

INTRODUCTION

The UNC System Strategic Plan includes a goal for the University to “systematically focus on recruitment, retention, and development of the most talented and diverse workforce possible at all levels over the next five years.” To assist in meeting this expectation, UNC General Administration (UNC-GA), through the Division of Human Resources, is implementing several ongoing metrics related to engagement, retention, succession planning, and investment in professional development in order to promote system-wide improvements in these areas. In order to collect data that will address the employee engagement aspect of the Strategic Plan, UNC General Administration Human Resources is introducing a system-wide employee engagement survey.

The UNC System engagement survey will be conducted by ModernThink. For the past 10 years, ModernThink has collaborated with *The Chronicle of Higher Education* to produce the annual “Great Colleges to Work For” list. The Great Colleges program recognizes institutions that have been successful in creating great workplaces in order to more broadly foster better understanding of the factors, dynamics, and influences that have the most impact on successful organizational culture.

In 2008, ModernThink partnered with *The Chronicle* to convene a blue ribbon panel of experts and professionals within the field of higher education to solicit input regarding the customization of The ModernThink Higher Education Insight Survey® (the instrument used in the Great Colleges program) so that it would best reflect the dynamics, systems and demographics unique to higher education. The survey measures 15 dimensions reflecting managerial and organizational competencies. These dimensions were determined and confirmed through a series of factor analyses, and provide the basis for the recognition categories.

The ModernThink Higher Education Insight Survey® is largely the same as the instrument that the University will use for the UNC System engagement survey. UNC constituent institutions have the option, at no additional cost, to participate in the 2018 Great Colleges program as an added benefit of the system-wide engagement survey, but participation in the Great Colleges program is not required.

The survey will be issued annually over the next five years (2018-2022). In 2018, 2020, and 2022, the survey will be distributed to all permanent, full-time faculty and staff. In 2019 and 2021, a shorter “pulse” survey will be distributed to a random sampling of permanent, full-time faculty and staff. Constituent institutions, for an added fee, may extend the survey population to other employee groups (e.g., permanent part-time employees, temporary employees, postdoctoral fellows, adjunct faculty, etc.). The first UNC System engagement survey is scheduled to be administered over a three-week period starting in late January 2018 and running through mid-February. The first data reporting will be available by early summer 2018.

UNC-GA is providing the core funding for administration of the survey, including a suite of standardized reports and benchmarking comparisons, and UNC-GA will also have an Online Report Gateway for customized data analysis and reporting. Each constituent institution may separately purchase at its own expense additional survey questions, reports, benchmarks, and its own Online Report Gateway.

UNC-GA Human Resources will coordinate this effort through the chief human resources officers (CHROs) at each institution. The CHROs will coordinate with other key institutional constituencies (such as the chief academic officers, institutional research, and public relations) to administer the survey, analyze data, and develop and communicate action plans as necessary. UNC-GA HR has also established a system-wide steering committee with representation from each institution to assist with long-term administration of the program.

We have prepared the attached FAQs to help address initial questions. Please contact Chris Chiron at cchiron@northcarolina.edu if you have any questions you would like to see added.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

1. How often will we do this survey, and why that frequency?

The engagement survey will be distributed to all permanent, full-time faculty and staff every other year for the next five years (2018, 2020, and 2022). A shorter “pulse” survey of only a random sampling of permanent, full-time faculty and staff will be distributed in the off years (2019 and 2021). This should provide a sufficient snapshot of the culture of engagement at UNC-GA and our constituent institutions to develop trending data and to monitor changes without being too time-consuming for UNC-GA, the constituent institutions, and our employees. This every-other-year approach should also provide the constituent institutions with the opportunity to administer other relevant wide-distribution surveys, such as the COACHE survey for faculty, without inducing “survey fatigue” in a single calendar year.

2. Is there any cost to the survey for the constituent institutions?

UNC-GA will pay for the base survey instrument and a suite of response and benchmarking reports both system-wide and by constituent institution. Constituent institutions may purchase additional survey items and additional benchmarking/reporting options to address institution-specific reporting needs. The CHROs have received a pricing guide for these add-on services.

