

# 2023 HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS



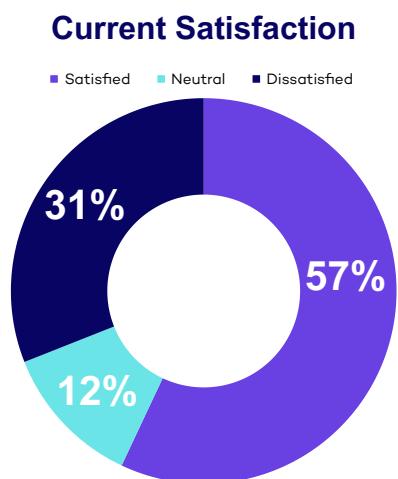
The Society for College  
and University Planning



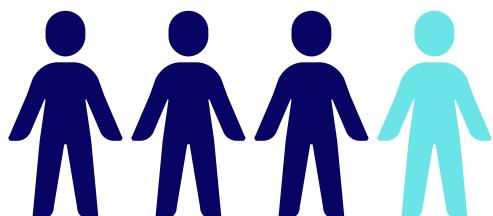
## STUDY OBJECTIVE

Help ambassadors of Higher Education (Higher Ed) and advisory board members mitigate the outflow of employees from Higher-Ed institutions, while identifying ways to prepare early-career employees for future leadership roles. To reach this goal, Compass Group collaborated with industry associations in March 2023 to create a survey to better understand the challenges and benefits of careers in higher ed; assess employee preparedness for various events or challenges; and identify opportunities to improve training and development.

## EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

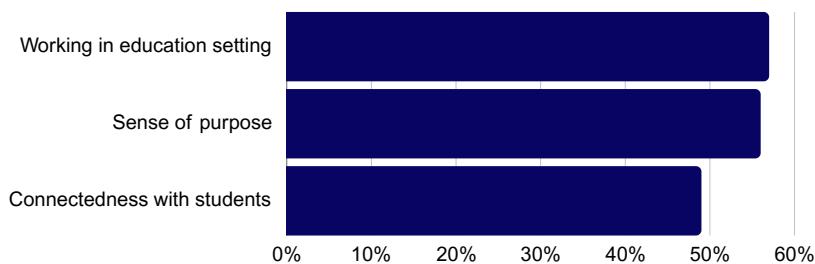


Majority feel satisfied with their job; however, satisfaction has dropped 27% from five years ago (78%)

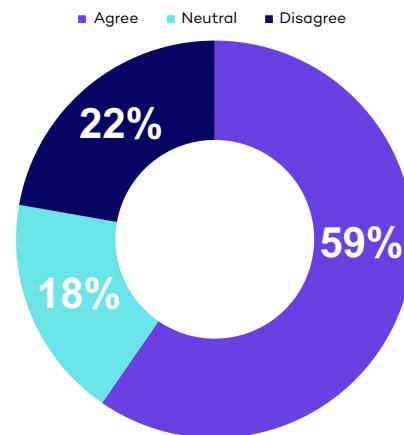


Three-in-four feel supported by their direct manager, but only 40% feel supported by campus leadership. Position and proximity impact the feeling of support, as those in more senior positions feel more supported by campus leadership (48%)

### Top 3 things employees enjoy most about Higher Ed



**"I am worried that a Higher Education degree or experience is not as valuable as it used to be."**



Majority feel that the value of Higher Ed is diminishing for the upcoming generation of students, parents/ guardians, and the general public

## MOTIVATION



of Higher-Ed team members are **actively looking for new jobs** (60% of which are seeking outside of the Higher Ed industry)



of team members at large or public institutions would consider new opportunities



82% list higher pay as the top reason for seeking a new role. Receiving higher pay would also encourage most (76%) team members to stay in Higher Ed



Employees are seeking upward mobility and professional advancement. With nearly half (48%) of respondents saying they do not receive enough training; this may be an opportunity area for employers seeking to retain and develop staff

# OVERALL STUDY OBSERVATIONS

In recent years, higher education staff throughout North America have increasingly expressed concern about compensation, work/life balance, and sense of agency over work. In fact, in this study we found that 24% of all staff are actively seeking roles outside of higher education, and 70% of staff at large or public universities would consider changing jobs. This dissatisfaction not only affects morale and wellbeing, but also raises questions about both the perceived value and long-term future of higher education. How can higher education address these issues, retain staff, and fundamentally transform its core conditions to assure a bright future?

## TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Hands-on experience, training on financial skills, and sponsored conferences are most appealing training and development opportunities. Providing employees with opportunities for continued learning and development communicates an investment in their growth, which in turn, helps them to feel more valued, appreciated, and cared for.



## COMPENSATION

Forty-eight percent of employees say that compensation is an attribute they enjoy least about working in Higher Ed. Higher-Ed employees, particularly staff, feel heavily underpaid, especially when considering their workload, professional credentials, and tenure. Employees believe they can receive better pay elsewhere.



## BURNOUT

Poor work/life balance is impacting employee morale and mental health. Understaffed conditions and unmanageable workloads are leaving employees feeling jaded, burnt out, and looking for other jobs. However, 56% of employees say "sense of purpose" is an attribute they enjoy most about Higher Ed, providing an area of focus that can improve engagement.



## VALUING STAFF

Staff do not feel appreciated or prioritized as a valuable part of their institution's success. They are seeking opportunities where their talents and contributions are recognized. A survey respondent noted, "Higher Ed as an industry sector must better acknowledge the expertise of non-faculty and non-PhD individuals."



## RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



**Two-in-three** are Directors (33%) or Associate Directors (32%)

**89%** have a **graduate degree**

**51%** worked at least **15 years** in Higher Ed

## NEXT STEPS

- Encourage direct managers to meet regularly with team members to understand their career goals and discuss projects that align with their interests
- Allocate a certain number of hours for hands-on experiences such as positions swaps, job shadowing, or workshops every semester
- Provide access to training on business acumen, leadership, and project management

- Create a career matrix that documents the required steps and skills for employees to move up to the next role.
- Consider paying less people more and focus effort on most impactful work. Doing more with less is no longer an option.

- Conduct in-depth reviews of tasks, projects, and timelines to identify where employees are at capacity and evaluate using start, stop, continue model
- Build responsibilities into job positions that align with team members' unique strengths and interests to keep them engaged in what they consider meaningful work

- Consider results-based over rules-based leadership with the flexibility to get to necessary outcomes in individual ways
- Help staff understand how their work connects directly to the mission of the institution and help upper administration see the value of individual staff contributions to the mission of the institution