

# Washington State University Employee Engagement Survey Report

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Human Resource Services  
September 2016*



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The WSU Employee Engagement Survey is a method for the University to gather feedback from employees to identify strengths and weaknesses of the workplace and evaluate overall perceptions of the work environment.

In line with the WSU Strategic Plan 2014-2019, and in an effort to improve institutional effectiveness, the first institution-wide Employee Engagement Survey was conducted in April 2014 to serve as a baseline in measuring progress and determining how effective improvement efforts are over time. The 2016 Employee Engagement Survey was sent to all active faculty, administrative professional, and classified staff employees in March 2016. Results from the 2016 survey will be used to identify areas of improvement and assist in developing strategies to enhance the workplace and advance the University's mission.

In addition to the survey results provided within this report, Human Resource Services (HRS) released preliminary survey data which contained an overall response breakdown for each statement. The preliminary report is available on the HRS website: <http://hrs.wsu.edu/employee-engagement-survey/>.

## SURVEY OVERVIEW

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### ABOUT THE SURVEY:

For the 2016 Employee Engagement Survey (EES), statements were added and/or modified based on employee feedback received from the 2014 survey comments, as well as input provided by senior leadership. The 2016 survey was designed to answer the following key questions:

Section 1	Do employees feel they have what is needed to do their job?
Section 2	Do employees feel they are valued?
Section 3	Do employees feel they provide individual contributions?
Section 4	Do employees feel connected to their co-workers?
Section 5**	Do employees feel satisfied with their supervisor?
Section 6*	Do employees feel connected to their department and do employees feel their department is advancing the University's mission?
Section 7	Do employees feel connected to WSU as a whole?
Resources**	Are employees aware of WSU resources or have concerns in the workplace?
Faculty Specific	Do faculty feel they provide contributions within their faculty appointments?

*\*Updated for 2016 ; \*\*New for 2016*

HRS utilized Qualtrics online survey tool to conduct the survey as well as compile the data for analysis and comparison between 2014 and 2016. A total of 38 statements were available for administrative professional and classified staff employees and a total of 42 statements were available for faculty. For 2016, there were 7 statements added to the survey regarding workplace concerns and WSU resources.

The EES measured the responses using a 5-option Likert scale to determine the frequency in which employees identified with the statements. Specifically, respondents were asked to choose between the following: *Never; Rarely; Sometimes; Often; Always*. The statements were scored 1-5, with "Never" equaling 1 and "Always" equaling 5, with the exception of statement 41 "*I have concerns regarding work climate,*" which was scored in reverse. The statements were analyzed to identify the response average overall, as well as the response average for each individual statement.

## WHO PARTICIPATED:

The EES was sent on March 28, 2016 to 6,815 faculty, administrative professional, and classified staff employees on active appointments. Employees with WSU email addresses received an email with instructions on how to complete the survey online. Employees without a WSU email address were mailed a hard copy of the survey along with a postage-paid return envelope to their mailing address on record. The EES closed on April 8, 2016, with responses received by 1,958 employees, resulting in a 28.7% response rate.

Although the overall response rate decreased by 1.5% (30.1% in 2014 to 28.7% 2016), the actual number of responses received increased by 3.5% (1,891 responses in 2014 to 1,958 responses in 2016).