3. Can a constituent institution opt out of participation in this survey?

No. The UNC System engagement survey is being implemented as part of the University’s Strategic Plan, and data from UNC-GA and all constituent institutions is necessary toward fulfilling the strategic goals adopted by the Board of Governors. Although constituent institutions are not required to participate in ModernThink’s “Great Colleges to Work For” program, institutions may opt-in, at no additional cost, to participate in that program and have their results considered for recognition. To participate in the Great Colleges program, an institution must also complete a short institutional questionnaire. Participation in the Great Colleges program is not publicly released if an institution is not ultimately recognized by the program, though UNC-GA will be aware of which constituent institutions participated.

4. What are the advantages of doing a survey like this?

The survey will help establish a baseline for, and improve awareness of, the strengths and challenges in UNC-GA’s and each constituent institution’s workforce culture and human resources practices. This will assist leadership in focusing on specific areas within the constituent institution or across the UNC System where employee engagement challenges may exist and to recognize those areas that are succeeding in fostering strong employee engagement. The survey results will also help the UNC System advocate for improvements to our human resources policies and programs at the statewide level that are generally beyond our institutional control. In general, the survey can help build a culture of communication and trust by soliciting feedback from employees and then using that feedback to pursue meaningful incremental changes within each organization.

5. What are the risks of doing a survey like this?

The greatest risk is figuring out what to do with the results and managing employee expectations about what can be achieved with these results. The survey itself is not a “magic bullet” that will result in the resolution of all employee concerns, and it is important that employees receive appropriate messaging in this regard. The University will work to manage these expectations carefully by communicating fully with our employees about the purpose of the survey and how the University intends to use the results. UNC-GA will be working closely with the chief human resources officers of the constituent institutions to develop appropriate messaging as the engagement survey is rolled out.

6. How will constituent institutions be consulted in the implementation and administration of the survey?

UNC-GA Human Resources is closely consulting with the chief human resources officers of the constituent institutions via the UNC System Human Resources Council to discuss and obtain feedback on this initiative. UNC-GA HR also has established an engagement survey steering committee with membership from each institution and will continue to consult with our institutional partners as this program moves forward.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SURVEY

7. When will the survey be issued?

The survey will launch in January 2018. There will be a three-week window for employees to respond.

8. Which employees will be surveyed?

The survey audience will include all permanent full-time (0.75 FTE, equivalent to 30+ hours per week or a 9-month work schedule) faculty and staff at all 17 constituent institutions and UNC General Administration. Roughly 48,000 employees across the UNC System will be surveyed. Students will not participate in this survey. Other employee types, such as temporary and part-time employees, are not included in the standard survey audience, but a constituent institution may choose to add to the survey other employee types at an additional cost. Although a constituent institution will receive its survey results in their entirety, only survey results for permanent, full-time faculty and staff will be included in the system-wide employee engagement metrics to ensure consistency in reporting across the UNC System.

9. How many questions will be on the survey?

The survey has about 90 questions across four components: belief statements, benefits statements, demographics questions, and open-ended questions. ModernThink reports that the average respondent spends 15-20 minutes completing the survey. Constituent institutions may add customized statements or questions for an additional cost.

10. What type of questions will be asked?

The belief statements address key dimensions of employee engagement, including job satisfaction, institutional pride, communication, and fairness. Examples of belief statements are “My job makes good use of my skills and abilities,” “People in my department work well together,” and “I understand how my job contributes to this institution’s mission.” Respondents will answer how strongly they agree or disagree on a five-point scale, or they can select ‘not applicable.’ The benefits questions gauge employee satisfaction on a five-point satisfaction scale with a variety of benefits programs provided by the State/University. The demographics questions provide employee self-identification, such as race, gender, years of service, salary range, organizational unit, etc.

11. Does this survey measure “morale”?

Although “morale” is not itself easily measurable, this survey is intended to cover many issues to which employees typically refer when speaking of “morale”. These dimensions include job satisfaction and support, collaboration, respect and appreciation, pride, and fairness, among others directly correlated to employee engagement.

