

HIGHER-ED PROFESSIONALS FEEL RESPECTED, BUT OVERWORKED

A national survey of more than 4,000 academic professionals by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* paints a mixed picture of what it's like to work in higher education. Nearly all higher-ed professionals (97%) believe they contribute to their institution's mission. But the survey responses also shed light on the tensions many higher-ed employees feel about working in the sector.

Higher-ed professionals feel respected by their colleagues, though some feel their workplaces are dysfunctional or toxic.

The vast majority (81%) of survey respondents, across faculty, staff, and administrative ranks, agree or strongly agree that they feel respected by their colleagues. And nearly half of the survey's 4,107 respondents indicate that while their workplace has "some friction," it remains "generally productive."

Still, a notable number—about a third—describe their workplaces as "often dysfunctional" or "toxic." Survey responses highlight a few common themes, including frustration with leaders, the painful effects of budget shortfalls, perceptions of a lack of communication and transparency, and unease with the rapid pace of change.

Faculty members, administrators, and staff differ on whether they would encourage others to work in higher education.

There are notable differences by role when respondents are asked whether they would encourage someone to pursue a career in higher ed (78% of administrators say they would, compared with 74% of staff and 61% of faculty members).

Overall, fewer respondents say they would encourage someone to pursue a position *in their role*. Among those who would not, the most common reason is inadequate compensation and increasing workload. Two-thirds (67%) of higher-ed professionals say they are working more now than they did five years ago, and 44% say they are working "significantly more."

Half of respondents indicate they had considered leaving higher ed in the past year.

Only about a third of faculty members have confidence in their institution's leadership.

66% of administrators agree or strongly agree with the statement, "I have confidence in the leadership of my institution," compared with 52% of staff and 38% of faculty members.

Survey respondents express dissatisfaction with specific leaders and their actions, as well as, more generally, with managerial approaches they see as top-down, centralized, and more prescriptive than collaborative. Some respondents criticize leaders for being passive in the face of political pressure or unwilling to intervene in fraught workplace situations.

Across all roles, political influence is the biggest contributor to stress on the job.

46% of faculty members, 41% of administrators, and 37% of staff say political influence on higher education is a major contributor to stress.

Still, many faculty respondents say they derive a sense of purpose working in education, particularly those who would recommend their career to others. Overall, they enjoy working with students.

Faculty members who wouldn't encourage someone to pursue a career like theirs point to a host of reasons, including overwork and poor pay, growing service loads and committee work, and declining institutional support.