

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF A VALUES-BASED REWARD
SYSTEM ON ENGAGEMENT AND PERCEPTIONS OF
OFFICE CULTURE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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DEDICATION

To my husband and my daughter.

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement and satisfaction may be telling indicators of employee health that can have rippling effects on the employee, university, and the student who interacts with the employee every day. Research has demonstrated a positive correlation between administrative styles and retention in the context of engagement, climate and culture (Farrell, 2009). Across industries and disciplines, employees who are engaged are more productive, creative, solve more problems, and more easily adapt to change (Craig & DeSimone, 2011; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012). Contrast to this research, in the higher education setting, employee engagement is measuring at an all-time low (Wasilowski, 2016). The purpose of this transformative, sequential, mixed-methods study is to examine how formalizing an engagement incentive program for higher education administrative staff in the Division of Student Success at a regionally accredited, land-grant institution impacts employee-reported engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12. The researcher collected qualitative data to help explain the quantitative Gallup Q12 survey scores to give individuals in leadership roles concrete information on how employees interpret Gallup Q12 and which, if any, actions they can take to improve employee engagement in their offices in the context of climate and culture. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test indicated significant change in the overall engagement score for the Division of Student Success ($z = 2.79, p = .002$), indicating the formalization of an engagement program does have a statistically significant effect on engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12. Major themes that emerged from the engaged offices in relation to climate were *Relatedness* and *Care for the Student Experience*. Major themes that emerged from the disengaged offices included *Frustration*, *Stress*, *Turnover*, *Exclusivity*, *Not Being Able to Demonstrate Expertise or Improve Processes*, *Customer Service Focus*, and *Problem-Solving*.

CHAPTER ONE—INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Employee engagement and satisfaction may be telling indicators of employee health that can have rippling effects on the employee, university, and the students who interact with the employee every day. Paralleling the experience of students coming to college for the first time, university administrative professionals in higher education starting a new job on campus are socialized in the functioning of office boundaries, introduced to new policies and procedures for which they will be held accountable, and must identify their niche in an environment of well-established norms. Administrative staff have an impact on the student experience. Research has demonstrated a positive correlation between administrative styles and student retention in the context of engagement, climate and culture (Farrell, 2009). Across industries and disciplines, employees who are engaged are more productive, creative, solve more problems, and more easily adapt to change (Craig & DeSimone, 2011; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012). Contrast to this research, in the higher education setting, employee engagement is measuring at an all-time low (Wasilowski, 2016). Given this information, engagement of professionals who interact with students on a regular basis ought to be a priority for university leadership.

Mirroring the professional experience, research has shown that many factors influence a successful undergraduate experience and further shows that engagement is one critical element to fostering student success (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Goodenow, 1993b; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Strayhorn, 2012). Simply, turning 18 and graduating

from high school does not guarantee a student's a successful transition into college. Likewise, graduating from college does guarantee a successful transition to the workplace. One must look at the factors of those successful employees and see the common denominator in each was an aspect of engagement in activities and surroundings. Research furthers this notion and stresses that these same factors must exist in the workforce because engagement ultimately influences success (Craig & DeSimone, 2011; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012). Noting the value of engagement at the student level suggests that engagement as an employee is as important.

One potential indicator of student success is student socialization. Student socialization to the higher education environment has been an early cornerstone of student success theory for many years (Tinto, 1975; Weidman, 2003). When a student comes to campus for the first time, they are learning a new language, adapting to a new culture, are held accountable to new rules, must follow new policies, and must independently navigate each of these obstacles often without the assistance of a parent. Their socialization to this new environment greatly contributes to their success as a college student (Claybrooks & Taylor, 2016). Similar to students going to college the first time, new employees to a university campus often must learn a new language, adapt to a new culture, be accountable to new rules, follow new policies, and independently navigate each of these obstacles without external assistance. Current literature indicates the students who are the most socialized to these new social structures, e.g., are engaged and have higher GPA's, are more likely to persist and be retained, and they endure a shorter time to graduation (Strayhorn, 2012). Similarly, employees who are the most

engaged tend to be more productive, more creative, more satisfied with their job duties, and more adaptable to change than their disengaged counterparts (Craig & DeSimone, 2011; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012). Given the similarities between student and employee socialization and outcomes, one could apply student engagement theory in combination with an organizational theory to better understand employee engagement and retention in a higher education setting.

Increasing opportunities for students to become engaged and develop a strong sense of belonging to their institution has been a focus of Student Affairs professionals since the 1970s (Strayhorn, 2012). To foster student engagement the Division of Student Success at one land-grant, regionally-accredited Northwestern university offers an incentive program called, for the purposes of this dissertation, Cat Scratch. Cat Scratch serves as a currency that allows students to earn points for engaging in activities such as tutoring, visiting the library, registering on time, working out at the gym, or attending a football game; activities that promote healthy engagement, proactive socialization, and encourage the development of the sense of belonging on campus. Throughout the semester, students can use the points they have accumulated for participating in engagement activities to bid on prizes, some of which can be quite valuable. The institution found differences in GPA and retention rates between students who engaged on campus compared to students who opted out. For example, new freshman who were retained attended, on average, 25.3 events compared to 15.3 events for students who were not retained. 74.4% of the students who participated in the Cat Scratch program were retained compared to 54.6% of students who did not attend any events. The average GPA

for new freshman who actively engaged was 2.29, whereas students who did not participate, earned an average semester GPA of 2.36. Students who are likely to be involved may be more likely to be retained. This incentive program seemed to be effective for sophomores, juniors, and seniors as well. Findings for freshman from this student engagement incentive program are detailed below in Table 1.

Table 1. GPA, Retention rates, and average number of engagements for Cat Scratch (T. Lauriski-Karriker, personal communication, July 25, 2018).

Grade	GPA	Retention rate (%)	Average number of events
Freshman (N=3227)	2.29/2.36	74.4/54.6	23.3/15.3
Sophomore (N=1339)	2.88/2.83	83.4/76.5	17/11.8
Junior (N=2558)	3.06/2.93	90/88.4	15.7/10.5
Senior (N=3518)	3.28/3.15	94.9/92.7	12.4/11.5

Note. Students with high participation in CatScratch/Students with low participated in CatScratch

Sophomores who were retained attended an average of 17 events compared to 11.8 events for students who were not retained. Similarly, 83.4% of students who participated in Cat Scratch activities were retained compared to 76.5% of students who did not participate. Sophomores who participated earned an average semester GPA of 2.88 while students who did not participate earned an average semester GPA of 2.83. Juniors who were retained attended an average of 15.7 events compared to 10.5 events for students who were not retained. The retention rate for students who participated in Cat Scratch was 90.0% compared to 88.4% for students who didn't participate. Juniors who engaged in the program earned an average semester GPA of 3.06 compared to the average GPA of students who did not participate, which was 2.93. Finally, the trend continues with seniors. Seniors who retained attended about 12.4 events compared to

11.5 for students who were not retained. Students who engaged were retained at 94.9% compared to 92.7% for students who did not participate. Students who engaged earned an average semester GPA of 3.28 compared to students who did not engage, whose average semester GPA was 3.15. Incentive programs can assist in the socialization and engagement of students correlated with, in this case, more positive student outcomes than unengaged students.

Formalizing a Staff Engagement Incentive Program

The current study will more fully examine the impact of formalizing a staff engagement incentive program using the existing infrastructure of Cat Scratch and a pilot engagement program, RISE. Paralleling the student version of Cat Scratch, staff have the opportunity to earn points from engagement to bid on prizes either garnered by or donated to the Division of Student Success. These individuals will be eligible to earn points for activities that promote healthy engagement and positive socialization, and that encourage the development of sense of belonging on campus, such as taking a colleague to lunch, attending Division events, and attending professional development workshops.

Study Rationale

Engagement has been found to be an important contributing factor to student success in higher education (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Goodenow, 1993b; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Strayhorn, 2012), therefore implying that once a student graduates, engagement holds the same importance as they transition into a working professional. Again, research suggests that engagement influences success in the workforce (Craig &

DeSimone, 2011; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012), and has been found to be positively correlated with retention (Farrell, 2009). Noting the value of engagement suggests that higher education administrative professionals ought to provide formalized opportunities for their staff to engage.

The literature has shown that employees who are engaged report better employment outcomes such as increased creativity, productivity, problem solving, and overall job satisfaction than their disengaged counterparts (Craig & DeSimone, 2011; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012). Providing a formalized means of engagement for administrative staff in the Division of Student Success could potentially lead to more positive employee outcomes that have the potential to positively contribute to student interactions. Currently, there are limited formalized opportunities for engagement within the Division, including a once a semester professional development series and a monthly coffee get-together.

Statement of the Problem

Research shows the importance of employee engagement in productivity, problem-solving, efficiency, creativity, and ultimately job satisfaction (Craig & DeSimone, 2011; Dalal et al., 2012). Next to faculty and time teaching in the classroom, administrative staff such as front-line employees spend the most amount of time with students: talking them through processes, explaining policies, advising students on course selection, and providing tutoring assistance or performing retention interventions (Harrill et al., 2015). Multiple studies have found that most employees across a wide range of industries are disengaged which can lead to workplace incivility, low productivity and

poor job attitudes (Dalal et al., 2012; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012; Craig & DeSimone, 2011). Given this information, one could surmise that the outcome of a disengaged employee meeting with a high-risk student compared to the outcome of a highly engaged employee meeting with a high-risk student could look quite different and lead to varying outcomes (Farrell, 2009). Providing a formalized means of engagement for staff has the potential to increase employee engagement in their daily responsibilities. What remains unclear in the literature is if an incentivized engagement program could impact individual engagement for administrative staff in a higher education environment as it does in other industries.

Statement of Purpose

This explanatory sequential design mixed-methods study has 3 purposes:

1. Examine how formalizing an engagement incentive program for higher education administrative staff in the Division of Student Success at a regionally accredited, land-grant institution impacts employee-reported engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12.
2. Collect qualitative data to help explain the quantitative Gallup Q12 survey scores to give individuals in leadership roles concrete information on how employees interpret Gallup Q12 questions and which, if any, actions they can take to improve employee engagement in their offices in the context of climate and culture.
3. Provide more context and insight into what employees need from their leaders to help them be engaged in their role on campus.

In order to satisfy the purpose of this study, the following research questions have been formulated to examine how a formalized engagement program influences staff-reported engagement and better explain how engagement might influence office climate and culture in a higher education environment. These research questions will explore if a formalized engagement changes the overall engagement score for the Division of Student Success, examine if respondents feel the Gallup Q12 provides an accurate representation of their engagement, climate, and culture, and explore the differences in climate and culture between engaged and disengaged offices. Results will be systematically reviewed in Chapter 4.

Research Questions

1. Does the overall engagement score for the Division of Student Success change after implementing a formalized incentive program?
2. Do respondents feel Gallup Q12 adequately captures their level of engagement and reflects their office climate and culture?
3. How do staff in highly engaged offices feel differently about office climate and culture than staff in disengaged offices?

Significance of Study

Results from this study could contribute to the body of knowledge to solve a problem of practice across disciplines and industries; how to improve employee engagement. This study could inform what motivates staff to engage in a higher education context. Higher education is not exempt from turnover, policy changes, budget

cuts and other external stressors. Being able to identify and prioritize what staff need to engage could be a valuable tool to retain talented employees which could result in better use of institutional resources. Through this study, directors and managers will better be able to prioritize resources and plan strategically to provide opportunities for their staff to engage by offering encouraging incentives.

Theoretical Frameworks

Two theories will guide the understanding of employee engagement in higher education. Astin's (1993) Input, Environment, Output (IEO) Model will guide understanding related to the significant parallels identified between the student and a new employee experience, which could allow for better understanding the development of engagement in employees. (Craig & DeSimone, 2011; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012). To align with more traditional organizational and employee theory, Maccoby's Eight Value Drives in the Workplace (1986) will guide conceptual evaluation of a traditional workplace environment. Understanding how employees engage, what motivates them to engage, and how university leadership can foster engagement could be imperative to retaining talented staff.

The first theory used to better understand engagement in a higher education setting is Astin's (1993) Input, Environment, Output model. This theory, referenced below in Figure 2, contends that student inputs (demographics, knowledge, skills and abilities) can be mediated by environmental characteristics (supportive, engaging environments or cold, disengaging environments) which will have an effect on the student's output (success or lack thereof). Although this is a student development theory,

one could argue this is simply a development theory and the specific individual, whether a student or not, is not critical. One could replace “student” with “new employee to campus” and the theory ought to still explain how one’s environment, in combination with established attributes, can affect success outcomes.

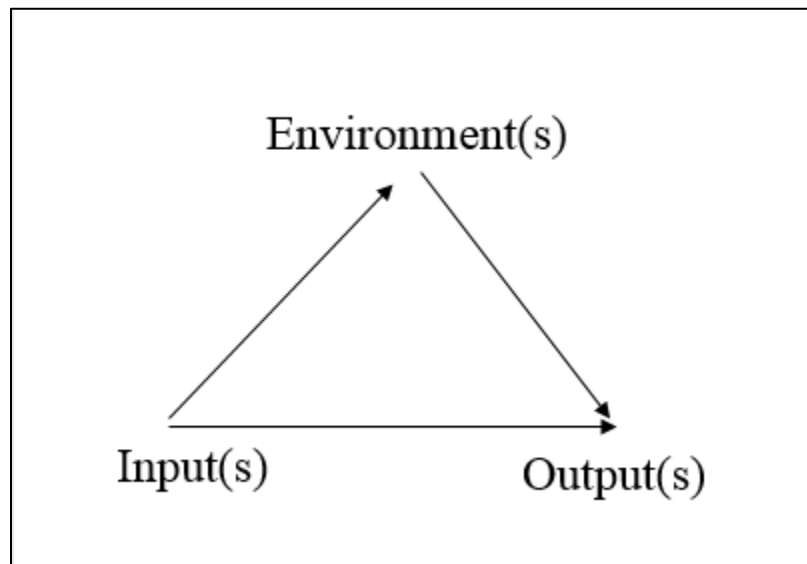


Figure 1. Astin’s input, environment, output model (1993).

The second theory to help guide understanding of the organizational environment is Maccoby’s Eight Value Drives in the Workplace theory. Maccoby contends employees are driven by the values of survival, relatedness, pleasure, information, mastery, play, dignity, and meaning (Maccoby, 1986). He and his team interviewed thirty-five hundred employees ranging from front-line staff to CEOs to better understand what motivates an individual to do good work. Maccoby contends that each of these values are a motivation drive for employees. For example, staff may simply be seeking a means to pay their bills (survival), or get great pleasure out of being considered the expert in their field (mastery), or be motivated by knowing their work has an influence on the

state of the world (meaning). From his interviews, five different work-type motivators emerged which explained how individuals came to find their work meaningful. These employee sub-types included: *the expert*, *the helper*, *the defender*, *the innovator*, and *the self-developer*. Maccoby found *the expert* tended to be motivated by information and mastery, *the helper* tended to be motivated by relatedness, *the defender* tended to be motivated by survival and dignity, *the innovator* tended to be motivated by play, and *the self-developer* tended to be motivated by dignity, mastery, and information. Each sub-type was motivated by meaningful work and pleasure which aligns with findings in employee engagement literature that meaningful work or being able to find a larger meaning in work is imperative to successfully engaging employees (Craig & DeSimone, 2011). One could argue, at one time or another during the span of one's career, an employee would identify with each of these sub-types and therefore be motivated by different values depending on the project, the collaborators, or the environment. Understanding what motivates employees to do good work and engage in their environment arms higher education professionals with the tools they need to provide an environment that fosters engagement.

The aforementioned theories can be combined to better understand employee engagement on college campuses by explaining the parallels between the student and the working professional experience.

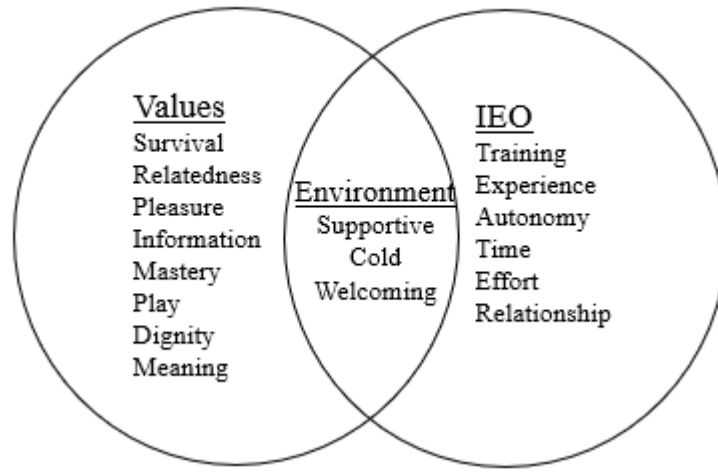


Figure 2. Similarities in student and employee engagement.

Specifically, understanding the values that motivate employees could help change the trajectory of engagement or development, allowing a disengaged employee to be nurtured to becoming more engaged. These two theories speak to the importance of socialization and the environment in which development takes place. If the outcome of that development was then fed into Astin's Input, Environment, Output Model (1993), a closed loop of reinforced growth and development emerges, a novel framework which the Researcher calls the Employee Loop of Development. Employees who opt out can re-engage with an initial catalyst. The reinforcing effects of time and energy in combination with either an encouraging or discouraging environment yield an output where one continues to engage and they invest their energy toward development.

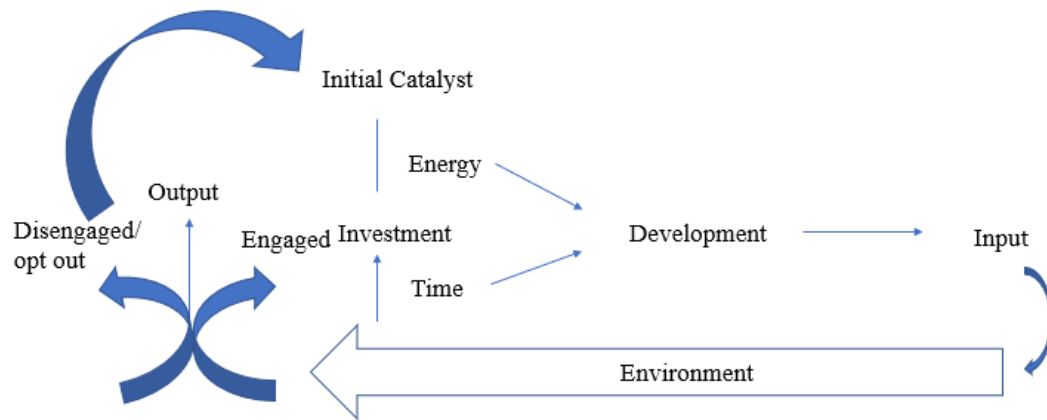


Figure 3. Employee loop of development.

This conceptual framework starts with an initial catalyst (new job, training/professional development opportunity) in which the employee is motivated to perform and invests energy and time learning their new role or task. The development that occurs through the devotion of time and energy to the task becomes an input or baseline characteristic for engagement. The input(s) are either nurtured or extinguished in the office environment which result in an employee who is engaged or opts out. The result of the combination of input(s) and environment can be redirected back into the dedication of time and energy resulting in development, suggesting that an employee who was previously disengaged can become engaged if they are given a catalyst to which they can freely apply time and energy in order to develop. Once engagement is established, the employee spends their time and energy investing in their intentional development.

Operational Definitions

Climate: Office climate is defined as the shared meaning organizational members attach to the events, policies, practices, and procedures they experience and the behaviors they see being rewarded, supported, and expected (Ehrhart et al., 2014).

Culture: Schein (2010) defined Organizational Culture as a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by an organization as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

Engagement: The Glossary for Educational Reform (2016) refers to engagement as the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students (staff for the purposes of this study) show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education (or administrative position).

Engaged Employees: Individuals who report enthusiasm for their work, are determined to do their job well and find ways to creatively contribute to their team's success. These employees are excited to provide high-quality service or products, are prepared to fully devote themselves to their work, and see their job as a personal sense of pride (Craig & DeSimone, 2011).

Disengaged Employees: Employees who are less likely to find meaning in their work, less likely to perceive having influence over what happens in their work environments, feel their job is not important, and report poor interactions and connections

with coworkers (Craig & DeSimone, 2011.) Disengagement can lead to workplace incivility, low productivity and poor job attitudes (Dalal et al., 2012; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012; Craig & DeSimone, 2011).

Cat Scratch: Cat Scratch is an incentive program which allows students to earn points for engaging in activities such as tutoring, visiting the library, registering on time, listening to a guest speaker, working out at the gym, or attending a football game; activities that promote healthy engagement, proactive socialization, and encourage the development of sense of belonging on campus. Students can then use the points they've accumulated throughout the semester to bid on prizes.

Gallup Q12 Survey: The Gallup Q12 survey is an engagement tool created by the Gallup Organization to assess employee engagement in a variety of industries. The survey requires respondents to use a 5-point Likert-type scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) on 12 the following statements: *I know what is expected of me at work, I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work in the last seven days, someone at work seems to care about me as a person, there is someone at work who encourages my development, my opinions seem to count, the mission or purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important, my team members are committed to quality work, I have a best friend at work, someone at work has talked to me about my progress in the last six months, and I have had the opportunity to learn and grow this last year.* Results are then broken up by the Gallup Organization into three employee categories; engaged, not engaged, or actively disengaged. The

Division of Student Success distributes the Gallup Q12 survey to all Division employees in October of every year.

Assumptions

Mixed method research assumes a greater collection, depth, and breadth of information. This approach is advantageous to a researcher as multiple methods are combined to better understand the concept being explored (Creswell, 1994). Explanatory sequential design mixed-method research requires collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, distinct analysis, and merging the data sets together to attempt to explain any differences or better understand the concept being explored (Creswell, 2015). Mixed methods allow for strengths of each method and can provide greater context than a single approach.

Limitations

As with most survey research, the Gallup Q12 has several limitations that must be considered when analyzing and interpreting results. Gallup Q12 requires identifying which offices “house” individuals responding to the survey so the results can be generalized to a department. For the past 3 years, smaller offices have been grouped together inconsistently with larger offices, as the survey requires a minimum number of respondents assigned to each department for the scores to be counted. For purposes of data collection, analysis, and consistency only the Gallup Q12 score for the overall division, Financial Aid, Registrar’s Office, Admissions, and Office of Student Success

will be examined. To maintain the privacy of each office, the offices will be referred to as Office, A, B, C, or D.

A further limitation of survey research, the Gallup Q12 survey captures a moment in time and does not allow for the respondent to elaborate or explain their response. This means that one must consider that factors outside the work experience, such as a respondent's commute to work, a stressful financial situation, or perhaps a fight with a spouse, have set the tone for how they might respond. This limitation makes it difficult to tell over time if there are engagement issues in an office or if the individuals in the office who are completing the survey are systematically dealing with stressful life events that have the potential to influence their responses. To overcome this limitation, respondents will be provided an opportunity to elaborate on why they chose the score they did and if they think it is representative of their office.

Forced choice is a limitation in survey research when using Likert-type response scales. This response scale prevents participants from fine-tuning their answers to the prompts and does not allow for open-ended analysis to give the researcher a rich explanation as to why the respondent chose the score they did. The qualitative interviews occurred after the pilot project, which may impact the validity of the pre-intervention descriptions. Participants may remember earlier events differently than they would have described them at the time.

Finally, the lessons learned from the qualitative and quantitative analysis of this study will not be generalizable (external validity) to the general public, as this is an in-

depth analysis of a unique Division within a specific university, however; the reader may find some lessons transferable to their own experiences or workplace situations.

Delimitations

To minimize the challenges of mismatching smaller offices to larger offices, the researcher will exclude results from offices that have not been consistently paired by Gallup over the past four years. For purposes of data collection, analysis, and consistency, only the Gallup Q12 score for the overall Division of Student Success, Office of Financial Aid, Registrar's Office, Office of Admissions, and Office of Student Success will be examined. Each will be assigned a pseudonym to protect the identity of the office. Those 4 offices will be the only offices to also receive the follow up survey as well.

Chapter Summary

Employee experiences when undertaking a new position on a college campus are similar to a student undertaking their first year at a new campus. In a higher education setting, engaged employees have the potential to positively contribute to student success outcomes and institutional initiatives if engagement is prioritized appropriately. Employees who are the most engaged tend to be more productive, more creative, more satisfied with their job duties, and more adaptable to change than their disengaged counterparts (Craig & DeSimone, 2011; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012). This chapter reviewed the importance of employee engagement and satisfaction, examined the differences between devoted/engaged and disengaged employees, compared the

similarities between student and employee sense of belonging, inspected how engagement might influence office climate and culture, and explored how incentives might increase one's likelihood of participating in a formalized program. Given this information, one could apply student engagement theory to better understand employee engagement in a higher education setting.

CHAPTER TWO—LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The following chapter thoroughly reviews peer reviewed articles, books, and journals from diverse disciplines including business, human resources, psychology, and education. This literature review focuses on job satisfaction and employee engagement, in higher education and other industries. Later, sense of belonging is discussed, first for students and then for staff to demonstrate the parallel in experiences and concluding with a review of current research on the effectiveness of incentivizing engagement.

Across industries and disciplines, employee engagement is a rather new concept, as historically, the focus has been on assessing job satisfaction (Craig & DeSimone, 2011; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012). Often the two terms are conflated or used interchangeably when, in fact, they are different and measure different employee outcomes. The Gallup Organization (2017) defines employee engagement as employees who are enthusiastic and committed to their work and their workplace. Engaged employees are more productive, innovative, creative, efficient, sharply focused on their customers, and invest significantly more time and mental, physical and emotional energy into their work than their disengaged colleagues (Craig & DeSimone, 2011; Hanaysha, 2016). Job satisfaction is defined in the literature as one's affective appraisal of one's job (Cranny et al., 1992). Understanding the difference between satisfaction and engagement is imperative to the foundation of this dissertation. Herzberg & Snyderman (1959) surmised job satisfaction was explained by a combination of motivating factors (achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth) and

hygiene factors (company policy and administration, supervision, relationship with supervisor, work conditions, salary, relationships with peers, personal life, relationships with subordinates, status, and security). This concept would suggest altering the motivating factors would improve one's assessment of job satisfaction. Thus, job satisfaction appears to be more about the *qualities* related to the work (hours, pay, policies, stress) and engagement appears to be more about a relationship and the *meaning* derived from work (productivity, creativity, and enthusiasm toward the work and the workplace), which could explain why individuals in seemingly difficult or undesirable jobs report satisfaction (Craig & DeSimone, 2011; Herzberg & Snyderman, 1959; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012). Holbeche & Matthews (2012) identify the main difference between the two constructs by highlighting job satisfaction can be raised to an impressive level, but not without cost to the organization stemming from the entitlement mentality or worker complacency. Both engagement and satisfaction are important health indicators that managers must attend to for optimal performance.

To properly situate this study, Maccoby's Eight Value Drives in the Workplace (1986) provides an avenue to frame relevant and current literature in the context of what motivates individuals to work. As previously reviewed, Maccoby contends employees are motivated by the values of survival, relatedness, pleasure, information, mastery, play, dignity, and meaning. The following literature review will detail the consequences of an employee simply working to pay their bills (survival), and how engagement and sense of belonging have the potential to foster relatedness to individuals and the organization, illicit pleasure in mastering one's professional responsibilities, and how play can increase

engagement and the development of an internal locus of control leading to feelings of dignity and meaning with the institution.

The Importance of Employee Engagement and Satisfaction

Employee engagement has been assessed in a variety of ways. In 2011, Accenture Institute for High Performance (AIHP) surveyed 1,300 full-time employees across a wide range of industries and found striking differences between engaged employees and their disengaged counterparts (Craig & DeSimone, 2011). The AIHP researchers found they could group employees into four engagement groups; 1) Devoted: employees who put their heart and soul into their work every day and meaningfully contribute to the organization's success; 2) Plugged In: These employees consistently contribute and are willing to go further than expected if asked; 3) Cruise Control: These employees show up for work each day but only occasionally devote their full energies to their work; and 4) Checked Out: These employees do the basic requirements of their job and rarely devote additional time, energy, or creativity to help their team. Devoted and Plugged In employees are considered to be engaged in their work while Cruise Control and Checked Out employees are considered to be actively disengaged in their work (Craig & DeSimone, 2011). How these employees navigate their work and interact with, in this case students, has the potential to impact student outcomes.