## OVERALL SURVEY RESULTS

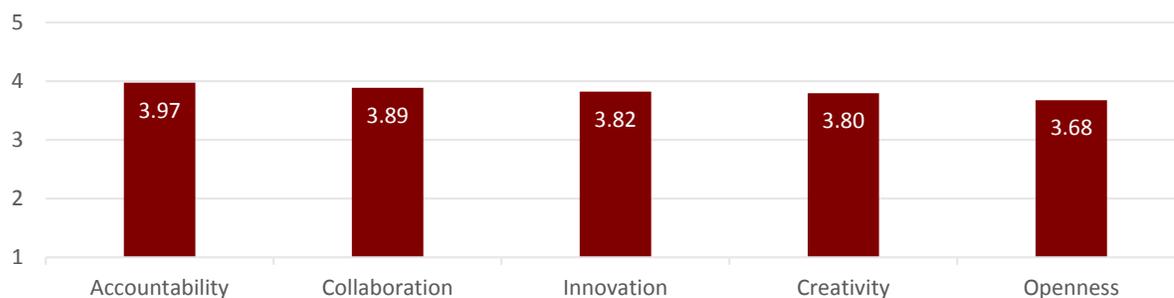
Overall, 70.2% of respondents indicated they are often or always satisfied at work, 20.8% of respondents indicated they are sometime satisfied with work, and 8.9% of respondents indicated they are rarely or never satisfied with work. The overall response average for sections 1-7 was 3.81. Below is the overall response average breakdown comparison for each section. Detailed results for can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Section	Overarching Question	2014 Average	2016 Average	Change
Section 1	Do employees feel they have what is needed to do their job?	4.15	4.12	-.03
Section 2	Do employees feel they are valued?	3.49	3.56	.07
Section 3	Do employees feel they provide individual contributions?	3.52	3.68	.16
Section 4	Do employees feel connected to their co-workers?	3.92	4.00	.08
Section 5**	Do employees feel satisfied with their supervisor?	N/A	3.88	N/A
Section 6*	Do employees feel connected to their department?	3.69	3.79	.10
	Do employees feel their department is advancing the University's mission?	N/A	3.83	N/A
Section 7	Do employees feel connected to WSU as a whole?	3.59	3.65	.06
Section 8**	Are employees aware of WSU resources or have concerns in the workplace?	N/A	3.75	N/A
Faculty Specific	Do faculty feel they provide contributions within their faculty appointments?	3.62	3.53	-.09

\*Updated for 2016 ; \*\*New for 2016

## ADVANCING THE UNIVERSITY'S MISSION:

The 2016 survey asked respondents to identify the extent to which their department approached advancement of the University's mission, specifically as it related to the University goals of accountability, innovation, creativity, openness, and collaboration. Overall, respondents identified departments are advancing the University's mission 'Often'.



## WORKPLACE CONCERNS AND RESOURCES:

Based on feedback, the 2016 survey added additional statements regarding workplace concerns and employee awareness of WSU resources, specifically those resources related to Workplace Violence, Bullying, State Ethics, Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct. While the majority of respondents are aware of the policy prohibiting discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct, only 66.55% of respondents are aware of the WSU policy regarding bullying prevention and reporting.

% OF RESPONDENTS AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING WSU POLICIES:



## POSITIVE RESPONSES:

In looking at the overall data for the 2016 survey, over 70% of those who responded indicated positive responses of often or always to the twelve (12) statements listed below.

### *Do you feel you have what is needed to do your job?*

87.91% of respondents indicated they often or always know what is expected of them at work

78.20% of respondents indicated they often or always receive the information they need to perform their job

76.86% of respondents indicated they often or always have the technology needed to do their jobs efficiently

74.95% of respondents indicated they often or always have the resources needed to do their job efficiently

### *Do you feel connected to your co-workers?*

86.40% of respondents indicated they often or always feel they have positive interactions with co-workers

77.60% of respondents indicated they often or always feel those around them are committed to doing quality work

75.83% of respondents indicated they often or always enjoy the work climate that exists between themselves and their co-workers

### *Do you feel satisfied with your supervisor?*

79.43% of respondents indicated they often or always feel their supervisor treats them with dignity and respect

### *Do you feel connected to your department?*

71.07% of respondents indicated they often or always enjoy being part of their department

70.12% of respondents indicated they often or always feel their department demonstrates support for a diverse workforce

### *Do you feel connected to WSU?*

76.43% of respondents indicated they often or always enjoy being part of WSU  
70.24% of respondents indicated they often or always feel satisfied at work overall

## AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT / EVALUATION:

Less than 50% of respondents indicated positive responses of often or always to the seven statements listed below.

*Do you feel you provide contributions within your faculty appointment?*

33.76% of respondents indicated they are often or always encouraged to participate in extension activities

*Do you know and feel you are valued?*

40.06% of respondents indicated they feel they are often or always appropriately compensated for their level of position

*Do you feel connected to your department?*

48.37% of respondents indicated they often or always know how their department measures success

48.00% of respondents indicated they often or always receive clear information about changes made within their department

*Do you feel connected to WSU?*

42.11% of respondents indicated they often or always receive clear information about changes made within WSU

41.90% of respondents indicated they often or always receive clear information about changes made within their college/area

*Are employees aware of WSU resources or have concerns in the workplace?*

47.79% of respondents indicated they often or always feel their supervisor encourages them to use the University resources available

