Themes from Survey
Employee Comments

Overall

Faculty and Staff at MSU Denver were asked four open-ended questions on the 2013 Campus Climate Survey. Listed below are the major themes found in the responses to these questions.

Employees appreciate and value:

- The rich diversity in the MSU Denver community including economic status, race, age, and background
- MSU Denver’s mission and its role in informing an enhanced sense of purpose in their work
- The flexibility and freedom provided by supervisors to do a good job as they see fit
- The students they work with and their commitment to their education.
- MSU Denver’s historic commitment to excellent teaching
- The collaborative nature of their colleagues particularly on the departmental level
- MSU Denver’s involvement with the community it serves and its dedication to furthering that involvement through initiatives like the HSI distinction
- The development of the master’s programs and the opportunities it provides MSU Denver
Areas warranting attention:

- Utilizing community engagement and partnership opportunities in an effort to attract and retain qualified students
- Modifying admissions standards to increase the academic rigor of the institution
- There were many employees who requested evaluating the compensation scale for fairness especially in regards to Affiliate Faculty
- Increased two-sided communication about the future vision for MSU Denver and changes that will be implemented along the way
- Many employees expressed great concern for the increased level of bullying and favoritism and the development of a more hostile work environment
- Employees cite a need for a better allocation of MSU Denver's resources as the institution transitions from a teaching college to a research University particularly in regards to professional development and research funds
- Faculty cited workload balance as one of the greatest pain points. There are questions surrounding the sustainability of the current teaching and research workload
In Their Own Words:

“I appreciate that MSU Denver has given me an opportunity to succeed. I am an alumni and have a very tight bond with this institution. I appreciate the flexibility that I have been given in my position [to] help implement initiatives for our department.”

“I appreciate that I can put together collaborative projects with faculty in other departments and place my students in the multi-disciplinary projects without much departmental or university bureaucracy getting in the way.”

“The caring and supportive attitude of the people I work with, and their concern for all students. Metro appreciates the contribution of affiliate staff members and their life experiences.”

“I mostly value Metro’s commitment to excellence in the classroom. I specifically came to Metro due to this commitment and am wholly passionate about increasing pedagogical awareness. I also am very pleased with my department (EAS). As a newcomer, I feel they have helped me navigate the world of academia.”

“The fact that this institution contributes to the enhancement of the community. I appreciate the opportunities that the University offers to the non-traditional student. The diversity of the faculty, staff and students is awesome. I appreciate the fact that I’m a contributor to the education of the college community.”

“The diversity of the student body. I feel as thought I’m assisting them in setting their sights higher and achieving their goals more than I could at an institution where students came from more privileged backgrounds.”

“I have a lot of respect for the mission of this institution and how they are keeping college affordable even when there are huge cuts in state funding.”
“The sense of community or family within the institution and department”

“People are supportive and helpful. When I ask for assistance I receive it in a cooperative and timely manner. My office is comfortable. My work schedule is somewhat flexible. I have great flexibility in developing my work program. Colleagues are open to working together, excited about their programs and students, and seem very loyal to the university.”

“I appreciate having a voice and being identified by name. I’ve worked at other institutions where you are one of many (just a number) and the senior leadership has no interest in your opinion. This University is much different, I have an opportunity to provide input and be recognized.”

“The recent changes… name, adding graduate programs, new buildings, HSI initiative, etc., have made me even more proud to be a MSU Denver Roadrunner.”

“Freedom of teaching and doing significant research that impact students and communities”

“By getting as many people on the same boat as possible. Basically you can't steer the ship if you have half your people wanting to go a different direction. I also think there needs to be less eggs in the faculty basket and more eggs in the administrative/classified basket. We all do great work here; however, some of us don't get to hear it as much as others. We also need to eliminate the us vs. them approach. We are all on the same team. We should work together better. Simply because some received a terminal degree and others stopped short of that, we are still well educated. It would be nice if someone noticed more often.”

“Tougher academic standards for admission and higher expectations of student work.”
“There continues to be a culture of faculty-against-administration in some areas of the university, which is detrimental to our functioning and growth”

“Equality regarding compensation for job duties; some seem to be recognized and others are taken for grant because of the dependability and always willing to do more to accomplish tasks/goals. Others request or require additional compensation for added duties rather than just stepping up to the plate and being recognized later based on their performance.”

“By recognizing the need to provide a balanced workload for faculty attempting to help the university meet this goal. For example, Master degree programs can be a great change, but not if the 4/4 teaching load is not reduced. In most fields, that is essential to creating the type of research that will attract graduate students. Metro State is trying to be everything to everyone and it would be better to establish priorities and focus on those so that what Metro State does (whether teaching focused or research focused) is of excellent quality.”

“I think we need to be concerned about stretching ourselves too thin given our resources – we should concentrate on what we do best while we try new things. I do not think we need to worry about faculty & staff benefits and salaries.”

“I am generally very happy with the culture and workplace quality at MSU Denver. If there was one thing that I could say bothered me it would be the numerous occasions where I have seen individuals get hired because of who they know, not what they know. In other words, the hiring process is a little shady/political. Also, the process of hiring new employees takes FOREVER. So many forms, justifications, requirements, etc. I have served on four hiring committees this year alone and three of them ended in a failed search. Very frustrating and a monumental waste of time.”

“Continue to place important on our faculty and increase education requirements to gain more respect in the academic community.”

“Salary compression creates low moral; although some efforts are made to mitigate it, more needs to be done.”
“Resources are not shared in an equitable manner”

“I feel that with the current open enrollment we can not fully achieve preeminence. While I agree that everyone should have a chance to obtain an education, we need to be realistic about who is being admitted and if it is truly appropriate.”