Engagement in Higher Education

The higher education landscape is changing, but change is nothing new to colleges and universities. From the founding of Harvard in 1636, to the influx in students going to college for the first time because of the Morrill Act of 1862, higher education institutions have had to embrace change. Similarly, when veterans started taking advantage of their education benefits granted to them by the GI Bill of 1944, to breaking down barriers for students with disabilities with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, higher education is a seasoned industry that one would think could adapt and transform with agility. However, change in higher education policies and practices are usually on such a massive scale, that transformations are often slow and difficult (Thelin, 2011). Currently, the value of a college degree is questioned by students who wonder if the debt they may take on to attend college is worth the education they'll receive (Mayhew et al., 2016). Students must weigh the costs and benefits of going to college, as it has never been more expensive. Pew Research Center (2017) found American students owed \$1.3 trillion in student loans, and graduates who carry debt often question the utility of their degree. Student learning outcomes, institutional effectiveness and assessment, technology, laws and policies, and the evolution of degree programs skim the surface of why educational institutions are in a constant state of change. It is imperative that higher education faculty and staff are engaged in their work, so they can remain agile and flexible when a change agent requires a quick reaction.

Devoted Employees Across Industries

Devoted and *Plugged In* employees reported enthusiasm for their work, were determined to do their job well and found ways to creatively contribute to their team's success. These employees are excited to provide high-quality service or products, are prepared to fully devote themselves to their work, and see their job as a personal sense of pride (Craig & DeSimone, 2011). Noting similar findings, The Corporate Leadership Council (2004) found highly engaged employees try 57% harder, perform 20% better, and are 87% less likely to leave the organization compared to their disengaged counterparts. Engagement appears to not only increase productivity, efficiency, and creativity, but engagement also seems to affect the relationships between the worker, their customer, and the organization as well. For example, Accenture (2011) found that when employees find their work meaningful and are fully engaged, they feel their work can make a difference in their lives and to their customers. Exploring where this intrinsic motivation stems, Parent-Rochelleau et al. (2016) found the locus of control is significantly related to engagement, specifically that employees with an internal locus of control tend to emotionally engage with the organization. In addition to emotional engagement, these individuals tend to adopt attitudes and behaviors beneficial to the organization. These employees perceive they have control over their working environment and control over how they interact with that environment. Demonstrating how engagement can literally be the difference between life and death, Dawson (2009) found that patients recover faster and live longer when staff engagement increased at surveyed European hospitals. If staff engagement can influence one's ability to interact with one's environment, recover from and survive illness or injury, or affect one's

likelihood of returning to seek services, we ought to explore how staff engagement can affect student outcomes in a higher education setting. Finally, Robinson, Hooker, & Hayday (2007) found the business benefits of engaged employees include improved retention and a receptivity to change. Given the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, Student Affairs professionals must care about engaging their staff as change agents to meet the developing needs of their students.

Disengaged Employees Across Industries

Employees classified as *Cruise Control* or *Checked Out* can have an even more dramatic impact on their organization. Craig & DeSimone (2011) found these employees are less likely to find meaning in their work, less likely to perceive having influence over what happens in their work environments, feel their job is not important, and report poor interactions and connections with coworkers. Multiple studies have found that most employees across a wide range of industries are disengaged which can lead to workplace incivility, low productivity and poor job attitudes (Dalal et al., 2012; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012; Craig & DeSimone, 2011). Disengagement can be quite dangerous and expensive for organizations as well. Arkin (2011) investigated a UK retailer with over 80,000 employees and found links between employee engagement and performance; employees who were disengaged contributed less to the organization's overall sales, had poor mystery shopper reviews and increased absences. With only 30% of the American workforce actively engaged, Sorensen & Garman (2013) estimate disengagement costs American businesses and organizations anywhere from \$450-\$550 billion in lost productivity each year. Ultimately, disengaged employees can actively

work against positive change in an organization, negatively affect relationships between their coworkers, organizations, and their customers, and cause significant losses in productivity and revenue. With the dramatic effects of employee disengagement being noted in the business sector, it is worth our time, energy, and effort for higher education professionals to examine how Student Affairs professionals are engaging with their work and with students in higher education. Although most of these examples come from multiple industries they can be translated to higher education as low office morale in a dean's office is likely experienced the same as low office morale in an executive's office. The evidence suggests, although a different sector, higher education is not exempt from the effects of disengagement and our students would be the ones to suffer the consequences.

Employee Engagement in Higher Education

Specifically, in higher education, faculty have been assessed more completely than administrative staff (Wasilowski, 2016), which is an issue as faculty job conditions are not representative of staff working conditions. In 2015, Inside Higher Ed and The Gallup Organization surveyed 22,500 faculty members across a wide variety of institutions (2-year, 4- year, public, private, for-profit) and faculty (tenured, tenure track, adjunct) and found 34% of faculty were engaged in their jobs, 52% were disengaged, and 14% were actively disengaged. Of the disengaged and actively disengaged faculty, the majority were part-time or adjunct instructors (Gallup, 2015). When comparing the 34% of engaged faculty members to other industries, higher education engagement rates are about average. Similar to other industries such as business, sales, communication, and

manufacturing, disengagement has an impact on financial outcomes for higher education, such as the cost of attrition or recruitment and training of a new employee.

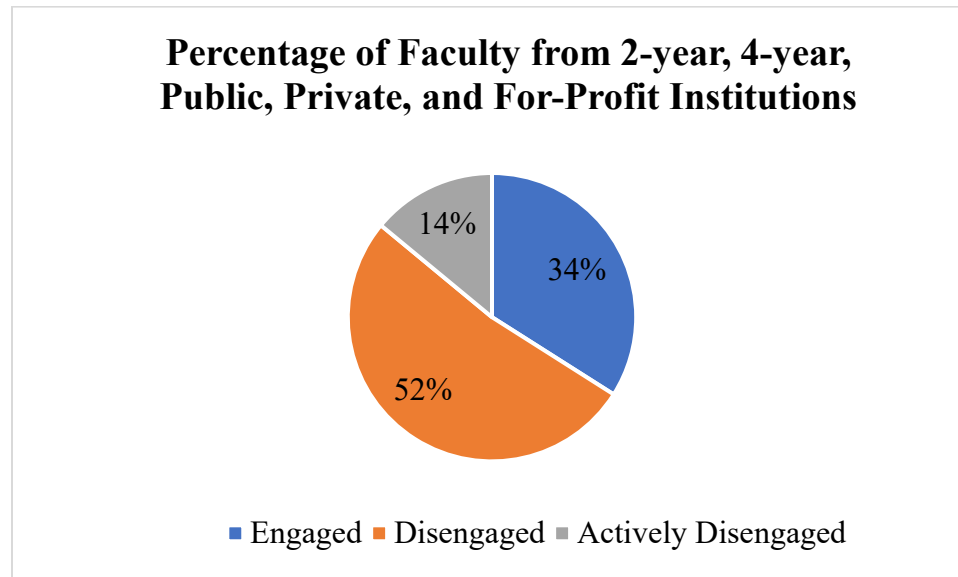


Figure 4. Faculty engagement in higher education.

Unique to higher education, financial implications affect not only the institution, but also the students. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) reported an individual with a high school diploma can expect to earn a median weekly salary of \$678 compared to an individual with a bachelor's degree who can expect to earn \$1,137 per week. Similarly, the Bureau found that individuals who earned a bachelor's degree earned a median income of \$45,500/year compared to \$28,000. Individuals who held a bachelor's degree had a much lower rate of poverty as well, 3.8% compared to 12.2% for individuals who held a high school diploma as their highest educational credential. The consequences of going to college and never earning a degree are severe. Researchers have found students who begin college and do not graduate are not only lower earners but are three times more likely to default on student loan repayment (Haugwout et al. (2015). Faculty

engagement in higher education has been found to have significant protective effects for student success in college and beyond (Wasilowski, 2016). Combined, these data suggest faculty engagement is important for the faculty but may be even more important for student success.

Faculty/staff engagement has been linked to not only have financial impacts on students, but also the institutions they attend. In other industries, engagement is linked to an increase in sales, acquired accounts, or number of transactions (Craig & DeSimone, 2011; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012). In higher education, employee engagement may be linked to success (financial, retention, safety, quality, absenteeism metrics) which therefore can be linked to student success, student retention, and graduation rates (Wasilowski, 2016). Thus, the opposite, disengagement, may be linked to attrition and higher institutional costs.

Hackett (2015) reported up to 40% of students at some institutions do not complete their bachelor's degree in six years, which requires the institution to spend additional time, money, and effort to replace the students who are not returning year after year and argues that attrition is expensive for the student and the institution. Staff engagement has the potential to protect against attrition. Gallup (2013) found engagement can reduce staff turnover by 25-65%. This figure is impressive given the Gallup (2015) reported 52% of faculty identify as disengaged and 14% identify as actively disengaged. Not only is student attrition expensive for institutions, but so is faculty and staff turnover. The Center for American Progress reviewed 30 case studies analyzing the cost employee turnover and found organizations spend anywhere from 5.8%-213% of the annual salary

of the vacant position trying to hire and train a replacement (Boushey & Glynn, 2012). A complete list of estimated institutional costs of replacing employees can be found below in Table 2.

Table 2. Employee retention calculation (Wasilowski, 2016).

Total employees	Average number of employee turnover	Turnover rate (%)	Average salary	Total salary or replacement (millions)	Estimated cost of replacement (20%) (millions)
750	35	4.67	\$75,000	\$2.625	\$0.525
1,500	75	5.00	\$75,000	\$5.625	\$1.125
2,000	100	5.00	\$75,000	\$7.500	\$1.500
3,000	150	5.00	\$75,000	\$11.250	\$2.250

The cost of replacing an employee can be expensive and ranges vastly from 5.8%-213% (Boushey & Glynn, 2012). The cost of replacing someone, especially with specialized skills, abilities, and education, can become unmanageable quickly. Considering the cost in advertising, recruiting, interviewing, possibly flying the candidate(s) to the interview site, paying for lodging and meals, the process of hiring can be shockingly expensive. The researchers found, for an institution/organization with 750 faculty and staff, each with a salary averaging \$75,000, if 35 employees left each year, it would cost the institution/organization \$2,250,000 to replace employees who left each year assuming the cost of replacing the employee was held at 20% (Wasilowski, 2016). For larger institutions/organizations with 3000 faculty and staff, it would cost the organization \$2,250,000/year to replace the estimated 150 employees who would voluntarily leave assuming 20% of the vacant position with an estimated salary of

\$75,000 (Wasilowski, 2016). Given the cost of recruiting, hiring, and training an employee, retaining employees should be prioritized to ensure good stewardship of funds.

Sense of Belonging and Engagement

Sense of belonging has the potential to retain employees and therefore decrease or stabilize institutional costs of employee attrition (Jacoby & Garland, 2004). Not a new concept, sense of belonging has been understood to be a basic human need (Maslow, 1962) and found to motivate individuals to explore or engage in their environment to find their niche (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Sense of belonging in the literature is comprised of diverse definitions, but concepts include the sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), a sense of membership to a school (Goodenow, 1993b), and a feeling of acceptance or connectedness with an institution and peers (Jacoby & Garland, 2004; Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Taylor et al., 2001). The literature suggests a strong sense of belonging is key to success for all students including students from underrepresented minority groups, LGBTQIA students, first-year students, and graduate students (Castellanos & Jones, 2003; Fleming, 1984; Strayhorn, 2012; Turner, 1994). Much like the importance of student sense of belonging to success outcomes, employee sense of belonging is found to be as important to employee success outcomes, most commonly measured by productivity, longevity, and overall satisfaction with workplace environment (Jaitli & Hua, 2013; Buffat et al., 2014) and could be important health indicators of the workplace environment.

Student Sense of Belonging

The literature indicates sense of belonging encompasses diverse feelings of engagement, community, membership, and connectedness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Goodenow, 1993b; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Jacoby & Garland, 2004; Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Taylor et al., 2001). Much like its diverse definition, sense of belonging can be fostered different ways in different groups of students. Meewisse et al. (2010) found students who identify as an ethnic minority derive their sense of belonging in a different context than students in the ethnic majority. The researchers found students in the ethnic minority felt a stronger sense of belonging in the academic programs, compared to students in the ethnic majority who felt a stronger sense of belonging in the creation of informal relationships with peers. This finding demonstrates the complexity involved in formalizing a means to foster sense of belonging for diverse individuals.

Student attrition caused by an absence of sense of belonging is especially a concern at the graduate level. Fostering a strong sense of belonging appears to be time sensitive in the sense that if students do not find a connection with their peers or institution in their first semester of college they are more likely to leave (Kane et al., 2014). When doctoral attrition was first being studied, social integration and development of sense of belonging was identified as being an important contributing factor for students' success. Tinto (1975) theorized students who are involved in their program and their department beyond the classroom are more likely to be successful than students who only engage in the classroom. Many studies have found that social integration is a cornerstone for successful degree completion (Golde, 1994; Lawson, 1985). In fact, Golde (1994) suggested office location, orientation programs, and student participation in

departmental decision-making centrally contributed to attrition, meaning, if an office was difficult to find, or if students felt disconnected from their own departments, they were more likely to leave. Overall, the research indicates that students at all levels who have intentional structures in place that allow them to engage both academically and socially tend to persist. When considering discipline, Bowen and Rudenstein (1992) found that completion rates were as low as 33.4% for students in the Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines, while Pion (2001) found completion rates to be as high as 76% for students in the Biomedical and Social Sciences. In an attempt to set a national baseline, a 2008 study by the Council of Graduate Schools, Sowell, et al. (2008) found doctoral completion rates to be as low as 56% ten years after students started their doctoral program. Sowell et al. (2008) found 49.3% of Humanities, 54.7% of Mathematics and Physical Sciences, 55.9% of Social Sciences, 62.9% of Life Sciences, and 63.6% of Engineering students completed their program within ten years.

Large personal expenses are incurred when students start college but do not graduate, which could have been mediated by institutions intentionally fostering a strong sense of belonging early on. The American Institutes for Research (2011) found that some students pay thousands of dollars in tuition, may take out loans, change personal behaviors like developing time management and study skills, and still ultimately fail at their goal of achieving a college degree. The taxpayers are responsible to pay billions in grants and state appropriations to support students who will never finish. There are a variety of different contributing factors to attrition. Golde (2000) identified why doctoral attrition is so perplexing; doctoral students are the most academically capable, most

academically successful, most stringently evaluated and most carefully selected students in the higher education system yet have the lowest chance of graduating. Failing at earning a terminal degree has damaging and demoralizing social and emotional costs, including depression, missed job opportunities, broken personal relationships, and financial devastation (Gillingham et al., 1991; Lovitts, 2001; Terrell, et al., 2009). Such devastating consequences demonstrates the importance of prioritizing engagement opportunities for students to foster a strong sense of belonging early on at their institution.

Employee Sense of Belonging

Employee sense of belonging parallels student sense of belonging in the sense that failing to connect with the organization or institution results in attrition, workplace incivility, low productivity and poor job attitudes (Dalal et al., 2012; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012; Craig & DeSimone, 2011). Researchers have found organizational commitment can minimize the impacts of job stress (Sanjeev, & Rathore, 2014) and involving employees in the decision-making process can foster feelings of being engaged, appreciated, and valued (Emmanuel & Damachi, 2015). One of the largest impacts and highly debated aspects of failing to create a sense of belonging with employees, much like students, is attrition. Researchers have found that individuals who develop a sense of belonging also tend to develop a sense of commitment to their organization, which can lead to occupational persistence (Meyer et al., 2004). Research has been conducted that conflates with previous findings. For example, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found affective commitment yields a weak relationship with turnover and a

moderate relationship with intention to stay at the organization, and Jex (2002) found affective commitment is moderately related to job commitment and is weakly related to absenteeism.

Much like sense of belonging for students, the development of a sense of belonging for employees requires both ontological and often geographical proximity to the organization or institution. Belle et al. (2014) investigated feelings of belonging in teleworkers (employees who work elsewhere than on-campus) and found sense of connectedness, belonging, and engagement were integral in employee productivity and performance. The researchers found individuals who reported feelings of not belonging reported or experienced conflict, a loss of stability, and exclusion from ownership of ideas or processes.

Play in the Workplace and Its Connection to Engagement

One way to facilitate engagement and sense of belonging in adults is through play (Barab et al., 2012; Florin et al., 2014). Children learn complex concepts such as socialization, cultural norms, and sense of belonging through play (Molina, 2012). The American Academy of Pediatrics reports play has lifelong social, emotional, cognitive, and physical benefits that help shape adult characteristics (Miltner & Ginsburg, 2012). The American Journal of Play is dedicated to disseminating the importance of play from childhood into adulthood and has found that play is important in development in reasoning and problem-solving (Zheng et al., 2011), understanding social interactions and solving social problems (Green et al., 2008), and managing stress (Gaikwad et al., 2016). Harrison (2012) found elementary students who played “school” were more engaged in

the classroom and had better outcomes than students who did not play school, corroborating findings that play is an effective learning strategy at a young age.

As we grow older, play becomes a less common strategy to understand social situations and solve problems, but should it? Play is emerging as a construct that has impressive effects for. For example, Mainemelis & Altman (2010) found companies like Google, Motorola, and Du Pont (all billion-dollar companies) encourage employees to spend up to 20% of their time, or one day a week, freely playing with new ideas and exploring creative concepts freely. Florin et al. (2014) found play to be a promising strategy to promote well-being, creative thinking, and problem solving at work. The researchers identified ten principles of play, mapped them to established theoretical basis and elaborated on the expected benefits an employee or organization might experience should their work become “gamified.” Florin et al. (2014) define gamified workplaces as organizations that use game-like qualities to transform their work processes into game-like experiences for employees to increase well-being, productive collaboration, and create more engaging workplaces.

Principles of Play in the Workplace

The Ten Principles of Play include:

- I Orientation,
- Persuasive Elements,
- Learning Orientation,
- Achievement-Based Rewards,
- Y Generation Adaptable,
- Amusement Factors,
- Transformative,
- Wellbeing-Oriented,
- Research Generating, and

- Knowledge-Based

These principles can be easily memorized by using the mnemonic I PLAY AT WORK. Florin et al. (2014) found that gamification of work helps employees create a personal connection, more easily adapt to new initiatives, feel a sense of control over their environment, increase their productivity, and increase personal satisfaction; all of these findings are beneficial for the employee and the employer. The researchers found that play provides employees an opportunity to practice self-efficacy and therefore develop or refine the feelings of an internal locus of control by putting the employee in the center of the experience. This psychological development allows staff to feel engaged and in-control of their environment (Florin, et al., 2014). Parent-Rochelleau et al. (2016) found the locus of control is significantly related to engagement, specifically that employees with an internal locus of control tend to emotionally engage with the organization. In addition to emotional engagement, these individuals tend to adopt attitudes and behaviors beneficial to the organization. Persuasive elements in gamified processes can enhance meaningful position, motivation, and enhance understanding of content and context Barab et al. (2012). When a teacher taught children different version of the same curricula (one game-based and one story-based) students in the game-based condition reported significantly higher motivational goals for participation and higher levels on engagement (Barab et al., 2012) indicating that persuasive elements can impact the trajectory of one's learning. Achievement-based rewards in gamified work has been found to be linked to intrinsic motivation, or internal locus of control (Cameron et al., 2005). Specifically, researchers found that achievement-based rewards during learning

increased one's intrinsic motivation. This strategy may be important for managers to employ corroborates Parent-Rochelleau et al. (2016) findings that individuals with an internal locus of control were more likely to emotionally engage with the organization. Utilization of achievement-based rewards in a higher education setting has the potential to impact the trajectory of one's learning. Principles, descriptions, theoretical basis, and expected benefits can be referenced below in Figure 5.

Figure 5. I PLAY AT WORK Florin, Ejones, & Ekatsikitis (2014)

ID	Principle	Description	Theoretical Basis	Expected Benefits
1.	I Orientation	Gamified processes place the employee at the center of the experience	Operant conditioning, locus of control, self-efficacy	Increased engagement, sense of control, self-efficacy
2.	Persuasive elements	Gamified processes include persuasive elements based on sound psychological and behavioral theories	Theory of planned behavior, uncertainty management	Adoption of new initiatives, increased satisfaction with internal communication
3.	Learning orientation	Focus on knowledge acquisition, skill development, motivational outcomes or behavioral change	Theory of planned behavior, self-efficacy, experiential learning	Development of personal and organizational capabilities and resources
4.	Achievement based rewards	Focus on a justifiably and predicible return to investment	Theory of planned behavior, experiential learning	Increased personal satisfaction and employee retention
5.	Y Generation adaptable	Generation Y is the fastest growing segment of the workforce and they are looking for work experiences that are supportive, fun, and engaging	Hierarchy of needs, psychogenic needs	Employee acquisition and retention
6.	Amusement factors	Inclusion of humor, play and fun elements as part of the work process	Psychogenic needs, social learning theory	Increased personal satisfaction and enhanced wellbeing

Figure 5 Continued

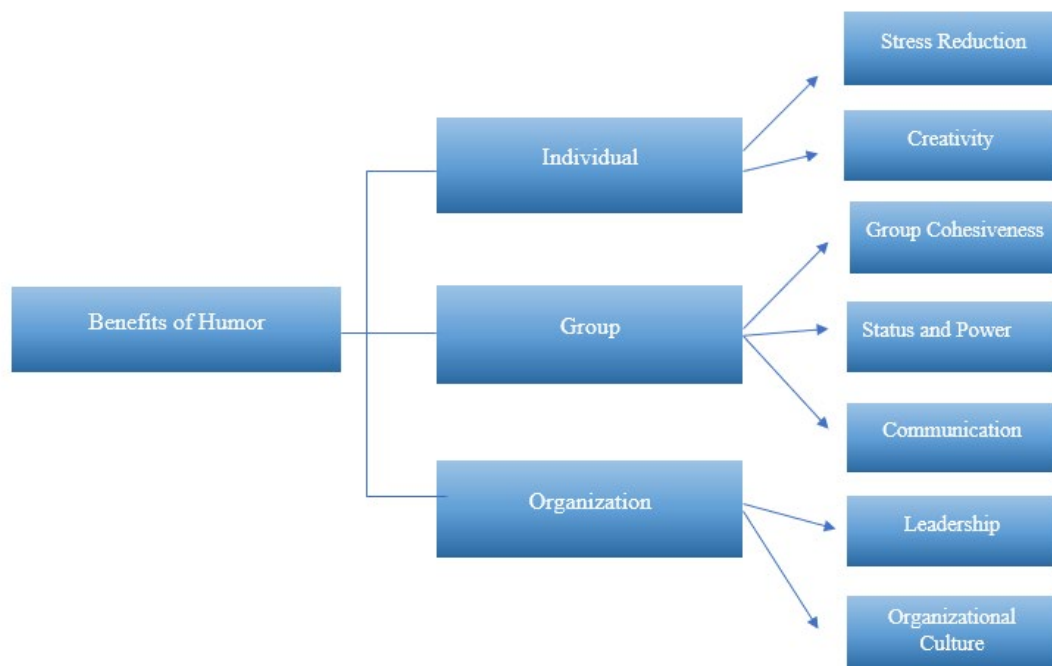
7.	Transformative	Use of a balanced and attractive combination of competition and collaboration in order to transform existing work processes within an organization	Leadership theories, team building	Enhanced productivity
8.	Wellbeing oriented	Focus on personal and organizational wellbeing	Organizational behavior, self-competence	Enhanced personal and organizational wellbeing
9.	Research generating	Collaborative research efforts must be encouraged to justify future investments in the area	Organizational needs assessment and evaluation	Enhanced monitoring and decision making
10.	Knowledge-based	Based on knowledge as either an outcome or as feedback	Organizational training, adult learning	Development of personal and organizational capabilities and resources

Playfulness at work can enhance learning, problem-solving, creative thinking, social relations (Green et al., 2008), and manage stress (Gaikwad et al, 2016). The Millennial generation expects work to be fun (Romero & Pescosolido, 2008). This expectation has been found to change the trajectory of workplace environments across industries and disciplines. Playfulness in the workplace has benefits to the individual including laughing and a general sense of feeling good (Fredrickson, 2001) and more significant effects such as stress reduction (Henman, 2001), creativity (Romero & Cruthirds, 2006), group cohesiveness (Gozukara, 2016), status and power (Duncan & Feisal, 1989), and enhanced communication (Forester, 2004). The organization benefits from employees who practice playfulness as well. Leaders who are playful or use humor may be more effective in persuading their colleagues to follow context of increased performance and agility related to organizational change (Ho et al., 2011). Additionally,

humor has been found to play a pivotal role in communicating organizational values and changing organizational culture (Duncan & Feisal, 1989).

The researchers concluded that, although gamification is not well understood in the workplace, evidence suggests it is a promising strategy to improve loyalty, productivity, and well-being in the workplace by fostering control, communication, increased satisfaction, improved productivity, and enhanced decision-making (Florin et al., 2014). These findings indicate playfulness in the workplace has the potential to not only increase engagement of staff but simultaneously improve staff performance outcomes as well.

Figure 6. The Benefits of Humor and Play at Work (Mathew & Vijayalakshmi, 2017).



With these benefits of play, why is adult play on the decline? Research suggests that adults limit their play to also limit embarrassment, as play is socially seen as a

juvenile activity (Deterding, 2018). Perhaps another reason for the decrease in adult play, adulthood is socially defined as the opposite of childhood (Jenkins, 2008) possibly insinuating those who play are childish. Although playfulness in adults is understudied, there is evidence it serves an important role in continuing to shape our identity, sense of well-being, and impact socialization as an adult (Proyer & Ruch, 2011). Even when seeking a life partner as an adult, playfulness often indicates other positive qualities, such as intelligence, creativity, and humor (Proyer, 2011). These traits carry over into the professional context as well. Glynn & Webster (1992) found that adults with playful traits tend to be more innovative while at work.

Engagement's Relationship to Climate and Culture

Examining and understanding office climate and culture and how it impacts one's productivity, sense of belonging, and engagement is complex. Office climate is defined as the shared meaning organizational members attach to the events, policies, practices, and procedures they experience and the behaviors they see being rewarded, supported, and expected (Ehrhart et al., 2014). Climate could be likened to a car engine. It's the standardized nuts and bolts, the power source, the engineering behind what makes an office tick. When the engine revs and all the cylinders are pumping, it's exciting! When the engine sputters and struggles to run, it's frustrating. Office climate is not much different. Research on office climate did not begin in earnest until the 1970's when researchers were finding stimulating links between climate and human behavior/performance (Guion, 1973).

Measuring Climate

Ever complex, researchers found measurement to be complicated and often yielded inconsistent outcomes. Some questioned whether climate could be separated from individual attitudes (Guion, 1973), or whether it should be considered and measured as a perception (Payne & Pugh, 1976), or if organization climate could be distinguished from psychological climate (James & Jones, 1974). An important clarification emerged in climate research; James & Jones (1974) defined climate as a property of the unit distinct of individual perceptions, essentially clarifying that climate can be described on the macro-level (laws, policies, regulations) vs. culture on the micro-level (implementation, routine).

The 1980's focused on how to accurately measure climate given the definition, and methods vary. Researchers explored how to achieve agreement between respondents. Some thought specific wording associations (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000), referent-shift consensus (Chan, 1998), or aggregate inter-rater agreement and reliability (Bliese, 2000) was the best way to measure climate. At best, measuring climate is complicated. Kuenzi & Schminke (2009) suggest that researching climate decreased at the tail end of the 1980's because of the uptick in interest in culture. However, climate has continued to be well researched in customer satisfaction and service behavior research (Schneider et al., 2011; Schneider et al., 2005; Whitman et al., 2012).

Linked to Organizational Justice, research on climate is focused on climate as the moderator. Lam & Mayer (2014) found that organizational climate can account for low levels of individual differences in employee behavior. This means that a well-tuned climate might be able to affect organizational processes and functioning.

Organizational Culture

Shein (2010) defined Organizational Culture as a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by an organization as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. Referring to the aforementioned car example, culture can be likened to driving style. A father shows his son how closely to follow the car ahead of him on the road; it's worked for him, he's never been in an accident and he's passing down his knowledge, style, and values of safety and good driving to his son.

Research on culture increased as research on climate began to decline. Much like climate, researchers debated how to conceptualize and measure culture. Smirch (1983) suggested perceptions of climate are different depending on the context: is it something organizations have or is it something organizations are? When culture is viewed as something organizations have, it is researched as a variable and compared to other variables to determine their relationship to organizational effectiveness. When culture is viewed as something organizations are, it is viewed as a symbolic representation of day-to-day life with the goal of understanding the experiences of the individuals in that context. Linked to organizational justice, researchers have found that organizations composed of specific professions can have their own culture influence the that of the organization (Trice & Beyer, 1993; Van Mannen et al., 1984). One could then understand how personal feelings and personal life events can penetrate the office environment, changing a once positive work environment into a negative one.

The next logical step in the research is to determine how one can change a negative culture into a positive one. Burke (2011) suggests changing an organizational culture is so difficult because the culture exists to provide order and remove ambiguity. Culture gives individuals rules to operate within to control for any uncertainty. Some researchers have found that changing organizational culture is easier at certain times and harder at others, for example during a crisis or a time of chaos (Schein, 2010; Louis, 1985). Since crises are unwanted and unpredictable, a more pragmatic strategy has been investigated and used related to the recognition and celebration organizational values. Essawi (2012) found a productive strategy to manage organizational change was to approach organizational culture through confrontation of desired organizational values and values available to employees; essentially, if employees have a say in what the values are, they are more likely to buy into them. If the employees buy into the values, one is more likely to successfully bring about organizational change.