12. Will the survey be electronic or on paper?

The survey will be administered online and available in English and Spanish. Constituent institutions may choose to offer in-person assistance and/or dedicated workstations to staff who have limited online access or computer skills, or may purchase paper copies of the survey to distribute to these employee populations.

13. Can the survey be done on a mobile device?

Yes. The survey is mobile-friendly and can be completed on a PC/laptop, tablet, or smart phone.

14. What standard languages will the survey support? How will other languages be handled?

The survey will be offered to all employees in English or Spanish online. Constituent institutions will have the option to offer the survey in other languages based on their localized needs for an additional fee.

15. Will the constituent institutions have the opportunity to customize the survey?

Yes. UNC-GA will define the “core” survey elements that will be included system-wide. In addition, each constituent institution has the option to purchase further customizations, such as additional belief statements, demographic questions, or open-ended questions.

QUESTIONS ABOUT SURVEY DATA AND REPORTING

16. How is confidentiality guaranteed?

Confidentiality of individual responses is critical to the success of this program. The survey results provided to the University are not individually identifiable. The data will be collected and stored on secure servers managed by ModernThink. ModernThink will also provide a confidential customer support service to address employee questions or concerns. Additionally, a minimum of five responses is required for any identified demographic group in order for the University to receive response information in any report. If there are not at least five responses in that group, then the only available data would be “rolled up” to a broader group of respondents for reporting. Please feel free to contact ModernThink directly at 888-684-4658 with any additional questions regarding data and response confidentiality.

17. Will the survey results be published?

Yes. UNC-GA will publish aggregated survey results for the UNC System as a whole and for each constituent institution in standard reports provided by ModernThink. UNC System or constituent institution data may also be used by ModernThink anonymously as a benchmark for other institutions.

18. What benchmarks are being used for comparison?

UNC-GA is providing six standard benchmarking groups for comparison with UNC institutions. The benchmarks include data from institutions that have participated in ModernThink’s sponsored surveys.

- The Great Colleges “Honor Roll” (highest rated institutions participating in that program)
- Carnegie classification
- Public institutions
- Enrollment size
- Region (south)
- Single aggregate of all UNC institutions

Constituent institutions may separately purchase additional benchmarks relevant to their institution.

19. Will assistance be provided to institutions in analyzing the data?

Yes. ModernThink will provide UNC-GA with analysis and consultation services for interpreting system-wide results along with training for constituent institutions on analyzing survey data. UNC-GA will also assist each constituent institution with data interpretation. Constituent institutions may also purchase additional consulting services from ModernThink.

20. Can each constituent institution receive more detailed results?

Yes. All constituent institutions will receive a basic report suite for their institution that will include comparisons with the benchmark organizations selected by UNC-GA as well as breakouts by institutional demographics and by organization department structure. UNC-GA will have access to a reporting gateway provided by ModernThink for additional customized reporting, and institutions may purchase their own gateway for an additional fee.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

21. Who can I contact for further information?

Please contact Chris Chiron, Associate Vice President for Employee Relations, at UNC-GA for additional information. He can be reached by email at cschiron@northcarolina.edu or by telephone at (919) 843-4121. You can also contact ModernThink Project Manager Karen Kukulka with questions regarding confidentiality and customization, reporting, and consulting available for purchase. She can be reached by email at kkukulka@modernthink.com or 888-684-4658.

TECHNICAL QUESTIONS FOR SURVEY ADMINISTRATORS

22. Is UNC-GA undergoing IRB review for this project? Will individual institutions need to get approval from their own IRB offices?

UNC-GA has already submitted the survey through IRB, and IRB determined that neither UNC-GA nor any UNC constituent institution will need IRB approval for this survey. Although institutions will not have direct access to the raw data (all data will be housed by ModernThink), customized reporting can be accomplished through UNC-GA's Online Report Gateway access, or constituent institutions may purchase their own Online Report Gateway.

