

YSU 2017 Great Colleges Survey Results

This document summarizes the 2017 YSU results of the Chronicle of Higher Education’s “Great Colleges to Work For” survey in comparison to the 2016 survey results.

Interpreting the Results

In 2016 only a sample of employees were surveyed, while in 2017 the survey included all full-time employees and a sample of part time faculty. While the survey themes, and many questions, reflect at least a slightly lower average positive response, this is likely due to the differences in survey administration. Conclusions based solely on number reductions are cautioned against. The results for 2017 reflect campus perceptions more accurately, rather than less positively, in comparison to the 2016 results. Only differences greater than +/-5% points should be considered potentially notable.

Survey Themes

Similarities:

The 2017 top and bottom five themes, from most to least percentage positive, were identical to the top five and nearly identical to the bottom five scales. **This indicates that the strengths, challenges, and high-level priorities identified in 2016 should continue to be considered relevant moving forward.**

2017 Rank	TOP Five Themes (most positive)	2016 Rank
1	Supervisors/Department Chairs	1
2	Job Satisfaction/Support	2
3	Pride	3
4	Facilities	5
5	Professional Development	4

2017 Rank	BOTTOM Five Themes (least positive)	2016 Rank
15	Shared Governance	13
14	Senior Leadership	15
13	Faculty Admin, and Staff Relations	14
12	Communication	12
11	Teaching Environment	8

Differences:

There were several specific themes that saw notable differences:

Rank	Theme Name	Difference 2016-2017	Comments
4	Professional Development	2016: 60% positive; 2017: 53% positive (-7)	Questions in this scale focus on skill and career advancement and are both lower (2 question scale).
11	Teaching Environment	2016: 46% positive; 2017: 41% positive (-5)	Scale fell from “warrants attention” to “poor” category. Big fall in question regarding recognition of teaching in tenure and promotion.
14	Faculty, Admin & Staff Relations	2016: 32% positive; 2017: 27% positive (-5)	A specific area of focus, but both questions on scale lower (2 question scale).
15	Shared Governance	2016: 33% positive; 2017: 26% positive (-7)	Should be noted as an area of increased concern on campus.

Individual Questions

Similarities:

Again, the similarities between the 2016 and 2017 five top/bottom questions were very strong—only the order changed.

2017 Rank (2016)	2017 Positive (2016)	2016-17 Change	5 MOST Positive Questions
1 (1)	81% (81)	0	This institution actively contributes to the community.
2 (3)	79% (80)	-1	I understand how my job contributes to this institution's mission.
3 (5)	76% (77)	-1	My supervisor/department chair supports my efforts to balance my work and personal life.
4 (2)	74% (81)	-7	I have a good relationship with my supervisor/department chair.
5 (4)	72% (77)	-5	I am given the responsibility and freedom to do my job.

2017 Rank (2016)	2017 Positive (2016)	2016-17 Change	5 LEAST Positive Questions
1 (1)	17% (16)	+1	My department has adequate faculty/staff to achieve our goals.
2 (5)	24% (30)	-6	I am paid fairly for my work.
3 (3)	18% (23)	-5	There's a sense that we're all on the same team at this institution.
4 (2)	17% (20)	-3	Faculty, administration and staff are meaningfully involved in institutional planning.
5 (4)	25% (29)	-4	Senior leadership shows a genuine interest in the well-being of faculty, administration and staff.

Differences:

At the question level, there were a number of questions with large enough difference to warrant attention and consider if campus perceptions around these areas have changed. Not all of these questions were considered top/bottom questions.

