

**2021-22 Staff Engagement Survey  
Summary and Work  
June 2022**

UC Merced 2021-22 Staff Assembly Board  
in partnership with  
UC Merced Human Resource

## **Staff Engagement Survey Background**

The Staff Engagement Survey, developed by the Council of University of California Staff Assemblies (CUCSA) and the systemwide Employee Relations unit, helps university leaders, managers, and supervisors better understand the views, experiences, and needs of policy covered staff on a range of topics related to working at UC, including career development, performance management, staff engagement and workplace interactions. Results from each survey help us determine areas where progress was made, as well as areas that may need further effort and focus.

Randomly selected policy-covered staff received an email from Willis Towers Watson (WTW) with an invitation to take the survey back in May 2021. Union-represented employees will not participate in the survey because UC receives their feedback through their union representatives during the collective bargaining process.

## **High Level Summary of Results**

A total of 592, or 75%<sup>1</sup>, of policy-covered UC Merced staff were invited to participate in the survey and had a 61% response rate, 359 respondents. The results can be summarized as follows:

### Strengths and Most Improved

Respondents indicated strong, favorable, responses in the areas of Image/Brand, Sustainable Engagement and Wellness. Seven out of the thirteen categories improved since the survey in 2019. The most improved being the area of Communications, which saw an increase of 8%, up from 54% in 2019. Also noted as most improved were the areas in Leadership and Supervision, which increased by 6%.

### Opportunities and Most Declined

Areas of opportunities for improvement, as identified by UCM respondents, fall into the categories of Career Development, Empowered Culture and Wellness. The categories that saw the most decline was Retention, which fell by 6%, down from 46% in 2019. It should also be noted that Career Development, Image/Brand, and Working Relationships all fell by 1%.

## **A Deeper Dive into the Results**

Further reviewing the results of the engagement survey, we noticed that there were some very interesting data when it comes to ethnicities, gender, tenure, and role from the staff respondents. Using the average of favorable response, those who “Agree” and “Tend to Agree” or “Strongly Agree” and “Agree”, we can see where there are increases and decreases in positive response for each type of breakdown for each of the category being surveyed (see Appendix B for the figures). Increases and decreases range by just 1% to 4% in general but there are cases where we see the percentage of decrease fall to double digits, 10% to 25% for some categories and benchmark.

In reviewing the group sizes (see Appendix C), we also acknowledge that some of the percentages may not be a fair representation of all non-represented staff here at UC Merced. The survey was administered to randomly selected staff which may not represent the full population of staff who identify in one or more of the categories being assessed. That being said, we do still find it very interested and important to note that, although the group sizes were random, the average percentage

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<sup>1</sup> Human Resources - Number of Non-Represented Staff Employees: 792

of favorable responses for this select population of respondents, 359 or 45% of non-represented staff at UC Merced, indicate there are some clear opportunities of improvement and growth.

### **UC Merced Staff Assembly Work**

Since the release of the CUCSA Staff Engagement Survey results for UC Merced, Staff Assembly, in partnership with Human Resources, has been busy interacting, presenting, and discussing the data with many different individuals and departments across campus and partners outside of UC Merced. Following the guidance from WTW to 1) promote a healthy work environment, 2) provide employees with the information they need to manage their careers effectively and 3) ensure that employees feel safe voicing their thoughts and opinions, Staff Assembly and Human Resources, with consultation from the Associate Chancellor and Senior Advisor to the Chancellor, Luanna Putney, started working on forming a workgroup focused on creating a Speak Up Culture campaign that will encompass the recommendations of WTW.

### Speak Up, Listen Up and Follow Up

A workgroup is currently being formed to explore ways to promote engaging UC Merced staff to ensure they feel safe and respected when speaking up. Our first proposal as a group is to design a “Speak Up Culture” campaign created in partnership with Chancellor’s Office, Staff Assembly, Human Resources, Academic Personnel, Office of the Ombuds, and Office of Ethics and Compliance aimed to build our campus culture and capacity around speaking up to both celebrate our campus successes and design feedback around areas of growth and opportunity.