## ACTION ITEMS:

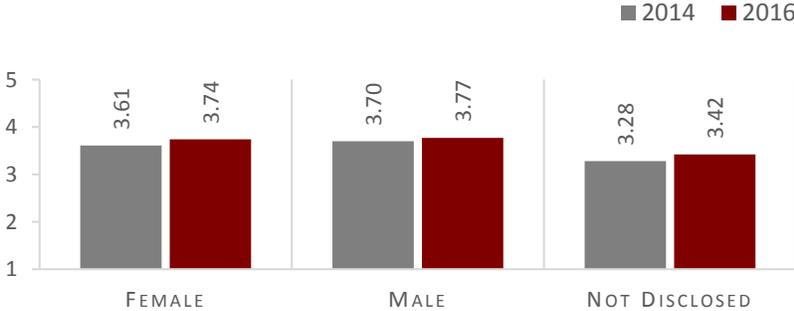
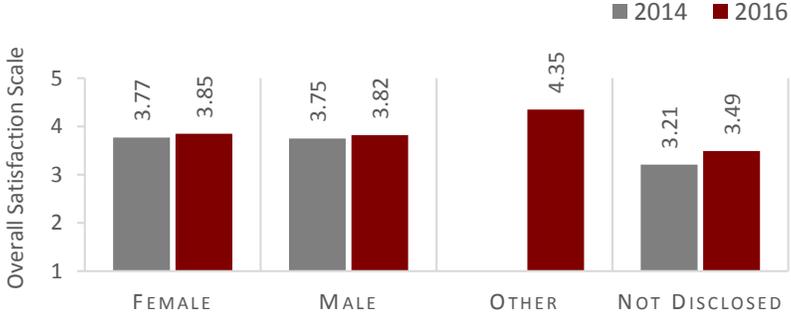
In reviewing the overall survey data, WSU as a whole should focus on initiatives to improve employee engagement and perceptions of the workplace, including but not limited to:

- Improve communication efforts regarding changes at all levels of the university (Statements 24, 35, & 36)
- Encourage faculty to provide contributions within their faculty appointments by encouraging them to engage in extension opportunities (Faculty statement 4)
- Evaluate employee compensation (Statement 8)
- Provide communication to employees on how success is measured (Statement 25)
- Provide supervisors with information on WSU resources to better equip them to encourage employees to utilize said resources (Statement 40)

# DEMOGRAPHIC SPECIFIC INFORMATION

## BREAKDOWN BY GENDER:

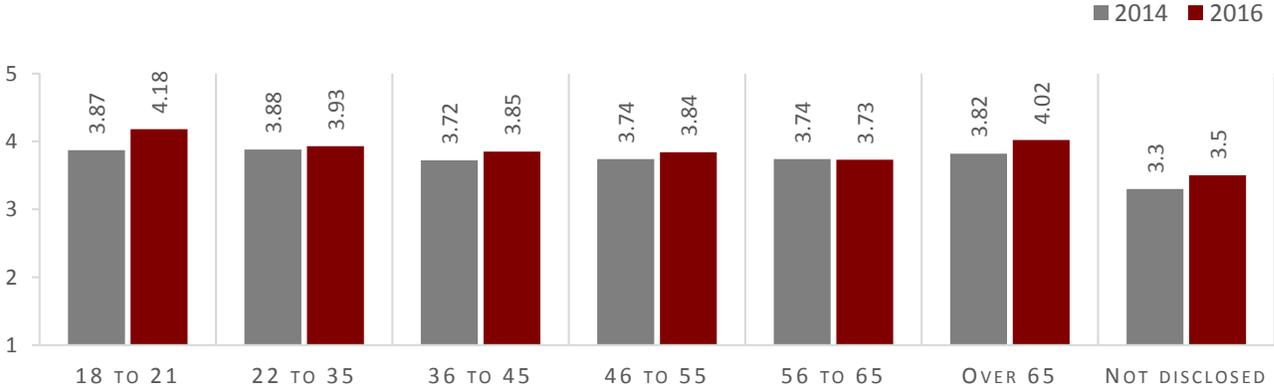
For the 2016 survey, 60.4% identified themselves as female, 32.9% identified themselves as male, and 6.7% chose to not self-identify. For statements 1-38, those who identified themselves as female indicated a slightly higher average response of 3.85 compared to those who identified themselves as male, 3.82. The detailed breakdown by each statement can be found in [Appendix B.1](#).



For the faculty specific demographics, those identified as male indicated a higher average response of 3.77 compared to those who identified as female, 3.74. The detailed breakdown by each statement can be found in [Appendix D.1](#).