Selected Question Improvements 2016-2017			
Questions	2017 Positive	2017 Negative	Comments
Our recognition and awards programs are meaningful to me.	37 (↑5)	32 (↓10)	Increase in positive percentage of responses, but notable for large drop in percentage of negative responses
I am proud to be part of this institution.	67 (↑5)	8 (↓6)	This is a strength area that has continued to improve, now a top 10 most positive question.
This institution's benefits meet my needs.	54 (↓4)	13 (↓5)	While the percent positive responses dropped some, the negative responses have also dropped to the "fair-good" level

Selected Question Declines 2016-2017			
Questions	2017 Positive	2017 Negative	Comments
The role of faculty in shared governance is clearly stated and publicized.	24 (↓12)	47 (↑17)	This question has large changes in both positive and negative responses—this should be a consideration by leadership in addressing challenges
Teaching is appropriately recognized in the evaluation and promotion process.	39 (↓10)	26 (↑4)	This large drop in positive responses warrants further investigation to understand impetus
I believe what I am told by my supervisor/department chair.	58 (↓7)	17 (↑6)	The changes moved this question from "good" to "fair to mediocre" (positive), and from "fair to good" to "yellow flag" (negative).
Changes that affect me are discussed prior to being implemented.	30 (↓7)	37 (↑4)	Reviewers posited that this change could be due to changes in graduate assistantships and student work-study program changes announced preceding the survey.

Questions Added in 2017:

A set of questions were added by YSU for the 2017 survey administration, mainly focused on recent leadership actions.

Selected Additional Questions 2017			
Questions	2017 Positive	2017 Negative	Comments
My colleagues communicate effectively with one another.	47	18	Highest positive additional question.
Senior leadership has taken action based on the results of last year's data.	43	29	Just below the "warrants attention" level for positive responses; aligns with qualitative analysis regarding leadership action.
Since the survey in 2016, the workplace climate has improved.	25	46	Lowest positive additional question.

Color Key:

Please refer to this key, defined by Great Colleges, to interpret the color-coding on the above questions.

KEY	+ Positive responses	Very Good/ Excellent 75%+	Good 65%-74%	Fair to Mediocre 55%-64%	Warrants Attention 45%-54%	Poor <45%	
	- Negative responses	Excellent – Very Good <10%	Fair – Good 10%-14%		Yellow Flag 15%-19%	Red Flag 20%-29%	Acute 30%+

2017 Open Response Summary

What do you appreciate most about working at this institution?

Top 3 Occurring Themes (% of responses):

1. **Positive Interaction with Colleagues** (34%)
2. **Employee Benefits Package** (23%)
3. **Impact on Students** (19%)

This question appeared on both the 2016 and 2017 Campus Climate survey. *Similarities:* Themes are very similar between survey administrations. Top themes from 2016 included *Positive Relationships with Colleagues*, *Working towards the Common Goal of Student Success*, and *Interacting with Great Students*. *Differences:* In 2017, one notable new theme emerged – *Leadership of Senior Staff* (occurring in 4% of comments). The themes occurring in this question closely align with highest-performing thematic areas from the quantitative data in both 2016 and 2017.

What would make this institution a better place to work?

Top 3 Occurring Themes (% of responses):

1. **Appropriate Compensation and Opportunity for Advancement** (30%)
2. **Mission-Driven Hiring and Resource Distribution** (27%)
3. **Demonstrate Respect** (21%)

This question appeared on both the 2016 and 2017 Campus Climate Survey, as well as in the 2016 Open Forums. *Similarities:* Top themes across the surveys and forums were mostly similar; themes occurring most frequently across years focus on increase in pay, changes in Senior Leadership (personnel and behavior), increase in staffing and resources, opportunities for employees to give input/shared governance, and a call for respect for employees from Senior Leadership and the Board of Trustees. *Differences:* Some noticeable differences include an increase in occurrence of the pay theme. In 2016, *Equitable Pay Structures* occurred in 21% of comments; comment occurrence rose by 9% to 30% (*Appropriate Compensation and Opportunity for Advancement*) in 2017. Additionally, in 2016 *Removing and/or Accountability for Senior Leadership* was the 2nd most prevalent theme occurring in 22% of comments, while in 2017 the theme dropped to the 4th most

common at 17% of comments (*Senior Leadership Change and Improvement*). At a smaller scale, but showing noticeable jumps are two themes, *Academics over Athletics* and *Inclusive Culture*. In 2017 the *Academics over Athletics* theme occurred in 7% of comments (only 3% in 2016) and the *Inclusive Culture* theme went from 2% in 2016 to 4% of comments in 2017.