23. What information about employees is being provided to ModernThink to launch the survey?

UNC-GA will pull employee data from the December 2017 HR DataMart to provide ModernThink with the "pre-loaded" data to initiate the survey in January 2018. The pre-loaded data includes:

- Employee email address (used to create the unique login/password for each employee to invite the employee by email to participate in the survey)
- SHRA/EHRA status
- ModernThink Standard Employee Groups (Administration, Faculty, Exempt/Salaried Professional Staff, Non-Exempt/Hourly Staff)
- UNC Employee Groups (SAAO Tier 1, SAAO Tier 2, EHRA Non-Faculty/IRPS, Faculty, SHRA Exempt, SHRA Non-Exempt) – these are also mapped to the ModernThink Standard Employee Groups
- Job Category (Career Banding Job Families for SHRA employees)

Other demographic information (age, race, gender, department, years of service, etc.) will be self-reported by employees when they take the survey. We are attempting to balance the identifiable information that we report on each employee with the employee's ability to self-select more identifiable information (or choose not to report/respond).

Please note that there must be at least five responses in any identifiable demographic group or combination of demographics in order for data about that group to be reported. Neither UNC-GA nor individual constituent institutions will have access to any demographic or cross-tab of demographics in which there are fewer than five respondents. For example, if you were trying to generate a report on responses from Black/African-American females in the Physics department, but there are only two respondents who fit that demographic combination, then no responses would be reported. However, responses from those employees could be available if the demographic combination was modified to Black/African-American females in the School of Natural Sciences (which includes Physics), if that dataset has 5 or more respondents who fit this demographic combination. This five-respondent minimum threshold is applied to both the hard copy reports and the Online Report Gateway.

24. Each constituent institution has to provide 3 organizational levels: What constitutes an organizational level? How does this affect small departments?

The three organizational levels provided by UNC-GA for the survey are the top three levels in each institution. The first level would be the Chancellor/Vice Chancellor/Dean (School/Division) level, and the next two levels would be units and departments under those areas. Institutions may separately purchase additional organizational levels for reporting purposes.

Institutions may also opt to "flatten out" some levels to fit deeper levels of the organization into these existing three org levels. In some instances, an institution may have areas that only have one or two organizational levels, which is fine. Decisions on defining organizational levels should take into consideration the level to which the survey data may be useful in identifying areas of strength and opportunities for improvement across the institution and its management teams. Remember that there must be at least 5 responses provided in any identifiable demographic in order for data to be reported for that group.

- 25. Our understanding is that if we choose to administer paper surveys, ModernThink will provide us with the number of paper surveys requested, and we will be responsible for distributing them and returning the completed surveys to ModernThink. How is postage handled, and will respondents need to provide any personally-identifiable information on their completed surveys?**

ModernThink recommends using as few paper surveys as possible due to additional cost and because response rates tend to be much higher with the electronic surveys. They recommend setting up computer stations and giving staff who have minimal computer access time to use these stations to complete the survey electronically.

If paper surveys are needed, ModernThink recommends setting up one or more paper survey drop-off locations so that they can be collected in bulk. Each survey needs to arrive at the drop-off station in a sealed envelope; surveys not in sealed envelopes will not be counted. Those collections are sent in bulk to ModernThink's paper survey processing vendor, which provides ModernThink with electronic versions of the data collected. This vendor also stores the original paper surveys until the data is verified as final. ModernThink can also provide business reply envelopes for individual surveys to be sent to their processing vendor one at a time for an institutional fee of \$2.00 per paper survey sent. ModernThink will ask the same self-selected demographics on the paper survey as on the online survey. Paper surveys are also barcoded by constituent institution.

- 26. The pricing guide shows that UNC-GA can customize up to 6 demographic questions. Does this mean if we want we can add up to 6 more demographic questions?**

UNC-GA has the option to add up to 6 custom questions for the system-wide survey. If a constituent institution wants to purchase additional questions beyond those provided system-wide by UNC-GA, then the constituent institution can purchase them at an additional cost (\$250 per demographic question or organization level). These questions will be asked only to employees at that constituent institution.

- 27. Are we limited in customizing demographic questions? Is there a list to choose from?**

No, constituent institutions may create their own customized questions. UNC-GA and ModernThink will assist institutions in aligning customized questions to existing questions in ModernThink's database, and to customize questions requested by other UNC constituent institutions, which may help with some benchmarking and reporting. For example, if several institutions are seeking to add a very similar customized question, we may explore standardizing that question so that those institutions could more directly compare responses.

