



Results of the 2019 Academic Staff/Faculty Survey

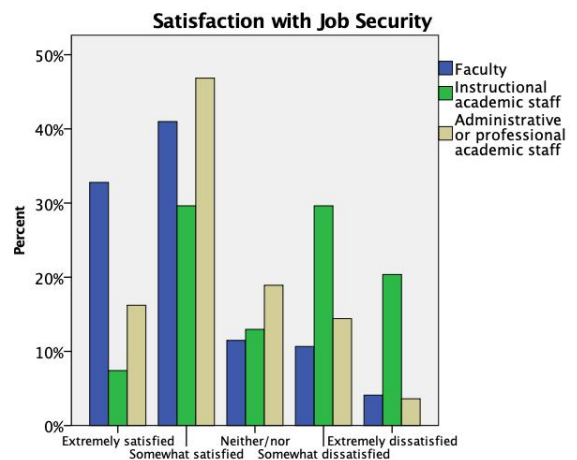
Earlier this semester, one-third (n=290) of all academic staff and faculty completed a survey about working conditions on campus—the first effort in a long time to find out how UWEC employees feel about their jobs. A full presentation of the results was presented at the union’s spring Membership Meeting; it is available upon request.

Problems and Solutions Our objectives were to learn what problems and concerns academic staff and faculty have with their working conditions and how we can improve them. As you might guess, pay was the biggest concern, regardless of employee classification. All types of employees rated a pay increase as the top morale booster, and everyone liked the idea of a tuition benefit for families and free/cheaper parking. These are issues of total compensation that reflect how much we are valued, literally and figuratively. As the old union adage goes, it’s about both bread and roses. Importantly, there were also big differences among employee categories.

	<i>Biggest Problems</i>	<i>Real Solutions</i>
<i>Instructional Academic Staff</i>	<i>Job security</i> <i>Promotion/Advancement</i>	<i>Multi-year contracts</i> <i>Pathways to tenure track</i>
<i>Administrative & Professional Staff</i>	<i>Supervisor Demands/Communication</i> <i>Promotion/Advancement</i>	<i>Compliance with FASRP policies</i> <i>Empowerment to say “no”</i>
<i>Faculty</i>	<i>Workload</i> <i>Pay</i>	<i>More time for teaching & scholarship/creativity</i>

For instructional academic staff—the lecturers and instructors not on the tenure track—job security and the lack of opportunity for promotion or advancement were the biggest problems. An appalling 42% of instructional staff reported working without an appointment letter “sometimes” or “frequently.” Lecturers often work on a semester-to-semester basis for years, knowing that the university has no obligation to rehire them and no obligation to inform them in a timely manner if their appointment is not renewed. Half of all instructional staff reported never having received a promotion. It is sad enough that any workers are exploited like this; the fact that we show so little regard to those who give so much to our students is unjust. **We owe our instructional staff greater job security and more opportunities for promotion and professional development; an investment in instructional staff is an investment in our students.**

Our administrative/professional academic staff also are relatively dissatisfied with opportunities for promotion and advancement, and their working conditions seem to be dependent on their supervisors. About half of administrative/professional staff experience unclear communication from supervisors “frequently” or “always,” and 45% reported being given additional work outside their job description “frequently” or “always.” It is not clear that administrative/professional staff have much support or protection outside their units—if their supervisors don’t inform them of promotion opportunities, or if they are asked to take on new responsibilities for no extra pay, what recourse do they have? **We need to ensure that academic staff are informed of promotion**





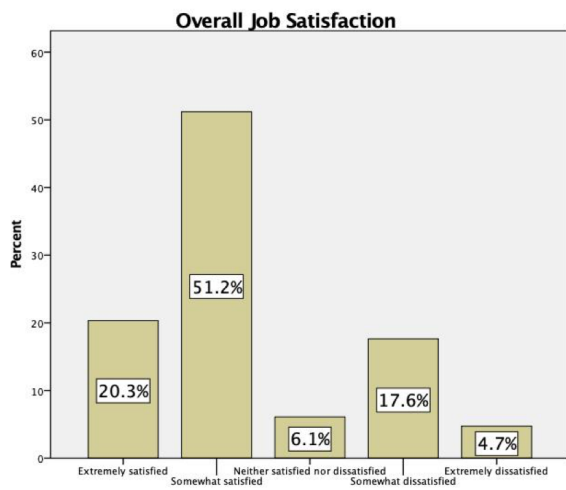
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opportunities, that their appointment letters reflect university policies, and that they are empowered to say “no” if they are asked to do something unethical or something outside their job description.

Finally, faculty are suffering from an increasingly burdensome workload. Larger class sizes have increased grading and day-to-day course management tasks. Layers upon layers of assessment are piled on top of the curricula, while bureaucratic e-forms, gimmicky marketing stunts, online trainings, and new information security protocols have made it difficult to find the time for scholarship and creative activity. Among the 17 single-spaced pages of written comments the survey elicited, one big theme was how the heavy workload made it difficult to maintain professional standards of research and pedagogy. **We need to hold the line: policies and tasks that undermine the quality of teaching, research, and service that enrich students’ education need to go.**

FIND OUT HOW TO APPLY FOR A PROMOTION

1. Go to www.uwec.edu
2. Type “FASRP” into search bar
3. Open the first result
4. See pp. 91-96



Despite these concerns, overall, academic staff and faculty are happy with their jobs: 71% said they were “somewhat” or “extremely” satisfied. Employees clearly feel that UWEC is a good place to work, and a lot of that has to do with co-workers. Respondents reported “feeling emotionally supported” much more often than they reported “feeling harassed or uncomfortable.” They reported feeling “happy” and “fulfilled” most often, and they reported feeling “bored” and “worried” least often.

Unfortunately, not everyone feels equally happy or secure. Although it was not the main focus of the survey, the results confirm that many people still face discrimination and feel unwelcome here. About 2/3 of women and people of color report having been discriminated against at least once (on the basis of gender and race, respectively). One quarter of people who identify as transgender, queer, or otherwise outside the male-female gender binary report that they “frequently” or “always” feel harassed or uncomfortable at work. These numbers need to drop, and we support the further integration of our shared values—equity, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI)—into all aspects of our work here.

The Vision The union believes that the strength of this university comes from people, not things—the students, staff, and faculty who do inspiring, amazing things every day. Pay increases, more promotion opportunities, better job security, less busy-work, more transparency from administration, and more supervisor accountability would improve employee morale. **We advocate for these improvements because they strengthen the whole institution.** A university is nothing without the people who make it work. Shiny new buildings are good (after all, customers are attracted to pretty packaging), but it is who’s inside those buildings that counts. **Please contact us if you want to be a part of our advocacy on behalf of students, academic staff, and faculty.**

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