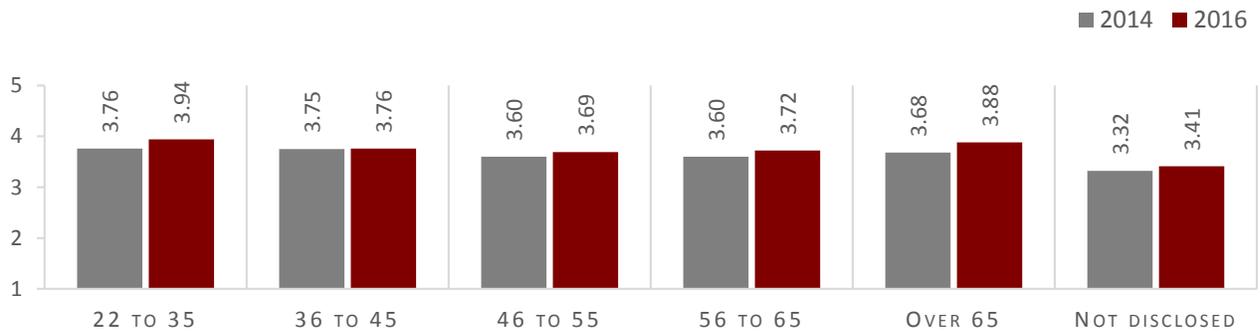
## BREAKDOWN BY AGE:

Nearly half of the 2016 survey respondents (49.9%), identified themselves as over the age of 45. Those who identified themselves between the ages of 18 to 21, indicated the highest response average for statements 1-38 of 4.18, however they represent only 0.1% of respondents. While those between the ages of 56-65, representing 23.1% of respondents, had the lowest response average for statements 1-38 of 3.65. The detailed breakdown by each statement can be found in [Appendix B.2](#).



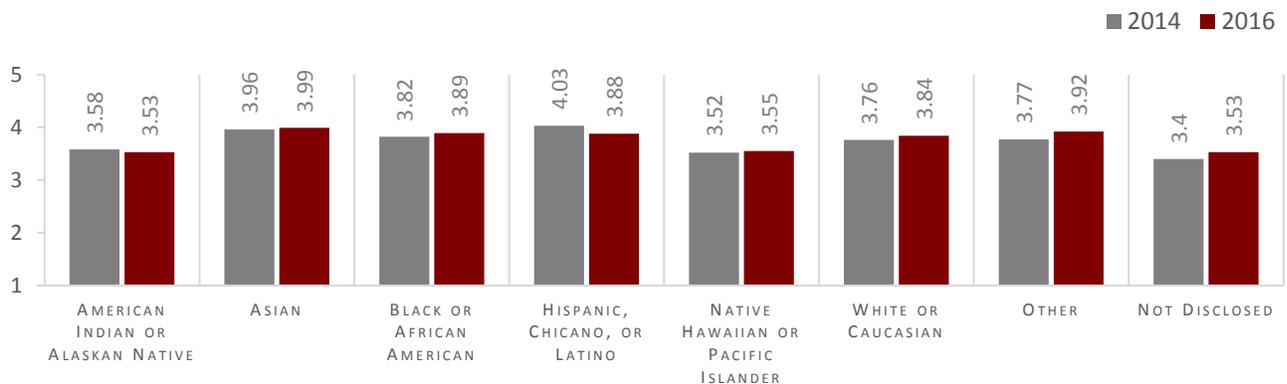
## BREAKDOWN BY AGE, CONTINUED:

For the faculty specific data, those age 22 to 35 indicated the highest response average of 3.94, while those faculty age 46 to 55 indicated the lowest response average 3.69. The detailed data can be found in [Appendix D.2](#).