- 28. Which reports do the constituent institutions receive? Do we just get a single paper copy of the report, or do we get it electronically as well? Also, if we take the option to add our own benchmark groups, do we would need to order the custom suite?**

Each constituent institution will receive one hard copy and an electronic copy of their report suite of data. This includes all GA-selected benchmarks and any customized survey items and benchmarks purchased separately by a constituent institution. Additional hard copy report suites can be purchased at additional cost, varying by report type. Refer to the list of reports already included in the UNC-GA package.

UNC-GA also will receive access to the Online Report Gateway as well as a hard copy paper suite of reports that includes data from every institution/UNC-GA and the benchmarking data. The Online Report Gateway can be purchased by individual constituent institutions (containing data for their institution plus benchmarks) for \$5000 per institution for the first year of purchase, and \$2,900 for each subsequent year of purchase. Multiple years of investing in the Online Report Gateway will allow for year-over-year cross-tab analysis.

For additional benchmarks, constituent institutions may receive a stand-alone report or may order an additional suite of reports and integrate that benchmark into those reports. For example, a constituent institution might purchase an aspirational peer benchmark and then order a Job Category Benchmark Spreadsheet; this report would include the aspirational peer data benchmark across job categories.

29. Will constituent institutions get reports on response rates broken out by group (e.g., faculty/staff, gender, race)? Will we see response rates from benchmark groups? Other UNC constituent institutions?

Each UNC constituent institution will receive a report containing the percentage of respondents by each survey demographic for their institution. N-values for each demographic will also be supplied in the core reports funded by UNC-GA. While the survey is being administered, ModernThink will provide access to an online response rate portal, where response rates by employee groups (Administration, Faculty, Exempt/Salaried Professional Staff, Non-Exempt/Hourly Staff) can be monitored in real-time. Access to the response rate portal will be sent to the designated primary contact at each institution after the survey launches. UNC-GA will have access to response rates and N-values system-wide.

30. To clarify, for the constituent institution report with just our results (which comes at no additional fee), our Carnegie Classification benchmark would match our institution specifically?

Yes, you will receive the benchmark for the Carnegie classification associated with your constituent institution.

31. Will we be able to see a list of the names of the participating institutions included in each selected benchmark group?

You will be able to know the number of institutions comprising each benchmark and only the names of the institutions for the benchmarks that were recognized in the Great Colleges program. ModernThink cannot release the names of Great Colleges participants unless they are recognized in the program. UNC constituent institutions may provide ModernThink with a list of possible peers for a customized benchmark, and if these peers are in ModernThink's databank, then those can be used in aggregate for comparison, but comparisons will not be made to individually-identifiable institutions.

32. Can a constituent institution wait until after the results are available to make decisions about purchasing additional reports?

Yes. UNC-GA is providing a core set of reports and benchmarks for each institution and can provide some customized reporting to institutions as well through the Online Report Gateway access that UNC-GA has purchased. Each constituent institution can review the provided content to decide if additional reports are necessary or if the institution would prefer to purchase its own gateway access. ModernThink can advise constituent institutions on which reports may yield valuable data based on an institution's particular needs.

33. Will we need to pay an additional fee to get individual comments from our respondents?

No. Each constituent institution will receive a Word document of their employee comments as part of the standard reporting package provided through UNC-GA, and UNC-GA will also receive a CSV file of all comments system-wide. Each constituent institution also may purchase a CSV file of its employee comments for an additional fee.

34. To access our raw data to do our own analyses, would we need to purchase the Online Report Gateway? Or will UNC-GA be able to download data (and necessary documentation) from this platform to share institution-specific data?

No one will have access to "raw data" for confidentiality purposes. UNC-GA will have access to a customized Online Report Gateway to the data housed by ModernThink and can provide some basic reporting for each constituent institution. To run more robust reports, ModernThink recommends that institutions purchase their own Online Report Gateway for greatest flexibility. Constituent institutions may want to wait to see what information they can receive from the standard reports and through UNC-GA's gateway before deciding if they want to purchase an institutional gateway.