Workplace Incivility

Mistreatment in the workplace can range from physical aggression to psychological aggression (Sguera et al., 2016). Many similarities exist between instances of workplace incivility and characteristics of disengaged employees, including aggression, role ambiguity, poor job attitude, low productivity, low job satisfaction, and reported poor interactions with co-workers (Dalal et al., 2012; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012; Craig & DeSimone, 2011). Leiter (2013) went so far as to describe workplace as a 'crisis' speaking to the effects it has on mental health, productivity, and negative impact to employee sense of belonging. Given these similarities, one could

assume disengaged offices might experience workplace incivility at a greater rate than offices that are engaged.

Workplace incivility not only negatively impacts employees that work in the office but impacts the customers/students/patients as well. In one study, Hoffman & Chunta (2015) researched workplace incivility in a radiology nursing unit at a hospital. The researchers found uncivil behavior impacted the individual, the organization, and threatened patient safety. Roter (2019) found that workplace incivility has emotional costs such as stress and anxiety that cost industry upwards of \$300 billion annually. Similar to disengagement, workplace incivility is destructive, often intentional, and difficult to change without direct intervention (Hoffman & Chunta, 2015; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012; Roter, 2019). Translating these findings to the higher education setting, one can understand how incivility in the workplace has the potential to impact the individual, the university, and the students.

Incentivizing Engagement

Incentive programs are can be found in almost all industries including business, healthcare, and education. In an article for the *Harvard Business Review*, Kahn (1993) suggested that most of business have some sort of incentive program in place to motivate their staff to work harder, smarter, or faster, however, the programs, although popular, would likely fail. The author argued incentive programs offer temporary compliance and socialize employees to focus on the reward they earn for doing a certain action instead of understanding why they must perform a certain action. Román et al. (2017) found the effectiveness of an incentive program depends on a few different variables, including the

business cycle and size of the organization. The researchers found that incentive programs worked for organizations of all sizes but were most effective on larger organizations and had less of an impact on smaller organizations. Exploring the potential for incentive programs to affect behavior or established habits, Carrera et al. (2018) investigated the impact of financial incentives on gym-going practices. The researchers found varying financial amounts and delivery schedules had only a small effect during the first six weeks of the program and no long-term effect on changing gym-going behavior. Finkelstein et al. (2017) found conflicting results which indicated incentive programs were an effective tool to change health behaviors. The researchers found participants who were offered incentives to make healthy habits lost more weight and kept the weight off longer compared to participants who were not offered incentives. The literature indicates that the effectiveness of incentive programs depends on many variables, including size of the audience, type of reward or incentive, and behavior being altered.

Different Kinds of Incentives

Although few studies examine incentives in higher education for employees (Durant et al., 2006), there is literature that exists reviewing incentive programs in other industries to which parallels can be drawn to help frame potential strategies implemented in higher education. It is important to note that traditionally, most incentive programs have been used to improve performance outcomes of employees, not necessarily increase engagement. In a meta-analysis, Durant et al. (2006) examined four popular incentive frameworks, financial incentives, job design input, participation in decision-making, and

goal setting, and their respective effects on performance and employee behavior. The researchers reviewed the results of 72 different field studies and found financial incentives were moderately to significantly effective for improving employee performance and behavior but only if organizational conditions were satisfactory. Essentially, no amount of money can compensate for an organization that is poorly managed. Stajkovic & Luthans (2003) found the most powerful combination of financial incentive was observed when paired with feedback and social recognition. Furthermore, they iterate that financial incentives alone improved performance by 23%, social recognition alone improved performance by 17%, and feedback alone improved performance by 10%. However, when combined, performance improved 45% suggesting that a combination of approaches is most effective in improving performance outcomes. Merit pay, one of the most popular and well-known financial incentive strategies, was also examined and analyzed for effectiveness on performance outcomes. Merit pay is a pay-for-performance framework that allows employees to earn different levels of financial incentives for different levels of performance, allowing the employee to potentially earn a considerable amount of money beyond their base salary for exemplary performance.

Milkovich & Wigdor (1991) found merit pay is, at best, moderately effective and mediated by overall organizational conditions. Contrary to the above positive finding regarding merit pay, researchers found the same results are not replicated in the public-sector, possibly because adequate funding is not as easily accessible, suggesting there is a certain amount of financial reward that inspires an employee to improve their

performance (Ingraham, 1993; Kellough & Lu, 1993; Perry, 1988). Given this information, a combination of incentives might be more effective.

Allowing employees to provide feedback into their job design is another incentive framework that researchers have evaluated for effectiveness. Job design frameworks have stemmed from Herzberg's (1959) theory on motivating factors and can include employees shaping their schedule and professional development priorities. Researchers found job design, as a framework, increased productivity and quality 28% (Durant et al., 2006) and can positively affect an employee's attitudes towards their work more than it impacts their behavior on the job (Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

Participation in development of values or strategic planning is another incentive framework that has been evaluated for effectiveness. Much like the findings discussed earlier (Bartkus, 1997), providing employees an opportunity to be empowered in the leadership of their company or organization seems to increase employee concern and performance directly related to their job duties. Durant et al. (2006) reviewed eight meta-analyses and four narrative reviews and found participation as an incentive framework led to strong positive affective attachments to the organization but less impressive effects on job performance. Although participation has strong influence over one's feelings toward their job and limited influence over one's performance, researchers found employees who were invited to participate in strategic planning yielded better decision-making outcomes (Wagner et al., 1997).

Finally, goal setting is another incentive framework researchers have evaluated for effectiveness. In reviewing over 1,000 articles and examining over 40 years of

research, Mitchell & Daniels (2003) argued goal setting is the one of the most effective strategies to improve overall employee performance. Specifically, researchers found that setting challenging, learning-focused, and specific goals, was effective in improving employee performance. Setting complex goals without a learning focus or specific outcomes had the opposite effect on employee performance reinforcing the paradigms earlier outlined in Astin's (1999) Student Involvement Theory suggesting that involvement must be intentional in order for growth and development to be achieved.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the extant literature related to job satisfaction and its transformation into employee engagement in higher education and subsequently across other industries. The literature connected to the benefits of employee engagement was examined, including: productivity, invalidation, creativity, efficiency, a sharp focus on their customers, and a significant increase in time and mental, physical and emotional energy into their work compared to their disengaged colleagues (Craig & DeSimone, 2011; Hanaysha, 2016). There is a gap that exists in the peer reviewed literature pertaining specifically to assessing engagement in higher education. Research has been conducted on faculty (Gallup, 2015; Wasilowski, 2016) and students (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015; Donghoon, 2013; Haugwout et al., 2015) but problematically, there is limited research that exists for administrative staff (Boushey & Glynn, 2012; Wasilowski, 2016). Sense of belonging was discussed, first for students as well as for staff to demonstrate the comparison in experiences. Engagement is a tried and tested strategy to foster a student's sense of belonging with an institution (Strayhorn, 2012) and research

suggests sense of belonging is imperative for students to feel connected to their peers (Jacoby & Garland, 2004; Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Taylor et al., 2001). Similarly, employees' sense of belonging was found to be imperative for retention, productivity, workplace civility, and one's feelings associated with their job (Dalal et al., 2012; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012; Craig & DeSimone, 2011). Playfulness at work can enhance learning, problem-solving, creative thinking, social relations (Green et al., 2008), and manage stress (Gaikwad et al, 2016). The Millennial generation expects work to be fun (Romero & Pescosolido, 2008). This expectation has been found to change the trajectory of workplace environments across industries and disciplines. Finally, current research on the effectiveness of incentivizing employees was reviewed and included a review of the effectiveness of financial incentives, job design input, participation in decision-making and strategic planning, and goal-setting. Results indicated that using a variety and a combination of strategies was most effective in motivating/incentivizing employees and their behavior or feelings toward their work (Durant et al., 2006; Finkelstein et al., 2017; Mitchell & Daniels, 2003; Román et al., 2017; Wagner et al., 1997). These findings suggest effectively incentivizing employees can be a complex yet effective way to increase engagement.

CHAPTER THREE—METHODOLGY

Introduction

The purpose of this transformative, sequential, mixed-methods study was to examine how formalizing an engagement incentive program for higher education administrative staff in the Division of Student Success at a regionally accredited, land-grant institution impacts employee-reported engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12. The researcher collected qualitative data to help explain the quantitative Gallup Q12 survey scores to give individuals in leadership roles concrete information on how employees interpret Gallup Q12 and which, if any, actions they can take to improve employee engagement in their offices in the context of climate and culture. Finally, this study provides more context and insight as to what employees need from their leadership to help them be engaged in their role on campus.

Research Questions

The researcher will better understand the impact incentive programs have on employee engagement by answering the following questions:

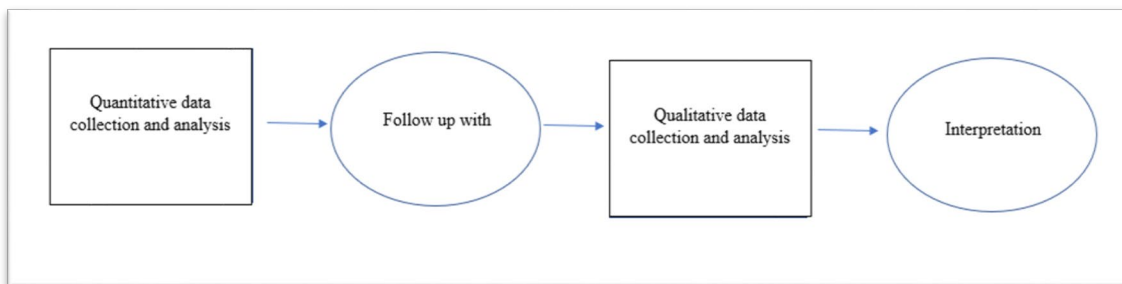
1. Does the overall engagement score for the Division of Student Success change after implementing a formalized incentive program?
2. Do respondents feel Gallup Q12 adequately captures their level of engagement and reflects their office climate and culture?
3. How do staff in highly engaged offices feel differently about office climate and culture than staff in disengaged offices?

Methodology Selected

Mixed-methods research allows for the collection and analysis of multiple sources of data which can then be categorized into themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). When using mixed methods, a series of advantages and disadvantages must be considered. Creswell (2015) indicates advantages of qualitative research include: providing detailed perspectives of participants, allows for an understanding and exploration of participant experiences, and is based in the views of the participant, not the researcher. Creswell (2015) indicates disadvantages of qualitative research include: generalizability limitations, high subjectivity, and often limited sample sizes. Similarly, there are advantages and disadvantages to quantitative approaches. Advantages include proficient data analysis, examination of probable cause, and generalizability to different populations (Creswell, 2015). Quantitative approaches can be impersonal or dry, do not include participant reflections or experiences, and provide little participant context (Creswell, 2015). Given the advantages and disadvantages of each approach, this study employs an transformative, sequential, mixed-methods design which requires the collection of quantitative data and then uses qualitative data to provide clarification to the quantitative results (Creswell, 2015). Mixed methods allow for triangulation between scores reported on the Gallup and responses on the following Qualtrics survey. Transformative, mixed methods design use qualitative and quantitative data to spur social change at all levels, including personal to political arenas (Mertens, 1998). The “lessons” learned from triangulation of concepts can be used as interventions to help directors change their staffs’ engagement and improve their office climate and culture. Additionally,

transformative frameworks incorporate the intent to improve the human experience (Sweetman et al., 2010). Mixed-methods research is advantageous to a researcher as multiple methods are combined to better understand the concept being explored (Creswell, 1994). Methodological selections will be described for the qualitative and quantitative approaches, respectively.

Figure 7. Sequential, Transformative, Mixed-Methods Design



This study followed a sequential transformative design, quantitative and qualitative survey data was collected separately, and both sets of data were analyzed with the intention of using qualitative results to better understand quantitative results through triangulation and integration of concepts. This research design allowed the researcher to examine the Gallup Q12 Division of Student Success survey engagement results prior to the launch of the employee incentive program and after the launch of the employee program, as well as across offices that did and did not participate in the program. Additionally, qualitative data from Division employees who may or may not have participated in the program will added rich description of reflections specific to engagement and office climate and culture which were used to better understand division scores on the Gallup Q12 survey.

Survey research is an appropriate approach to generalize responses from a sample to a broader population so inferences may be made related to characteristics, behavior, or attitude of the population (Babbie, 1990). The benefits of survey research include rapid data collection and the ability to identify attributes of a larger population from a small group of people (Creswell, 1994). In this case, all possible respondents were invited to participate, and more than half did so, which provides strong support for generalizability to the affected population, with some limitations described below. The researcher did not collect data on how people who participated may be similar or different from people who did not as part of this study.

The Researcher

Researcher positionality is important to explore as it allows for transparency as one's experiences and identities influence how information is perceived, processed, and disseminated (Bansal et al., 2011). The purpose of stating my researcher positionality is to identify how my life, educational, and work experiences have accumulated to result in a passion for higher education, student success, and employee engagement. Finally, a purpose of stating my researcher positionality is to acknowledge any biases in how my life has shaped my opinions about higher education and employee engagement.

I was considered a high-risk, (Frankel et al., 2009, p. 7) first-generation student who likely persisted because a staff member went above and beyond their duties as an 8-5 employee to show concern for my success. I was from a divorced family, the first in my family to attend college, had a great GPA in high school but had low SAT/ACT scores. While living in the residence halls in 2010, I had a health event while home over winter

break. Upon my return, this staff member had balloons, a get-well card, and homemade soup waiting to greet me back to campus. At that moment, I knew that I wasn't just a student on her list to contact for the semester to see how things were going. She made me feel as though I'd be missed if I decided not to return and I felt obligated to show her that I was worth her time. She made sure to check in on me even after I was healed and encouraged me to get involved in residence life.

In 2011 became a resident advisor (RA) and helped my students through drug dependency and abuse, depression, relationship turmoil, domestic abuse, sexual assault, eating disorders, peer pressure, and self-harm. I tried to make sure each one of my residents knew I would miss them if they were to let their problems overcome their motivation or ability to stay in school. I connected students with resources, walked them to their appointments, took notes for them in their classes, let them eat my stash of snacks, and made sure I stopped by to talk to them about how important they were to the spirit of our floor, because they were. It was the most challenging, engaging, and rewarding position I've held to date.

After my year as an RA, I became a retention advisor and focused on my studies in Psychology. In between retention meetings with students, I ran experiments in a lab on campus as a student assistant studying motivation, diversity, discrimination, and modern-symbolic racism. During my time as a retention advisor, I helped students with time management skills, study strategies, held retention interventions, and contacted students earning a C or below in their courses to connect them with resources. I often found that the content of the course was not what students were struggling with, instead, many

students struggled with food insecurity, substance abuse, anxiety or depression, trauma, or health issues. I was proud to be a student and employee of a university that believed so passionately that we could create such a nurturing environment that, regardless of the obstacles students were facing outside of the classroom, our campus community was their proverbial soft place to land. Consistently, I saw students persevere and overcome the challenges potentially preventing them from being successful because they were engaged, aware of their resources, and knew someone was keeping an eye on them.

After four years as a retention advisor, I took a full-time administrative position after earning my baccalaureate degree in Psychological Science. I was responsible for enforcing departmental and university policy to ensure students met the requirements of a regionally accredited undergraduate degree. This was my first experience as a full-time staff member, and I was naive to the dangers of workplace incivility and how one or two toxic individuals can corrupt all intentions of collegiality. I witnessed adults launch into tantrums, intentionally sabotage or treat their coworkers badly, and complete the bare minimum work to successfully avoid behavioral intervention.

After three years, I moved to a position at an online, for-profit, regionally accredited military institution. Although the institution was facing furloughs and widespread layoffs, I observed staff were happy to come to work and worked hard while they were there. The institution's leadership focused on recognizing great work in a seemingly hopeless situation, celebrated behaviors and actions that aligned with the institution's values, and students regularly shared their gratefulness that someone went above and beyond their expectations to help them out.

I then returned to the very same office I once left but this time returning as a supervisor. Many of the same individuals I worked with previously were still at the office. My first charge in my new position was to better understand the Gallup Q12 scores and see what we could do to improve employee engagement. I immediately replicated the same process that was taking place at the military school and had staff define which values were important to them, and then focused on recognizing when staff exemplified the value. Thus, I have been intimately involved with staff development, change leadership, and change management for the last five years. I've taken personal responsibility for the increase or sometimes decrease of the Gallup Q12 for the office I work in and have helped to shape the Division initiative based on successes and challenges of RISE.

These experiences have helped me to develop a social constructionist research approach that allows for many voices, perspectives, and opinions to determine the utility of engagement strategies (Holman et al., 1997). I've learned that some strategies that didn't work to increase engagement previously are now popular as the people the strategy is applied to are different than the first cohort, open to alternative ideas, and find value in things that the previous cohort didn't consider. This approach allows for constant re-evaluation and rejuvenation of interventions. Given my experience as a high-risk first-generation student, I feel quite strongly that a responsibility exists for higher education institutions to do their best to ensure their staff are engaged, as one's level of engagement may or may not be the determining factor of a student deciding to leave an institution or face their challenges in partnership with their school.

Piloting Employee Engagement Incentive Programs

To foster engagement in employees at the same university, one office within the Division of Student Success implemented a similar engagement incentive program after partnering with the Gallup Organization to assess employee engagement across the division. For the purposes of this dissertation, this office will be referred to as Office A. Gallup was chosen as the tool of choice as the Vice President for Student Success had used Gallup at their previous institution to monitor and increase engagement.

Office A was included in the Division of Student Success which participated in assessing employee engagement via the Gallup Q12 Survey. The Gallup Q12 Survey is a 12-question survey developed by Gallup with over 30 years of in-depth behavioral and economic research reported from over 17 million employees related to job performance and engagement outcomes (Gallup, 2017). Although limitations of survey research apply, such as relying on an individual's self-reported assessment of their knowledge, skills, and behaviors, social desirability concerns, and response rate challenges (Mertens, 1998), the Gallup Q12 survey has a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.91 at the business unit level of analysis (Gallup, 2017) making it one of the most widely used assessments for employee engagement across industries. Although many articles in Business and Human Resources magazines and publications exist, there doesn't appear to be a peer-reviewed Gallup Q12 critique in the literature at this time.

The Gallup Q12 was sent out electronically via university email to employees in October of 2015. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement using a 5-point Likert-type scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) on 12 statements:

- I know what is expected of me at work,
- I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right,
- I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day,
- I have received recognition or praise for doing good work in the last seven days,
- someone at work seems to care about me as a person,
- there is someone at work who encourages my development,
- my opinions seem to count,
- the mission or purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important,
- my team members are committed to quality work,
- I have a best friend at work,
- someone at work has talked to me about my progress in the last six months, and
- I have had the opportunity to learn and grow this last year.

Results were then broken up into three categories; employees are engaged, not engaged, or actively disengaged. Engaged employees are in the top 66th percentile in the Gallup database, not engaged are in the 33rd-66th percentile, and actively disengaged employees are below the 33rd percentile. In addition to engagement scores, departments receive the grand mean, sample, and Gallup database percentile rank to help them situate their level of engagement compared to similar organizations. Grand mean is the average of the averages of all of the offices that used the tool. The sample is the total number of employees who took the survey, and the Gallup database percentile rank is how one's institution/organization/office compares with all others in the Gallup Database. Office A was found to be actively disengaged on each measure. The highest reported measure for Office A, *the mission or purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important*, was 11/100. This means the office placed in the 11th percentile when compared to other institutions in the database. There were eight questions, *I know what is expected of me at work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work in the last seven days, someone at work seems to care*

about me as a person, there is someone at work who encourages my development, my opinions seem to count, my team members are committed to quality work, and someone at work has talked to me about my progress in the last six months, where Office A staff scored 1/100. Finally, Office A staff reported their *overall satisfaction* with their work as 1/100. A complete list of scores for 2015 is reported below in Table 3.

Office A's leadership team was not shocked by the results as many behaviors in the office were reflective of the outcome. The office was productive but not efficient. Leadership perceived the staff as cordial but not friendly. The employees did their work but did not complete it with enthusiasm or seek additional responsibilities. The staff completed their work, but they did not appear to enjoy it. All the behaviors observed mirrored textbook disengagement as found in the literature (Dalal et al., 2012; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012; Craig & DeSimone, 2011). Additionally, the Gallup Q12 results could be triangulated with complaints from students and departments regarding service received from Office A submitted to the office manager, and two employees had active disciplinary warnings in their file due to poor performance or behavior.

The leadership's primary concern was the possibility that students were negatively impacted by the staff's active disengagement. Increasing employee engagement and satisfaction (and improving the Gallup Q12 scores as a result) became the leadership team's top priority. Thus, Office A initiated a transformative case study to better understand how a value-based rewards program may affect office culture and climate experienced by university administrative staff. The office leadership researched

how to get their staff to participate in the positive change that needed to take place to improve engagement, overall job satisfaction, and the Gallup Q12 scores. This goal was not to achieve a temporary fix, but rather to transition into a shift in the cultural norms Office A had practiced for many years. Research specifically related to organizational culture and change indicated this work is often challenging, disruptive, and can take significant time (Awal et al., 2006), but is important, as perceptions of organizational culture are associated with job satisfaction (Schneider, 1990). Framing change in the context of guiding values has been found to successfully lead individuals through significant organizational change when coming from diverse backgrounds and perspectives (Awal et al., 2006; De Geus, 1997). Given this information, the leadership asked their staff to carefully consider which values were important to them in the context of their jobs and service to students. After some thought and consideration, the staff of Office A defined their values as respect, integrity, student success, and excellence. The values identified by the staff were identical to the institutional values outlined in the University's strategic plan which gave the office leadership an opportunity to connect their work to the guiding principles of the institution.

Once the values were agreed upon, the staff then defined what each of those values looks like or feels like for them. For example, the dictionary definition could provide a basis of information, but would lack the perspective an employee could offer working in the office. For four days one week during the Fall 2015 semester, the staff were asked to thoughtfully reflect on what each value looked like and share their definition. The leadership then compiled the staff-defined definitions for each value and

worked with university printing services to have the values and staff definitions printed on cardstock. Programmatically, one value a month would be celebrated according to the following structure: recognition of strengths, encouraging employee engagement both inside and outside of the office, and rewarding employees for recognizing staff contributions and engaging beyond job duties. At the beginning of the month, the staff were given the respect card, for example. Their job was to watch their colleagues' interactions with students, faculty, and other staff. If they saw something that aligned with the definition written on the card, they would write the observed transaction on the back of the card and "award" the employee their respect. Slowly, the default setting of Office A began to change. Instead of looking for mistakes or faults in their colleagues to share with management, the staff began looking for examples of *respect*, *integrity*, *student success*, and *excellence* in everyday transactions. The program became known as RISE, an acronym for the values.

The first month of RISE, Office A's leadership team chose a staff exemplar who had received value cards from their colleagues and embodied the values in their work and transactions with students. As a means of recognition, their picture was hung in the office, and they were celebrated on the office website and Facebook page as the Exemplar for the month. Every month after that, the previous exemplar chose the next. Each month, different staff members, chosen by their peers, were celebrated in the office, online, and on social media. Simply recognizing and acknowledging the good work that was happening in the office appeared to make a significant impact. The calculated efforts observed by Office A's leadership team were corroborated by the 2016 Gallup results.

The highest measure reported, *someone at work seems to care about me as a person*, improved to 71/100 from 1/100 from the previous year, although overall job satisfaction only improved from 1/100 to 3/100. A complete list of the 2016 Gallup scores can be found in Table 2. Although progress was being made, Office A's leadership predicted it would take more than recognition to continue improving, it would take rewarding staff for good performance and behavior. After careful consideration, the leadership team requested one-time-only funding from the Division of Student Success and was granted \$4000 to allocate toward the RISE program.

In addition to being recognized by their peers for a job well done, Office A's employees could now be rewarded if they met two conditions; first, they had to have given out a card (actively recognized someone else's good work) and second, they had to engage in two opportunities outside of the office to connect with peers in the Division of Student Success. These engagement opportunities were wide-ranging and included: helping welcome students at orientation, volunteer for welcome week activities, assist students and parents with move-in day, take a colleague from a different office to coffee to learn about their job, or attend a professional development workshop. If the employees met both conditions, they could spend \$50 in the campus bookstore on items of their choosing. The incentive itself could boost feelings of belonging if used to purchase university-branded apparel, for instance. After another year of consistently encouraging staff members to catch their peers doing good work and offering engagement opportunities outside of the office, the Gallup scores continued to improve.

In 2015, Office A focused on recognition of exemplifying self-defined values. In 2016, recognition was paired with reward, which seemed to have some influence on the increasing Gallup Q12 scores. Finally, in 2017, engagement opportunities were added to established recognition and reward which seemed keep the Gallup Q12 scores trending upward. Engagement opportunities were broad and included a minimum of at least two external (out-of-the-office) engagements a semester. In 2017, there was a tie for the highest scores reported. Both *I have received recognition or praise for doing good work in the last seven days* and *Someone at work seems to care about me as a person* came in at 98/100, however the office scored lower in *My teammates are committed to doing quality work* than the previous year and *I know what is expected of me at work* only increased one percentile from the previous year. The two measures related to the employee feeling as though their team and they know *how* to do a good job consistently remain in the lower percentiles, while the combination of consistent recognition, reward, and engagement seemed to be working to increase reported engagement and job satisfaction on the Gallup Q12 survey.

It must be noted that staff changes also took place between 2015 and 2017. A few staff members found other employment opportunities which resulted in vacancies that needed to be searched and filled. Thus, the same group of people did not take the survey year after year, which is an expected limitation of longitudinal research (Mertens, 1998). Comparing Office A to itself over time, therefore, may erroneously attribute change to the employee engagement intervention that is actually due to turnover. Comparing Office A to other offices and the Division, which also experienced staff turnover but no

formalized value-based recognition and engagement program, would lend more credence to the intervention's influence.

Office A's scores from 2015-2017 may be referenced along with other offices in the Division of Student Success, which did not experience a formalized employee engagement intervention. Offices B-D are similarly sized offices with no significant organizational or leadership change over the three years studied in Tables 3-7.

Table 3. Office A Gallup Q12 survey scores percentiles

Question	Prompt	2015	2016	2017	Point Change
Q00	How satisfied are you with your organization as a place to work?	1	3	20	19
Q01	I know what is expected of me at work.	1	3	4	3
Q02	I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.	6	65	95	89
Q03	At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.	1	18	32	31
Q04	In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.	1	23	98	97
Q05	My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.	1	17	98	97
Q06	There is someone at work who encourages my development.	1	39	97	96
Q07	At work, my opinions seem to count.	1	4	72	71
Q08	The mission or purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important.	11	7	84	73
Q09	My team members are committed to doing quality work.	1	3	1	0
Q10	I have a best friend at work.	9	71	91	82
Q11	In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.	1	41	81	80
Q12	This last year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow.	5	32	88	83

Table 4. Office B Gallup Q12 survey scores percentiles

Question	Prompt	2015	2016	2017	Point Change
Q00	How satisfied are you with your organization as a place to work?	15	10	19	4
Q01	I know what is expected of me at work.	3	1	2	-1
Q02	I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.	81	33	23	-58
Q03	At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.	12	19	26	14
Q04	In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.	87	89	77	-10
Q05	My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.	99	32	77	-22
Q06	There is someone at work who encourages my development.	98	16	58	-40
Q07	At work, my opinions seem to count.	85	25	13	-72
Q08	The mission or purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important.	98	96	96	-2
Q09	My team members are committed to doing quality work.	97	59	91	-6
Q10	I have a best friend at work.	25	9	39	14
Q11	In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.	82	35	53	-29
Q12	This last year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow.	67	22	30	-37

Table 5. Office C Gallup Q12 survey scores percentiles

Question	Prompt	2015	2016	2017	Point Change
Q00	How satisfied are you with your organization as a place to work?	96	88	98	2
Q01	I know what is expected of me at work.	99	98	99	0
Q02	I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.	99	80	97	-2
Q03	At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.	96	91	85	-11
Q04	In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.	99	89	98	-1
Q05	My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.	99	99	99	0
Q06	There is someone at work who encourages my development.	98	78	98	0
Q07	At work, my opinions seem to count.	99	93	99	0
Q08	The mission or purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important.	97	81	98	1
Q09	My team members are committed to doing quality work.	98	85	99	1
Q10	I have a best friend at work.	35	50	93	58
Q11	In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.	90	65	99	9
Q12	This last year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow.	99	82	99	0

Table 6. Office D Gallup Q12 survey scores percentiles

Question	Prompt	2015	2016	2017	Point Change
Q00	How satisfied are you with your organization as a place to work?	1	46	1	0
Q01	I know what is expected of me at work.	1	1	1	0
Q02	I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.	1	35	22	21
Q03	At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.	1	38	1	0
Q04	In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.	4	9	9	5
Q05	My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.	3	86	14	11
Q06	There is someone at work who encourages my development.	1	62	1	0
Q07	At work, my opinions seem to count.	1	52	1	0
Q08	The mission or purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important.	21	73	74	53
Q09	My team members are committed to doing quality work.	1	24	37	36
Q10	I have a best friend at work.	1	24	1	0
Q11	In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.	1	5	1	0
Q12	This last year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow.	12	70	29	17

Table 7. Gallup Q12 survey scores percentiles for the division of student success

Question	Prompt	2015	2016	2017	Point Change
Q00	How satisfied are you with your organization as a place to work?	10	46	65	55
Q01	I know what is expected of me at work.	14	28	52	38
Q02	I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.	21	39	74	53
Q03	At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.	21	61	66	45
Q04	In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.	41	59	83	42
Q05	My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.	73	88	95	22
Q06	There is someone at work who encourages my development.	46	65	86	20
Q07	At work, my opinions seem to count.	70	70	86	16
Q08	The mission or purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important.	79	79	94	15
Q09	My team members are committed to doing quality work.	73	78	92	19
Q10	I have a best friend at work.	10	31	63	53
Q11	In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.	40	32	66	26
Q12	This last year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow.	63	71	88	25

Office A is the only office in the Division to have an individual dedicated to encouraging employee engagement. All other offices were introduced to the engagement program in 2018. It should be noted that participation was not required and not all staff members elected to participate.