The campaign aims to:

1. Provide capacity building resources and training around giving and receiving **actionable feedback for both staff, supervisors/managers, and campus leadership**
2. Asks all UC Merced staff members to commit to promoting a positive speak up culture in alignment with our strategic plan goal to show **“Respect for All”**
3. Reach out to staff through various forums to **assess the current culture with the goal of tracking improvements** (trainings/workshops, listening sessions/circles, newsletters, resource pages, feedback forms, surveys)
4. Improve **employee morale** and **psychological safety** at UC Merced

### **Potential Activities/Campaign Ideas:**

- Stay Interviews – engage in career dev. Conversations (outside of evaluations)
- “Why I stay” or “UC Merced for me because...” videos from staff
- 360 Debrief session with supervisors
- Support system of supervisors
- Career development training for supervisors – how do you develop staff?
- Tools for department leads to implement: suggestion box feedback, etc.
- Workshops on actionable feedback
- Information resources in newsletters like Monday memo, etc.
- Development around psychological safety for staff

Currently, we are still the early stages of the workgroup, and it may expand to include additional campus partners such as the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, CARE Office and other partners in the academic schools. We hope that senior leadership will be some of the first individuals to demonstrate what it means and what it looks like to have a positive speak up culture here at UC Merced. We have

already received some very positive feedback from senior leadership, and we will continue to work closely with them to on this campaign.

### **A UC Merced Specific Staff Engagement Survey**

As part of our interactions with senior leadership, departments, and organizations, we were found that there was a lot of interest in a survey that was focused just on UC Merced. We received comments from Vice Chancellors who would have liked to see more information that is specific to the areas they oversee and comments from staff, those who were not selected for the survey or are part of a bargaining unit, who were interested in providing their feedback as well. Being a systemwide survey focused on non-represented staff, the Staff Engagement Survey does not collect department specific information or sent to staff who are part of a bargaining unit.

This presents an opportunity for UC Merced to conduct a campus focused survey for all staff. In a discussion with Co-Chairs of the Campus Experience Survey Workgroup<sup>2</sup> (CESW), Staff Assembly was informed that a staff survey is part of a larger strategic plan for the workgroup. With the many surveys currently occurring, there is concern that there would be competing surveys and survey fatigue, resulting in a smaller response pool. The advice given at the time of counsel was to wait and assess the current climate for surveying staff. We hope to work with CESW to construct a UC Merced specific survey where we can gather more detailed information on departments and division while ensuring the confidentiality of staff who are completing the survey.

### **Plans Moving Forward**

As we move forward with observing the current climate of the campus, talking to staff, and collecting data, Staff Assembly will continue to engage in dialog with campus partners and the administration to provide feedback, suggestions and advice on ways that may help improve not only the response in the next CUCSA Staff Engagement Survey in spring 2023 but also the reality here at UC Merced. We hope to slowly move the needle toward a positive climate and culture where staff are comfortable with providing their thoughts and suggestions out loud, without the fear of retaliation, and that those listening will listen and provide follow up. We have already started to see this demonstrated by some of our campus leaders who are asking for feedback, listening, and then following up with updates during campus/department townhalls.

As the current Staff Assembly Board Members transitions out and new members transition in, there will be some minor delays, but we hope to see progress move forward in fall 2022. The Scott-Jewett gift fund allocated to Staff Assembly will also provide support for active and transformational programming directed to improve staff morale, provide development opportunities, and align Staff Assembly's goals with the UC Merced Strategic Plan.

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<sup>2</sup> Campus Experience Survey Workgroup (CESW) - <https://diversity.ucmerced.edu/initiatives/cesw>

## APPENDIX A: Acknowledgments

We thank the following individuals and organizations for their continued support of our work on this project.

