

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

2014 Staff Development Survey Results

with comparisons to previous results

July 2014

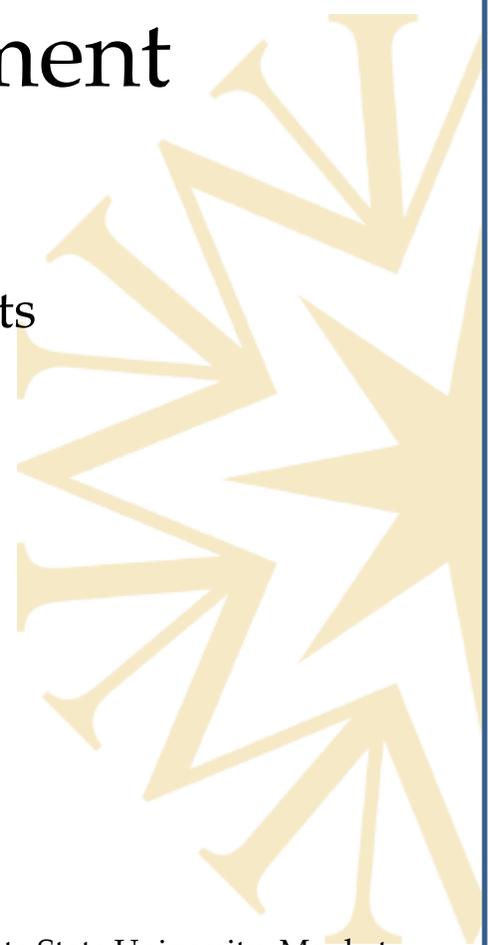
A Collaborative Project of

The Human Resources Division

College and University Chief Human Resource Officers

The Talent Management Steering Committee

The Organizational Effectiveness Research Group, Minnesota State University, Mankato



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Talent Management Steering Committee initiated this effort and spent considerable time developing the survey and analyzing results. A list of 2013-14 Steering Committee members is below. Survey Committee members included: Tamzin Bukowski (chair), Dee Anne Bonebright, Dee Bernard, Jodi Kuznia, Anade Long-Jacobs, and Lynn Lutz. Chief Human Resources Officers encouraged their staff to participate in the survey.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Employee Development Policy

"We are committed to developing the talents of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities' employees. We value our employees and understand that continuous learning benefits the entire system by developing and maintaining employee skills that link directly to achieving organizational goals and objectives. Supporting successful leaders at all levels also builds institutional capacity to better serve our students and our communities. This commitment is realized as a shared responsibility between each employee and each college, university, or the Office of the Chancellor."

- Endorsed by Leadership Council in May 2006

Background

During March 2014, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Office Human Resources Division conducted a survey to assess employee development needs of college and university staff and administrators. The overall response rate in 2014 was 50%, with a total of 3,648 surveys completed.

Similar surveys were conducted in 2005, 2007, 2010 and 2012. This report highlights findings related to trends and opportunities for improvement.

Positive Trends

- Reported participation in job-specific training increased 9% (28%, as compared to 19% in both 2010 and 2012).
- Increase in the percentage of respondents reporting they received a performance evaluation in the past twelve months (72% as compared to 67% in 2012; similar to 71% reported in 2010).
- When comparing the group of questions related to performance management, the overall results were 64% agree/strongly agree as compared to 61% in 2012.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Continue and expand opportunities for job-specific training
- Provide opportunities to participate in training and practice new skills during work time
- Offer supervision training opportunities to non-supervisory employees who are responsible for leading and directing the work of others
- Increase communication related to staff development opportunities at both the campus and system level

INTRODUCTION

During March 2014, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities conducted a survey to assess professional development needs of college and university staff and administrators. The Organizational Effectiveness Research Group (OERG) at Minnesota State University, Mankato provided survey administration. Staff of the Talent Management unit in the system office Human Resources division managed the project in cooperation with the Talent Management Steering Committee. This was the fifth survey, following previous surveys in 2005, 2007, 2010 and 2012.

