



What's **Your Harvard** Like?

The Harvard 2008 Staff Survey

Harvard Graduate School of Design Summary of Findings 2009

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Survey Objectives



- Gauge progress since the last survey in 2006 and create a baseline measurement for the future
 - Measure staff engagement
 - Benchmark against ‘best employers’
 - Update our understanding of key factors that foster or undermine engagement at GSD now
- Use data to inform HR investments and priorities
- Use engagement as a key HR measure
- Attract, retain, motivate and inspire the talented people the GSD needs to be successful

Survey Background



- Harvard University core staff* were invited to participate in the survey from October 22 to November 5, 2008.
 - 10,888 staff were surveyed over the web; 1,789 staff received a paper survey in one of three languages
- Overall, Harvard achieved a 72% response rate
 - **The GSD had a 91% response rate – the highest of all the schools!**
- Staff members were asked to rate their agreement with 83 statements, using a six-point scale.
 - 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Slightly Disagree, 4=Slightly Agree, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly Agree
- Survey participants were asked three open-ended questions.
 - Best thing about working at Harvard; worst thing about working at Harvard; main suggestion for improvement

*Non-Temporary Administrative/Professional, Support and Service/Trades employees, including LHT's.

A Picture of the Harvard Employment Experience: The Good News



- Overall, the level of staff engagement at Harvard University is 75%. Engagement is up 9 points, from 66% in 2006.
 - A strong increase, typically attained by only 15% of organizations. Puts Harvard and all its units securely into Hewitt’s Best Employer Range
 - **At the GSD our engagement score went from 64% to 70%**
- Harvard has made progress in virtually all areas since 2006. Significantly, staff see evidence of improvement in the “big three” focus areas:
 - Much more effective university leadership (32%→70%)
 - Greater inclusion as full members of the University community (46%→55%)
 - Being paid fairly for their contribution to the University’s success (44%→54%)
 - Perception of good career opportunities (47%→53%) and the ability to explore career opportunities without negative repercussions (53%→60%)

A Picture of the GSD Employment Experience: More Good News



- Staff report a positive relationship with their manager who:
 - Treats staff with respect (82%)
 - Supports their need for balance of work and personal commitments (81%)
- Staff have favorable opinions of Harvard's benefits
 - Perceived as are competitive compared to other employers (83%)
 - Effective in meeting their needs and their family's needs (76%)
 - Well understood (79%)

A Picture of the GSD Employment Experience: Still More Good News



- Most staff members enjoy their day-to-day work
 - They have a strong sense of accomplishment (77%)
 - Are motivated to go above and beyond (80%)
 - Do their best work every day (81%)
 - Believe that Harvard deserves its reputation as a great place to work (73%). (up from 57% in 2006)
- Positive perception of University Leadership
 - Strong evidence of effective leadership (81%)
 - Communicate Harvard goals and priorities well (76%)
 - Create a sense of optimism and excitement about Harvard's future (75%)

Staff Comments

“The flexibility is what I like best. It is important for me to have balance between work and home. By working here, I have that.”

“The mission, international stature, and exceptional resources – people, financial, and physical – of the institution motivate me every day to contribute my best.”

“[I like] the diversity of backgrounds, origins, trainings, and interests.”

“Our work environment is small, but we have the resources of the University...It seems to be the best of both worlds.”

“I have had many opportunities to grow during my career. I have had opportunities to work with bright and motivated individuals from across the University. My Unit consists of staff who are intellectual, open, caring and motivated individuals.”

“I also enjoy the sense of community, which has greatly increased under President Faust’s leadership.”



“The benefits provided to staff are very important, and I appreciate the opportunity to take classes, as well as the time off, health care, and retirement.”

“The flexibility which helps me to balance my life with my job is very, very important to me.”

...Staff Wants GSD to Be Better



- Perceptions of performance management are steadily improving, and it has become more prominent in the engagement “mix”.
 - Reported participation has gone from 62% to 83% of staff.
 - Most staff are finding the process helpful in understanding:
 - How well I am doing (63%→68%)
 - Strengths and areas for improvement (63%→65%, vs. benchmark of 68%)
 - What is expected of me (53%→60%); however, supervisors still need to continue clarifying goals and setting clear expectations (54%) in the review process
 - Providing staff with feedback on how well they are doing has become the 4th strongest driver of engagement, trailing only University reputation, local leadership, and pay.

...Staff Wants GSD to Be Better



- Local Leadership

- Our scores have improved from 2006, although there's still work to be done.
- Staff feel local leaders could improve on:
 - communicating goals and priorities (44%)
 - communicating the reasons behind actions and decisions (39%)
 - being visible/accessible (44%)

* Local leadership was defined as “the leadership of your ‘tub’—your school or major department. For example, if you work in a school, this refers to the dean and other members of the school's senior leadership. If you work in the Central Administration or an allied institution, this refers to the vice president, director, and department directors.”

...Staff Wants GSD to Be Better



- Pay for Performance

- While more staff feel they are paid fairly for their contributions (50%), these scores remain below benchmarks for best employers (56%).
- University-wide, 30% (up from 22%) see a significant relationship between performance and pay, versus a best employer benchmark of 56%.
 - Administrative/professional 34%
 - Support staff 23%
 - Service/trades 44%

...Staff Wants GSD to Be Better



- Resources & work processes remain a chronic issue.
 - Staff perceive that work processes are not allowing them to be as productive as possible (47%);
 - Harvard has does not have all the people in place to get the job done (34%)

Staff Comments



“Staff are largely second-class citizens at the GSD. We are often not treated with the respect that we deserve.”

“Not enough communication at the school level. Initiatives are talked about at a general level, but the why, how, and especially how the staff are involved are minimally discussed. The initiatives appear to be very faculty and student focused, but it is obvious staff are involved ... that is rarely mentioned.”

“Health care and pay raises for staff have been steadily eroding and have not begun to keep up with the cost of living, with the very uncertain economic future this has really hurt us.”

“Disorganization and the last-minute nature of everything.”

“It appears that there is a lot of red tape / bureaucracy when it comes to getting tasks accomplished.”

“The decentralized nature of the school. Certain systems and policies are not consistent across the university which makes things more difficult...”