

Fostering a Supportive UK Community
July 8, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

Over the last several years the University of Kentucky has developed and invested in clear priorities around recruitment, retention and support for our campus family. Among these efforts are a series of merit-based salary increases to recognize your extraordinary work, an enhanced performance evaluation process, and myriad initiatives to support professional development and work/life.

Much has been done, but we know there is still much to do to build the culture and environment we want for everyone in the UK family. Under the administration of Human Resources, we recently completed the campus-wide UK@Work Survey with the goal of identifying points of pride and areas for continued improvement. What did we learn?

- In short, an overwhelming majority of you are proud to work at UK; you have a clear understanding of your responsibilities; feel as though you have sufficient flexibility to meet personal and family needs; and believe in the goals and mission of the University.
- There also is a clear sense that managing stress at home and work remains important in finding the appropriate work-life balance and well-being. In finding this balance, please know that resources provided by [Office of Work-Life](#) and [UK Wellness](#) are always available.
- Some identified that the physical work environment varies across the University, which is why we will continue to focus on improving the physical infrastructure of our entire campus.
- While the majority of the UK family enjoys and respects their colleagues, more must be done to foster trust, collaboration and collegiality across departments and units.
- Our work to emphasize and improve diversity and inclusivity on campus was recognized and appreciated. The results make clear this is an essential value and continued effort to foster equal opportunity for all faculty and staff is a high priority.
- Another area that needs further focus is our process for resolving concerns from faculty and staff. Our goal will be to ensure the campus understands the current system in place and feels comfortable addressing issues in a welcome environment.
- While we have prioritized merit-based salary increases to reward our people, your feedback indicated that still more must be done to strengthen retention and promotion.

These primary conclusions are only a portion of the feedback we received through this important exercise. The full report and findings from the UK@Work Survey are accessible at <http://www.uky.edu/hr/work-life/ukwork-survey>.

UK HealthCare (UKHC) conducted a separate but equally robust survey of their employees – one that recognizes the unique work environment of an academic medical center. The results of that survey are available at <http://ukhealthcare.uky.edu/forstaff/>, and Executive Vice President of Health Affairs Michael Karpf will continue to work toward creating a supportive and productive work environment.

One particular point of concern for me in the survey is the finding that there is little expectation that action will be taken as a result of this process. I assure you we will not let this document and its findings simply sit on a shelf. To that end, steps already are underway to make sure all academic and

administrative units across campus internalize these results, acknowledge success and prioritize improvement in areas you identified.

Senior leadership will be held accountable for moving forward on initiatives designed to respond to the results of the survey. At the same time, all faculty and staff have a responsibility for developing strong working relationships, building trust among colleagues and collaborating with others. We deeply value a campus community that encourages hard work and supports each other's well-being. If we are to succeed, everyone must participate in fostering such a place.

Four years ago when I arrived on campus, I was impressed by the quality and determination of the faculty, staff and students. It was clear to me that we have an impressive cadre of people at UK, and that we could do more to invest in them and foster their success. The UK@Work Survey is critically important to this process.

Thank you for taking the time to participate. Your feedback clearly identified areas of success and opportunities for improvement. We are a learning organization, and we will communicate throughout the process as we foster a campus that supports all members of the UK family.

Sincerely,
Eli Capilouto
President