The web-based survey began on March 11, 2014 and ended on April 1, 2014. Survey invitations were sent to 7,302 staff and administrators from 31 colleges and universities across the state of Minnesota. The overall response rate was 50% with a total of 3,648 surveys completed. Each college or university achieved a response rate between 37% and 86%. Individual institutional response rates are presented in Appendix II.

This is a report of opinions and self-reported needs of staff in five key areas:

- Types of training wanted and needed by individual staff
- Individual access to existing training
- Investment by employees and institutions for individual professional development
- Completion of performance evaluations and use of individual development plans
- Supervisory and institutional support for staff development

This year's survey included three new questions regarding employee engagement. Other questions were revised by consolidating specific training or development activities into more summarized categories.

DEMOGRAPHICS

While there are slight variances among respondents from each institution, the following are demographic highlights of the 3,648 employees who answered the survey. The demographics of the 2014 survey respondents were similar to those of the past respondents and reflect demographics of the system overall.

- The following bargaining units and plans were represented among survey respondents: AFSCME, MAPE, MGEC, MMA, MSUAASF, MNA, Commissioner's Plan, Classified Managerial Plan, and the Administrator's Plan.
- Over 70% of the respondents were from AFSCME (42%) and MAPE (29%).
- Women comprise 60% of staff surveyed and 70% of the respondents.
- Approximately 12% of college, university, and system office staff belong to an underrepresented racial or ethnic group as compared to almost 13% percent of survey respondents.
- Over half the respondents have been employed by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities for fewer than 10 years, while 25% have been employed for 10-20 years and almost 20% report being employed over 20 years.

2014 SURVEY FINDINGS

There was a great deal of consistency in the results from prior years with a few outstanding variations. Positive trends included a 9% increase in reported participation in job-specific training, a 5% increase in the reported percentage of performance evaluations received over the past twelve months, and an overall increase in performance management scores.

New areas of opportunity include indicators that MnSCU employees are striving to enhance skills that directly affect their ability to perform job duties and are requesting for job-related training. An ongoing trend was identified as a desire for leadership and supervisory skills training. Communication about development opportunities continues to be a challenge. Open-ended comments included suggestions about increased advertising, increased lead time in announcements, and creating a centralized place to find job-specific training.

Three new questions were added to the 2014 Staff Development Survey. These questions were developed to create a baseline of data evaluating employee job satisfaction. The data collected from these questions could be used to understand the relationship between staff development and job satisfaction. It could also be useful to develop baseline data for campus reporting and accreditation, for example as a supplement to the PACE survey or for AQIP reporting.

The job satisfaction-related questions and resulting data were as follows:

- *My college, university or system office workplace gives me the tools I need to be successful on the job.*
 - The survey reported that 59% of our respondents indicated that they “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with this statement.
- *My workplace supports my career growth and development.*
 - Fifty-five percent of the respondents indicated that they “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.”
- *Even if I were offered a comparable position with similar pay and benefits at another company, I would continue working in my MnSCU position.*
 - Fifty-two percent of respondents indicated that they “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.”

Within individual institutions, there was a strong relationship between overall scores on the three new engagement questions and other categories such as performance management, supervisory support, and institutional attention to staff development. Colleges and universities that had high scores on these categories also had high scores on the engagement questions, and vice versa.

The subcommittee attempted to compare the survey results for the three job satisfaction related questions to similar questions from the 2014 Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement survey statistics reported by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and Gallup’s State of the American Workplace Report 2013; however, the questions did not align significantly to permit a reliable comparison of survey data.

POSITIVE TRENDS

Increased participation in job-specific training

In 2014, 28% of respondents reported attending job-specific training, as compared to 19% in both 2010 and 2012. This trend, along with open-ended comments, reflected an ongoing commitment by many MnSCU employees to enhance skills that directly affect their ability to perform job duties.

Increase in performance review completion

There was a 5% increase in the percentage of respondents indicating they received a performance evaluation in the past twelve months (72% as compared to 67% in 2012). The number of supervisors that indicated they conduct annual performance reviews with their staff remained consistent (67% in 2014, and 66% in 2012).

