

**Division of Student Affairs
Staff Wellbeing and Appreciation Committee
Division Staff Needs Assessment - Spring 2018**

Background

The Division of Student Affairs (DSA) Staff Wellbeing and Appreciation Committee was developed in the summer of 2017. The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs charged the committee to “promote the recognition of DSA staff and to find ways to encourage DSA staff to live healthier lifestyles, support a healthy workplace, and create a culture of wellbeing. The committee is charged with planning and implementing the Division’s summer social event and the Years of Service/Staff Appreciation event each year. In addition, the committee is charged with exploring ways to encourage wellbeing through promoting existing university wellness activities and utilizing their committee budget to explore/develop Division specific programs/activities aimed at staff.”

The committee worked with graduate students in the Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education (SAAHE) program in developing a survey to understand staff’s current behavior in the areas of wellbeing and appreciation, as well as what they needed in these areas. Additionally, the SAAHE students worked with Student Life Studies for the administration and analysis of the survey. This is the first time a survey focused on these topics has been conducted with staff in the Division of Student Affairs and the first assessment for this division-level committee.

Method and Sample

The electronic survey was developed in Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys. Of the 22 questions, 15 were quantitative and seven were qualitative. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all questions. The results were evaluated using SPSS®, a statistical software program, and Microsoft Excel®.

Student Life Studies sent the survey link to all full-time staff in the Division of Student Affairs through their work email account on March 30, 2018. Non-respondents received up to three reminders before the survey closed on April 16. Of the 537 staff members who received the survey, 297 completed some part of it, yielding a 55% response rate.

Results

Results are reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the questions. For ease of reading, the percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Tables are listed in order of decreasing means or frequencies unless otherwise noted. The themes for the qualitative questions are contained in this report; the full listing is in a separate document. This report is divided into four sections: Wellbeing, Appreciation, Years of Service Celebration, and Summer Social.

Wellbeing

Survey respondents were told that for the purpose of this survey, wellbeing was defined as maintaining a happy, healthy, and balanced quality of life. Using a check all that apply option, staff members were asked about the factors that motivated them to participate in wellness activities. Table 1, on the following page, shows that improving or maintaining one’s health or quality of life were the most common motivating factors. Of the factors provided, winning prizes was the least selected motivator. Alternatively, 5% of staff responding to the survey reported that none of the options provided motivation to participate in wellness activities. Staff selecting the “other” response option were given the opportunity to write a comment. Of the nine who wrote something, there were several different ideas including making it a competition, getting a T-shirt, having the time to attend, taking a mental break, and keeping it easy to participate.

Which of the following factors motivate you to participate in wellness activities? (Select all that apply)	Frequency Percentage
Improve/maintain my health	84%
Improve/maintain my quality of life	66%
To spend time with friends/social atmosphere	31%
Take advantage of activities at work	31%
Win prizes	22%
None of the above	5%
Other; please list	3%

Table 1: Motivating Factors (n=259)

Using a check all that apply formatted question, division staff were provided with a list of University wellbeing initiatives and asked which they were currently utilizing. Table 2 reveals that wellness release time and Walk Across Texas were the most common university initiatives being utilized. However, almost one-quarter indicated not using any of the university wellbeing initiatives. Those selecting the “other” option could write a response and 14 staff members did. Some wrote that they utilized the Naturally Slim program, educational release time, and flu shots on campus. Others referred to division initiatives such as using a stand-up desk and getting a summer membership at the Rec. A few mentioned walking on their own during lunch or after work.

Which, if any, of the following University Wellbeing Initiatives are you currently utilizing? (Select all that apply)	Frequency Percentage
Wellness Release Time	54%
Walk Across Texas	37%
Free Exercise Classes	23%
None of the above	22%
Wellness Workshops	16%
Living WELL Aware (videos, workbook, etc.)	15%
Perks Connect	15%
On-Campus Wellness Exams	10%
Other; please list	6%
Employee Tuition Assistance Program	5%
Financial Wellness Counseling	4%
Employee Assistance Program	4%
WELL Leader	4%

Table 2: University Wellbeing Initiatives (n=250)

When asked about the topics of wellbeing they would like additional information or programming on in the future, 47 staff members wrote a wide range of responses. Staff mentioned wanting to see more on financial planning, healthy eating options, mental health/burnout, ergonomics, and how to utilize wellness release time.

