



INTRODUCTION

The UNC System Strategic Plan includes a goal for the University to “systematically focus on recruitment, retention, and development of the most talented and diverse workforce possible at all levels over the next five years.” To assist in meeting this expectation, the UNC System Office, through the Division of Human Resources, is implementing several ongoing metrics related to engagement, retention, succession planning, and investment in professional development in order to promote system-wide improvements in these areas. In order to collect data that will address the employee engagement aspect of the Strategic Plan, UNC System Human Resources is introducing a system-wide employee engagement survey.

The UNC System Employee Engagement Survey will be conducted by ModernThink. For the past 10 years, ModernThink has collaborated with *The Chronicle of Higher Education* to produce the annual “Great Colleges to Work For” list. The Great Colleges program recognizes institutions that have been successful in creating great workplaces in order to more broadly foster better understanding of the factors, dynamics, and influences that have the most impact on successful organizational culture.

In 2008, ModernThink partnered with *The Chronicle* to convene a blue ribbon panel of experts and professionals within the field of higher education to solicit input regarding the customization of The ModernThink Higher Education Insight Survey[®] (the instrument used in the Great Colleges program) so that it would best reflect the dynamics, systems and demographics unique to higher education. The survey measures 15 dimensions reflecting managerial and organizational competencies. These dimensions were determined and confirmed through a series of factor analyses, and provide the basis for the recognition categories.

The ModernThink Higher Education Insight Survey[®] is largely the same as the instrument that the University will use for the engagement survey. UNC constituent institutions have the option, at no additional cost, to participate in the 2018 Great Colleges program as an added benefit of the system-wide engagement survey, but participation in the Great Colleges program is not required.

The survey will be issued annually over the next five years (2018-2022). In 2018, 2020, and 2022, the survey will be distributed to all permanent, full-time faculty and staff. In 2019 and 2021, a “pulse” survey will be distributed to a random sampling of permanent, full-time faculty and staff. Constituent institutions, for an added fee, may extend the survey population to other employee groups (e.g., permanent part-time employees, temporary employees, postdoctoral fellows, adjunct faculty, etc.). The first engagement survey is scheduled to be administered starting in late January 2018 and running through mid-February. The first data reporting will be available by early summer 2018.

The UNC System Office is providing the core funding for administration of the survey, including a suite of standardized reports and benchmarking comparisons, and the UNC System Office will also have an Online Report Gateway for customized data analysis and reporting. Each constituent institution may separately purchase at its own expense additional survey questions, reports, benchmarks, and its own Online Report Gateway.

UNC System Human Resources (HR) will coordinate this effort through the chief human resources officers (CHROs) at each institution. The CHROs will coordinate with other key institutional constituencies (such as the chief academic officers, institutional research, and public relations) to administer the survey, analyze data, and develop and communicate action plans as necessary. UNC System HR has also established a system-wide steering committee with representation from each institution to assist with long-term administration of the program.

We have prepared the attached FAQs to help address any questions. Please contact Chris Chiron at cschiron@northcarolina.edu if you have any questions you would like to see added.



QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

1. How often will we do this survey, and why that frequency?

The engagement survey will be distributed to all permanent, full-time faculty and staff every other year for the next five years (2018, 2020, and 2022). A random sampling of permanent, full-time faculty and staff will be distributed in the off years (2019 and 2021). This should provide a sufficient snapshot of the culture of engagement at the UNC constituent institutions and the UNC System Office to develop trending data and to monitor changes without being too time-consuming for the UNC institutions, faculty, and staff. This every-other-year approach should also provide the constituent institutions with the opportunity to administer other relevant wide-distribution surveys, such as the COACHE survey for faculty, and avoid “survey fatigue.”

2. Is there any cost to the survey for the constituent institutions?

The UNC System Office will pay for the base survey instrument and a suite of response and benchmarking reports both system-wide and by constituent institution. Constituent institutions may purchase additional survey items and additional benchmarking/reporting options to address institution-specific reporting needs. The CHROs have received a pricing guide for these add-on services.

3. Can a constituent institution opt out of participation in this survey?

No. The engagement survey is being implemented as part of the University’s Strategic Plan, and data from each institution is necessary toward fulfilling the strategic goals adopted by the Board of Governors. Although constituent institutions are not required to participate in ModernThink’s “Great Colleges to Work For” program, institutions may opt-in, at no additional cost, to participate in that program and have their results considered for recognition. Participation in the Great Colleges program is not publicly released if an institution is not ultimately recognized by the program, though the UNC System Office will be aware of which constituent institutions participated.

4. What are the advantages of doing a survey like this?

The survey will help establish a baseline for, and improve awareness of, the strengths and challenges in the UNC System Office’s and each constituent institution’s workforce culture and human resources practices. This will assist leadership in focusing on specific areas within the constituent institution or across the UNC System where employee engagement challenges may exist and to recognize those areas that are succeeding in fostering strong employee engagement. The survey results will also help the UNC System advocate for improvements to our human resources policies and programs at the statewide level that are generally beyond our institutional control. In general, the survey can help build a culture of communication and trust by soliciting feedback from employees and then using that feedback to pursue meaningful incremental changes within each organization.

5. What are the risks of doing a survey like this?

The greatest risk is figuring out what to do with the results and managing employee expectations about what can be achieved with these results. The survey itself is not a “magic bullet” that will result in the resolution of all employee concerns, and it is important that employees receive appropriate messaging in this regard. The University will work to manage these expectations carefully by communicating fully with our employees about the purpose of the survey and how the University intends to use the results. The UNC System Office will work closely with the chief human resources officers of the constituent institutions to develop appropriate messaging as the engagement survey is rolled out.