### UC Merced Administrators and Staff

De Aker, Director of Program Development, Office of Legal Affairs  
Kelly Anders, Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Personnel  
Gregg Camfield, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost  
Cynthia Cortez, Deputy Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion  
Cinnamon Danube, Principal Analyst, Center of Institutional Effectiveness  
Jessica Duffy, Program Manager – Capital Projects, Center of Institutional Effectiveness  
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David Ellington, Director of Total Rewards, Human Resources  
Jeff Gilger, Dean for the School of Social Science, Humanities and Arts  
Cecil Howard, Interim Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer  
John Jackson, Director of Operations, Chief of Staff, Office of Research and Economic Development  
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Ed Klotzbier, Vice Chancellor, External Relations, Philanthropy and Strategic Partnerships  
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Shenethia Manuel, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Human Resource Officer  
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Chanelle Reese, Associate Ombudsperson  
Marjorie Zatz, Interim Vice Chancellor, Office of Research and Economic Development

### UC Merced Departments and Organizations

Chancellor's Cabinet  
Dean's Council  
Division of External Relations  
School of Social Science, Humanities and Arts  
Staff and Faculty of Color  
Staff Assembly  
UC Merced Library

### External Organizations

Council of University of California Staff Assemblies

## APPENDIX B: Staff Engagement Survey: Category Breakdown

How to read the data:

Scores in this report has been adjusted to display the actual percentile score instead of the difference between the Merced overall and each identified category.

**Category:** A group of survey questions that address the same topic or theme.

**Benchmark:** A comparison score that provides context for your results. External benchmarks, which aggregate results from other companies, are also called Norms. Internal benchmarks are comparison groups within your company, e.g., your business unit or the company overall. Historical benchmarks refer to past surveys and show trend over time.

**Total Favorable:** In most cases survey data is reported based on the Total Favorable score, which combines the two most favorable scale-point responses, typically "Agree" and "Tend to Agree" or "Strongly Agree" and "Agree", depending on the scale used. If your Total Favorable score for a question is 70%, it means that 70% of employees in your group respond favorably to that question, and the remaining 30% is either neutral or unfavorable.

	MERCED (359)	MERCED: Individual Contributor (Employee with no direct reports; not a Director, Manager or Supervisor) (165)	MERCED: Supervisor (Employee who supervises activities of direct reports) (82)	MERCED: Manager (Employee with the job title of Manager, responsibility over a functional area) (50)	MERCED: Director and above (62)
Career Development	51	54	45	50	52
Diversity & Inclusion	58	58	58	56	58
Empowered Culture	48	49	42	52	49
Communication	62	65	58	63	57
Image/Brand	72	74	67	73	74
Leadership	47	51	37	47	50
Organizational Change & Innovation	54	57	42	56	56
Performance Management	50	53	42	49	52
Retention	40	43	32	38	42
Supervision	73	75	67	72	75
Sustainable Engagement	71	74	64	72	69
Wellness	53	53	52	54	50
Working Relationships	69	67	66	72	72

Number of individuals who identify in this sub-group

Percent of favorable response of individuals in each sub-group. (Ex: 52% of the 62 who identify as a director or above had a favorable response to questions related to career development)

Overall percent of total favorable response from Merced staff in each category  
  
(ex: 50% of all respondents indicated a favorable response to questions related to Performance Management)

Colors indicate a positive/increase (green) or negative/decrease (red) percent from the overall Merced score in the left grey column  
  
(ex: within the Working Relationship category, Directors and above responded 3% higher than the overall total favorable response.)

For the full report CUCSA Staff Engagement Survey Results for UC Merced, visit <https://staffassembly.ucmerced.edu/resources/staff-engagement-surveys>

## Category Breakdown by Role

Scores are Total Favorable

	MERCED (359)	MERCED: Individual Contributor (Employee with no direct reports; not a Director, Manager or Supervisor) (165)	MERCED: Supervisor (Employee who supervises activities of direct reports) (82)	MERCED: Manager (Employee with the job title of Manager responsibility over a functional area) (50)	MERCED: Director and above (62)
Career Development	51	54	45	50	52
Diversity & Inclusion	58	58	58	56	58
Empowered Culture	48	49	42	52	49
Communication	62	65	58	63	57
Image/Brand	72	74	67	73	74
Leadership	47	51	37	47	50
Organizational Change & Innovation	54	57	42	56	56
Performance Management	50	53	42	49	52
Retention	40	43	32	38	42
Supervision	73	75	67	72	75
Sustainable Engagement	71	74	64	72	69
Wellness	53	53	52	54	50
Working Relationships	69	67	66	72	72