To better understand staff preferences in terms of programming, respondents were asked to rank order different formats on their level of interest with one being what they were most interested in and eight being what they were least interested in. Table 3, on the following page, demonstrates staff had a stronger interest for in-person workshops that were activity based or guest speaker/lecture based or website resources. Of the provided formats, finding information on their own was the least preferred method of respondents. Six staff members wrote a response for the “other” option including time to work out, discounts for the Rec Center, classes, fitness discounts, webinars, and free money. One note for Table 3, a lower mean indicates a stronger interest in that format.

Please rank the programming format based on your level of interest.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Mean (sd)
In-person workshop-activity based	29%	24%	13%	7%	9%	11%	5%	2%	3.09 (2.04)
In-person workshop-guest speaker/lecture style	24%	25%	17%	8%	11%	7%	6%	2%	3.11 (1.95)
Website resources	13%	15%	14%	20%	16%	18%	4%	--	3.82 (1.77)
In-person social event/networking opportunity	9%	14%	25%	15%	10%	14%	12%	2%	4.03 (1.91)
Videos	9%	11%	13%	25%	24%	12%	5%	1%	4.06 (1.66)
Newsletters	4%	7%	13%	18%	19%	25%	12%	2%	4.71 (1.68)
Find information on my own	10%	3%	6%	8%	10%	11%	50%	2%	5.49 (2.08)
Other	2%	<1%	<1%	--	<1%	2%	6%	89%	7.69 (1.19)

Table 3: Programming Formats (n=228)

The final question related to wellbeing asked respondents how likely they were to participate in wellbeing activities sponsored by the division. Two-thirds (67%) of the staff reported they were likely to participate (18% were very likely and 49% were likely). Almost one-quarter (23%) said they were neutral, 7% were not likely, and 4% said they were not at all likely (mean=3.70/5/00; sd=.97; n=259).

Appreciation

Survey respondents were told that for the purpose of this survey, appreciation events were defined as opportunities to recognize staff achievements and/or provide enjoyment to staff members in the Division of Student Affairs. Division staff were asked a series of questions about how often they felt there should be formal recognition. Table 4 illustrates that staff members felt that recognition by the department should be more frequently than by the division or university.

How often do you think staff should be formally recognized/appreciated?	More than once a month (4)	Monthly (3)	Each semester (2)	Annually (1)	Mean (sd) [n]
By the department	7%	32%	42%	20%	2.24 (.85) [246]
By the division	1%	11%	41%	47%	1.67 (.72) [245]
By the university	1%	5%	19%	75%	1.31 (.61) [242]

Table 4: Frequency of Recognition

Staff members were asked about their level of satisfaction with division-level appreciation events such as the Years of Service Celebration, Awards Ceremony, Summer Social, etc. Two-thirds (66%) of staff members reported being satisfied (22% were highly satisfied and 44% were satisfied). Just over one-quarter (28%) indicated they were neutral, 3% said they were dissatisfied, and 2% were highly dissatisfied (mean=3.82/5.00; sd=.89; n=250).

Division staff members were given the opportunity to explain their response to their level of satisfaction for division-level appreciation events, and 114 wrote a comment. Staff who were highly satisfied or satisfied commented that the events are well organized and well done, that they are held at a good frequency, and felt valued and appreciated. Alternatively, they also said that staff members are not always able to attend and that outside of the semester is better, that not all departments get recognized, and that there should be more recognition for newer staff members. Those who were neutral in their level of satisfaction said they are not always able to attend recognition events due to workload, that they are not a fan of formal ceremonies and prefer less formal activities, and that in numerous years of being in the division that they have never been recognized. Staff who reported being dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied mentioned that the division could do more, that not all staff are recognized, for some events there does not seem to be a reason, and that the nomination process takes too long.

The final question related to appreciation asked staff for additional ways they would like to be recognized and appreciated by the division. Of the 80 comments shared, staff mentioned differences in departments in terms of how staff members were recognized and balancing formal and informal recognition. Some staff mentioned what they would like in terms of appreciation, leave and money were mentioned multiple times, followed by tickets to athletic events or MSC OPAS events. Several talked about just being thanked for a job well done goes a long ways and small recognition or awards would be appreciated.