The intervention of a formalized value-based recognition and engagement program increased the Gallup Q12 scores for Office A, while other offices saw less, or uneven, change. To corroborate these findings, interviews were conducted with staff

members to capture major themes and differences between office climate and culture before the program compared to office climate and culture after the program was launched. Staff were asked to give a brief description of climate and culture. These descriptions were then categorized into key phrases, themes, and then major themes.

Organizational culture before the RISE program was implemented, as described by one participant, “was like a snake pit.” Participants report an environment where staff were quick to blame each other for mistakes yet unwilling to help when someone reported being overwhelmed, were motivated by fear of being disciplined or criticized, and felt isolated. Many changes had taken place at the institution before 2015, including the hiring of a new Vice President for Student Success, a new Registrar and a new Associate Registrar. These changes fostered tension between veteran and novice employees. One participant reported, “As new people came on, they could feel the tension between the veteran employees and sometimes got dragged into the mess unknowingly.” Participants reported, before the RISE program, that employees were not recognized for a job well done but motivated to complete their workload as fast as possible to avoid discipline or criticism.

Participant responses regarding organizational climate before RISE corroborate the findings of James & Jones (1974) where climate is defined as property of the unit distinct from individual perceptions, essentially clarifying that climate can be described on the macro-level (laws, policies, regulations) vs. culture on the micro-level (implementation, routine). Participants described organizational climate as “policies,

laws, organizational structure,” or “ambiguous....hard to define.” Climate appears to be product of the policies and laws in place that regulate university business.

Organizational culture after RISE is an environment focused on teamwork. One participant describes, “People are willing to step up and help out more.” Another participant reported, “We now celebrate one another’s successes. There is a greater focus on equity.” Conversely, one participant reports that the focus on “being nice” RISE has brought to the office has compromised the focus on performance outcomes; “Now, behavior is the focus instead of good work.” In the culture after the RISE program, staff report interdependence, inclusion, recognition, celebration, and collaboration.

Table 8. Staff reported description of climate and culture

Climate/ Culture	Key Phrases	Themes	Major themes
Climate before RISE	Hard to define, policy, laws, disciplinary, division	Ambiguity, policy, division	Policy, vagueness, fear
Culture before RISE	Snake pit, fear, isolation, blame, whining, thankless, tension, changes, competition, overwhelmed	Isolation, fear, criticism, exclusion	Lack of recognition, isolation, competition, insecurity
Climate after RISE	Organizational structure, policy, rules	Policy, structure	Policy, structure
Culture after RISE	Interdependence, team, inclusive, equity, shared experience, reward, celebration, togetherness, collaborative, recognition, shared experience	Togetherness, recognition, celebration, collaborative, equity, reward	Recognition, team, equity

Much like climate before the RISE program, the office climate after the RISE program was described similarly as being mostly affected by University policy, organizational structure, and laws the university must follow. Results indicate office

climate influence is macro-focused, affected by the laws and policies a University must follow to remain in state and federal compliance. Conversely, office culture is affected at the micro-level by individual personalities and perceptions. After the implementation of a values-based rewards program, perceptions of office culture shifted from lack of recognition, isolation, competition and insecurity to a focus on recognition, team, and equity. Additionally, trends reflected in the Division of Student Success Gallup engagement polls corroborate participant statements regarding an environment shifting from a negative climate to a climate focused on teamwork and recognition. Finally, researcher observations of staff include celebration of birthdays, social engagement events (bar trivia, for example), distribution of an office newsletter, celebrations of traditions, and a focus on employee social wellness, all of which were not present before RISE was implemented.

The increase in reported Gallup Q12 scores for Office A from 2015-2017 makes a case for exploring and formalizing a staff program that focuses on recognition, engagement, and rewarding staff. Given the success of the program in one office, providing a program that mirrors similar concepts has the potential to increase the overall scores for the Division of Student Success, and all of the offices that make up student support services. The results of the pilot program inspired the Division of Student Success' Engagement Advisory Roundtable (EAR) committee to create a formalized engagement program that the whole Division could participate in. The EAR committee has broad participation from across the Division to ensure as many offices as possible are represented and the diverse barriers to engagement for employees in different roles are

addressed. The committee met twice a month to during the Fall 2018 semester to focus on providing a formalized engagement program with the intention of better understanding how this program could influence Gallup Q12 scores in the future.

Engagement Initiative Participants

The population for this study included all administrative staff, from front-line administrative assistants to directors or department heads, in the Division of Student Success at a land-grant, regionally accredited university in the Northwest United States. Many different offices contribute to the Division's composition, including; Admissions, an office of Student Success, Dean of Students, office of Diversity and Inclusion, Financial Aid Services, Recreational Sports and Fitness, Registrar's Office, Residence Life, Rodeo, Office of Student Engagement, TRiO Student Support Services, Student Health, Veteran's Services, Women's Center, and a center for students experiencing domestic or sexual violence, totaling roughly 250 employees. The Division only purchases 144 Gallup Q12 surveys, therefore, whoever accesses the surveys first were be counted. The 144 responses represent response rates ranging from roughly 68% to 100% over time, which are very high for current survey research norms and exceed the typical employee response rates in surveys administered to random samples at the same university. Response rate is the good indication of representativeness. Indeed, the qualitative project showed support for the representativeness of the findings. Random sampling methods were utilized to seek out a pool of participants who also contributed to quantitative results to contribute rich qualitative reflections on engagement and office

climate and culture. This process continued until saturation of concepts were reached; thus, the two pools are unequal.

Access to Participants and Confidentiality

The nature of qualitative research includes rich descriptions of participant characteristics, environments, feelings, observations, and attitudes (Creswell, 1994). To maintain the integrity of the study and the confidentiality of participant responses, names were not collected, and individuals were anonymized within the office in which they work, and all offices were coded to ensure identities were protected. All respondent participation was voluntary, and participants could discontinue the study at any time without consequence. The participant consent form can be found in Appendix A.

Instruments

This study utilized two different instruments to answer the research questions outlined above. The broader study employs the same Gallup Q12 survey as the pilot. Two qualitative studies were employed. First Office A staff participated in one-on-one interviews shortly after the pilot intervention in 2015, asking them to reflect on their experiences prior to the intervention and after. Their responses inspired the Vice President to charge an Engagement Advisory Roundtable (EAR) with implementing a Division-wide engagement program. These one-on-one interviews were not utilized for this study, but instead helped inform the methodology for the current study and helped the Employee Advisory Roundtable develop the Cat Scratch program.

Second, to assess impact on the Division, the Engagement Advisory Roundtable (EAR) is composed of engagement enthusiasts with representation from most offices in the Division of Student Success. These individuals find connecting with coworkers, making time to creatively play and solve problems, and establishing relationships across the division as a primary source of their success. This group crafted follow-up surveys in Qualtrics with guidance from the Office of Planning and Analysis. This open-ended survey was distributed to 4 offices in the Division: Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar's Office, and Student Success. For respondents in each office, the survey included a screen shot of that office's Gallup Q12 scores and provided respondents an opportunity to freely describe their office climate and culture, inquire if the scores for their reported office seem accurate given their experience, and inquire if growth opportunities might impact their likelihood of engaging.

Validity

Quantitative Instrument

Creswell (1994) defines internal validity as “the accuracy of information and whether it matches reality” (p. 158). Gallup (2017) has found reliable results using the Gallup Q12 survey to assess employee engagement for 30 years in various industries demonstrating construct validity and reliability. As noted, the Gallup Q12 survey has a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.91 at the business unit level of analysis (Gallup, 2017). In terms of validity, criterion-related and convergent validity have been demonstrated through psychometric studies and expert review (Harter, Schmidt, Agrawal, Plowman & Blue, 2016). Random sampling is considered the most rigorous approach allowing for the

researcher to generalize the findings of their research to the entire population (Creswell, 1994). An example of the Gallup Q12 survey can be found in Appendix B.

Qualitative Approach

To accomplish internal validity on the qualitative instrument, the researcher triangulated concepts between both qualitative and quantitative measures and member check with qualitative survey participants. External validity for survey research is dependent upon respondent honesty (Mertens, 1998). The researcher has accounted for not all respondents being completely honest in reporting their thoughts feelings, and opinions. Open-ended questions developed in consultation with the Office of Planning and Analysis and Employee Advisory Roundtable (EAR) accompanied the Gallup Q12 allowing staff to elaborate on why they chose the quantitative answer they did on the Gallup Q12. These questions sought to explain how the Employee Loop of Development can be used to better understand departmental mean scores on the Gallup Q12, specifically inquiring about employee input, environment, and output (speaking to climate and culture). An example of the qualitative questions can be found in Appendix C.

Procedures Followed

Approval from the Montana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the study of the intervention Division-wide was garnered. Once approved, the Engagement Advisory Roundtable (EAR), with representation from each office in the Division of Student Success, was charged with replicating the pilot program (RISE)

conducted in the Registrar's Office. The roundtable followed the following process to create the CatScratch incentive program:

1. Collected information during the Fall 2018 Division kickoff on what kinds of incentives would inspire busy professionals to attend the following engagement opportunities (Finkelstein et al., 2017; Stajkovic & Luthans, 2003): participate in a professional development opportunity, attend a training or presentation, connect with a colleague over coffee, or take on a new role/responsibility.
2. Created a punch card that staff members could bring with them to events to ensure they received "recognition" for attending (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2003). Eligible engagement activities included: Attending a professional development or training, taking a colleague to coffee, attending Division "Coffee Corner," attending the Division Games at the end of each semester, and 4 bonus opportunities that staff could appeal to EAR to receive credit. The bonus opportunities were included to ensure diverse participation. Each punch on the card would award the staff member one raffle ticket to bid on a prize of their choosing at the end of the academic year. If all opportunities were accounted for, each staff member would receive 30 tickets at the end of the year to bid on prizes.
3. Reached out to campus partners to obtain prizes to be auctioned off at the end of the year. Prizes included donated parking passes, gym memberships, fitness classes, and institution logo gear.

4. Created punch cards for each individual in the Division by partnering with University Printing.
5. Marketed the CatScratch program to the Division via email. A series of emails were sent to the Division listserv explaining the program.
6. Held the Spring Games in April 2019, knowing that play, especially in adults, fosters connections, problem-solving, stress-management, and engagement (Green et al., 2008; Molina, 2012; Zheng et al., 2011).
7. Conducted the first raffle in conjunction with the Games. Staff had the opportunity to cash in their engagement experiences by receiving one raffle ticket per confirmed engagement opportunity. Raffle tickets were then used to bid on prizes.

Data Collection Procedures

The Gallup Q12 survey is sent out to the Division of Student success via email every October through the Division of Student Success listserv, which includes the email address of every staff member within the Division. The listserv was double checked for accuracy of active employees before the link to the survey is emailed. Within one week, three emails were sent reminding staff to complete the survey in a timely manner as there are only 144 surveys that can be filled out before the survey would closed seven days after it is sent out. The survey allowed participants to anonymously respond to the 13 questions related to their office. Once all 144 surveys have been accessed, the survey was closed to responses. All 144 surveys for the 2019 Gallup Q12 were responded to, yielding a 100% response rate.

Following the Gallup Q12, a Qualtrics survey with open-ended, free response questions were sent to the employees in four offices who have been grouped consistently for the Gallup Q12 from 2015-2019. Following the same protocol, three emails were sent within one week to remind staff to respond to the Qualtrics survey. For both the qualitative and quantitative responses participation was voluntary and deidentified.

Data Analysis Procedures

Since the researcher was interested in examining if the engagement intervention impacts mean engagement scores, sample means were compared to answer the first research question: Does the presence of a formalized incentive program change the overall engagement score for the Division of Student Success. The researcher performed a Shapiro-Wilk test to confirm normal distribution and found the data was not normally distributed. The high scores were very high and the low scores were very low. Therefore, a Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test was used to account for non-normal distribution and small sample size. The Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test is the nonparametric equivalent to the t-test but can account for smaller samples sizes and non-normal distribution (Bhattacharya & Roychowdhury, 2017). In all scenarios, offices were coded to protect anonymity.

Open Coding

Each qualitative question was coded following Creswell & Poth's (2018) open coding procedures. These procedures include taking notes while reading through transcriptions to highlight important descriptions, identifying codes using abstract or concrete coding, and identifying themes by examining memos for patterns and to

contextualize categories identified by responses. Finally, the themes generated from analyzing the case study responses were summarized using naturalistic generalizations to communicate "lessons" that can be applied to similar situations/contexts. Participant responses were identified for key words and similar words/phrases were categorized together. For example, "can't ask questions," and "not able to do the work we're hired for" were categorized under the phrase "inability to do one's best." Participant excerpts were not used to protect participant anonymity. Following this analysis procedure allows for full, rich descriptions of experiences to better understand how engagement in a higher education setting contributes employee engagement and growth.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness speaks to credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. To parallel internal validity, the researcher focused on creating credibility in qualitative research by triangulation of concepts, prolonged and persistent engagement, and progressive subjectivity (Mertens, 1998). To parallel external validity, the researcher focused on thick description to ensure practitioners who may use this model have enough detail to make a judgment based on similarities or differences, or transferability of findings/lessons, of their specific context (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Dependability parallels reliability. To accomplish this, the researcher closely followed the methods described in the above chapter and partner with content-area experts, such as the Engagement Advisory Roundtable (EAR) to construct research questions (Yin, 2003). Finally, to ensure confirmability, the researcher partnered with EAR to audit research findings, minimize any opportunities for bias in interpretation, and ensure objectivity

(Guba & Lincoln, 1989). As mentioned previously, Gallup Q12 survey has a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.91 at the business unit level of analysis (Gallup, 2017) making it one of the most widely used assessments for employee engagement across industries. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 is the minimum cutoff for a reliable measure (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Referencing a manuscript by Peter Hutton, Crush (2009) reported Gallup has received criticism related to employing a strongly agree- strongly disagree Likert-type scale to capture engagement to make claims about engagement. To address potential oversimplification, this study's mixed-methods approach balances both qualitative and quantitative measures, while ensuring confidentiality of responses and rigor of instruments.

Ethical Concerns

The researcher ensured ethical practices were a priority throughout the research process, following the methods outlined in the above chapter to safeguard reliability and validity of this study, and ensured minimal risk to participants. The informed consent, sent out to each participant via email with the Qualtrics survey, can be found in Appendix A. Participation in this research was voluntary and anonymous and participants can choose not to continue at any time. All participants were 18 years of age or older. Following research best-practices, all recorded and collected materials will be purged after 5 years to ensure minimal risk to violating confidentiality (Knight, 2003). The researcher acknowledges a concern for researcher reactivity as some of the individuals in this study report to the researcher. To best provide them an opportunity to be open and

honest, the communication regarding the Qualtrics survey will be sent on behalf of EAR (group of people) instead of just the researcher.

Chapter Summary

The goal of this chapter was to outline the approach the researcher used to collect and analyze data to answer the three research questions outlined above. A review of the methodology selected, researcher positionality, procedure, participants, data collection, and ethical concerns frame the context for this study. The researcher reviewed an explanation of each method that will be used to analyze the data and explained best fit for the subsequent transformative approach. Concerns for validity, reliability, trustworthiness, and ethical concerns of the research were addressed. The goal of Chapter 4 is to demonstrate the methods in Chapter 3 are closely followed and provide study results to each research question.

CHAPTER FOUR—RESULTS

Introduction

This transformative mixed-methods study has three purposes:

1. Examine how formalizing an engagement incentive program for higher education administrative staff in the Division of Student Success impacts employee-reported engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12.
2. Collect qualitative data to help explain the quantitative Gallup Q12 survey scores to give individuals in leadership roles concrete information on how employees interpret Gallup Q12 questions and which, if any, actions they can take to improve employee engagement in their offices in the context of climate and culture.
3. Provide more context and insight into what employees need from their leaders to help them be engaged in their role on campus.

Throughout this section, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed results will be discussed thoroughly consistent with mixed-methods analysis to answer the research questions.

Quantitative Analysis

The mean engagement scores on the Gallup Q12 for Office A, B, C, D, and the overall division of Student Success were entered into R statistical software. A Shapiro-Wilk test for normality indicated the ordinal data were not normally distributed, confirming the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test to be the most appropriate statistic to analyze the difference in mean Gallup Q12 scores (Farrell et al., 2007). The Wilcoxon Signed-

Rank test is most appropriate for smaller sample sizes and assumes independence and equal variance, and that the data do not have a known distribution. Since this statistical test does not assume normality it is more robust than a *t-test* when analyzing small data sets (Farrell et al., 2007).

Research Question 1

To examine if the presence of a formalized incentive program had a significant effect on the overall engagement scores for the Division of Student Success, the following hypothesis were tested using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test where $\alpha = .05$:

H_0 : The presence of a formalized engagement program does not have a statistically significant effect on the overall mean engagement score for the Division of Student Success as reported by the Gallup Q12.

H_1 : The presence of a formalized engagement program does have a statistically significant effect on the overall mean engagement score for the Division of Student Success as reported by the Gallup Q12.

The division mean score on questions 00-12 can be referenced in below in Table 9.

Table 9. Division of Student Success Mean Score per Question

Year	Q00	Q01	Q02	Q03	Q04	Q05	Q06	Q07	Q08	Q09	Q10	Q11	Q12
2015	3.59	4.15	3.81	3.77	3.43	4.26	3.81	3.85	4.26	4.22	3.02	3.71	4.08
2016	3.9	4.22	3.93	4.05	3.55	4.42	3.93	3.85	4.25	4.27	3.2	3.6	4.12
2017	4.03	4.35	4.18	4.11	3.82	4.51	4.14	3.99	4.45	4.39	3.55	3.95	4.29
2018	3.92	4.25	4.03	4.05	3.67	4.49	4.17	3.92	4.37	4.4	3.54	4.02	4.31
2019	3.91	4.31	4.14	4.06	3.76	4.35	4.11	3.91	4.27	4.42	3.7	3.87	4.17

The result of using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test indicated significant change in the overall engagement score for the Division of Student Success ($z = 2.79$, $p = .05$, $r = .002562$), therefore, the null hypothesis must be rejected indicating a statistically significant association between the formalization of an engagement program and the overall mean score for the Division of Student Success.

For the 2019 survey, the Division's scored a 4.09 out of 5 overall mean engagement score from Gallup Organization, and when compared to other higher education institutions, scored in the 52nd percentile. Gallup indicates 55% of the employees who took the survey are engaged, 34% not engaged, and 8% actively disengaged. The individual mean engagement scores for Offices A-D can be referenced below.

Table 10. Mean Engagement Score on Gallup Q12

Office	Mean Score	N
A	4.49	14
B	3.21	18
C	4.19	17
D	3.81	17

For the purposes of this dissertation, the offices that scored in the 50th percentile and have a mean score of 4.06 and below, will be categorized as disengaged and the offices that scored above the 50th percentile and have a score of 4.07 and above in the 2019 survey will be categorized as engaged. These descriptions of climate and culture will be systematically reviewed in the qualitative sections.

Research Question 2

All staff from Office A, B, C, and D were asked if they feel their specific office's mean Gallup Q12 scores adequately capture their level of engagement and reflect their office climate and culture. Office A demonstrated a 76% response rate, Office B demonstrated a 48% response rate, Office C demonstrated a 30% response rate, and finally Office D demonstrated a 53% response rate. Table 11 details the majority of staff in each office feel their Gallup Scores accurately reflect their level of engagement and reflects their office climate and culture. One hundred percent of A reported alignment with Gallup Q12 results, while Offices B and C demonstrated about two-thirds of staff in agreement with the Gallup results. Finally, about six of seven in Office D's staff reported alignment with the Gallup results.

Table 11. Do staff feel Gallup Q12 adequately captures their level of engagement and reflects office climate and culture?

Office	Yes	N
A	11	11
B	7	11
C	4	6
D	5	6

An explanation of why or why not staff feel the results are representative are systematically reviewed in the Mixed Results section of this chapter.

Qualitative AnalysisResearch Question 3

Respondents were given the definition of culture and asked to reflect on their office's basic assumptions in a sentence or two. The researcher used open coding procedures to examine how staff in highly engaged offices feel differently about office climate and culture than staff in disengaged offices. Responses from the Qualtrics survey have been coded into key words and phrases, themes, and major themes related to culture and can be referenced in tables 12-15. The analysis between highly engaged and disengaged offices can be referenced in tables 16-17.

Table 12. Description of Culture Office A

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words or Phrases
Care for the Student Experience, Relatedness, Teamwork, Hard Work, and Fun	Hard Work (hard work, uphold policy, integrity, work hard), Teamwork (support, cooperation among coworkers, supportive, encouraging), Fun (have fun, fun, light hearted), Helpfulness (being helpful, helpful), Relatedness (support each other, cover each other, respect, friendly, community, shared experience), Improvement (state of change, improve processes), Accuracy (quickly and accurately), Care for the Student Experience (genuine care, helping students do the best we can, going above and beyond to deliver on projects, promote success, collective effort toward student success, care for our students, friendly place for students to visit, commitment to student success through improving processes)	hard work, support each other, cover for each other, respect, genuine care, have fun, acceptance, helping students the best we can, being helpful, going above and beyond to deliver on our projects for the entire university, support, promote success, uphold policy, integrity, collective effort toward student success, quickly and accurately, state of change, fun, light-hearted, friendly work hard, improve processes, community, shared experience, cooperation among coworkers, supportive, care for our students, friendly place for students to visit, helpful, encouraging, commitment to student success through improving processes

Office A's culture reflects *hard work* (hard work, uphold policy, integrity, work hard), *teamwork* (support, cooperation among coworkers, supportive, encouraging), *fun* (have fun, fun, light hearted), *helpfulness* (being helpful, helpful), *relatedness* (support

each other, cover each other, respect, friendly, community, shared experience), *improvement* (state of change, improve processes), *accuracy* (quickly and accurately), *care for the student experience* (genuine care, helping students do the best we can, going above and beyond to deliver on projects, promote success, collective effort toward student success, care for our students, friendly place for students to visit, commitment to student success through improving processes). Office A respondents describe a culture where *care for the student experience*, *relatedness*, *teamwork*, *hard work*, and *fun* are the basic assumptions of their environment.

Table 13. Description of Culture Office B

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words of Phrases
Exclusivity, Not Able to Demonstrate Expertise, Stress, Frustration	Frustration (frustrated, massive frustration, too busy, never implemented feedback), Stress (negative, staff treatment, hidden culture, unhappy, there is a problem, unexpected behavior among upper management, stress, fear-based), Exclusivity (isolation, removed from information, lack of communication, stay in your lane, expense of transparency, hierarchy, culture of exclusivity, appearances are everything, lack of support, lack of comfort, isolation), Not Able to Demonstrate Expertise or Improve Processes (stagnancy, changing and shifting, lack of confidence, lack of control, don't offer suggestions or feedback, nothing changes, basic procedures ought to be well-set right now but they're not)	Negative, frustrated, unhappy, lack communication, massive frustration, don't offer suggestions or feedback, there is a problem, nothing changes, stay in your lane, expense of transparency, hierarchy, culture of exclusivity, appearances are everything, basic procedures should be well-set right now and they're not, lack of support, unexpected behavior among upper management, stress, lack of comfort, isolation, lack of confidence, fear-based, too busy, isolation, removed from information, control, changing and shifting, never implement feedback, hidden culture, staff treatment

Office B's culture reflects *exclusivity* (stay in your lane, expense of transparency, hierarchy, culture of exclusivity, appearances are everything, lack of support, lack of comfort, isolation), *not being able to demonstrate expertise or improve processes* (stagnancy, lack of confidence, lack of control, don't offer suggestions or feedback, nothing changes, basic procedures ought to be well-set right now and they're not), *stress* (negative, unhappy, there is a problem, unexpected behavior among upper management, stress, fear-based), and *frustration* (frustrated, massive frustration, too busy). Office B respondents report *exclusivity, not being able to demonstrate expertise or improve processes, stress* and *frustration* to be basic assumptions of their environment.

Table 14. Description of Culture Office C

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words of Phrases
Collaboration, Support, Misunderstanding of Work	Collaboration (collaborative, togetherness, shared goals), Support (supportive, mutual affection and respect, work together and make mistakes together), Misunderstanding of work (transparency, accuracy is vital, work not well understood or valued by leadership)	collaborative, supportive, transparent, shared goals, mutual affection and respect, work together and make mistakes together, accuracy is vital, work not well understood or valued by leadership

Office C's culture reflects *collaboration* (collaborative, togetherness, shared goals, *support*, (supportive, mutual affection and respect, work together and make mistakes together), and *misunderstanding of work* (transparency, accuracy is vital, work

not well understood or valued by leadership). Office C respondents report *collaboration*, *support*, and *misunderstanding of their work* as basic assumptions of their environment.

Table 15. Description of Culture Office D

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words of Phrases
Customer Service Focus, Problem-Solving, Turnover	Customer Service Focus (customer service focus, students, parents, customer, hardworking, people, share information), Problem-Solving (ask questions, misinformation, fix problems, policy), and Turnover (little opportunity to teach people the culture when they don't stay long enough to be taught, managerial response, top down, things not being addressed)	Share information, ask questions, customer service focus, students, parents, customer, misinformation, fix problems, hardworking people, policy, little opportunity to teach new people the culture when they don't stay long enough to be taught, managerial response, top down direction, things not being addressed

Office D respondents describe a culture that reflects a *customer service focus* (customer service focus, students, parents, customer, hardworking, people, share information), *problem-solving* (ask questions, misinformation, fix problems, policy), and *turnover* (little opportunity to teach people the culture when they don't stay long enough to be taught) as basic assumptions of their environment.

To examine how highly engaged offices report culture compared to disengaged offices, Offices A and C have been grouped together and Office B and D have been grouped together based on their mean engagement Gallup Q12 scores. Similarities in

staff responses of culture will be examined. Differences in staff reported descriptions of culture will be discussed to provide a holistic perspective of the basic assumption of each office's environment.

Table 16. Highly Engaged Offices A and C

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words of Phrases
Relatedness and Care for the Student Experience	Relatedness (teamwork, fun, helpfulness, collaboration, shared goals, togetherness, support, lack of appreciation from leadership regarding volume and scope of work), Care for Student Experience (improvement, accuracy, hard work, productivity, integrity)	Hard work, teamwork, fun, helpfulness, relatedness, improvement, accuracy, care for student experience, productivity, integrity, collaboration, shared goals, togetherness, support, lack of appreciation from leadership regarding volume and scope of work

Offices A and C exhibit two primary assumptions of their environment. These two offices both care for relationships with each other, or *relatedness*, as demonstrated by calling attention to teamwork, fun, helpfulness, shared goals, collaboration, and expressing concern for the lack of appreciation from leadership regarding the volume and scope of their work. These offices also demonstrate a *care for the student experience* by calling attention to dedication to improvement, hard work, productivity, and integrity. Although similarly grouped by the Gallup Q12, these offices demonstrate unique difference in their reported basic assumptions of culture. Both offices report relationships are important to them, but Office A's staff detail a light-hearted, fun

environment where Office C's staff report leadership misunderstand the scope and volume of their work.

