



## Overview

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### About the survey

The first Cornell Employee Survey in 2011 was a response to a resolution from the Employee Assembly calling for a study to better understand staff engagement. This second survey was administered from October 6 to November 28, 2016 to nonacademic staff and librarians. Sixty-eight percent of invited employees responded to the survey, with 4309 surveys submitted over the web and 523 surveys submitted on paper. Results were released in April 2017.

### Results

The [2016 survey questions and results](#) can be found on the Institutional Research and Planning Employee Survey website.

A synopsis of the results is available in the [Chronicle article released in March 2017](#).

Overall, staff ratings have remained steady since 2011. Positive gains were made in performance reviews, supervisor feedback, and supervisors' support of their staff for professional development opportunities or in balancing work and family responsibilities. Many staff say recent organizational changes have had a positive change on their work, and have created new opportunities for them. In addition, concern about job security among employees has decreased about 10 percent since 2011.

Perceptions of the overall direction of the university are not as positive. Approximately 54 percent of staff responded that Cornell was moving in a positive direction. Forty percent of staff say they understand the strategic goals and objectives of Cornell – a drop of about 10 percent since the last survey.

Other areas – workload, staff recognition and consistency in university wide workforce policy administration – are issues that remain a concern for many respondents.

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### 6 areas of focus

A steering committee came together during the summer to look at the results and determine next steps. The team identified six focus areas:

- Create awareness and consistency around supervisory feedback
- Provide support for employees concerned about finances and debt
- Provide support for employees concerned about their health
- Improve consistency of policy application
- Improve recognition and promotional opportunities
- Connect staff to the mission and direction of the university

The first three were approved by the president, provost, deans and VPs, and assigned to leads who moved forward with implementation efforts immediately. The latter three focus areas were determined to need additional discovery to better understand the data and underlying issues.

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## Discovery teams

Three teams were created with volunteers from across campus to address to learn more about the issues of:

- Consistency of policy application
- Recognition and promotional opportunities
- Connection of staff to the mission and direction of the university

The teams met twice a week for eight weeks in August and September to [develop recommendations based on the data from the 2016 survey results](#). Presentations were given to the steering committee in late fall.

## Charge

Engage in a discovery process to create a meaningful response to the Staff Survey. Teams should meet with others as needed to gain an understanding of the data and/or messages to answer the questions, “What does this data mean?” and “How widespread are the sentiments?” Teams must create recommendations to address the concerns, issues, and/or opportunities, recognizing that this may be a multi-year implementation. Teams should keep in mind that we cannot do everything; and therefore should identify what is the most important to address.

## Emerging themes

Three similar themes arose for all of the discovery teams – communication, education, and measurement.

- Communicate: Develop a frequent, consistent multi-channel approach to communicating with staff utilizing existing platforms and technologies whenever possible
  - Educate: Require common training programs for all supervisors at regular intervals throughout careers
  - Measure: Utilize existing technology and pulse surveys to evaluate whether the recommended actions are effective and establish a culture of responsibility
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## Timeline



### April 2017

Results are released to campus.

### May-July 2017

Steering Committee meets to review data and finalize objectives; members are selected for the three discovery teams; team leads meet to review charge and principles

## **August-September 2017**

Discovery teams meet twice a week for eight weeks

## **October 2017**

Discovery teams present initial recommendations to Steering Committee Chairs, Mary Opperman and Paul Streeter

## **November 2017**

Discovery teams meet with the full Steering Committee to further frame recommendations; proposals are finalized for university-wide senior leaders

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