What one change have you noticed since the last survey in Spring 2016?

Top 3 Occurring Themes (% of responses):

1. **Efforts towards Enhanced Communication** (31%)
2. **Changes are Superficial** (17%)
3. **No Noticeable Change** (15%)

This question was added in the 2017 survey administration. A great deal of tension exists in this question's data between evidence of improvement, perceived superficial efforts towards improvement, and no changes being seen. Although not in the top 3 themes, one theme (*Observable Improvements*) and four sub-themes (*Communication Improvements*, *Opportunities for Input*, *Increased Transparency*, and *Accessibility*) point to evidence of improvement. An additional theme, *Things Have Gotten Worse*, speaks to the opposite.

What would a successful model of shared governance look like at YSU?

Top 3 Occurring Themes (% of responses):

1. **Inclusion in Decision Making** (48%)
2. **Model Respect for All Employees** (13%)
3. **Need for Clear Definition** (11%)

This question was added in the 2017 survey administration. After analyzing the 384 comments in response to the question, it becomes obvious that there is confusion around what shared governance means at Youngstown State University. Themes reveal a need to provide, operationalize, disseminate, and put into practice a clear definition and model of shared governance for the University. It is recommended that the model of shared governance give attention to many of the top themes and subthemes in this question including, but not limited to *Inclusion in Decision Making*, *Listen to Input*, *Use Recommendations*, *Model Respect for All Employees*, *Trust as the Foundation*, and *Clearly Defined Roles*.

Findings:

- **Some survey differences are due to administration.** While the survey has overall lower scores, this is likely due to differences in survey administration. The 2017 results should be considered **more accurate not more negative**.
- **The findings of the 2016 survey still stand.** The overall similarities of the survey indicate that:
 - the priorities for improvement should largely remain unchanged, and
 - there is still significant work to be done toward a positive campus climate.
- **Qualitative responses are more nuanced this year.** In analyzing the open response data between years, it is evident that 2017 data includes responses that point to respondents being able to better identify and articulate specific problems, which leads to a similar, but more sophisticated set of 2017 open response themes. For example, the 2016 theme of *Resources* has evolved into the 2017 theme *Mission-Driven Resource Distribution*.
- **The window for action between 2016 and the current survey was small.** It should also be recognized that there was a very short cycle between the completion of the open forums in Fall 2016 and the administration of the 2017 survey in March in which to make large scale improvements; therefore, it was to be expected that the survey would not show significant changes.
- **There are several new areas to attend to.** In particular, there were three notable areas for focus:
 - Shared governance: the significant difference in the shared governance question and the confusion in the qualitative data regarding a definition indicates this is an area for sustained attention and communication.
 - YES Committee: qualitative comments regarding the YES Committee indicate strong dissatisfaction with leadership choices and communication about actions. It is recommended that the Committee make purpose, transparency, and communication with campus a priority.
 - Teaching recognition in tenure/promotion: this question saw a large drop without specific mention of why in the qualitative. It is recommended that further investigation of the underlying reason be explored.

Additional Information:

2017 Survey Administration

All full-time employees and a sample of 50 part-time faculty were invited to participate in the Chronicle of Higher Education's 2017 "Great Colleges to Work For" Survey. The survey period was March 31-April 14, 2017. The overall response rate was 55%, and increase from 2016's 35% response rate (40% for full-time employees).

GC Job Category	Response Rate	Number of respondents
Faculty	57%	229
PT Faculty	14%	7
Administration	67%	123
Exempt Professional Staff	48%	117
Non-Exempt Staff	57%	123
Overall	55%	599

The "Great Colleges to Work For" Survey is made up of 60 agreement scale questions, 18 benefits satisfaction questions, 15 demographic questions, and two open-ended questions. In addition, this year YSU chose to add five additional agreement scale questions and two additional open-ended questions.

Requests for Data

Data and detail reports are available at cms.ysu.edu/campusclimate. Requests for access to open response raw data or the quantitative data portal can be directed to ysuassessment@ysu.edu.