Table 17. Disengaged Offices B and D

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words or Phrases
Frustration, Stress, Turnover, Exclusivity, Not Being Able to demonstrate Expertise or Improve Processes, Customer Service Focus, Problem-Solving	Frustration (frustrated, massive frustration, too busy), Stress (negative, unhappy, there is a problem, unexpected behavior among upper management, stress, fear-based), turnover, little opportunity to teach people the culture when they don't stay long enough to be taught), Exclusivity (lack of communication, stay in your lane, expense of transparency, hierarchy, culture of exclusivity, appearances are everything, lack of support, lack of comfort, isolation), Not Able to Demonstrate Expertise or Improve Processes (stagnancy, lack of confidence, lack of control, don't offer suggestions or feedback, nothing changes, basic procedures ought to be well-set right now but they're not), Customer Service Focus (customer service focus, students, parents, customer, hardworking, people, share information), Problem-Solving (ask questions, misinformation, fix problems, policy)	Negative, frustrated, unhappy, lack communication, massive frustration, don't offer suggestions or feedback, there is a problem, nothing changes, stay in your lane, expense of transparency, hierarchy, culture of exclusivity, appearances are everything, basic procedures should be well-set right now and they're not, lack of support, unexpected behavior among upper management, stress, lack of comfort, isolation, lack of confidence, fear-based, too busy, Share information, ask questions, customer service focus, students, parents, customer, misinformation, fix problems, hardworking people, policy, little opportunity to teach new people the culture when they don't stay long enough to be taught

Offices B and D exhibit seven distinct assumptions of their environment *frustration, stress, turnover, exclusivity, not being able to demonstrate expertise or improve processes, customer service focus, and problem-solving*; These staff members are discouraged from suggesting feedback that could update practices or procedures and therefore feel as though they are not able to use their knowledge to contribute to the success of their team. The constant discouragement leads to a lack in confidence and could potentially contribute to the turnover issue these offices are experiencing.

Respondents were given the definition of climate and asked to reflect on their office's basic assumptions in a sentence or two. The researcher used open coding procedures to examine how staff in highly engaged offices feel differently about office climate and culture than staff in disengaged offices. Responses from the Qualtrics survey have been coded into key words and phrases, themes, and major themes related to climate and can be referenced in tables 18-21. The analysis between highly engaged and disengaged offices can be referenced in tables 22-23.

Staff Descriptions of Climate. The following tables are major themes, themes, and key words or phrases of staff descriptions of office climate.

Table 18. Description of Climate Office A

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words of Phrases
Teamwork, Big Picture, Mutual Respect, Expressed Desire for Change or Improvement	Teamwork (work together, teamwork, support each other as a team, work ethic, help students), Big Picture (big picture, entire university, uphold standards, policy, rules, procedures), Mutual Respect (mutual respect, ensure minimal conflict, respectful, equal voice, share experiences and learning moments, professional, caring, wholesome support to faculty, staff, and students), Expressed Desire for Change or Improvement (expectations, encouraged to do our best, striving toward innovation, data integrity, dedicated to accuracy, high expectations, a little chaotic)	Mutual respect, work together, big picture entire university, teamwork, encouraged to do our best, supportive, ensure minimal conflict, uphold standards, policy, expectations, help students, support each other as a team, rules, procedures, striving toward innovation, caring, respectful, professional, a little chaotic, wholesome support and guidance to faculty, staff, and students, high expectations, data integrity, dedicated to accuracy, equal voice, share experiences and learning moments, work ethic, expressed desire for change or improvement

Office A reports shared meaning in the context of working together as a team to understand the big picture. The staff report they are encouraged by leadership to do their best which in part ensures minimal team conflict as individuals can then focus on creatively providing solutions to problems. Staff report experiencing an “equal voice” in the office when it comes to management addressing their frustrations or concerns. Office

A’s staff report a climate composed of *teamwork* (work together, teamwork, support each other as a team, work ethic, help students), concern for the *big picture* (big picture, entire university, uphold standards, policy, rules, procedures), *mutual respect* (mutual respect, ensure minimal conflict, respectful, equal voice, share experiences and learning moments, professional, caring, wholesome support to faculty, staff, and students), and an *expressed desire for change or improvement* (expectations, encouraged to do our best, striving toward innovation, data integrity, dedicated to accuracy, high expectations, a little chaotic).

Table 19. Description of Climate Office B

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words of Phrases
High-Stress, Shame, Micromanagement, Acknowledgement	High-Stress (high-stress, last-minute), Shame (Afraid to complain because they are made to feel dumb), Micromanaged (talented staff but micromanaged, the best of what everyone could offer does not happen, barely any delegation of authority and trust in the ranks, no authority to make decision, encouraged to do work without bothering others) Acknowledgement (excellence, good sense of humor, boss doesn’t respond in a timely manner, management thankful for work)	Extremely negative, talented staff but micromanaged, the best of what everyone could offer does not happen, high-stress, last-minute, barely any delegation of authority and trust in the ranks, afraid to complain because they are made to feel dumb, no authority to make decisions, excellence, good sense of humor, management thankful for work, encouraged to do work without bothering others, walking on eggshells, failure, boss doesn’t respond in a timely manner, support of certain programs over others

Office B reports shared meaning in the context of a workplace where individuals are often micromanaged to the extent their individual expertise is dismissed. This office reports they are discouraged from providing feedback and constantly operate on a timeline that makes them feel like all projects are an emergency. Office B's staff report a climate composed *high-stress* (high-stress, last-minute), *shame* (afraid to complain because they are made to feel dumb), *micromanagement* (talented staff but micromanaged, the best of what everyone could offer does not happen, barely any delegation of authority and trust in the ranks, no authority to make decision, encouraged to do work without bothering others), and *acknowledgement* (excellence, good sense of humor, boss doesn't respond in a timely manner, support for certain programs over others, management thankful for work).

Table 20. Description of Climate Office C

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words of Phrases
Affection for the Institution and Relatedness	Affection for Institution (upbeat, respect and affection and a commitment to share those feelings with students), Relatedness (supportive, positive in the face of an overwhelming workload, excellent feedback, not a lot of interaction outside of department)	Upbeat, supportive positive in the face of an overwhelming workload, leadership trying to be supportive, excellent feedback, not a lot of interaction outside department, respect and affection and a commitment to share those feelings with students

Office C reports shared meaning in the context of a shared affection and respect for the institution for which they work. Staff strive to share positive feelings with

students and parents. Staff report an overwhelming workload but credit their management for trying to be supportive and find ways to make the process easier. The staff indicate they can depend on each other to get through large tasks, often by focusing their energy and attention internally, although this may not be a positive quality. Office C’s staff report a climate composed *affection for institution* (upbeat, respect and affection and a commitment to share those feelings with students), and *relatedness* (supportive, positive in the face of an overwhelming workload, excellent feedback, not a lot of interaction outside of department).

Table 21. Description of Climate Office D

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words of Phrases
Customer-Service Driven, Dismissiveness, Incivility	Customer-Service Driven (professional, share accurate information, positive, confusing regulations), Dismissiveness (dismissive, not always great, scared to approach, some people disproportionately supported, moodiness, very little time to have "shared meaning" with workload) Incivility (expectation of poor behavior, tense)	Positive, professional, customer-service driven, share accurate information, dismissive, some people disproportionately supported, not always great, scared to approach, moodiness, confusing regulations, very little time to have "shared meaning" with workload, expectations of poor behavior, tense

Office D reports shared meaning in the context of an environment where employees report feeling dismissed while others seem to be disproportionately supported, while others report the environment as a positive and professional place to work. This staff works with many confusing regulations and are often scared to approach some

individuals when they need clarification. The staff report, with their workload, there is very little time to have shared meaning because they need to focus on their students.

Office D's staff report a climate focused on *customer service* (professional, share accurate information, positive, confusing regulations), and *dismissiveness* (dismissive, not always great, scared to approach, some people disproportionately supported, moodiness, very little time to have "shared meaning" with workload).

To examine how highly engaged offices report climate compared to disengaged offices, Offices A and C have been grouped together and Office B and D have been grouped together based on their mean engagements scores.

Table 22. Highly Engaged Offices A and C

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words of Phrases
Teamwork, Big Picture, Innovation, Affection for Institution, Shared Responsibility	Teamwork (work together, teamwork, supportive, support each other as a team, supportive in the face of an overwhelming workload, leadership trying to be supportive), Big Picture (big picture, entire university, data integrity, excellent feedback, not a lot of interaction outside of department), Innovation (striving toward innovation, encouraged to do our best, expressed desire for change or improvement, dedication to accuracy), Affection for Institution (help students, wholesome support and guidance to faculty, staff, and students, respect and affection and a commitment to share those feelings with	Mutual respect, work together, big picture entire university, teamwork, encouraged to do our best, supportive, ensure minimal conflict, uphold standards, policy, expectations, help students, support each other as a team, rules, procedures, striving toward innovation, caring, respectful, professional, a little chaotic, wholesome support and guidance to faculty, staff, and students, high expectations, data integrity, dedicated to accuracy, equal voice, share experiences and learning moments, work ethic, expressed desire for change or improvement, upbeat, supportive positive in the face of an

Table 22 Continued

students), Shared Responsibility (rules, procedures, uphold standards, policy, ensure minimal conflict, mutual respect, expectations high expectations, caring, respectful, professional, equal voice, share experiences and learning moments, work ethic, upbeat, a little chaotic)	overwhelming workload, leadership trying to be supportive, excellent feedback, not a lot of interaction outside department, respect and affection and a commitment to share those feelings with students
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Office A and C report similarities in valuing teamwork, creating a supportive environment, and feeling a sense of shared responsibility for their work at the institution. Both offices express an appreciation and receptiveness toward feedback and indicate their opinions are valued as part of a larger team. Both offices are encouraged to be innovative and think creatively to solve problems. Office A and C's staff value *teamwork, big picture, innovation, affection for institution, and shared responsibility*.

Table 23. Disengaged Offices B and D

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words or Phrases
Stress, Lack of Authority, Shame, Customer Service Focus, Dismissiveness	Stress (extremely negative, high-stress, last-minute, not always great, very little time to have “shared meaning” with workload), Lack of Authority (talented staff but micromanaged, the best of what everyone could offer does not happen, barely any delegation or trust in the ranks, no authority to make decisions), Shame (afraid to complain because they are made to feel dumb, scared to approach), Customer Service Focus (excellence, good sense of humor, management thankful for work, positive, professional, customer-service driven, share accurate information, confusing regulations), Dismissiveness (encouraged to work without bothering others, dismissive, moodiness, some people disproportionately supported	Extremely negative, talented staff but micromanaged, the best of what everyone could offer does not happen, high-stress, last-minute, barely any delegation of authority and trust in the ranks, afraid to complain because they are made to feel dumb, no authority to make decisions, excellence, good sense of humor, management thankful for work, encouraged to do work without bothering others, positive, professional, customer-service driven, share accurate information, dismissive, some people disproportionately supported, not always great, scared to approach, moodiness, confusing regulations, very little time to have "shared meaning" with workload

Office B and D report similarities in describing their environment as a stress-inducing place driven by last-minute assignments, lack of authority to make decisions or creatively solve problems where those who speak up are dismissed or “made to feel dumb.” An overwhelming workload in combination with a micromanaged staff leave individuals feeling incapable of doing a good job. Office’s B and C’s staffs report they are often unable to make their own decisions and have unreasonable deadlines (stress). These two offices do not discuss teamwork but instead describe how they are discouraged from bothering others or dismissed when they have questions (dismissiveness). The stress in combination with dismissive attitudes leaves individuals shamed or as if they are incapable of doing a good job.

Mixed Analysis

Staff from Office A, B, C, and D were asked if they feel their Gallup Q12 scores adequately capture their level of engagement and reflect on why or why not. Table 11 details the percentage of staff who agree or disagree in each office. In all offices, the majority of staff feel their Gallup Q12 results are reflective of their level of engagement and accurately reflect their climate and culture. Each office’s reflection on why or why not these numbers are representative of their engagement, climate and culture are systematically reviewed below.

Table 24. Office A: Does the overall average score reflect your overall sense of the office?

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words or Phrases
Teamwork, Involved Leadership and Intentional Change, Knowledge Transfer	Teamwork (positive, great team, hardworking, we are here for each other, intelligent, self-motivated), Involved Leadership and Intentional Change (huge improvement in engagement due to leadership, healthy environment created by the management, made changes to become a supportive office, encouraging place to work, ethical, fun), Knowledge Transfer (share our knowledge, cross-train)	Positive, encouraging place to work, huge improvement in engagement due to leadership, we are here for each other, healthy environment created by the management, great team, hardworking, intelligent, self-motivated, ethical, fun, made changes to become a supportive office, share our knowledge, cross-train

One hundred percent of the respondents for Office A indicated they felt like the 2019 Gallup Q12 was an accurate reflection of their engagement, climate, and culture. Office A’s staff indicate that the leadership team has worked to intentionally change the environment and have been catalysts for change in the office. They report the office as a fun, positive, encouraging place to work where information is shared so the staff can support each other. The specific intention to change the culture from negative to positive

by the leadership has allowed staff to focus their attention on cross-training and supporting each other as a team.

Table 25. Office B: Does the overall average score reflect your overall sense of the office?

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words or Phrases
Disengaged Leadership, Loss of Hope for Change, Support, Lack of Agency	Disengaged Leadership (morale is way down, turnover is constant, horrible people and management skills, important work but mediocre work environment, lack of training, lack of follow through of leadership on projects and deadlines), Loss of Hope for Change (feedback not well received, the office sucks out your enthusiasm, self- esteem, and hope for making a difference, some staff didn't respond because they didn't think it would make a difference, people are not honest and don't speak up out of fear of ridicule), Support (friendly, supportive, encouraging), and Lack of Agency (don't let people perform the work they were hired to do, micromanagement, frustration, lack of agency)	Morale is way down, turnover constant, opinions don't count, feedback not well received, horrible people and management skills, don't let people perform the work they were hired to do, people are not honest and don't speak up out of fear of ridicule, the office sucks out your enthusiasm, self-esteem, and hope for making a difference, micromanagement, frustration, lack of agency, lack of training, lack of follow through from leadership on projects and deadlines, important work but mediocre work environment, friendly, supportive, encouraging, overworked, cannot prepare ahead of time, scrambling, everything is an emergency, some staff didn't respond because they didn't think it would make a difference

About 64% of the respondents for Office B indicated they felt like the 2019 Gallup Q12 was an accurate reflection of their engagement, climate, and culture. Office B reports some staff didn't bother to fill out the survey because they didn't think that anything positive could come from it, which demonstrates a loss of hope for change in their environment. This staff reports feeling as though they cannot make their own decisions or set their own priorities, are fearful of making mistakes or asking clarification, and therefore, are micromanaged which leads to frustration and stress. The disengaged leadership in combination with a staff that has lost hope for change, results in a disengaged staff.

Table 26. Office C: Does the overall average score reflect your overall sense of the office?

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words or Phrases
Involved Leadership, High Expectations, Positive Environment	Involved Leadership (supervisors are actively engaged, supervisors promote positive environment, professional growth opportunities, specialize in area of strength), High Expectations (have lots of pressure and stress, work hard), Positive Environment (positive attitude, respectful disposition toward one another, supportive environment, support each other)	Positive attitude, respectful disposition toward one another, supportive environment, have a lot of pressure and stress, work hard, support each other, supervisors are actively engaged, supervisors promote positive environment, professional growth opportunities, specialize in areas of strength.

About 67% of the respondents for Office C indicated they felt like the 2019 Gallup Q12 was an accurate reflection of their engagement, climate, and culture. Office C’s staff indicate that the leadership team has worked to intentionally change the environment and have been catalysts for change in the office. This office has high expectations for performance but maintains a positive environment where individuals can practice their strengths to contribute to the team. The engaged leadership has allowed staff to focus their attention on meeting high expectations and meeting a standard of performance.

Table 27. Office D: Does the overall average score reflect your overall sense of the office?

Major Themes	Themes	Key Words of Phrases
Disengaged Leadership, Loss of Hope for Change, Inability to do Best	Disengaged Leadership (bring to bosses' attention but behavior continues, short staffing) Loss of Hope for Change (room for improvement, opinions don't seem to count, relationships between co-workers, prefer not to say) Inability to do Best (people desire to help students)	Room for improvement, opinions don't seem to count, bring to bosses' attention but behavior continues, people desire to help students, relationships between coworkers, short staffing, feedback, prefer not to say

About 83% of the respondents for Office D indicated they felt like the 2019 Gallup Q12 was an accurate reflection of their engagement, climate, and culture. Office B reports there is still room to grow in the context of creating a positive culture, climate, and healthy engagement. Staff report bringing issues to their leadership’s attention

without seeing anything change. These individuals feel as though their opinions do not count and their leadership is not listening. Respondents reported some staff didn't bother to fill out the survey because they didn't think that anything positive could come from it, which demonstrates a loss of hope for change in their environment, when they sincerely want to be provided the tools they need to help students. The disengaged leadership in combination with a staff that has lost hope for change, results in a disengaged staff.

Conclusions

This chapter contains the results and analysis of each of the research questions. The first research question was answered by using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test to analyze changes in the overall engagement score on the Gallup Q12 Survey in the Division of Student Success between 2015 and 2019. The result indicated a significant change in the overall engagement score for the Division on the Gallup Q12 Survey ($z = 2.79913, p = .002562$). Staff generally thought their Gallup Q12 score was an accurate reflection of their office's engagement, climate, and culture.

Mixed methods methodology was utilized to provide additional context to help explain changes in the overall Gallup Q12 score. Responses from Offices A, B, C, D were coded following open coding procedures into key phrases, organized into themes and then major themes. Similarities and differences between highly engaged and disengaged offices were analyzed according to the codes that emerged from participant responses. Disengaged offices had staff who reported feeling a lack of control and feeling dismissed by their leadership which ultimately brought about feelings of hopelessness in the context of change. Engaged offices had staff who reported being

matched with their expertise, the feelings of relatedness with their coworkers, and the intentional intervention of engaged leadership to alter the trajectory of their office climate and culture, ultimately impacting their engagement. Chapter 5 includes the summary from the major themes that have emerged in the context of theoretical and practical implications.

CHAPTER FIVE—DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this transformation, mixed-methods study was to examine how formalizing an engagement incentive program for staff in the Division of Student Success impacts employee-reported engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12, to collect qualitative data to help explain the quantitative Gallup Q12 survey scores, and to provide more context as to what employees need from their leaders to help them be engaged in their role on campus. Also included in this discussion is a thorough review of how findings relate the theoretical and practical implications for higher education. The chapter concludes with dialogue of limitations, suggested areas of future research, and an overall summary.

The researcher examined the impact incentive programs have on employee engagement by answering the following questions:

1. Does the overall engagement score for the Division of Student Success change after implementing a formalized incentive program?
2. Do respondents feel Gallup Q12 adequately captures their level of engagement and reflects their office climate and culture?
3. How do staff in highly engaged offices feel differently about office climate and culture than staff in disengaged offices?

Results indicated significant change in the overall engagement score for the Division of Student Success as measured by using the Wilcoxon's Signed Rank Test ($z = 2.79, p =$

.05, $r = .002562$). These results indicate the formalization of an engagement program does have a statistically significant effect on engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12.

Four offices from the Division of Student Success were sent a follow-up survey via Qualtrics to examine if staff felt the Gallup Q12 adequately captured their level of engagement and reflected their office climate and culture. Response rates varied from 30%-76%, but the majority of respondents reported the Gallup Q12 results aligned with their engagement and reflected their office climate and culture. One hundred percent of A reported alignment with Gallup Q12 results, while Offices B and demonstrated 67% staff in agreement. Lastly, about 80% of Office D's staff reported alignment with the Gallup results. Finally, to understand how highly engaged and disengaged offices differ in the experience of their office climate and culture, participant responses were coded following Creswell & Poth's (2018) open coding procedures and categorized into key words and phrases, themes, and major themes. Major themes that emerged for highly engaged offices included an emphasis on hard work, teamwork, relatedness, improvement, care for the student experience, collaboration, expertise, innovation, shared responsibility, involved leadership and high expectations. Major themes that emerged for the disengaged offices included an emphasis on frustration, lack of control, inability to demonstrate expertise or improve processes, turnover, stagnancy, stress, lack of authority, shame, disengaged leadership, loss of hope for change, and dismissiveness. Highly engaged offices appear to demonstrate 3 key staff-reported assumptions: 1) care for the student experience as demonstrated by prioritizing innovation, encouraging collaboration, and emphasizing hard work, 2) shared responsibility as demonstrated by focusing on

knowledge transfer and demonstrating expertise, and 3) involved leadership as demonstrated by striving for continual improvement, focusing on the big picture, and leading staff through intentional change. Disengaged offices appear to also demonstrate 3 key staff-reported assumptions 1) stagnancy as a result of a loss of hope for change and regular dismissiveness, 2) inability to demonstrate expertise brought about by frustration, stress, shame, and lack of authority, and 3) disengaged leadership demonstrated by inability or uninterest in improving processes and limiting staff growth, innovation, and mastery.

Interpretation of the Findings

Paralleling the experience of students coming to college for the first time, university administrative professionals in higher education starting a new job on campus are socialized in the functioning of office boundaries, introduced to new policies and procedures for which they will be held accountable, and must identify their niche in an environment of well-established norms. Students have the benefit of having intentional structures in place to encourage engagement, develop healthy habits that reinforce engagement, and have staff in student success offices dedicated to their successful transition to college life. Administrative staff have a clear impact on the student experience as demonstrated by a positive correlation between administrative styles and student retention in the context of engagement, climate and culture (Farrell, 2009). These findings indicate higher education professionals must pay attention to staff's perceptions of engagement, climate, and culture because it has the potential to impact the student experience. The implementation of a similar intentional structure for administrative staff

has been shown to be significantly associated with the overall engagement score for the Division of Student Success.

Four offices from the division were asked if the Gallup Q12 adequately captures their engagement and reflects their office climate and culture. The vast majority of respondents reported alignment contributing to the validity of the Gallup Q12. Although the validity of the Gallup Q12 is already established, staff reporting alignment with the results busters the tool's credibility. Directors cannot dismiss results and attribute their scores to good or bad days, life events, health, or outside impacts; each office will encounter and have to deal with negative stressors from time to time. Scores can be better understood by examining how staff respondents described climate and culture (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000). Climate has been well researched in customer satisfaction and service behavior research (Schneider et al., 2011; Schneider et al., 2005; Whitman et al., 2012). Connecting the higher education environment to our customer, the student, one can see stark differences between how engaged and disengaged offices describe their climate. Engaged offices reported a focus on the big picture, teamwork, innovation, affection for the institution, and shared responsibility. Disengaged offices reported stress, lack of authority, shame and dismissiveness. One could surmise that students could have two very different experiences should they seek help from an engaged office vs. disengaged office.

Engaged staff in this study replicate the findings of numerous studies examined in Chapter Two. Care for the student experience and hard work were specifically pointed out in the engaged group, reinforcing the finding that engaged individuals try harder,

perform better, and find meaning in their daily responsibilities that impact the student (Craig & DeSimone, 2011; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012). Similarly, a nod to innovation and intentional change, and the ability to become an authority or expert in their field are all prominent themes. Parent-Rochelleau et al. (2016) found the locus of control is significantly related to engagement, specifically that employees with an internal locus of control tend to emotionally engage with the organization. In addition to emotional engagement, these individuals tend to adopt attitudes and behaviors beneficial to the organization. These employees perceive they have control over their working environment and control over how they interact with that environment. There appears to be a drastic difference in locus of control between the engaged (Office A and C) and disengaged (Office B and D) offices. The staff in Offices A and C have adopted attitudes and feelings beneficial to the institution such as *acceptance, support, care for the student experience, teamwork, hard work* that go beyond daily responsibilities. Offices B and D appear to be demonstrating an external locus of control demonstrated by their emotional frustrations describing their office environments such as *unhappy, stress, frustration, and exclusivity*. These conclusions align with Kirkcaldy et al. (2002) findings that an external locus of control in the workplace is associated with greater work-associated stress and has the potential to impact both physical and emotional

Disengaged staff in this study replicate the findings of numerous studies examined in Chapter Two. Craig & DeSimone (2011) found these employees are less likely to find meaning in their work, less likely to perceive having influence over what happens in their work environments, feel their job is not important, and report poor

interactions and connections with coworkers. Multiple studies have found that most employees across a wide range of industries are disengaged which can lead to workplace incivility, low productivity and poor job attitudes (Dalal et al., 2012; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012; Craig & DeSimone, 2011). Disengaged staff in this study called attention to frustration, lack of control, stress, lack of authority, dismissiveness, and shame. Specifically, staff in the disengaged offices mentioned being dismissed when one had questions, being made an example of, and stress from not being able to adequately prepare for meetings or projects. Most concerning, care for the student experience was not an emergent theme. In the Division of Student Success, care for the student experience ought to be a primary priority for all offices, as the guiding value of student success supported the institution's mission and vision at the time of this study. We now have an opening to suggest student success can be better achieved or bolstered by staff engagement. Instances such as these have been found in previous research to incite workplace incivility (Dalal et al., 2012; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012; Craig & DeSimone, 2011). Leiter (2013) went so far as to describe workplace incivility as a 'crisis' speaking to the effects it has on mental health, productivity, and negative impact to employee sense of belonging. Emotional costs such as stress, specifically called out by participants in this study, and anxiety have been found to cost industry upwards of \$300 billion annually (Roter, 2019). For higher education, this could mean a loss in productivity, have student retention impacts, or cause a struggle with turnover, which was one of the major themes of the disengaged group.

One other distinct difference between the engaged and disengaged offices that must be mentioned is the distinguishing language between how they reference students. Offices A and C reference *students* while Office B and D reference *customers*. On the surface level, this could come down to semantics, however, codes were established by using the concrete language respondents used in their open-ended descriptions of climate and culture. The difference in how offices refer to students might have something to do with how they perceive their jobs or even how they interact with students. Referencing the earlier finding of *care for the student experience* for Offices A and C, but *care for the customer experience* was not an emergent theme for Offices A and D.

A relationship is emerging between engagement and culture and climate although directionality of the relationship cannot be determined and warrants further exploration. Staff in highly engaged offices use words such as *acceptance, support, fun, light-hearted, friendly, helpful, mutual respect, professional, integrity, and encouraging* to describe their environment. Staff in disengaged offices use words such as *extremely negative, unhappy, isolation, exclusivity, control, frustration, and high stress* to describe their environment. Disengagement and its impact on the working environment has been found to contribute to workplace incivility and poor job attitudes (Dalal et al., 2012; Flade, 2006; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012; Craig & DeSimone, 2011). As previously noted, engagement in higher education is at an all-time low (Wasilowski, 2016). Higher education administrators need to be cognizant of their staff's engagement, its positive relationship to retention (Farrell, 2009), and work to actively change the trajectory of engagement through prolonged and consistent change of behavior facilitated by the

Employee Loop of Development. One other distinct difference between the two groups is the concept of buy-in from their leadership which might have the potential to impact their environment. Both Offices A and C specifically credited their leadership's impact on their environment having positive effects. Both Offices B and D described being dismissed or excluded by their leadership. Buy-in, intentional change from leadership, and the engagement program appear to be the catalyst that facilitated an engaged workplace environment for these staff.

Theoretical Implications

Herzberg's Theory on Motivating Factors

Herzberg & Snyderman (1959) surmised job satisfaction was explained by a combination of motivating factors (*achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth*) and hygiene factors (*company policy and administration, supervision, relationship with supervisor, work conditions, salary, relationships with peers, personal life, relationships with subordinates, status, and security*). This concept would suggest altering the motivating factors would improve one's assessment of job satisfaction. Thus, job satisfaction appears to be more about the *qualities* related to the work (hours, pay, policies, stress) and engagement appears to be more about a relationship and the *meaning* derived from work (productivity, creativity, and enthusiasm toward the work and the workplace). The results from this study replicate Herzberg & Snyderman's findings. Employees who are categorized as engaged by Gallup Q12 point out care for the student experience, collaboration with teammates, relatedness with coworkers, expertise, and shared responsibility when describing climate

and culture; all words synonymous with positive relationships and meaning that can be derived from their work. Similarly, employees who are categorized as disengaged by Gallup Q12 point out inability to demonstrate expertise, lack of control, frustration, and stagnancy. None of these factors are qualities related to the job (hours, pay, policy) but are the feelings resulting from how they are treated in the relationships they've entered into by being a part of an office.

Astin's IEO Model

Astin (1993) contends that student inputs (demographics, knowledge, skills and abilities) can be mediated by environmental characteristics (supportive, engaging environments or cold, disengaging environments) which will have an effect on the student's output (success or lack thereof). Two very different environments and outcomes are emerging when reviewing the data through the lens of Astin's IEO model. Each individual office has staff that bring unique inputs to their position, such as experience in the field, different levels of academic degrees, previous experience in a higher education administrative or teaching setting, etc. These unique inputs, when combined with environmental characteristics such as elements of climate and culture, yield an output that is either reflected positively or negatively by the staff. It must be noted, however, employee inputs were not collected for this study; although distinct environments and outcomes have been captured.