The data indicated that most campuses with exemplary completion rates continued to complete performance evaluations in a timely manner. However, campuses that had previously exhibited lower completion rates increased their percentages of performance evaluations completed during the timeframe, ultimately contributing to the increase in the overall percentage of performance evaluations completed for this survey period. In 2014, all campuses showed completion rates over 50%, as compared to 2012 when the five campuses with lowest completion rates were under 50%. Of note, these five campuses demonstrated an average improvement of 23%.

Increase in performance management activities

Reflecting the increase in performance review completion, the group of questions related to performance management (completion of performance reviews, creation of individual development plans, and existence of current job descriptions) also increased to an overall average of 64% as compared to 61% in 2012.

OPPORTUNITIES AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

System-wide opportunities to deliver job-specific training

When asked about desired topics for future professional development, survey findings indicated that MnSCU employees are striving to enhance skills that directly affect their ability to perform job duties, with 53% indicating a desire for job-specific knowledge or skill training. Two areas of specific interest were computer skills training (34%) and technical training such as ISRS, SCUPPS, and BRIO (28%).

Given the reported need for training on job-specific skills, there may be an opportunity to develop shared training resources to address the many job-specific skills that are universal throughout campuses across MnSCU. Examples could include negotiating group rates for skills training via vendors such as Lynda.com, taking advantage of regional supervisory development labs offered through the Talent Management unit, and offering system-wide WebEx training on topics of regional or system-wide interest. Special focus might be warranted for system-specific systems and content that is not easily obtained elsewhere (for example, SCUPPS training).

Timing of job-specific training

Two trends in the survey should inform conversations about job-specific training. First, among employees who did not attend training, there is a substantial decrease in the number of employees agreeing that one reason was “timing conflicted with my work commitments.” This item has consistently decreased (52% in 2007, 47% in 2010, and 38% in 2012) and was reported at 10% in 2014. This may be a result of increased comfort levels with online training options.

At the same time, among employees who did not attend training, the number who agreed that one reason was that timing conflicted with personal commitments such as lunch, work hours, and vacation has doubled from 14% in 2007 and 2010, to 32% in 2014. This trend may indicate a need to pay attention to timing of training. As more training occurs online, there may be a need to provide dedicated time during the work day to attend training and practice new skills.

Desire for supervisory training

An ongoing trend is a desire for leadership and supervisory skills training, which has consistently been identified by both supervisors and non-supervisors. In 2014, 33% of participants identified leadership development as a desired topic for future professional development, as compared to 29% in 2012 and 28% in 2010. Related topics included building effective work teams (25%), managing conflict (25%), and communication/interpersonal skills (25%).

In 2014, 35% of respondents stated that they supervised or managed others. Of these, 34% were new to the role, having 0-4 years of supervisory experience. When asked about their training during the first year, 22% of all new supervisors reported zero participation in supervisory training during their first year undertaking supervision responsibilities. By comparison, 75% of new MMA supervisors and 70% of new supervisors in the Administrators Plan indicated that they had participated in supervisory training offered through MnSCU, such as the Art and Science of Supervision. Open-ended comments indicated that many of the individuals who identified themselves as supervisors may be supervising students or leading the work of others as a secondary function of their job rules. This may indicate a need to offer supervision training opportunities to non-supervisory employees who play a role in leading and directing the work of others.

Communication about training opportunities

For those respondents who did not attend training offered at their campus or within the MnSCU system during the past year, 37% indicated that they were not aware of any training offered, as compared to 30% in 2012. This may indicate a need for additional communication. Open-ended comments indicated that inadequate advertising, limited lead time in announcements, and lack of a centralized place to find development opportunities may contribute to a lack of participation.

Opportunities for improving communication exist at both the campus and system-wide level. Advertising, increased lead time in announcements, and creating a centralized place to find job-specific training may provide opportunities to resolve concerns about communication of staff development opportunities at individual campus and system office levels.

OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

There was a marked decrease in the number of open-ended comments; 385 were received in 2014 as compared to 971 in 2012 and 1,051 in 2010. The two most common themes in the open-ended comments were discussion of barriers to staff development and expressed need for specific types of training. Examples are provided below.