Years of Service Celebration

When asked if they felt that the Years of Service Celebration achieved its goal of celebrating staff's years of service, 80% of the 206 staff reported yes, 16% were unsure, and 4% said no. There was an option of selecting that they never attended the event and those were removed from the analysis. Additionally, staff members were asked if the event location impacted their decision to attend the Years of Service Celebration. Just over half (54%) of the 246 respondents said the location did not impact their decision, 28% said it somewhat impacted their decision, and 18% said the location definitely impacted their decision.

Using a check all that apply option, staff members were asked about their thoughts on the timing for the Years of Service Celebration. Table 5 indicates that holding the event when classes are not in session was the most selected option and that the spring semester seemed to be preferred more than the fall.

In general, when do you feel is the most appropriate time to hold the Years of Service Celebration? (Select all that apply)	Frequency Percentage
Spring semester - when classes are NOT in session	64%
Fall semester - when classes are NOT in session	40%
Spring semester - when classes are in session	26%
Fall semester - when classes are in session	18%

Table 5: Years of Service Timing (n=239)

Staff members were given the opportunity to share any suggestions or feedback regarding the Years of Service Celebration held in January 2018, and 44 wrote a comment. Several shared that they did not attend the event due to the timing in January and having training activities, holiday, and programs before school began. Those who attended made comments about the food not being very good and that the venue (Rec Sports) was too small. Some said they liked the event held in January, although others reported that they did not like the timing.

Summer Social

All respondents were asked if they had attended the DSA Summer Social event in the past three years. One-third (32%) of the 217 staff members responding said they had attended the DSA Summer Social and 68% reported that they had not attended. Those who said they had not attended (n=147) were asked to explain why they had not attended the summer social. There was a range of responses from the 98 staff who wrote a comment. Several talked about a scheduling conflict such as being on vacation, having a 9- or 10-month contract, covering the office so others could attend, and attending meetings scheduled during the event. Some indicated they were not interested in the social or that they did not view it as being that important that they attend. The location and marketing were also mentioned as reasons staff did not attend.

Staff members were asked what they saw as the purpose of the DSA Summer Social, and 108 responded. Many shared that they did not know what the purpose of the Summer Social was or that there was no clear purpose. Others talked about it being a networking or social event to meet other staff across the division. A few felt the event was to celebrate the upcoming year, appreciate staff members, and enjoy some downtime. A final theme that was shared was that the event supported the Stuff the Bus campaign in the local community.

When asked if the format of the Summer Social in the past few years achieved this purpose, 74% of the 248 respondents said they were unsure, 16% felt the Summer Social did achieve its purpose, and 11% said it did not. The 26 staff members who felt the Summer Social did not achieve its purpose were asked a follow-up question to share suggestions or changes and eight shared their thoughts. Some said people socialize with people they already know and do not meet new people and that the Summer Social should be connected to another event or reason to get together. Some mentioned socials from several years ago that were scheduled in the evening and included families. One person suggested that if there would continue to be a focus on community service that it may be good to select something associated with the State Employee Charitable Campaign.

Staff members were asked about the location of the Summer Social and if it impacted their decision to attend. Under half (41%) said the location did not impact their decision, 36% reported that it somewhat impacted their decision, and 23% indicated that the location definitely impacted their decision.

The final question on the survey asked staff to select the most appropriate time to hold the Summer Social using a check all that apply option. Table 6 suggests that earlier in the summer is better than later in the summer and that August is not a good option.

In general, when do you feel is the most appropriate time to hold the Summer Social? (Select all that apply)	Frequency Percentage
June	60%
July	48%
August	21%

Table 6: Summer Social Timing (n=227)

The Division of Student Affairs is made up of 17 departments plus the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. Table 7, on the following page and in descending order by the last column of response rate by departments, shows how many staff are in each department (and who were sent the survey) and the department breakdown of who responded to the survey. One note regarding the data in Table 7 is that department directors are included in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. The three largest departments based on staff size in the division are Student Health Services, Residence Life, and the Office of the Commandant. The survey respondents by department mostly matched with the department size within the division. The last column in Table 7 shows the survey response rate by each department. There were four departments that less than half of the staff responded to the survey: University Art Galleries, Office of the Commandant, Student Counseling Service, and University Center & Special Events.