Office A described an environment where colleagues backed each other up, there was noted genuine care and respect toward one another and a fun, light-hearted tone to alleviate the strict policies and procedures the office is charged to implement. The staff

reported a sincere care for the student experience, and a collective effort to improve processes. The leadership in this office are directly credited leading change and setting the expectation that the environment would be one that is friendly, engaged, and welcomes innovation. Given the previously noted inputs and the description of Office A's environment, one can see how this combination of factors results in an outcome where staff that are engaged and care for their co-workers and students.

Office B described an environment that is negative and workers were unhappy due to a lack of communication and lack of agency. Staff reported feelings of isolation, frustration, and concern for unexpected behavior from their leadership.

Micromanagement resulted in individuals feeling as though they were not able to perform the work they were hired to do and individuals expressed concern that when feedback was offered or a question was raised, those who asked the question or provided the feedback were either made an example of or made to feel dumb in front of their colleagues. Given these environmental factors staff reported, one can see how staff might need to self-select out to ensure safety or to minimize stress, anxiety, and frustration and the resulting outcome of staff members who are disengaged.

Office C described an environment that is collaborative, supportive, transparent, and where colleagues practiced mutual affection and respect towards the institution and one another. Their work, although not well understood by leadership, is appreciated as it is often an overwhelming volume. This office specifically pointed out a need to share their affinity for the institution with their students. Given these environmental factors

staff reported, one can see how staff can remain engaged and positive in the face of a crushing workload.

Office D describes an environment with a heavy customer-service focus that is driven by policy. Staff report being scared to approach others for help, frustration that some individuals are disproportionately supported compared to others. This staff reports challenges with managerial response and the top-down structure which can exacerbate issues because staff need clarification on complicated policies they need to communicate to students and parents. Given these environmental factors staff-reported, one can see how staff could be hesitant to engage based on their leadership's response.

Each of these offices contribute a unique environment that results in their employee's outcomes. Each office, at one time or another, has work that could be monotonous, must deal with state and federal politics and policy changes, and has individuals who are struggling in their personal lives. The individual inputs, one could argue, are similar across offices. The environment, however, is markedly different when comparing the highly engaged offices to the disengaged. Time, attention, and energy dedicated to improving the environment could ultimately change the output, or engagement, climate, and culture, for these offices.

Maccoby's Eight Value Drives

Maccoby contends employees are driven by the values of survival, relatedness, pleasure, information, mastery, play, dignity, and meaning (Maccoby, 1986). From these value drives, five different work-type motivators emerged which explained how individuals came to find their work meaningful. These employee sub-types included: *the*

expert, the helper, the defender, the innovator, and the self-developer. Maccoby found *the expert* tended to be motivated by information and mastery, *the helper* tended to be motivated by relatedness, *the defender* tended to be motivated by survival and dignity, *the innovator* tended to be motivated by play, and *the self-developer* tended to be motivated by dignity, mastery, and information. Each sub-type was motivated by meaningful work and pleasure which aligns with findings in employee engagement literature that meaningful work or being able to find a larger meaning in work is imperative to successfully engaging employees (Craig & DeSimone, 2011). Each office's responses were coded for major themes where many of these values emerged as important.

The main themes identified for Office A's climate included *care for the student experience, teamwork, relatedness, hard work, and fun*. Three of Maccoby's value drives can be linked to emerging themes. *Care for the student experience* implies meaning. This staff understands their daily work contributes to the bigger picture and the overall functioning of the university that might impact how a student feels about the university. *Relatedness* maps directly to *relatedness*. This staff understands their relationships with each other are important to the overall functioning of the office. Their commitment to "cover for each other," "respect each other," and create a "friendly community" in their place of work ensures a connection is created. Lastly, *fun* can be linked to *play*. This office reported they "have fun" in a "light-hearted environment." Maccoby would likely contend that this office, given its identified value drives, is full of *helpers* and *innovators*, those who are driven by *relatedness, play, and meaning*. This hunch is further confirmed

when reviewing major themes that emerge when reviewing Office A's climate. The themes included *teamwork*, *big picture*, *mutual respect*, and an *expressed desire for change or improvement*.

The main themes identified for Office B's climate included *high-stress*, *shame*, *micromanagement*, and *acknowledgement*. There are two themes that can be matched back to value drives; *shame* can be linked to *dignity* and *micromanagement* can be linked back to *mastery*. Unlike Office A, this office staff is reporting not being treated with dignity which results in shame, and not being allowed to demonstrate their mastery of their work, resulting in micromanagement. Such treatment can result in disengagement and workplace incivility (Hoffman & Chunta, 2015). These findings are further confirmed examining staff responses for Office B's climate. The themes included *disengaged leadership*, *loss of hope for change*, *support*, and *lack of agency*. Without evidence of motivating value drives, this office's climate and culture are fostering individuals who feel they cannot demonstrate their *mastery*, are not treated with *dignity*, and are likely continuing to work for *survival* as a means to pay their bills.

The main themes identified for Office C's climate included *affection for the institution* and *relatedness*. These themes can be linked to two of Maccoby's value drives: *affection for the institution* can be linked to *meaning* and *relatedness* can be directly linked to *relatedness*. This staff describes being "supportive" and "positive in the face of an overwhelming workload," and "respect and affection and a commitment to share those feelings with students." Maccoby would likely contend that this office, given its identified value drives, is full of *helpers* and *innovators*, those who are driven by

relatedness, play, and meaning. Examining the major themes emerging from climate, this office demonstrates *involved leadership, high expectations, and a positive environment.* One could argue that involved leadership help to set the expectations and contribute to the feelings of affinity toward the institution.

The main themes identified for Office D's climate included *customer service driven, dismissiveness, and incivility.* There are two themes that can be matched back to value drives: *dismissiveness to relatedness* and *incivility to dignity.* This staff is reporting they are "scared to approach" leadership with questions and frustrated by the "top-down managerial response." These individuals describe the lack of dignity and relatedness in their environment has brought about "an expectation of poor behavior" and created a "tense" environment. Once again, these individuals are likely continuing to work for *survival* as a means to pay their bills.

Practical Implications

These findings have diverse practical applications for higher education. The first is acknowledging that there are many similarities between the student experience and the new employee experience. Both students and employees are learning new boundaries, institutional language, policies and procedures to which they will be held accountable, are meeting new people, and are expected to perform and be assessed on their performance. One of the most obvious differences between the two groups is that students are met with mentoring, advising, and support services when they are struggling; employees are met with performance improvement plans and letters of warning which are primarily punitive. To support students and ensure they are successful, institutions put intentional structures

in place to provide a theoretical safety net. In this study, an intentional structure that encouraged engagement by incentivizing participation in social activities and focusing on professional play provided staff an opportunity to change their trajectory.

Acknowledging the similarities in the experience allows experimentation with successful interventions at the student-level translated to the employee experience. We know that engaged students who feel like they belong are better performing students than their disengaged counterparts (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Goodenow, 1993b; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Jacoby & Garland, 2004; Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Taylor et al., 2001), and we know engaged staff are better performing employees than their disengaged counterparts (Craig & DeSimone, 2011; Herzberg & Snyderman, 1959; Holbeche & Matthews, 2012). We now know that providing an intentional structure (in this case a formalized engagement program) similar to what students experience has been shown to significantly change the overall engagement score for a group of employees.

This research could be the start of a new model for inclusive employee engagement which provides a method to change one's engagement trajectory. Keeping the Employee Loop of Development in mind, the implementation of an intentional structure that fosters engagement has the potential to impact employee performance outcomes. Ensuring the engagement opportunities are broad to account for staff's availability and physical ability, such as offering a wide variety of times and types of activities, will make certain participation is maximized. For instance, student health employees cannot cancel student appointments to attend a professional development workshop, but they could likely watch a recorded professional development workshop in

between student appointments. Similarly, ensure any physical engagement activities are planned with appropriate accommodations to ensure individuals of all physical calibers have a means to meaningfully participate. Participation might look different for individuals depending on their role on campus and their commitments to the student. It is the responsibility of the leadership to ensure all individuals have many different options to participate.

Transformative, mixed methods design uses qualitative and quantitative data to spur social change at all levels, including personal to political arenas (Mertens, 1998). The lessons learned from this research can be applied to create an intentional structure in a professional, higher education environment to foster engagement for staff who regularly interact with students. The researcher found that there are three primary elements that can impact one's engagement in a higher education setting:

1. Change must be intentional. The old adage “nothing changes if nothing changes” applies here too. If a leader wants disengaged staff to become more engaged, the leader must incorporate engagement into their daily work by encouraging professional development, relationships, and collaboration across campus.
2. Engagement must be prioritized by the leader. If the director of the department doesn't think engagement is important, they're probably less likely to allow their staff to participate in activities that might take them out of the office to build meaningful relationships, or delegate important work to individuals who have the creative motivation to solve challenging problems.

Instead, they are likely to strictly focus on the daily operations/output of their office without considering the need for their staff to understand how their work impacts the overall institution. Similarly, staff reported trying to share important issues of concern or seek clarification supervisors and were either dismissed or discouraged from following through based on past interactions. Office leadership must address ambiguity in policy, directly tackle instances of incivility, and provide their staff the content and context to understand the projects they're working on.

3. Help staff develop an internal locus of control through play. Mentioned in Chapter Two, researchers have found that play provides employees an opportunity to practice self-efficacy and therefore develop or refine the feelings of an internal locus of control by putting the employee in the center of the experience. This psychological development allows staff to feel engaged and in-control of their environment (Florin, et al., 2014). Parent-Rocheleau et al. (2016) found the locus of control is significantly related to engagement, specifically that employees with an internal locus of control tend to emotionally engage with the organization. In addition to emotional engagement, these individuals tend to adopt attitudes and behaviors beneficial to the organization. In both disengaged offices B and D, feelings of micromanagement, lack of agency, dismissiveness, or not being able to do the job they were hired for were prominent. Office A reported feeling respected, striving toward innovation, and an expressed desire for change or

improvement. Office C also reported feeling respected and that they were able to specialize in their area of interest. Each of these offices display qualities of individuals demonstrating an internal locus of control and self-efficacy.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study provides a starting place to better understand how student outcomes are impacted by highly engaged or disengaged staff. To more thoroughly explore this concept on university campuses, one could gather student reflections regarding interactions students had with staff in previously identified engaged or disengaged offices. This research concept could be applied to advising, student services, residence life, any office where a student seeks advice or conducts business. This research could provide additional information on the outcome of staff engagement on the student experience in the context of retention and persistence.

Since we know engagement produces better outcomes for employees, it would be worthwhile to explore the impact of an intentional engagement structure in the context of human resources and work policy. It would be interesting to examine if requiring cross-campus engagement as part of the annual review impacted one's performance review at the administrative level. Setting the expectation that engagement is a priority, relationships are important, and innovation is encouraged might influence one's overall performance in a higher education setting.

Finally, research related to engagement in higher education for administrative staff is limited. Faculty research exists, but one cannot compare the faculty working

conditions and environment to administrative staff working conditions and environment. Therefore, literature from multiple industries and disciplines was reviewed to provide as much context as possible.

Conclusions

This chapter contains discussion related to the results of this transformative, mixed-methods design. An interpretation of the results and how they validate or contrast with theory was reviewed. Herzberg's Theory on Motivating Factors, Astin's IEO Model, and Maccoby's Eight Value Drives were systematically reviewed in the context of the results. Lastly, practical implications such as creating a new model for inclusive employee engagement, limitations such as non-normally distributed data, and suggestions for future research such as examining the student experience with highly engaged or disengaged staff were explored.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**SUBJECT CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN RESEARCH
AT MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY**

Exploring the Impact of a Value-Based Rewards Program
on Higher Education Administrative Staff

You are being asked to participate in a research study on the impact of a value-based reward program on higher education administrative staff. Understanding the impacts of value-based rewards programs on behavior and productivity may help managers provide needed support to employees, which might ultimately improve their performance. This research serves two purposes: to assess the impact of the reward program for Division management and as original research for a dissertation.

Procedures Involved:

Participation is voluntary. If you agree to participate you can choose to not answer any questions you do not want to answer and/or you can stop at any time. You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview and answer 3 questions.

Risks:

There are no foreseen risks

Benefits:

Your participation in this study will help to inform best practices and provide vital feedback to departments who are trying to retain, support, and effectively manage administrative employees in a higher education setting.

You are encouraged to ask question or provide additional feedback in addition to answering the pre-prepared questions. Your answers confidential and your name will never be shared in connection with the feedback you're providing.

Should you have any questions about this research, please contact the researcher, Candice Gresswell, (406) 994-2603 [candice.gresswell@montana.edu]. If you have additional questions about the rights of human subjects you can contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, Mark Quinn, (406) 994-4707 [mquinn@montana.edu].

AUTHORIZATION: Continuing with this survey indicates I have read the above risks and benefits of completing this survey and agree to participate. I understand I may discontinue at any time.

Signed: _____

Date _____

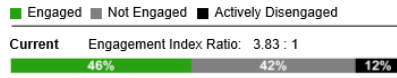
APPENDIX B

SAMPLE GALLUP Q12 SURVEY

Division of Student Success Gallup Poll 2016 | Overall

Percentile range in Gallup Database: ■ < 33 | ■ 33-66 | ■ > 66
*Team data not shown if sample size is less than 4. Workgroup data not shown to protect confidentiality.

ENGAGEMENT INDEX



OVERALL

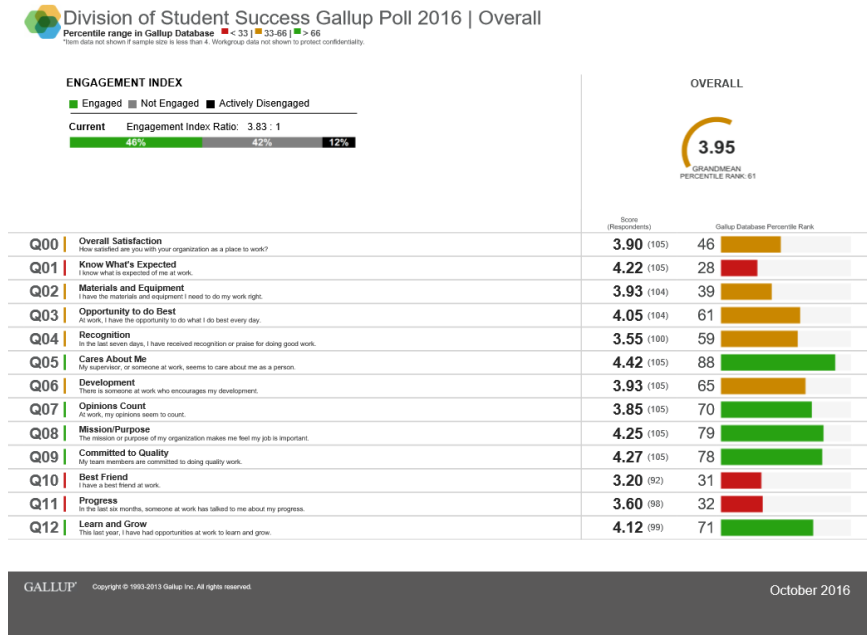


		Score (Respondents)	Gallup Database Percentile Rank
Q00 Overall Satisfaction	How satisfied are you with your organization as a place to work?	3.90 (105)	46 ■
Q01 Know What's Expected	I know what is expected of me at work.	4.22 (105)	28 ■
Q02 Materials and Equipment	I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.	3.93 (104)	39 ■
Q03 Opportunity to do Best	At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.	4.05 (104)	61 ■
Q04 Recognition	In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.	3.55 (100)	59 ■
Q05 Cares About Me	My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.	4.42 (105)	88 ■
Q06 Development	There is someone at work who encourages my development.	3.93 (105)	65 ■
Q07 Opinions Count	At work, my opinions seem to count.	3.85 (105)	70 ■
Q08 Mission/Purpose	The mission or purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important.	4.25 (105)	79 ■
Q09 Committed to Quality	My team members are committed to doing quality work.	4.27 (105)	78 ■
Q10 Best Friend	I have a best friend at work.	3.20 (92)	31 ■
Q11 Progress	In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.	3.60 (98)	32 ■
Q12 Learn and Grow	This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.	4.12 (99)	71 ■

APPENDIX C

EMAIL TO DIVISION OF STUDENT SUCCESS LISTSERV

Subject: Your Office’s Gallup Q12 Results



Body of email:

Back in October, the Engagement Advisory Roundtable sent out the Gallup Q12 survey for response. We’ve included your office’s results and would like your feedback on some questions that will help us better understand engagement in a higher education environment. Please take a moment to examine the mean scores and percentile ranking to reflect on the following questions.

Follow this link for a quick survey to report your reflections on your office’s scores: (link)

1. Culture is defined as Culture as a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by an organization as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. Do you feel your office’s scores accurately reflect the office culture? Tell us about it.

Open text box for responses.

2. Climate is defined as the shared meaning organizational members attach to the events, policies, practices, and procedures they experience and the behaviors they see being rewarded, supported, and expected Do you feel your office’s scores accurately reflect the office climate? Tell us about it.

Open text box for responses.

3. What kinds of activities or opportunities would encourage you to engage more fully in the Division of Student Success?

Examples:

Professional development

Learning a new role

Taking on a new responsibility

Additional training

Better understanding of the university's mission/vision

Better understanding of the strategic plan

Room and time to build and maintain connections and relationships across campus

Other

Open text box for responses

APPENDIX D

QUALTRICS FOLLOW UP SURVEY RAW DATA FOR OFFICES A, B, C, D

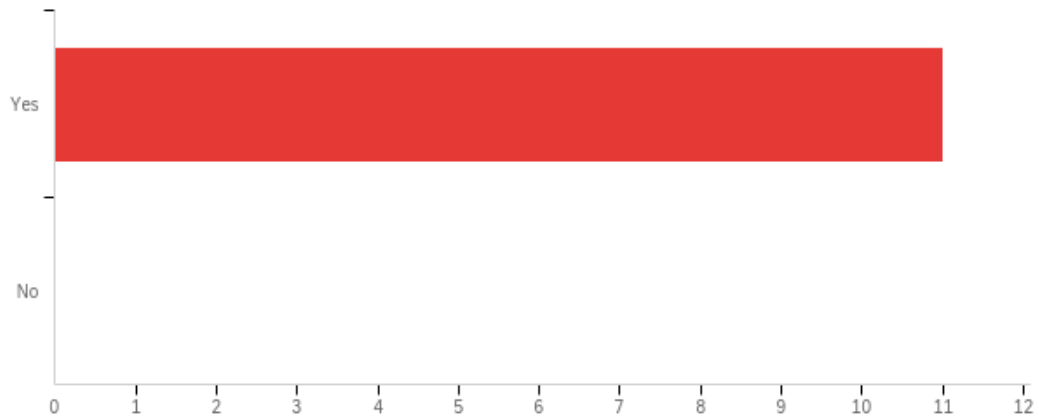
Engagement, Climate, and Culture

A Gallup Follow Up

February 6th 2020, 3:55 pm MST

Q2 - Does the overall average score reflect your overall sense of the office?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Does the overall average score reflect your overall sense of the office?	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	11



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	100.00%	11
2	No	0.00%	0

Q3 - Please elaborate on your previous answer; why or why not?

Our office is a positive encouraging place to work

I feel the [REDACTED] has made a huge improvement in engagement due to the leadership.

I think based on the people I work with and their personalities, we've got people all over the board. But for the most part, we work well and we are for each other.

Yes, I think the low scores are based on personal reflection. There is a healthy environment created by management in our office and that is reflected.

It's a great place to work with a great team

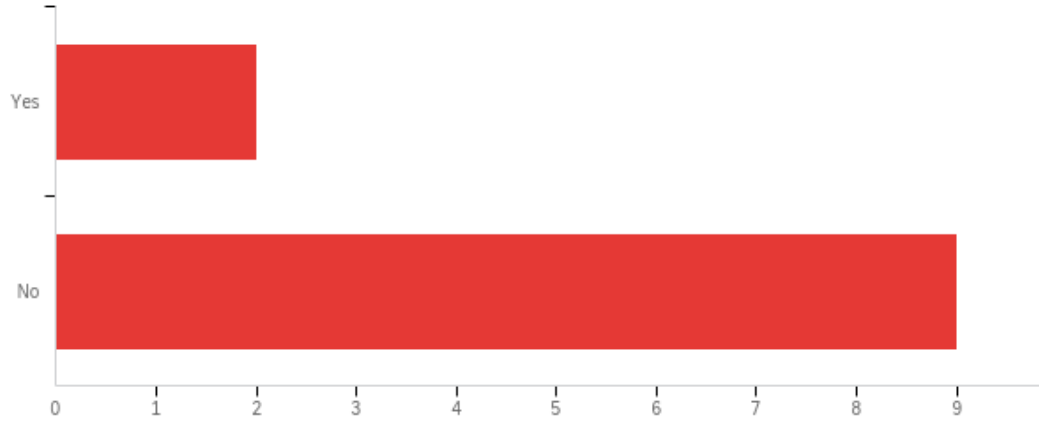
Overall it is a good work environment.

I think we have a great team currently, people are hard working, intelligent, self-motivated and ethical... not to mention FUN!

We've made changes to become a very team-work oriented and supportive office. We have worked hard to define expectations, roles, responsibilities, cross-train, and share our knowledge with each other. We still have challenges but we have each other's back.

I believe that the scores reflect the positive atmosphere experienced in the office, and the lowest scores are in more personal categories, where someone does not feel that their best attributes are in daily use and the acknowledgement of coworkers who may not put forth the expected or desired effort.

Q4 - Do any of the individual questions (Q00-Q12) stand out as unrepresentative of your office?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do any of the individual questions (Q00-Q12) stand out as unrepresentative of your office?	1.00	2.00	1.82	0.39	0.15	11

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	18.18%	2
2	No	81.82%	9
	Total	100%	11

Q5 - Which ones and why?

I'm surprised by Q05, because I feel that our supervisors care for us really well. Q11 is surprising to me as well, as I feel that I've gotten lots of feedback on what is going well and what can improve. Perhaps this takes some initiative on the part of the individual?

No.

na

NA

Q03 and Q09- my colleagues do great work. They are dedicated to student success, accuracy, and efficiency. We have systems in place to ensure training so that we can all be successful in what we are doing.

Q6 - Culture is defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by an organization as it solved its problems, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. Please describe your office's culture- it's basic assumptions- in a sentence or two.

Work hard, cover for each other, support each other, have fun and eat!!

Our office's culture is that of acceptance, being helpful, and going above and beyond to deliver on our projects to the entire university. If there is a way, we make it work. The entire office supports each other and is always looking to promote success as a whole.

I believe our office's culture is one of defense - trying to do everything we can to be sure that neither ourselves or the institution gets taken advantage of. However, I think we can work harder to shift our thinking to, "How do we do everything we can for the student while still remaining true to the academic integrity of the institution?"

Collective effort towards continual success.

Uphold standards, policy, and expectations while helping students the best we can and support each other as a team.

Get the job done quickly and accurately.

The culture of our office is very neutral and I feel anyone is welcome.

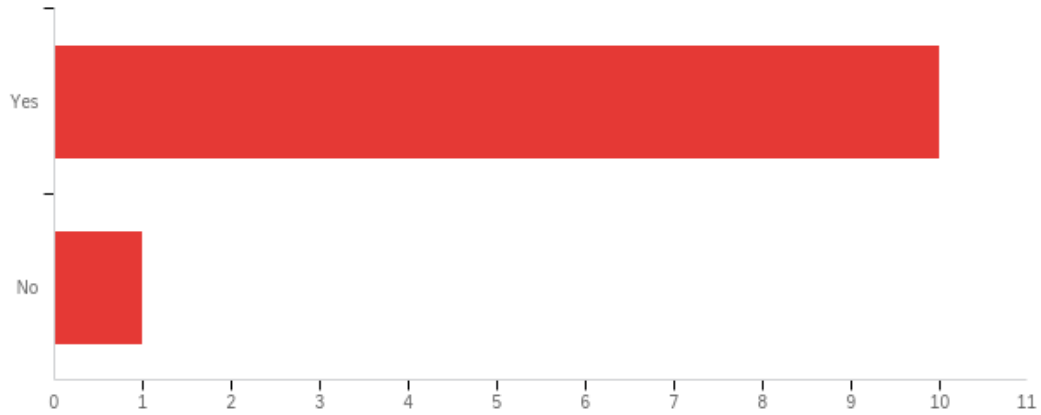
Survival. We seem to be constantly trying to stay afloat while trying new things. We're hardly ever in a state of consistency. Caring, our office genuinely cares for its employees which is rare.

Written policy, communication and documentation are essential to ensuring our work remains consistent and within the boundaries of university policy.

We are fun, light-hearted, friendly, dedicated, and care for our students. We work hard to make our office a nice place to work and a friendly place for students to visit. We are great at handling change, have to respond quickly, and have demonstrated our commitment to student success by improving many of our processes and systems.

The office culture, created in major part by the supervising staff, is one of community, shared experience, and cooperation among coworkers. Occasionally the stress of the job will interfere with this overarching culture and cause rifts, but the office as a whole is involved in one another's lives, supportive, helpful, and encouraging.

Q7 - Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office culture?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office culture?	1.00	2.00	1.09	0.29	0.08	11

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	90.91%	10
2	No	9.09%	1
	Total	100%	11

Q8 - Why or why not?

we know what is expected and we are praised and encouraged

I suppose so? But I don't want to manipulate the data to fit my opinions! I don't know that these questions necessarily correlate to the culture issue I identified.

Sure.

Those that are shown to be truly hard working are supported.

yes it's an awesome place to work.

I feel turnover makes it difficult for employees to accurately reflect the office culture when they have yet to learn it.

For the most part, people are working in our office because they want to, because they enjoy the work and the interaction with students. This is reflected in the good quality of work that we produce as well as the volume of work we are able to process as a team.

For the most part, we are great. We all have bad days, but this reflects that we still have work to do.

The office atmosphere and culture are mostly beneficial, and in stressful periods of time the stress may bring down a score somewhat from a 5, but not significantly enough to ruin an experience.

Q9 - Climate is defined as the shared meaning organizational members attach to the events, policies, practices, and procedures they experience and the behaviors they see being rewarded, supported, and expected. Please describe your office's climate- it's shared meanings- in a sentence or two:

Our office's climate is that of mutual respect. I feel that everyone works together to ensure we are successful for the big picture of the entire university rather than focusing on the success of ourselves as individuals.

I believe our office's climate is one of teamwork - we are encouraged to do our best to jump in where needed and to let the team know when we are in need.

Supportive engagement with the desire of ensuring minimal conflict.

Uphold standards, policy, and expectations while helping students the best we can and support each other as a team.

The majority of the team is striving toward innovation and a general updating of process. Those who are doing this are being rewarded, supported and it is the expectation. We tend to be working around those few who are not ready to evolve.

The climate of the office is rules and procedures. Follow them and you won't have issues.

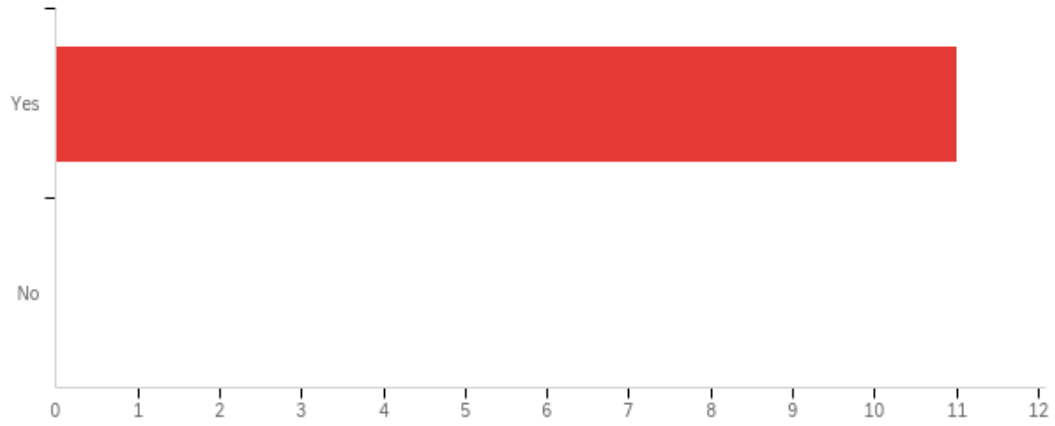
The personal climate is very caring and respectful. Great attitude and your managers genuinely care about their employees. On a professional level it can be a little chaotic but that could be the nature of the office and turnover. We've not found our groove yet.

Providing wholesome support and guidance to students, staff and faculty while maintaining data integrity and upholding university policies.