- Barriers to staff development (perceived inequity of the availability to all bargaining units/lack of supervisory support, and limited opportunities for professional growth)
 - *“Work load is very heavy and there is limited time to spend on development, even though many options are available.”*
 - *“Because we need help with the day to day student needs, it is difficult to get time off for personal, let alone professional development, needs.”*
 - *“More opportunities for system-wide training for non-managers. I am frequently offered opportunities to interact with my colleagues to learn and exchange ideas. There aren’t similar opportunities for my staff, who I think would benefit from creating the same collegial relationships outside of campus.”*
- Expressed need for job-specific training (in the areas of computer software/new employee orientation/communication skills/diversity training/conflict management. In addition, some respondents expressed a desire for more job-specific content for staff to be offered during staff development days. For example:
 - *“On staff development day offer more classes that relate to staff development. Most things offered in the past have focused on faculty.”*
 - *“Professional development opportunities...are not necessarily encouraged, especially if they take place off campus. On-campus professional development days carry an expectation for attendance, but the topics sometimes feel thrown together and not applicable, making people feel anxious about the work they could be doing instead.”*

As with every survey since 2005, respondents expressed frustration with the tuition waiver policy and processes. Comments indicate that some employees may not understand the financial structure of tuition waivers and may not be aware of the rationale for the current policy. Examples of comments included:

- *“It would be good to have a tuition waiver at a 4-year college when working at a 2-year college. Otherwise, how can we advance in the field?”*
- *“I realize that is part of our bargaining unit contract but I cannot afford to complete my bachelors degree without additional financial assistance.”*
- *“I have never understood why employees working at a 2-year college can only use the tuition waiver at another 2-year college and not a university. University employees can use the waiver at any MnSCU university and system office employees can use it anywhere in the system. What kind of support does that show 2-year college employees?”*

A summary of themes from open-ended comments is included in Appendix I.

CONCLUSION

Results of the 2014 Staff Development Survey indicate that there have been improvements in some measures of staff development efforts across the system. Appendix III summarizes the activities that occurred as a result of recommendations offered in the 2012 survey.

As noted in the following comment, many respondents believe that staff development is recognized as a priority for our system.

"I think our college does a great job in providing opportunities for everyone in all classifications and bargaining units. Very supportive."

As our system moves forward with implementation of *Charting the Future*, it will be important to develop staff capacity to meet the challenges of new ways of doing business and working with each other. Providing adequate training, and communicating effectively about these opportunities, will be critical to staff development. Specific actions that can be taken to promote staff development at our campuses and across the system are described below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Many areas that were identified as high priorities in 2012 continue to be important. Appendix II provides a review of the 2012 priorities and a status report. New areas of opportunity are listed below.

1. Job-specific training

- Share results of the survey with the *Charting the Future* working group on comprehensive workplace solutions and ask them to consider ways to make job-specific training available to our employees in an easily accessible and cost-effective manner.
- Share results of the survey with campus Chief Human Resources Officers and create a dialogue about ways to provide job-specific training on campuses, particularly during staff professional development days.
- Work with campus Chief Human Resources Officers and system-wide supervisory training directors to encourage supervisors to provide work time for employees to engage in training and practice new skills.

2. Leadership training for non-supervisors who lead staff

- Seek campus and/or system-wide resources to develop strategies for training non-supervisory employees who are leading student employees.
- Seek campus and/or system-wide resources to develop strategies for training non-supervisory employees who direct the work of colleagues.

3. Tuition waiver

- Share the results of the survey (and past surveys) with the *Charting the Future* team working on system incentives and rewards and ask them to consider options for different tuition waiver models.

4. Communication

- Develop strategies for creating an online system-wide resource for new employees to help them learn about training and development options.
- Share institution-specific results of the survey with campus Chief Human Resources Officers; identify and share best practices for communicating about training opportunities.

NEXT STEPS

Results of the system-wide staff development survey will be shared in July with leaders in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system and will be made available online. Institution-specific reports will be sent to Chief Human Resources Officers at the colleges and universities for discussion and use.