Department	Number in Population	Frequency Percentage Population	Number of Respondents	Frequency Percentage Respondents	Percentage of Department
Student Life Studies	5	1%	5	2%	100%
Disability Services	14	3%	13	4%	93%
Music Activities	9	2%	8	3%	89%
Offices of the Dean of Student Life	41	8%	29	10%	71%
Residence Life	57	11%	38	13%	67%
Vice President for Student Affairs	33	6%	21	7%	64%
Rec Sports	33	6%	21	7%	64%
Student Activities	40	7%	25	8%	63%
Memorial Student Center	28	5%	16	5%	57%
Student Health Services	81	15%	43	14%	53%
Becky Gates Children's Center	21	4%	11	4%	52%
Information Technology	23	4%	12	4%	52%
Multicultural Services	10	2%	5	2%	50%
Veteran Resource & Support Center	2	0%	1	0%	50%
University Art Galleries	5	1%	2	1%	40%
Office of the Commandant	52	10%	20	7%	38%
Student Counseling Service	46	9%	15	5%	33%
University Center & Special Events	37	7%	12	4%	32%
Total	537	100%	297	100%	55%

Table 7: Department Make-Up

Conclusions and Recommendations

A majority of staff members reported that improving or maintaining their health and/or quality of life were motivating factors for them to participate in the wellbeing initiatives. The committee may want to keep this in mind when marketing events or programs to staff as a way to encourage attendance. Additionally, almost one-quarter of division staff indicated they did not participate in any university wellness initiative. The committee could look at opportunities to market these resources with division staff throughout the year.

Several staff members referenced time in terms of participating in wellbeing initiatives such as needing to find the time or reporting they did not have the time. The DSA Staff Wellbeing and Appreciation Committee may look at ways to share resources related to time management or time hacks that staff could implement and hopefully allow for more participation in wellbeing initiatives.

Committee members also received several ideas that division staff would like to see in terms of programs or information related to wellbeing. This may provide a starting place as the committee develops programs for the upcoming year.

Staff reported wanting department recognition more frequently, and staff also indicated that small appreciations or just being thanked for a job well done makes a difference. The committee could explore developing resources for department directors and supervisors on appreciating their staff. This could be the results from this assessment as well as a list of ideas that supervisors could do during the year. Additionally, committee members might consider creating a process for staff members to recognize other staff members in the division and implement some small token of appreciation.

In terms of formal recognition, staff throughout the division seemed mostly satisfied with the timing and frequency of events. Staff members also commented that these events were well organized and overall enjoyable. However, there were a few that stated they had been employed in the division for numerous years, sometimes as many as 20 years, and had never received an award or been recognized in their department or by the division. Others also suggested having more awards for newer staff members and those whose work is more behind the scenes. As the division has grown in the number of staff employed, has the number of awards increased to keep a certain percentage or ratio between staff size and the number of awards? The Staff Wellbeing and Appreciation Committee may want to share information with the chair of the DSA Awards Committee to be considered and explored.

The Years of Service Celebration is considered one of the more formal division recognition. It seemed that most staff were satisfied with this event and that the location might be less of a concern in terms of attendance. However, identifying a date that would work with a majority of departments appears to be a challenge. The committee is strongly encouraged to explore options and set a date early, as well as send save the date announcements out at the beginning of the academic year.

A majority of the division staff were not sure of the purpose of the Summer Social or had not attended on in the past three years. The committee is encouraged to explore options to re-engineer this event into something that may meet the intended purpose more and would involve more staff to attend. Furthermore, the location does seem to matter more for staff based on the current format of the Summer Social. It would indicate that going too far out of one's way is a deterrent for attendance based on the informal nature of the event or that staff members do not understand the purpose of the event. Additionally, anything the committee plans to do during the summer months, whether that is continuing with the Summer Social or creating something new, earlier in the summer was preferred over later in the summer.

There were four departments with a lower response rate (less than 50% of the department responding) so the DSA Staff Wellbeing and Appreciation Committee could be missing feedback on how to support staff in these departments or their needs. The committee leadership may want to explore if they should reach out to those departments for feedback. A couple of the departments were also some of the largest departments based on staff size.

The DSA Staff Wellbeing and Appreciation Committee members are strongly encouraged to read through all of the qualitative responses to gain a better understanding of the themes summarized in this report. There were several ideas and suggestions shared, and the committee may want to consider implementing some of these concepts. The committee is also encouraged to share the results with staff throughout the Division of Student Affairs and other stakeholders.

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