Our climate is one of high expectations. If a mistake is made, it has the potential to impact a lot of people. Everything is fixable, but we need to be dedicated to accuracy.

One of the shared meanings or experiences in the office starts with the Daily Stand Up, where every person in the office has equal voice, the ability to share experiences and learning moments, as well as express a desire for change or improvement. All staff is treated with kindness and acceptance of their lives, choices, and experiences, with the knowledge that while in the office all members of the staff put forth their greatest effort and work ethic, and that if this is not displayed, they are asked to meet expectations.

Q10 - Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office climate?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office climate?	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	11

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	100.00%	11
2	No	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	11

Q11 - Why or why not?

I actually think this is a yes and no... Yes because of the answers to 4,5, & 7 but no because of the answers to 9 - I think this still demonstrates some frustrations that we have with one another.

Sure.

Again, the majority are striving for innovation and growth.

██████████ is run by rules and procedures

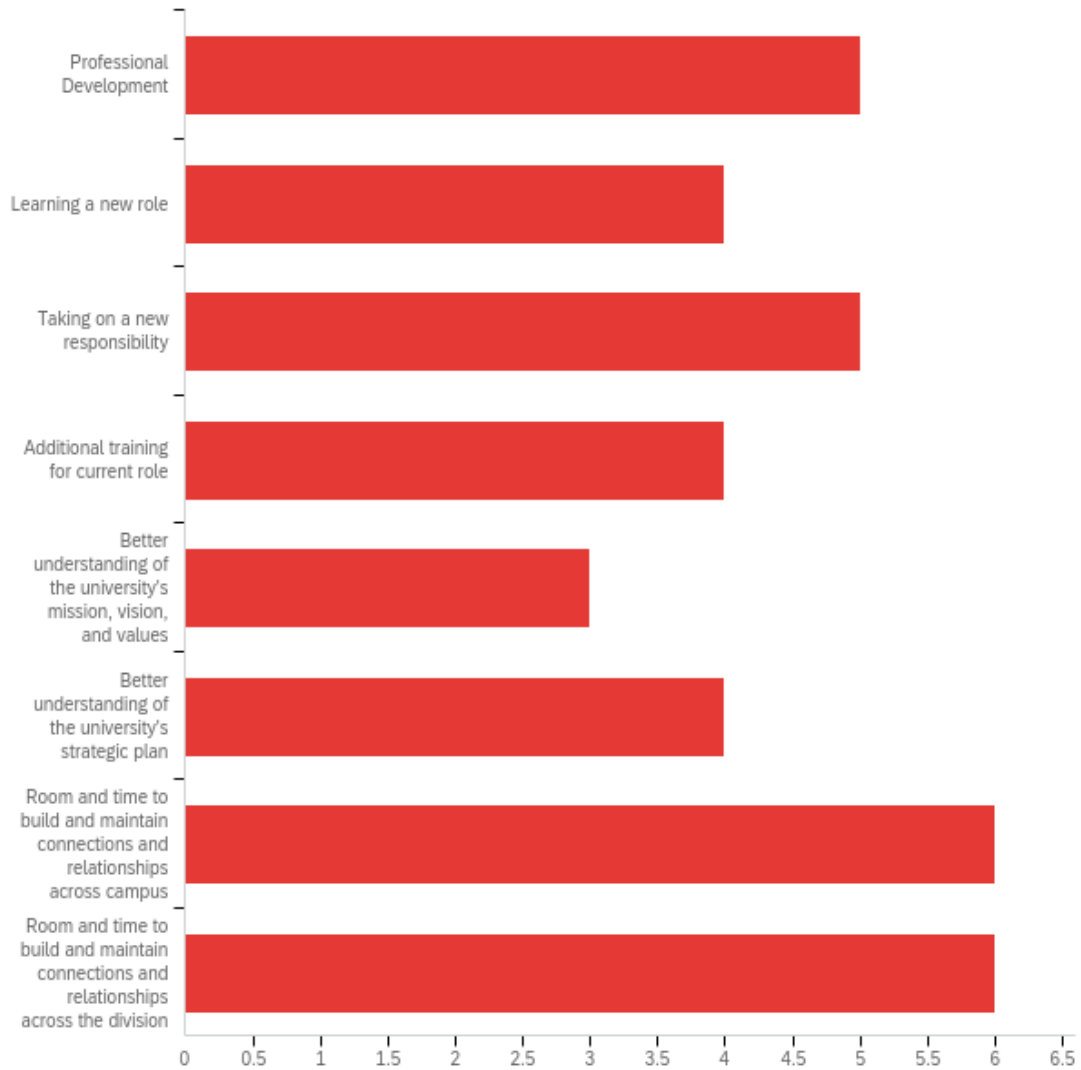
yes and no, so many changes are happening it can feel unorganized which is not part of the questions.

Our team is made up of caring individuals who take the time to approach each student as an individual, and do everything in their power to ensure the student succeeds.

We still have some improvement but for the most part, are dedicated to accuracy.

██████████ has a great climate and while not always perfect, it is generally positive which comes from the supervising staff and trickles down to the rest of the office.

Q12 - What kinds of opportunities or activities would encourage you to engage more fully in the Division of Student Success? Choose all that apply:



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Professional Development	13.51%	5
2	Learning a new role	10.81%	4
3	Taking on a new responsibility	13.51%	5

4	Additional training for current role	10.81%	4
5	Better understanding of the university's mission, vision, and values	8.11%	3
6	Better understanding of the university's strategic plan	10.81%	4
7	Room and time to build and maintain connections and relationships across campus	16.22%	6
8	Room and time to build and maintain connections and relationships across the division	16.22%	6
	Total	100%	37

Q18 - Other opportunities or activities? Please describe:

More inter-department collaboration- A great start would be a Forms Committee, so many of us see and process various forms and a standardization/modernization across the division would foster collaboration.

group activities-retreats

Understanding the "big picture" and being included in decisions rather than reacting to the changes being implemented.

Social "mixer" opportunities OUTSIDE of work time. During business hours, people are distracted, anxious and not able to fully engage and enjoy each others company.

n/a

Q14 - Is there anything else you would like EAR to know about your office or the division?

THANK YOU! It means alot that employee engagement is such an important part of the division and that our leaders understand that employee engagement helps to create happy and productive employees!

Overworked, underpaid.

you are awesome!

It would be nice to have a question on how long the person who is filling out the questionnaire has worked in the office to see if there is a trend.

There's no place I'd rather be. This office has provided unparalleled support for me and my family, and I am so grateful for their understanding and flexibility. Never once have I been made to feel like I am a burden or asking too much of them. I love my team!

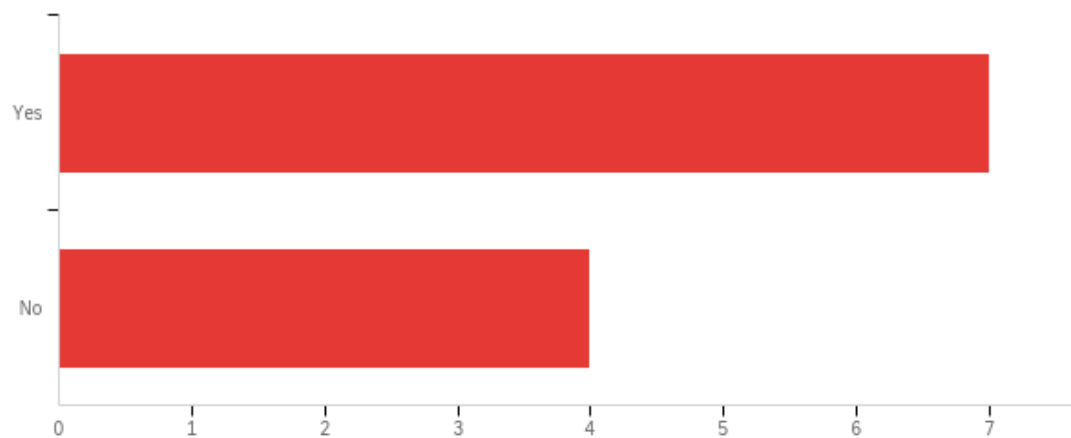
The [REDACTED] is a great place to work. They are flexible, knowledgable, and friendly.

Engagement, Climate, and Culture

B Gallup Follow Up

February 6th 2020, 3:58 pm MST

Q2 - Does the overall average score reflect your overall sense of the office?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Does the overall average score reflect your overall sense of the office?	1.00	2.00	1.36	0.48	0.23	11

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	63.64%	7
2	No	36.36%	4
	Total	100%	11

Q3 - Please elaborate on your previous answer; why or why not?

Unfortunately, moral is way down. Our turnover seems to be constant which does not help moral or the feeling of positive support.

You will notice Q07 is the lowest. Opinions don't count. Feedback is not received well at all. It is dismissed. The only opinions that count are [REDACTED]. They believe they have all the answers - and the only ones. I do believe staff - for the most - like them as individuals. But their people management skills are horrible. They dont let people perform the work they were hired to do. The next lowest scored comment is Q00. People are not satisfied. People are not honest in meetings, don't speak out of fear or ridicule. The office sucks out your enthusiam, self esteem, and hope of making a difference.

Morale in our office seems fairly low in comparison to other settings I have worked. I think this may be due to several reasons, including micro management which leads to frustration and lack of agency, too many theoretical frameworks from which we are tasked to operate, lack of training, lack of follow through from leadership on projects which delays deadlines and impacts productivity to name a few

There appears to be consensus about the importance of our work, but seems to reflect a mediocre work environment.

Some colleagues did not complete the survey due to a sense of futility. They believe these surveys will not change anything.

[REDACTED] is amazing! I find the office friendly, supportive, and encouraging.

My overall sense of the office would be closer to a mean score of approximately 3.75.

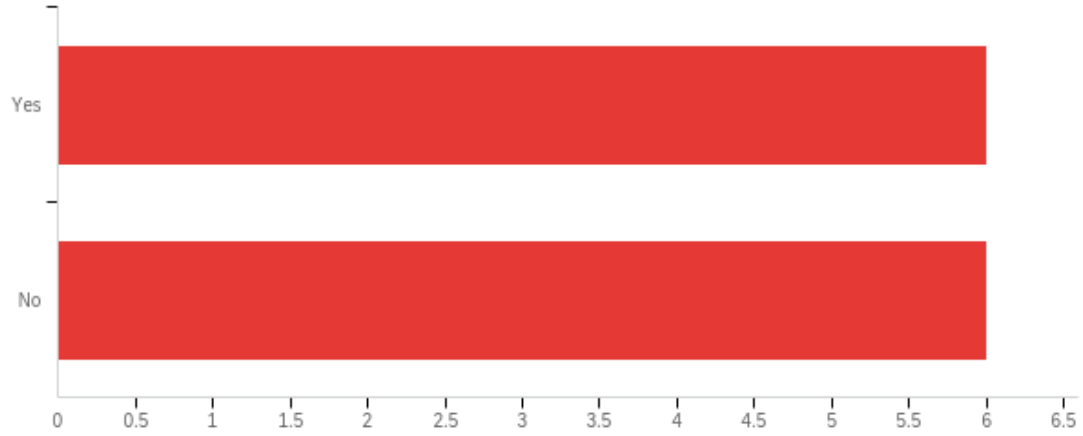
I feel very supported and engaged by my work.

I feel the survey represents the office most of the time, recently this has been a more consistent level, in past months is averaged a little lower than this.

Everyone always has a sense of it doesn't matter how I feel or what I am concerned about there are only two people in the office who make those choices and I am not one of them.

Staff seem very unhappy, overworked, never allowed to prepare ahead of time for events so it leaves everyone scrambling at the last minute all the time like everything is an emergency.

Q4 - Do any of the individual questions (Q00-Q12) stand out as unrepresentative of your office?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do any of the individual questions (Q00-Q12) stand out as unrepresentative of your office?	1.00	2.00	1.50	0.50	0.25	12

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	50.00%	6
2	No	50.00%	6
	Total	100%	12

Q5 - Which ones and why?

I feel that all the questions do pertain to our office and the outcome is accurate.

Am suprised some are as high as they are.

Q01:Lower - Typically incomplete directions are given for projects. Communications regarding changes are inconsistent. I need to ask clarifying questions & I often don't get answers.

1-12 I would bump them all to 5

For Q07, I personally think people's opinions count more than represented in this score.

Q7, individual opinions usually drive the best outcomes around here

Q07 seems like a higher score than it actually is when I walk around and see people. I try to give feedback and it is rejected and never taken into consideration.

Q6 - Culture is defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by an organization as it solved its problems, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. Please describe your office's culture- it's basic assumptions- in a sentence or two.

I feel that from the first day that I walked in to this office the culture was very negative. Many of the staff seem frustrated and unhappy. The office seems to lack communication and organization which leads to massive frustration. This attitude spreads quite fast when generated.

The pattern staff learns is - don't offer suggestions or feedback. It doesn't matter. All you have to do is look at the number of full time employees who have left year after year to know there is a problem. The reason the surveys are not completed by all staff is most don't see a reason to fill it out. Nothing changes. Especially in staff treatment.

"Stay in your lane", which is emphasized so often but often at the expense of transparency and potentially powerful collaborations

Our office culture is a hierarchy. Ideas are asked for but rarely actually contribute to the whole. There is an appearance of collaboration but it is a culture of exclusivity, which is unfortunate because the staff is ex

2 hidden cultures exist. 1st culture: Appearances are everything. 2nd culture: Start-up culture where things are constantly changing & shifting even though we're years in & some basic procedures should be well set by now & they are not. This is named continual improvement.

██████████ culture is nurturing and positive. The pace is quick and exciting. Expectations are high and the energy promotes creativity.

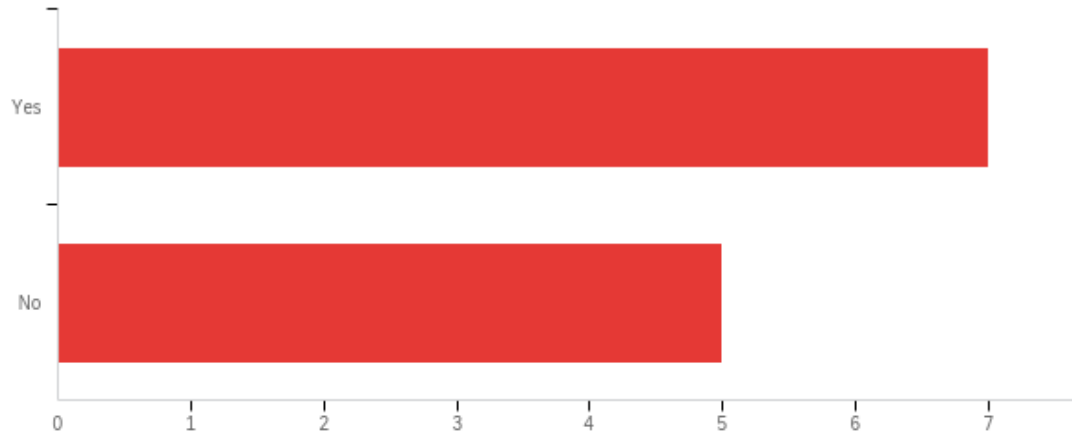
Culture: We are doing important work that matters and we should be innovators doing it.

Our office culture is both friendly and supportive among core team and concerned about lack of support and unexpected behavior among upper management. This creates stress and lack of comfort. People also feel boxed in to some situations and removed from information relating to others which creates isolation and a lack of confidence.

Fear based, if you are trying to make a positive culture change in this office you will made an example of.

██████████ have all the control and we just do what they say. We operate on a short timeline and don't work ahead because ██████████ are too busy so we can never implement feedback to make our process better.

Q7 - Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office culture?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office culture?	1.00	2.00	1.42	0.49	0.24	12

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	58.33%	7
2	No	41.67%	5
	Total	100%	12

Q8 - Why or why not?

Staff does not seem happy which leads to the culture being one of confusion, fear, over worked and not supported, and not heard or feel safe being vocal. I believe that many of the staff love what they do and their mission but the culture is not positive and makes it hard to keep "the good ones".

Again, am surprised they are this high.

What is conveyed is not what is representative of the culture. My idea of leadership includes honesty, integrity and one with concrete and clear based activities that contribute more effectively to our work.

Again, some people did not complete the survey due to hopelessness.

Our scores should be even higher. My sense is that people are treated well and they are doing important work!

I think we have the tools to do what we need. I think we have really talented people here.

The average to slightly below on most questions relates the overall feel. Recently it seems there is an effort to improve communication and bring different groups of people together more which has been helpful.

There is no trust or ability to make progress in your role because every little decisions has to be run all the way up the flag pole.

not as bad as most make it seem

Staff support each other and staff are working at 100% capacity. [REDACTED] is disorganized and has way to many projects on their plate. The expectation is that staff can never endingly add to their workload and new staff won't be brought on.

Q9 - Climate is defined as the shared meaning organizational members attach to the events, policies, practices, and procedures they experience and the behaviors they see being rewarded, supported, and expected. Please describe your office's climate- it's shared meanings- in a sentence or two:

Extremely negative

I believe the goals and work the office does is critical. The staff is very talented but micromanaged to the nth degree, so that the best of what everyone could offer does not happen.

I don't know if this is "climate" really, but it is clear the programs getting the most support, and it often feels at the expense of other programs and services.

Shared and supported ideas operates at the staff level, not at the leadership level.

Colleagues have a good sense of humor. Hard to know what behaviors are being rewarded, supported, & expected because we're encouraged to do our work without bothering others. If we have questions, we are supposed to email the boss who often doesn't respond in a timely manner.

I believe that the [REDACTED] has made a commitment to excellence in everything that they do. They are working towards making a difference in the lives of each student that they encounter.

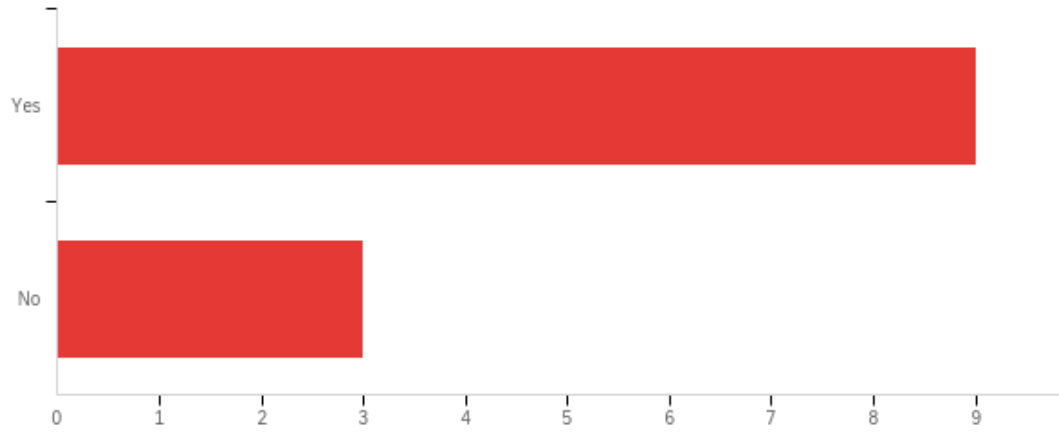
Management appears to be very thankful for the work we are doing.

Office climate right now is pretty good. This has a history of swinging widely on the pendulum related to timely sharing of information, bringing key staff together to work on a project and some staff feeling they have to walk on egg shells or be made to feel a failure.

Climate is always high stress and last minute decision as there is barely any delegation of authority and trust in the ranks.

Climate in [REDACTED] is that people are afraid to complain because they are regularly made to feel dumb. People don't seem to enjoy working there. They would enjoy working there if they had more authority to make decisions and work on a timeline conducive to progress and supporting student.s

Q10 - Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office climate?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office climate?	1.00	2.00	1.25	0.43	0.19	12

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	75.00%	9
2	No	25.00%	3
	Total	100%	12

Q11 - Why or why not?

The negativity is very strong. Coworkers talk and that climate will spread. The communication (or lack of) is a big part of that. An example of lack of communication is when the turn over is so vast with no explanation, announcement, etc.

Unfortunately, they scores fall into the middle and would prefer they fall toward the high range.

Again, some people did not complete the survey due to hopelessness.

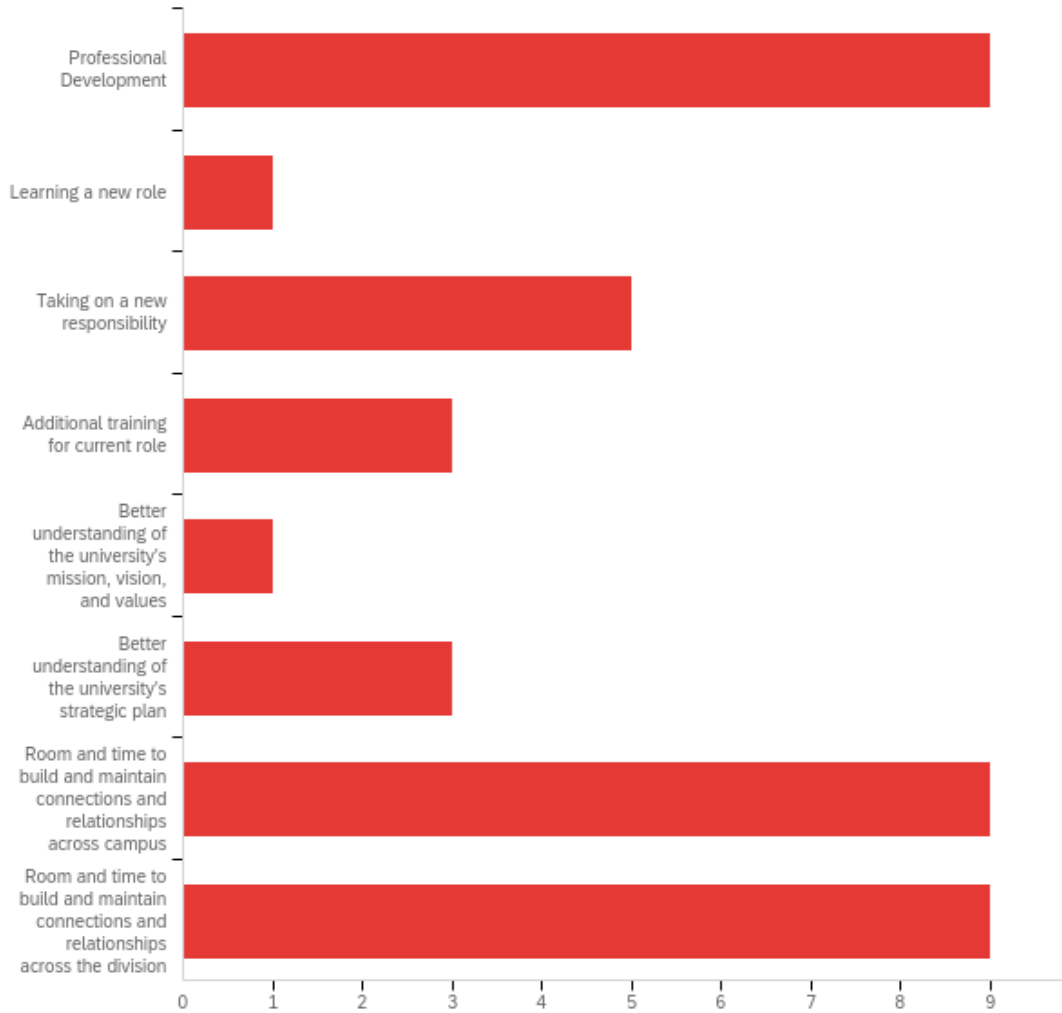
...again, I believe that the scores should be higher. I love the energy and the encouragement that I experience on a daily basis!

This place is more positive than the score would suggest.

We seem to be doing pretty well right now, I am concerned about sustaining this climate going forward.

They are low/poor and this is accurate because the staff feel afraid and annoyed at work and when staff are belittled and don't have authority - why would they want to work there?

Q12 - What kinds of opportunities or activities would encourage you to engage more fully in the Division of Student Success? Choose all that apply:



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Professional Development	22.50%	9
2	Learning a new role	2.50%	1
3	Taking on a new responsibility	12.50%	5
4	Additional training for current role	7.50%	3

5	Better understanding of the university's mission, vision, and values	2.50%	1
6	Better understanding of the university's strategic plan	7.50%	3
7	Room and time to build and maintain connections and relationships across campus	22.50%	9
8	Room and time to build and maintain connections and relationships across the division	22.50%	9
	Total	100%	40

Q18 - Other opportunities or activities? Please describe:

I would appreciate a more collaborative environment working toward the same goals.

With the ample employee turnover, perhaps a mini-retreat (2 or 3 hours), where the workings across the Division could be explained.

I would like to participate in an open think tank brainstorming session with the entire team! I believe that there are exceptional people with great ideas that could push the program even further ahead!

N/A

Q14 - Is there anything else you would like EAR to know about your office or the division?

This is an internal [REDACTED] problem. It is a toxic environment. People walk on eggshells around [REDACTED]. Its a shame.

I have heard that climate and culture issues have been around for many years, so my hope is that something will be done with this data/feedback to improve the employee experience there because the work itself of supporting students this way is so inspiring and needed! I wish you the best moving things forward and implementing meaningful change should you determine the need.

The following qualities are necessary for success: A sense of humor, ability to drop everything & change directions, ability to redo work often because the project wasn't clearly planned in the beginning. Don't get frustrated when you're not allowed input on project planning.

I am honored to be a part of this team! The program is cutting edge and should be mimicked across the state and beyond!

N/A

This is an amazing team, I really enjoy my colleagues.

Not at this time, there have been numerous HR reports and inquiries with no results. Therefore there is not much hope for change or progress.

I think if the attitude of the directors within each department doesn't change or improve, employee engagement won't change. It would be valuable to have [REDACTED] speak to each director about their commitment to making their workplace positive. It would be great if EAR could step to the next level of really expecting participation and improving workplace conditions rather than just holding events and hoping that workplace culture and attitudes change. I value the work EAR does, but the Gallup results have been the same for years and people are dissatisfied with working at [REDACTED] so I think taking it to the next step is necessary.

Engagement, Climate, and Culture

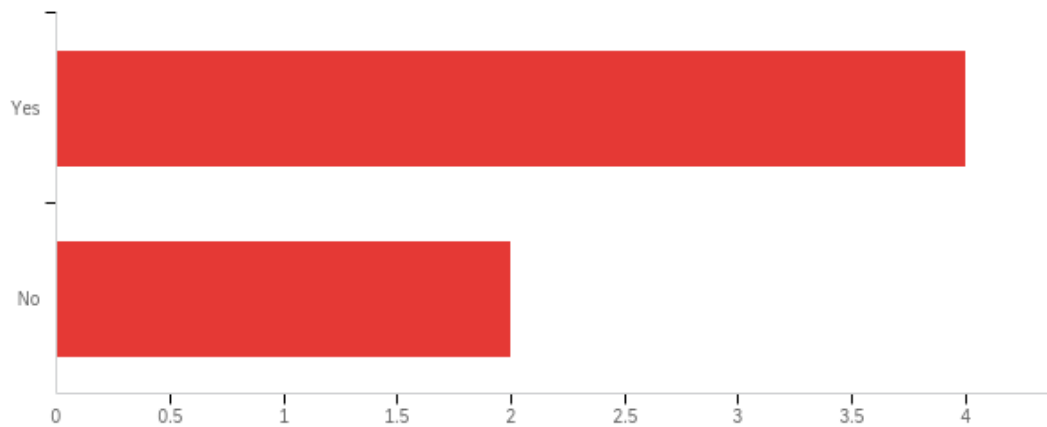
C Gallup Follow Up

February 6th 2020, 3:54 pm MST

Q2 - Does the overall average score reflect your overall sense of the office?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Does the overall average score reflect your overall sense of the office?	1.00	2.00	1.33	0.47	0.22	6

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	66.67%	4
2	No	33.33%	2
	Total	100%	6



Q3 - Please elaborate on your previous answer; why or why not?

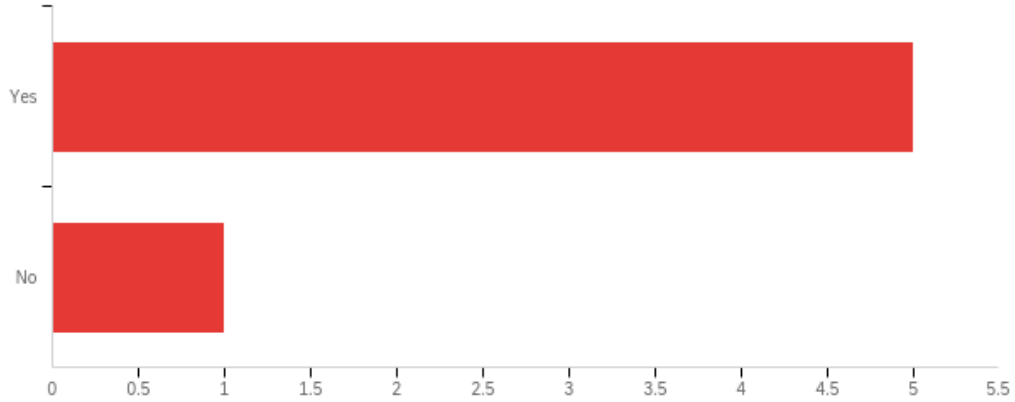
Overall I think there is a positive attitude and respectful disposition towards one another, which is reflects in the current mean scores.

