement on MSU's support for gender and ethnic diversity, averaging 2.20 compared to women's 2.40. Longer-tenure professionals report less agreement (2.71) with the consistent application of institutional regulations than do shorter-term professionals (2.51).

Job Satisfaction, Salaries and Benefits

1. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about salaries and benefits at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean Response (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
My salary is appropriate compared to other employees at MSU who perform similar work.	5.2	44.6	26.3	20.1	3.8	2.73
My salary is appropriate compared to employees at similar institutions who perform similar work.	2.4	15.0	27.3	40.2	15.0	3.50
I am satisfied with my health insurance coverage.	15.6	58.0	14.6	10.8	1.0	2.24
The out-of-pocket costs for my health insurance are reasonable.	10.5	58.9	14.7	13.7	2.1	2.38
The TIAA/CREF retirement package is adequate for my needs (leave blank if TRS/PERS).	12.8	53.4	22.8	7.3	3.7	2.36
The TRS/PERS retirement package is adequate for my needs (leave blank if TIAA/CREF).	3.0	52.5	37.4	6.1	1.0	2.49

Twice as many respondents agree as disagree with the statement on internal salary equity at MSU, though more than one-fourth is neutral and 24% disagrees. A majority disagrees with the statement about external salary equity, and a quarter are neutral on this statement too. Statements about benefits elicit more positive responses than do those on salary, with majorities agreeing that they are satisfied with their health coverage, that out-of-pocket costs are reasonable, and that the two retirement packages are adequate. Almost four in ten are neutral about the adequacy of TRS/PERS.

Women are more positive in their responses to health care coverage, out-of-pocket costs, and TRS/PERS, compared to men, averaging a quarter point lower on the five-point scale on each item. Shorter-term employees (2.19) are more positive than longer-term professionals (2.53) about TIAA/CREF.

2. Overall, how satisfied are you with your job at MSU?

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Mean Response (1=Very satisfied, 4=Very dissatisfied)
32.9	57.1	9.7	0.3	1.78

Nine out of ten respondents report they are satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs overall. One third are very satisfied. Only one professional employee who responded marked "very dissatisfied." Gender and longevity do not affect the average report of job satisfaction.