The Talent Management Steering Committee, in consultation with the Vice Chancellor for Human Resources and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources will address staff development needs identified in the survey in the annual work plan.

Feedback from Minnesota State Colleges and Universities employees regarding the survey report and work plan development is welcomed and can be directed to Dee Anne Bonebright at deanne.bonebright@so.mnscu.edu.

APPENDIX I

THEMES FROM OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

There was a marked decrease in the number of open-ended comments; 385 were received in 2014 as compared to 971 in 2012 and 1,051 in 2010.

Similar to past years, the two most common themes were discussion of barriers to professional development and comments related to job-specific training. These themes are reported in detail below.

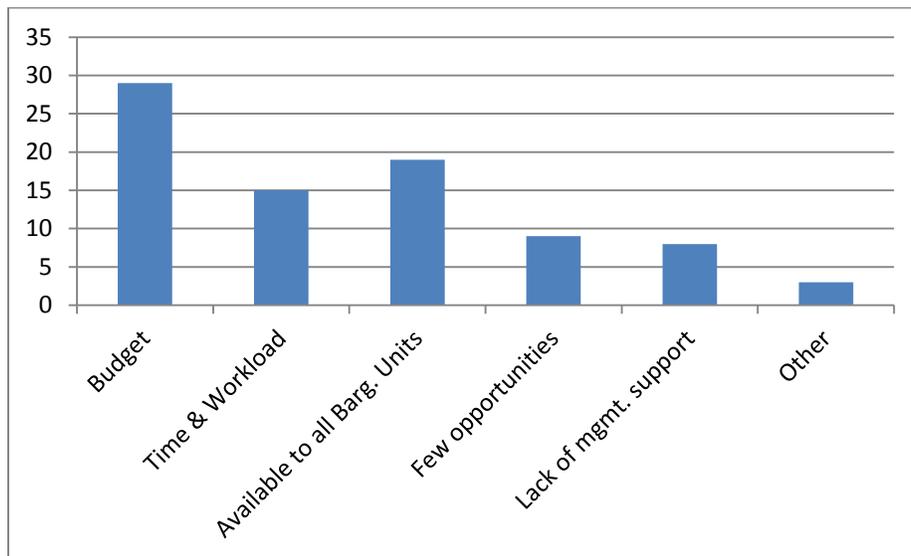
Theme	Number	Percent
1. Barriers	83	22%
2. Job-specific training	76	20%
3. Performance Management / Supervisory Support	40	10%
4. Staff Development Days / Professional Conferences	39	10%
5. Best Practices and Suggestions	34	9%
6. Tuition waiver	34	9%
7. Communication	25	6%
8. Other / Unrelated to scope of survey	20	5%
9. Career Development Opportunities	18	5%
10. Testimonials	15	4%
Total:	385	100%

Barriers to professional development

Similar to previous surveys, open-ended comments regarding barriers to staff development highlighted budget issues and difficulty in paying for staff development. Closely related were time and workload issues, which frequently centered on the difficulty in finding time for staff development when staff levels are decreasing and workloads are increasing. Other issues included:

- Perceived inequity in the degree to which staff development is available to employees across the bargaining units.
- Lack of support from immediate supervisor and/or upper management.
- Limited opportunities for professional development due to geographic constraints, lack of promotional paths, or other factors.