I would rank our overall mean closer to a 3.75. Not quite a B average.

Our office has experienced a lot of turn-over and the number of participants is about half of the total number of employees we have in the office.

The [REDACTED] office is a really supportive environment. We have a lot of pressure and stress at times, but we work hard to support each other. Supervisors are actively engaged in promoting a positive environment, professional growth and opportunities to specialize in areas of strength.

Q4 - Do any of the individual questions (Q00-Q12) stand out as unrepresentative of your office?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do any of the individual questions (Q00-Q12) stand out as unrepresentative of your office?	1.00	2.00	1.17	0.37	0.14	6

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	83.33%	5
2	No	16.67%	1
	Total	100%	6

Q5 - Which ones and why?

Q's 3 and 7 scores are higher than what I would expect for my office. We are more like worker bees, and our strengths and opinions don't factor into the work environment much.

Q12 - Personally, I have had amazing opportunities for learning and growth

Q11 and Q3 - answering no to these answers are indicative of the 'why'.

Questions pertaining to development/growth/improvement

The most surprising response was Q11. In the we have had regular conversations about progress, progression, and opportunities for growth.

I would rate Q11 and Q12 higher

Q6 - Culture is defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by an organization as it solved its problems, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. Please describe your office's culture- it's basic assumptions- in a sentence or two.

New members are taught that the overwhelming workload just can't be managed in 40-hour work-weeks, and yet accuracy is vital. Despite this we are taught that our work, though valuable to the University, is not well understood or VALUED by the leadership.

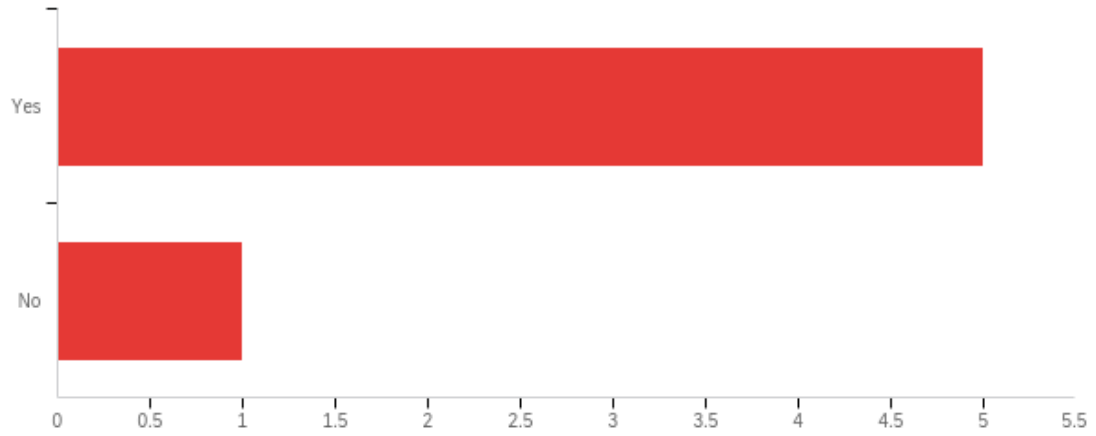
We have to work together as a team. We have a lot of information to remember and recall, it helps that we're all in the work together and make mistakes together too.

Our culture can be best described as people working very hard for a purpose that is unclear.

The [REDACTED] is collaborative, transparent, and supportive. The office functions as a family with shared goals and mutual affection and respect.

Collaborative and supportive

Q7 - Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office culture?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office culture?	1.00	2.00	1.17	0.37	0.14	6

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	83.33%	5
2	No	16.67%	1
	Total	100%	6

Q8 - Why or why not?

Why or why not?

Overall, yes.

I think we have a positive culture as an office but still have room for growth.

I would rank culture closer to a 3.5

Overall the scores are positive and generally reflect a positive connection to the office and our mission.

Q9 - Climate is defined as the shared meaning organizational members attach to the events, policies, practices, and procedures they experience and the behaviors they see being rewarded, supported, and expected. Please describe your office's climate- it's shared meanings- in a sentence or two:

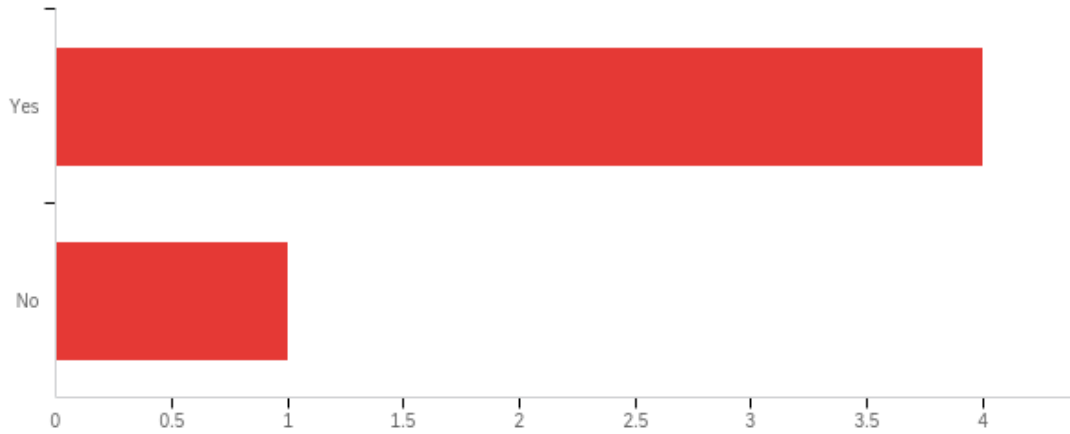
The climate is upbeat, supportive, and positive in the face of an overwhelming workload with eight out of nine brand new team members. It is apparent that leadership is very concerned with the high attrition rate and is trying to find ways to support front line employees.

Overall positive climate.

Our office climate includes excellent feedback between [REDACTED], but not a lot of interaction outside of that department.

The [REDACTED] climate is one of respect and affection for MSU and a commitment to share those feelings with our incoming students. Everyone participates in and is engaged in the process of recruiting, enrollment, and onboarding of new students - we all feel rewarded when we see the incoming class.

Q10 - Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office climate?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office climate?	1.00	2.00	1.20	0.40	0.16	5

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	80.00%	4
2	No	20.00%	1
	Total	100%	5

Q11 - Why or why not?

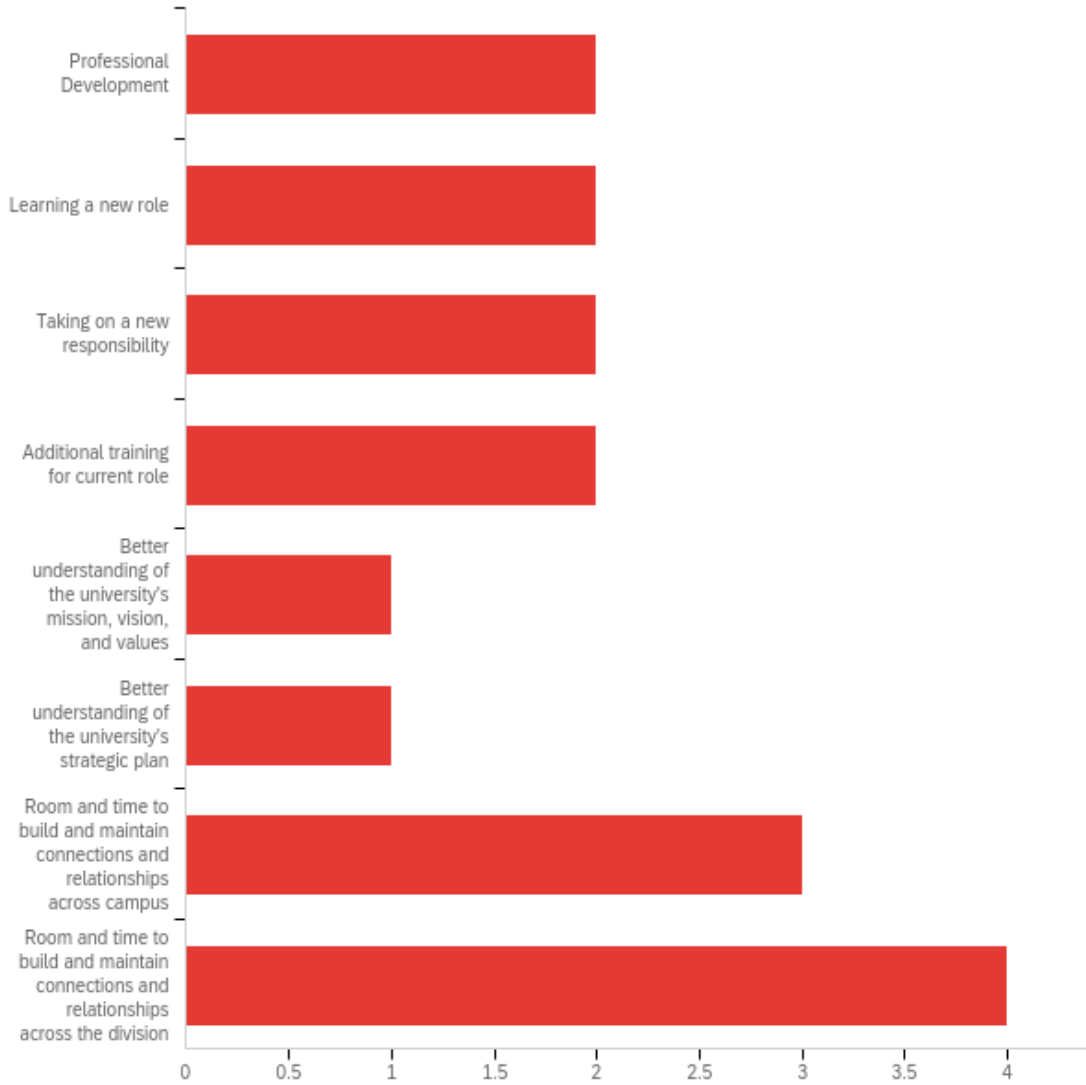
Why or why not?

Our new supervisor is working hard to improve this climate, so the scores are representative of that effort. There are others in adjacent leadership positions who are not as attuned to the needs of the office.

I would rank climate closer to a 3.5.

The scores show an appreciation for the climate and appreciation for the direction set by the supervisors.

Q12 - What kinds of opportunities or activities would encourage you to engage more fully in the Division of Student Success? Choose all that apply:



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Professional Development	11.76%	2
2	Learning a new role	11.76%	2
3	Taking on a new responsibility	11.76%	2

4	Additional training for current role	11.76%	2
5	Better understanding of the university's mission, vision, and values	5.88%	1
6	Better understanding of the university's strategic plan	5.88%	1
7	Room and time to build and maintain connections and relationships across campus	17.65%	3
8	Room and time to build and maintain connections and relationships across the division	23.53%	4
	Total	100%	17

Q18 - Other opportunities or activities? Please describe:

Organized outdoor leisure activities involving employees and their families for fellowship outside work, helping to build relationships across the Division.

More collaboration and understanding between departments

The more integrated we can be with the entire division allows us all to support incoming and continuing students in the very best way. It also helps us to keep the big picture in mind.

Q14 - Is there anything else you would like EAR to know about your office or the division?

Is there anything else you would like EAR to know about your office or the division?

The [REDACTED] is an amazing place to work - [REDACTED] has a lot to do with that, [REDACTED] drives the culture and climate!

Engagement, Climate, and Culture

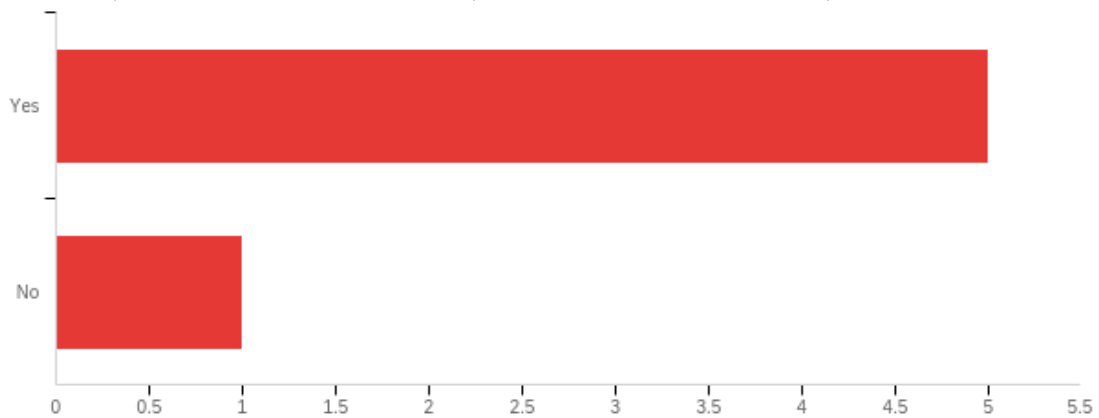
D Gallup Follow Up

February 6th 2020, 3:56 pm MST

Q2 - Does the overall average score reflect your overall sense of the office?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Does the overall average score reflect your overall sense of the office?	1.00	2.00	1.17	0.37	0.14	6

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	83.33%	5
2	No	16.67%	1
	Total	100%	6



Q3 - Please elaborate on your previous answer; why or why not?

Regarding Q3 and Q11 above, please read response to Q14 below

Seems to be about it the middle on a majority of questions. I feel that a "bad" score would be too much, but there is definitely room for improvement in many areas of the office.

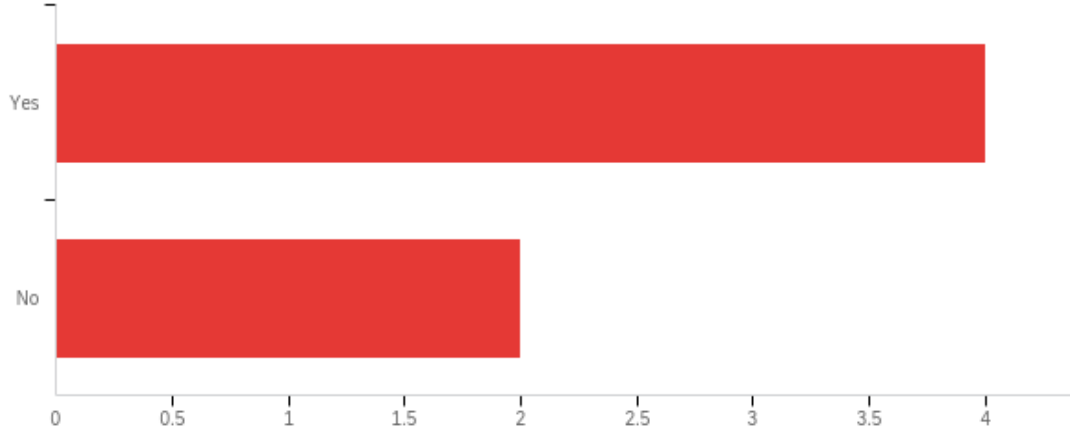
Yes it mostly does because I love my office and who I work with but there is always things that need improvement. Such as my opinion seems to count at work isn't always true. I have brought something that needs improvement to [REDACTED] and it doesn't seem to matter. And the behavior continues.

It reflects the parts that need to be aproved upon in our office

While there are good aspects of the office (peoples desire to help students, the relationships between coworkers) there is a lot of room for improvement. While there is a desire expressed by management to improve the office, and some steps have been taken with pay rate etc, there is much they don't address. The consistent short staffing and poor retention rates, which puts undue stress on the people still here, is not all caused by pay rate. There are retention issue related to training and office environment that are not being addressed. More attention needs to be made to the feedback that is given and not just aspects of it. There is a common theme people have cited for leaving that has not been addressed. More efforts need to be made to make the workplace inviting for new people by all the staff not just the majority

prefer not to say

Q4 - Do any of the individual questions (Q00-Q12) stand out as unrepresentative of your office?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do any of the individual questions (Q00-Q12) stand out as unrepresentative of your office?	1.00	2.00	1.33	0.47	0.22	6

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	66.67%	4
2	No	33.33%	2
	Total	100%	6

Q5 - Which ones and why?

Why even ask Q10? Seems irrelevant.

The materials and equipment question. In this case, I feel that time allocated for projects should be included in this, and it is not representative for those who have specific processing-based projects that have to get done outside of typical [REDACTED]. There are very limited time frames in which we are expected to complete tasks.

Q04- I rarely seem to get recognition about the job I do. I would like to know how I am doing. Q07-I have brought things up to our boss that needs to change and nothing ever seems to come of it. The behavior that needs to change keeps happening. I feel like my opinion doesn't count when it comes to those types of things. Q11- No one has met with me in over a year about my progress. And I really want to grow and know what I can do to make myself better at my job. Q12- I really want to move forward and become more than just the verification lead. But instead of giving me training to help me get there they just want to hire another person to take the management position. I have been stuck where I'm at for almost two years and I would like to make management but I need the tools, resources, and support to get there.

Q6 - Culture is defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by an organization as it solved its problems, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. Please describe your office's culture- it's basic assumptions- in a sentence or two.

Share information with colleagues. Ask questions. Top-down direction for daily processes, for the most part. Act professional. Customer service oriented.

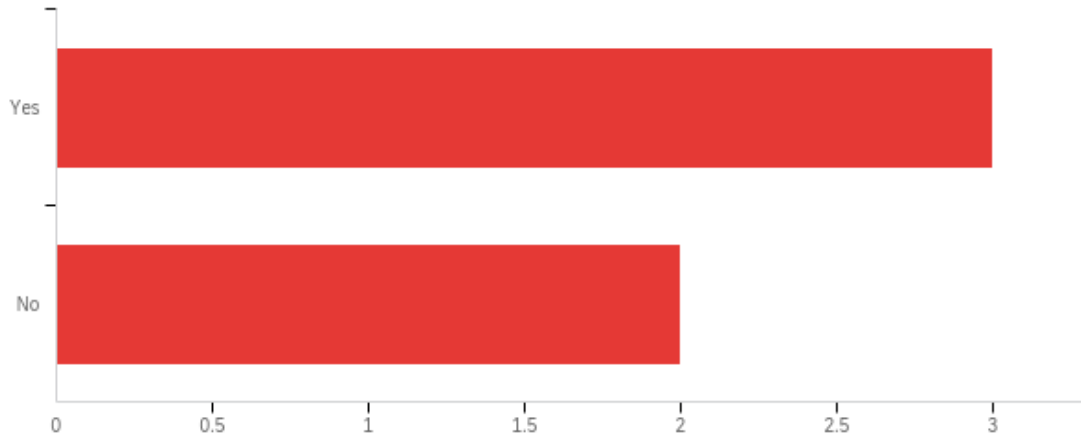
The office's culture is primarily customer service focused. Work attitude and, likewise, many problems stem from the ways in which we interact with and are approached by students and parents. Much of what happens in the office directly correlates not just to the issue the student is having, but how to handle it. Most of the time the ways in which we handle customer service experiences are directed by managerial response, but occasionally misinformation being spread causes hiccups in the system.

Our office for the most part does well solving our problems. Some are better at it than others. But for the most part we work pretty well as a team to fix problems and to learn how to avoid them in the future.

Our office is a group of hard working people who do their best to give the students great service, while keeping with federal policy.

There is little opportunity to teach new people the "Culture" when they don't stay long enough to be taught. Which may be caused by the office's current "Culture" and things that are not being addressed

Q7 - Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office culture?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office culture?	1.00	2.00	1.40	0.49	0.24	5

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	60.00%	3
2	No	40.00%	2
	Total	100%	5

Q8 - Why or why not?

Why or why not?

There seems to be the sense of a lack of time, funding, manpower or desire to improve or maximize the current work environment. Comes off as disorganization. Our office move has been somewhat disappointing.

The questions themselves are not necessarily focused on what we do or how we are able to (if at all) rectify problems. Rather, they are focused on personal issues in the office. I would say many personal problems stem from issues in the work itself. Having a friend in the office or someone I can go to is fine, but when the people making mistakes are also the ones I would go, there is an issue.

We are mainly good at working together and solving our problems. Of course there is always room for improvement.

We are dedicated people but we don't feel that our organization values what we do.

Seems a good average

Q9 - Climate is defined as the shared meaning organizational members attach to the events, policies, practices, and procedures they experience and the behaviors they see being rewarded, supported, and expected. Please describe your office's climate- it's shared meanings- in a sentence or two:

Most members of the office team are positive, professional and customer service driven. We seek to support each other, to understand and share accurate information with each other about policies and procedures and be as efficient as possible

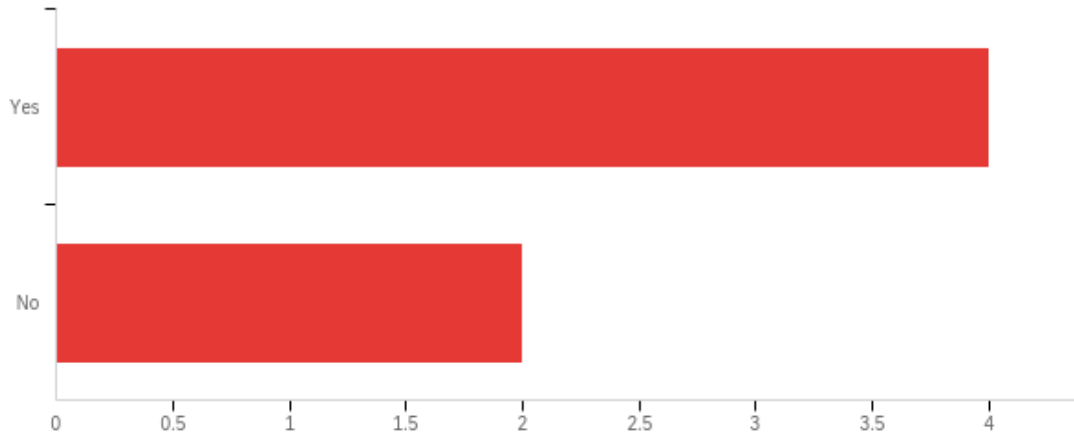
The office climate is tense. There is a lot of expectation that poor behavior is allowed to continue in [REDACTED] alike despite many efforts by colleagues when brought to the attention of others. Even with little things like expected schedules and answering questions in a civil manner get dismissed without repercussion. Typically, the office sticks up for one another and celebrates achievements together, and the behaviors are well-meaning. Other times, however, it feels as if some people are disproportionately supported.

Our climate is not always great. Sometimes there are people that need a better attitude especially when we ask them a question. It would be nice not to be talked down on for asking it and not getting our heads ripped off. When people are scared to approach a specific person than it is a problem. And their moodiness and how they treat people brings down the entire office.

We help students navigate the confusing regulations [REDACTED].

With our workload we have very little time to have shared "meaning" we are focused on getting the work done for the students.

Q10 - Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office climate?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do you feel your office's scores accurately reflect the office climate?	1.00	2.00	1.33	0.47	0.22	6

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	66.67%	4
2	No	33.33%	2
	Total	100%	6

Q11 - Why or why not?

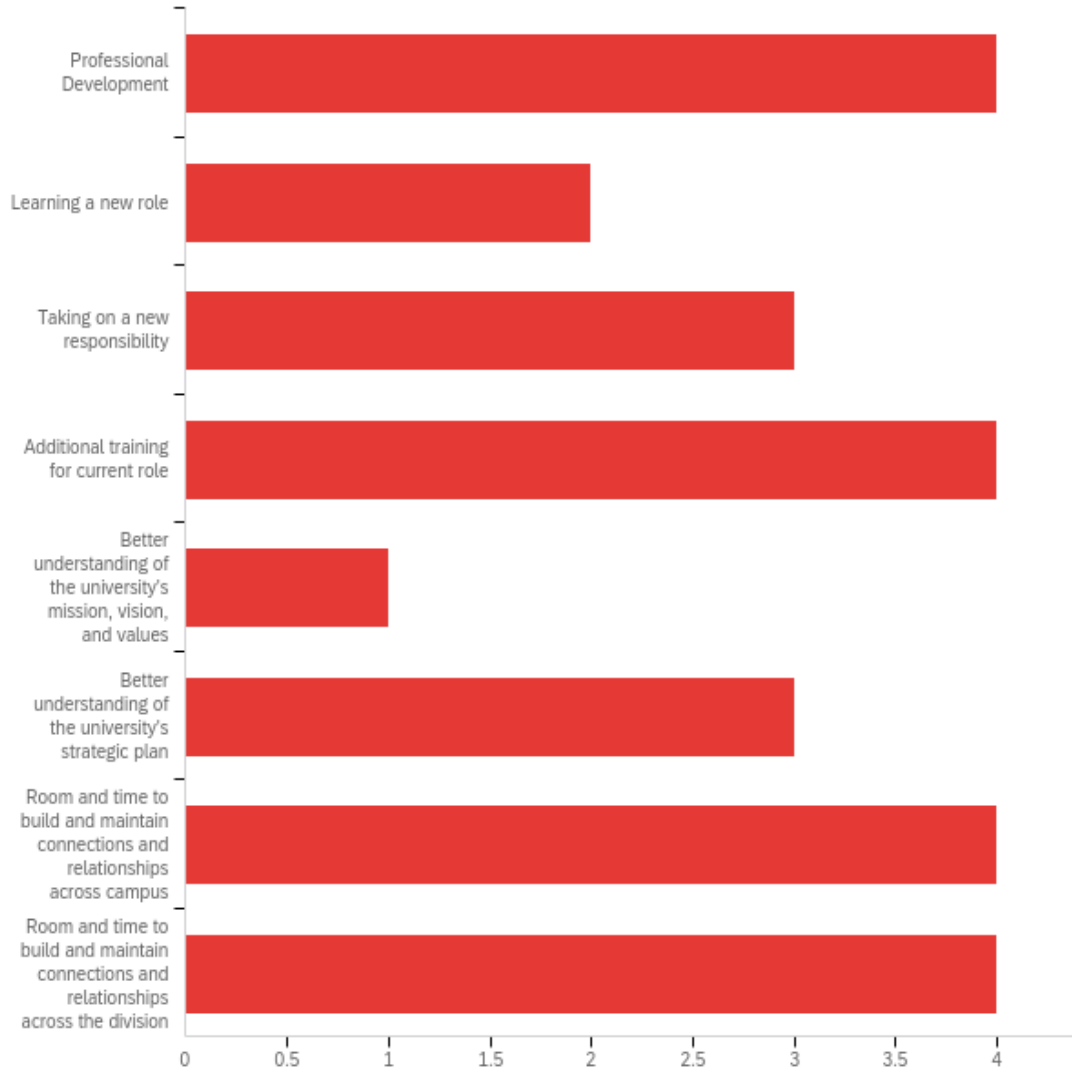
Some key staff display a more short-tempered, unfriendly or even oppositional manner and seem to intentionally give incomplete or contradictory information which naturally causes conflict and degrades the team morale. But, we tend to work around it whenever possible.

The opinions counting question reflects how I feel many times when a concern is brought to light and ultimately dismissed.

When someone has been brought up as a concern by multiple people in the office and nothing is done about it. It really makes us feel like our opinions don't matter. Why have voices if no one will listen to us.

We are dedicated people but we don't feel that our organization values what we do.

Q12 - What kinds of opportunities or activities would encourage you to engage more fully in the Division of Student Success? Choose all that apply:



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Professional Development	16.00%	4
2	Learning a new role	8.00%	2
3	Taking on a new responsibility	12.00%	3

4	Additional training for current role	16.00%	4
5	Better understanding of the university's mission, vision, and values	4.00%	1
6	Better understanding of the university's strategic plan	12.00%	3
7	Room and time to build and maintain connections and relationships across campus	16.00%	4
8	Room and time to build and maintain connections and relationships across the division	16.00%	4
	Total	100%	25

Q18 - Other opportunities or activities? Please describe:

More inter-office teambuilding that is explicitly engaged in building a network across campus.
While getting together over coffee is fun, it does not build a strong working relationship.

Nope. I think it was well listed above.

Nothing

The time to actually attend activities and not feel like you are getting behind in work.

Q14 - Is there anything else you would like EAR to know about your office or the division?

There is a lack of consistent annual review and concrete career advancement planning assistance. I think changes are happening, but at a glacial pace.

n/a

There is always room for improvement. I love my job. I love my coworkers but, there is always things that can be worked on to make us a better team.

Nothing

While there are steps being made for improvement there is still a lot that needs to be addressed.