6. How will constituent institutions be consulted in the implementation and administration of the survey?

UNC System Human Resources has worked closely with the chief human resources officers of the constituent institutions via the UNC System Human Resources Council to discuss and obtain feedback on this initiative. UNC System HR also has established an engagement survey steering committee with membership from each institution.



QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SURVEY

7. When will the survey be issued?

The survey will launch in January 2018. There will be a two-week window for employees to respond.

8. Which employees will be surveyed?

The survey audience will include all permanent full-time (0.75 FTE, equivalent to 30+ hours per week or a 9-month work schedule) faculty and staff at all 17 constituent institutions and the UNC System Office. Roughly 48,000 employees across the UNC System will be surveyed. Students will not participate in this survey. Other employee types, such as temporary and part-time employees, are not included in the standard survey audience, but a constituent institution may choose to add to the survey other employee types at an additional cost. Although a constituent institution will receive its survey results in their entirety, only survey results for permanent, full-time faculty and staff will be included in the system-wide employee engagement metrics to ensure consistency in reporting across the UNC System.

9. How many questions will be on the survey?

The survey has about 90 questions across four components: belief statements, benefits statements, demographics questions, and open-ended questions. ModernThink reports that the average respondent spends 20-30 minutes completing the survey. Constituent institutions may add customized statements or questions for an additional cost.

10. What type of questions will be asked?

The belief statements address key dimensions of employee engagement, including job satisfaction, institutional pride, communication, and fairness. Examples of belief statements are “My job makes good use of my skills and abilities,” “People in my department work well together,” and “I understand how my job contributes to this institution's mission.” Respondents will answer how strongly they agree or disagree on a five-point scale, or they can select ‘not applicable.’ The benefits questions gauge employee satisfaction on a five-point satisfaction scale with a variety of benefits programs provided by the State/University. The demographics questions provide employee self-identification, such as race, gender, years of service, etc.

11. Does this survey measure “morale”?

Although “morale” is not itself easily measurable, this survey is intended to cover many issues to which employees typically refer when speaking of “morale”. These dimensions include job satisfaction and support, collaboration, respect and appreciation, pride, and fairness.

12. Will the survey be electronic or on paper?

The survey will be administered online and available in English and Spanish. Constituent institutions may choose to offer in-person assistance and/or dedicated workstations to staff who have limited online access or computer skills, or may purchase paper copies of the survey to distribute to these employee populations.

13. Can the survey be done on a mobile device?

Yes. The survey is mobile-friendly and can be completed on a PC/laptop, tablet, or smart phone.

14. What standard languages will the survey support? How will other languages be handled?

The survey will be offered to all employees in English or Spanish online. Constituent institutions will have the option to offer the survey in other languages based on their localized needs for an additional fee.

15. Will the constituent institutions have the opportunity to customize the survey?

Yes. The UNC System Office will define the “core” survey elements that will be included system-wide. In addition, each constituent institution has the option to purchase further customizations, such as additional belief statements, demographic questions, or open-ended questions.



QUESTIONS ABOUT SURVEY DATA AND REPORTING

16. How is confidentiality guaranteed?

Confidentiality of individual responses is critical to the success of this program. The survey results provided to the University are not individually identifiable. The data will be collected and stored on secure servers managed by ModernThink. ModernThink will also provide a confidential customer support service to address employee questions or concerns. Additionally, a minimum of five responses is required for any identified demographic group in order for the University to receive response information in any report. If there are not at least five responses in that group, then the only available data would be “rolled up” to a broader group of respondents for reporting. Please feel free to contact ModernThink directly at 888-684-4658 with any additional questions regarding data and response confidentiality.

17. Will the survey results be published?

Yes. The UNC System Office will publish aggregated survey results for the UNC System as a whole and for each constituent institution in standard reports provided by ModernThink. UNC System or constituent institution data may also be used by ModernThink anonymously as a benchmark for other institutions.

18. What benchmarks are being used for comparison?

The UNC System Office is providing six standard benchmarking groups for comparison with UNC institutions. The benchmarks include data from institutions that have participated in ModernThink’s sponsored surveys.

- The Great Colleges “Honor Roll” (highest rated institutions participating in that program)
- Carnegie classification
- Public institutions
- Enrollment size
- Region (south)
- Single aggregate of all UNC institutions

Constituent institutions may separately purchase additional benchmarks relevant to their institution.

19. Will assistance be provided to institutions in analyzing the data?

Yes. ModernThink will provide the UNC System Office with analysis and consultation services for interpreting system-wide results along with training for constituent institutions on analyzing survey data. The UNC System Office will also assist each constituent institution with data interpretation. Constituent institutions may also purchase additional consulting services from ModernThink.

20. Can each constituent institution receive more detailed results?

Yes. All constituent institutions will receive a basic report suite for their institution that will include comparisons with the benchmark organizations selected by the UNC System Office as well as breakouts by institutional demographics and by organization department structure. The UNC System Office will have access to a reporting gateway provided by ModernThink for additional customized reporting, and institutions may purchase their own gateway for an additional fee.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

21. Who can I contact for further information?

Please contact Chris Chiron, Associate Vice President for Employee Relations, at UNC System Human Resources for additional information. He can be reached by email at cschiron@northcarolina.edu or by telephone at (919) 843-4121. You can also contact ModernThink Project Manager Karen Kukulka with questions regarding confidentiality and customization, reporting, and consulting available for purchase. She can be reached by email at kkukulka@moderntthink.com or 888-684-4658.