## Category Breakdown by Gender (Self-Identified)

Scores are Total Favorable

	MERCED (359)	MERCED: Female (233)	MERCED: Male (104)	MERCED: Decline to state (18)
Career Development	51	49	60	31
Diversity & Inclusion	58	55	69*	37
Empowered Culture	48	44	60*	31
Communication	62	60	70	47
Image/Brand	72	73	76	54
Leadership	47	47	50	28
Organizational Change & Innovation	54	52	58	48
Performance Management	50	47	57	48
Retention	40	37	45	39
Supervision	73	71	74	77
Sustainable Engagement	71	69	75	64
Wellness	53	49	61	44
Working Relationships	69	70	68	58

## Category Breakdown by Ethnicity

Scores are Total Favorable

	MERCED (359)	MERCED: Asian (38)	MERCED: Black/African American (18)	MERCED: Hispanic (99)	MERCED: Unknown (21)	MERCED: White (174)
Career Development	51	47	47	47	38	56
Diversity & Inclusion	58	50	33*	50	63	64
Empowered Culture	48	37	36	40	57	54
Communication	62	57	67	56	64	65
Image/Brand	72	74	57	70	65	75
Leadership	47	45	56	42	38	50
Organizational Change & Innovation	54	52	54	50	46	57
Performance Management	50	40	37	44	59	55
Retention	40	37	33	32	24	47
Supervision	73	65	79	73	72	73
Sustainable Engagement	71	68	60	67	66	74
Wellness	53	45	53	49	43	58
Working Relationships	69	74	61	63	71	71

## Category Breakdown by Tenure

Scores are Total Favorable

	MERCED (359)	MERCED: 1 < 3 (86)	MERCED: 3 < 5 (66)	MERCED: 5 < 10 (95)	MERCED: 10 < 15 (62)	MERCED: 15 < 20 (38)
Career Development	51	54	53	51	50	45
Diversity & Inclusion	58	68	58	55	51	53
Empowered Culture	48	59	51	43	45	39
Communication	62	71	62	65	53	55
Image/Brand	72	77	73	70	71	70
Leadership	47	57	49	42	42	37
Organizational Change & Innovation	54	60	55	53	51	41
Performance Management	50	56	56	47	48	39
Retention	40	43	45	33	48	26
Supervision	73	78	78	71	68	62
Sustainable Engagement	71	76	70	72	66	64
Wellness	53	56	53	49	56	46
Working Relationships	69	72	68	67	65	62



## APPENDIX C: UC Merced Survey Group Size

### Group Sizes

MERCED (359)

#### Benchmarks

MERCED Jun 2019.....	338	US Norm.....	147,268
MERCED May 2017.....	267	University Staff Norm.....	13,525
UC Overall.....	11,256		

#### Role

MERCED: Individual Contributor.....	165	MERCED: Manager .....	50
MERCED: Supervisor .....	82	MERCED: Director and above .....	62

#### How do you self-identify with respect to your sexual orientation?

MERCED: Heterosexual or Straight .....	290	MERCED: Decline to state .....	37
MERCED: Bisexual .....	20		

#### Over the past year, have you worked primarily onsite at your campus/location, remotely, or both?

MERCED: On Campus / Location .....	32	MERCED: Mix of Both .....	50
MERCED: Remotely / From Home .....	277		

#### Gender (HRIS)

MERCED: Female .....	226	MERCED: Unknown .....	33
MERCED: Male .....	100		



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#### Ethnicity

MERCED: Asian .....	38	MERCED: Unknown .....	21
MERCED: Black/African American .....	18	MERCED: White .....	174
MERCED: Hispanic .....	99		

#### Tenure

MERCED: 1 < 3 .....	86	MERCED: 10 < 15 .....	62
MERCED: 3 < 5 .....	66	MERCED: 15 < 20 .....	38
MERCED: 5 < 10 .....	95		



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