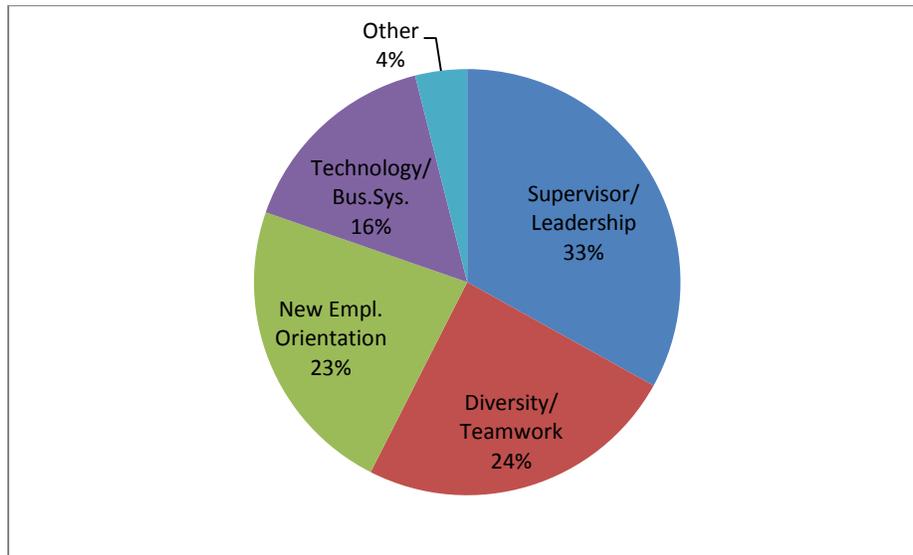
Barriers to Professional Development



Job-specific training

The majority of comments relating to job-specific training addressed respondents' own professional development. The most frequently identified categories are reported in the chart below.

Job-specific Training Comments



Other key trends in open-ended comments related to job-specific training included:

- Need for computer/ software training, particularly for new employees
- Perception of inadequate orientation of new employees
- Need for communication skills, diversity, and conflict management training
- Desire for campus staff development days to provide usable job-related training that can be applied during day-to-day work

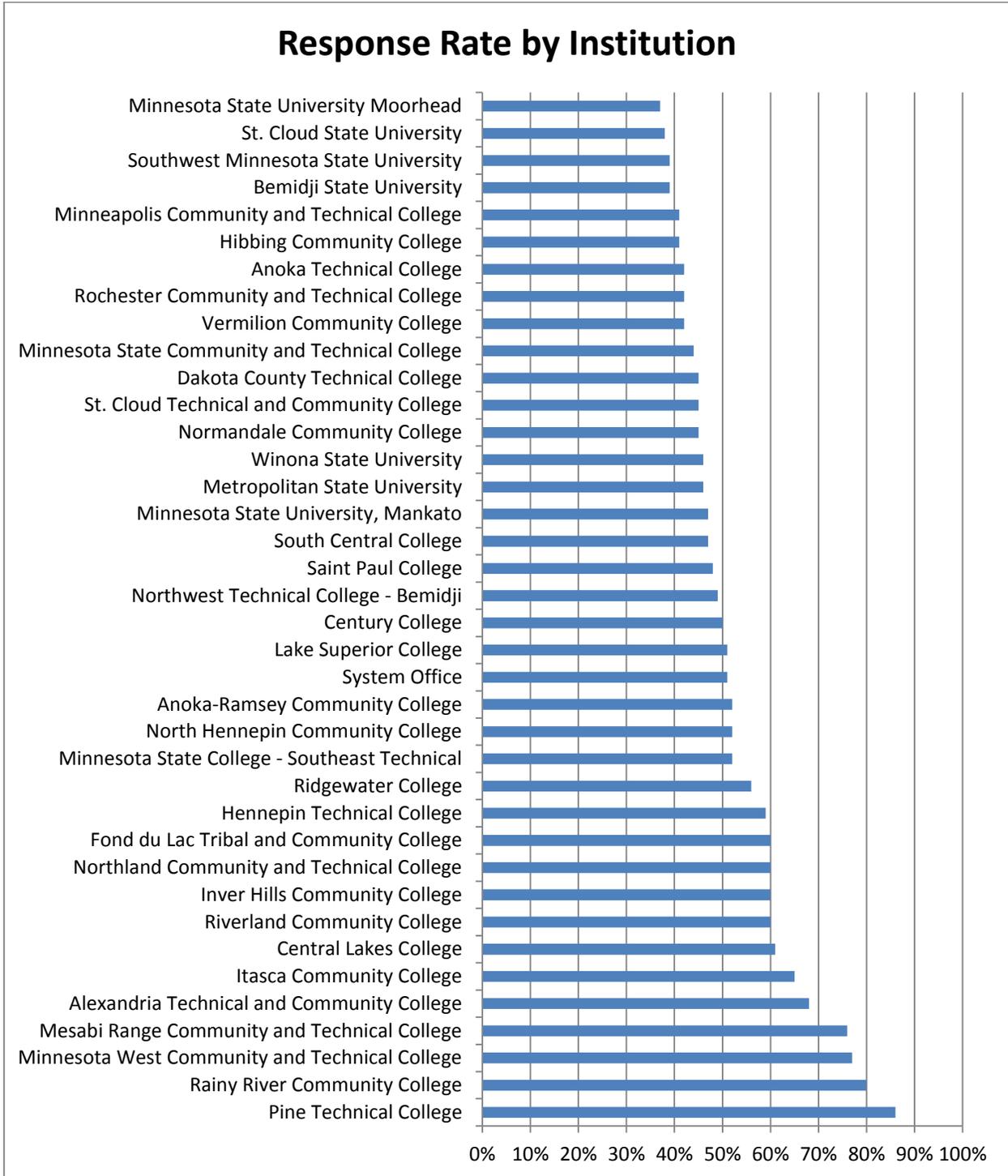
In addition, there were several comments regarding the need for increased skill development for supervisors and managers across insitutions. Examples included:

“Additional, specific training for the administrator-level positions in the areas of conflict management and managing relationships in the college. Focus on the people issues, which are the most prevalent, most stressful, most time consuming, and most damaging.”

“We want to hire people into leadership roles with previous experience but we don’t give opportunities to promote from within and give people a chance to learn those roles if they are interested.”

APPENDIX II

RESPONSE RATE BY INSTITUTION



APPENDIX III

STATUS OF 2012 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following items were identified as high priority opportunities in the 2012 report. For each item, a summary of recommendations and a description of the current status is provided.

1. **Performance management** – identify technology solutions and continue the work of the Talent Management Steering Committee to promote improvement in the number of employees saying they received a performance review in the past year and the number of supervisors saying they provide performance reviews to their staff.
 - The Talent Management subcommittee has created a set of performance management tools, including sample evaluation forms and guides. It is available at http://www.hr.mnscu.edu/talent_management/index.html
 - A technology solution for tracking completion within SCUPPS has been proposed and will be implemented in FY15.

2. **Safety training** – explore technology solutions for delivery and tracking of mandatory training, create resources for identifying training requirements according to job role, and recruit a person with a safety training background to serve on the Talent Management Steering Committee.
 - A committee led by Don Beckering, System Director for Public Safety and Compliance, successfully completed a pilot initiative to develop a matrix of training requirements according to job role; project will expand system-wide in FY15.
 - A short-term solution for tracking and reporting has been implemented as part of the compliance training project; long-term solutions are being explored.
 - Tamzin Bukowski, Director of Safety and Security for Alexandria Technical and Community College, joined the Talent Management Steering Committee.

3. **Diversity training** – clarify requirements regarding diversity training, assist campuses in tying diversity training to intercultural competencies and community needs, increase awareness of system-wide training resources, recruit a person with a diversity training background to serve on the Talent Management Steering Committee
 - Talent Management staff members have collaborated with the Office of Diversity and Equity to develop system-wide training on key issues such as prevention of sexual violence
 - Diversity training requirements will be included on the mandatory training matrix described in Item #2 above.
 - Ka Vang, Diversity Programs Director, MnSCU System Office, joined the Talent Management Steering Committee

4. **Student employment supervision** – Provide training for non-supervisory employees who are leading student employees.

- This recommendation has not yet been addressed, and the need continues to be important, according to the survey results.

5. **Tuition waiver**

- This recommendation has not yet been addressed, and continues to be reflected as a concern in the open-ended comments.

6. **STARS (System-wide Training and Registration System)** – continue to enhance the functionality of this system, while also investigating options for a more robust employee learning management system (LMS) to invite, register, and track training participants.

- STARS has been maintained and ongoing training has been conducted for campus administrators.
- A Request for Information process was conducted to explore external LMS vendors as well as the State of Minnesota system; a decision for moving forward will be made in FY15.