

Staff Engagement and Work Life Survey

Key Findings

In February 2020, Harvey Mudd College launched the Staff Engagement and Work Life Survey, a key tool in understanding issues of work and work culture on the HMC campus. Through the survey, we sought to hear directly from staff about experiences working at Harvey Mudd College. The survey was designed to provide insight into 5 specific areas of staff engagement and work life (Workload; Control; Reward Systems; Community; and Fairness & Values) and to complement workload data from faculty (From the [COACHE Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey](#)) and students (from the [WHAM! Study](#) and end of course evaluations).

The [Staff Workload Working Group](#) developed the Staff Engagement and Work Life Survey with the guidance of the President's Cabinet. There were two versions of the survey, one for [exempt staff](#) and one for [nonexempt staff](#). Both versions of the survey were translated into Spanish and administered either online or on paper between February 3 and March 2, 2020. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness administered the survey and analyzed the results.

209 of the 254 eligible staff members¹ participated in the survey for an overall response rate of 82%. To be included in the final data set for analysis, respondents had to have completed at least one substantive question on the survey instrument. 46% (n=95) of respondents were exempt staff and 54% (n=114) were nonexempt staff.

While our separation from campus makes it difficult to gather together to share these results and consider any next steps, we will do so after we have returned. When we are all back together on campus, each vice president will take the lead on sharing the results for their division. By collaborating with colleagues and offices across campus, we will make progress towards our shared goal of ensuring HMC is a place where we all have fulfilling and productive professional and personal lives. There is a role for everyone in this vital and ongoing work.

Key Findings

1. **High levels of satisfaction with the work environment at HMC.** The term “work environment” is used generally to describe the conditions in which an employee operates. Most exempt and non-exempt respondents “agree” or “strongly agreed” that they were proud to work at HMC; found their work environment inclusive and welcoming; experienced open communication with their colleagues, and felt supported by their departments.
2. **Positive attitudes about work.** The way staff perceive and experience their work influences their performance and success at HMC. Attitudes towards work are another indicator of HMC's work environment. 99% of exempt respondents and 91% of nonexempt respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the work they do is valuable

¹ In order to be eligible to participate, staff members had to have been employed at HMC at least one month.

to HMC. Results from both exempt and non-exempt staff indicate high levels of overall satisfaction with work assignments and supervision.

3. **Workload.** Staff at any college face a set of complex challenges, including internal and external pressures, a changing organizational culture, and rapidly changing technology. All these potentially contribute to the work environment for staff. Survey results do suggest that many staff perceive an increase in their workloads over the last 12 months, though some significant fraction of that increase, perhaps more than 50% for non-exempt staff, is due to voluntary acceptance of additional assignments.
4. **Work-life Balance.** Tensions between work and life are not unique to any member of our community, but our data suggests that the majority of staff have adequate time for self-care. Challenges remain for some in creating desirable balances between work and personal life and in achieving a healthy ability to disconnect from work responsibilities during time off.
5. **Staffing and Resources.** A majority of staff report having the resources to be effective in their job, and most reported that their departments had the staff to function well. Opportunities may remain to create more space for reflection and for big picture thinking where appropriate for departments.

These findings provide a powerful foundation for the work that lies ahead. In April of 2020, findings from the Staff Engagement and Work Life Survey were presented to the President's Cabinet. President Klawe and her Cabinet agreed the findings are largely consistent with those found for faculty and students and provide us with useful and informative information. While there is considerable good news, there are also areas that may present exciting opportunities for institutional growth.