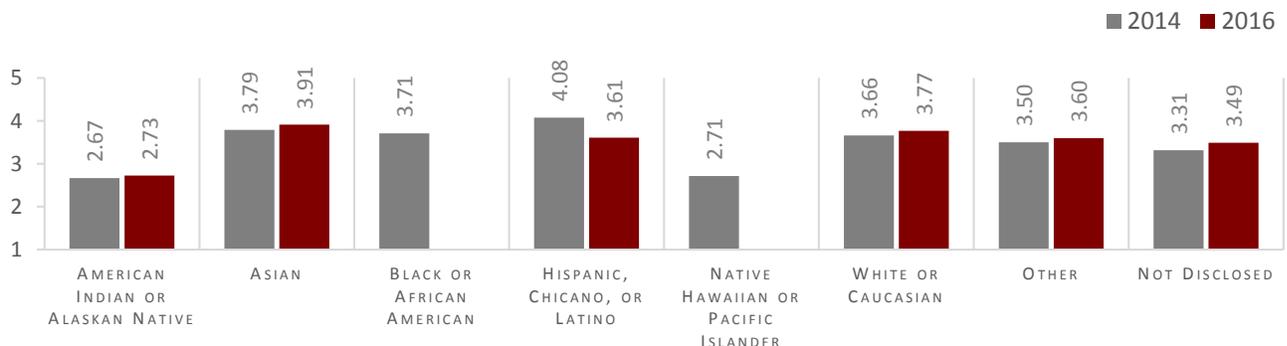


## BREAKDOWN BY ETHNICITY / RACE:

Respondents who identified themselves as Asian (3.6%) indicated the highest response average for statements 1-38 of 3.99. Those who identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native (1%) had the lowest response average for statements 1-38 of 3.53. The detailed data can be found in [Appendix B.3](#).

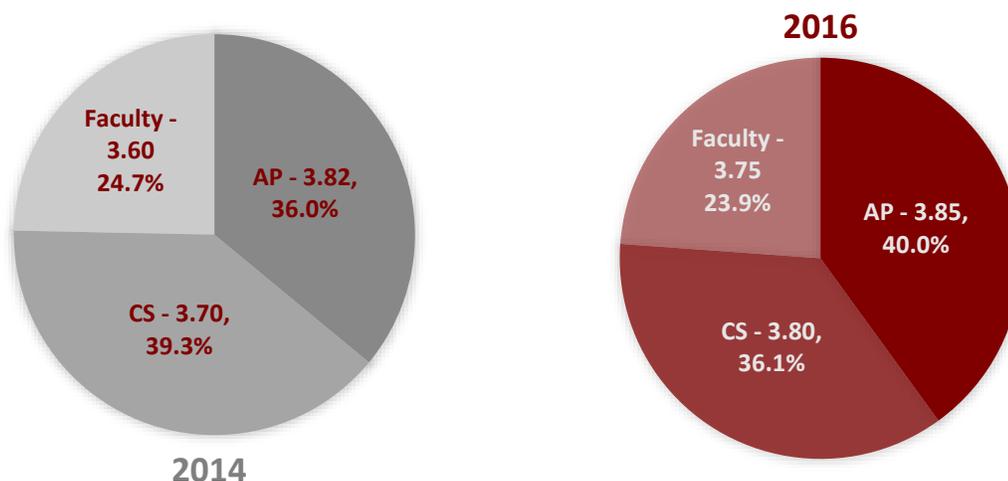


For the faculty specific data, those who identified themselves as Asian indicated the highest response average 3.91. Those who identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native had the lowest response average of 2.73. The detailed data can be found in [Appendix D.3](#).



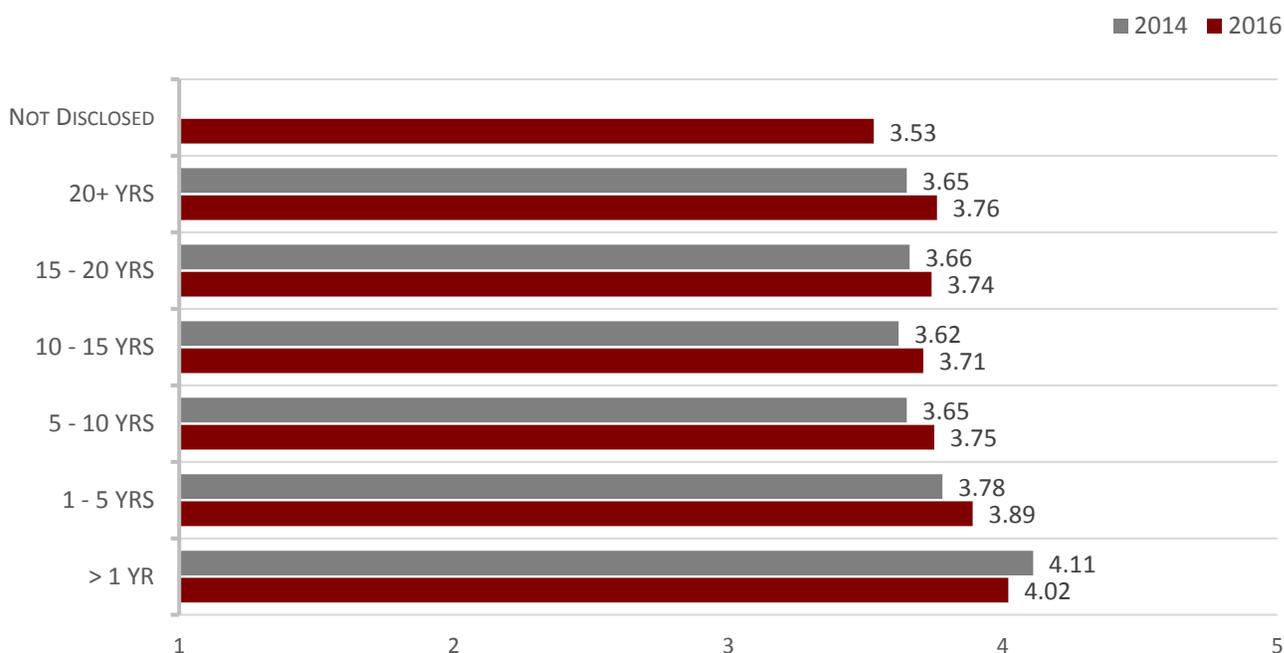
## BREAKDOWN BY EMPLOYEE TYPE:

In 2016, Administrative professional (AP) employees were the largest respondents at 40%, classified staff (CS) employees made up 36.1%; while 23.9% indicated they were Faculty. AP employees had the highest response average for statements 1-38 of 3.85. The detailed breakdown can be found in [Appendix B.4](#).



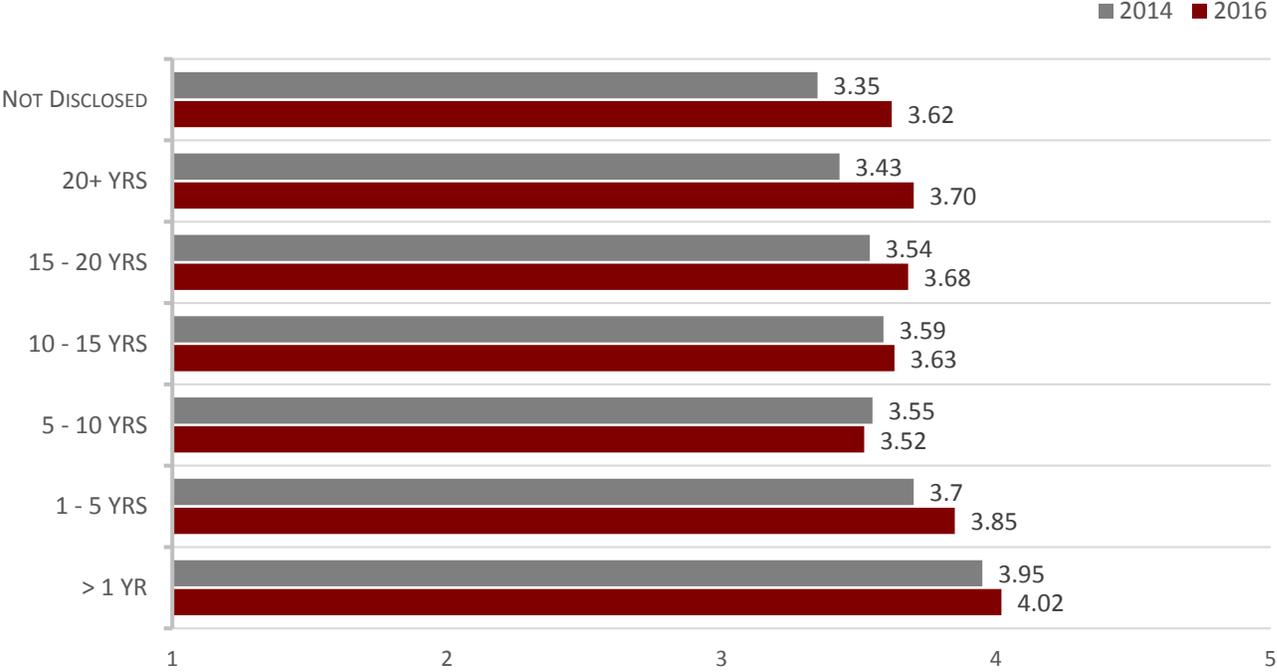
## BREAKDOWN BY NUMBER OF YEARS EMPLOYED BY WSU:

Respondents employed for less than one year (10.55%) had the highest response average for statements 1-38 of 4.02 while those who have been employed with WSU for 10 to 15 years (13.87%) indicated the lowest response average of 3.71. Detailed breakdown can be found in [Appendix B.5](#).



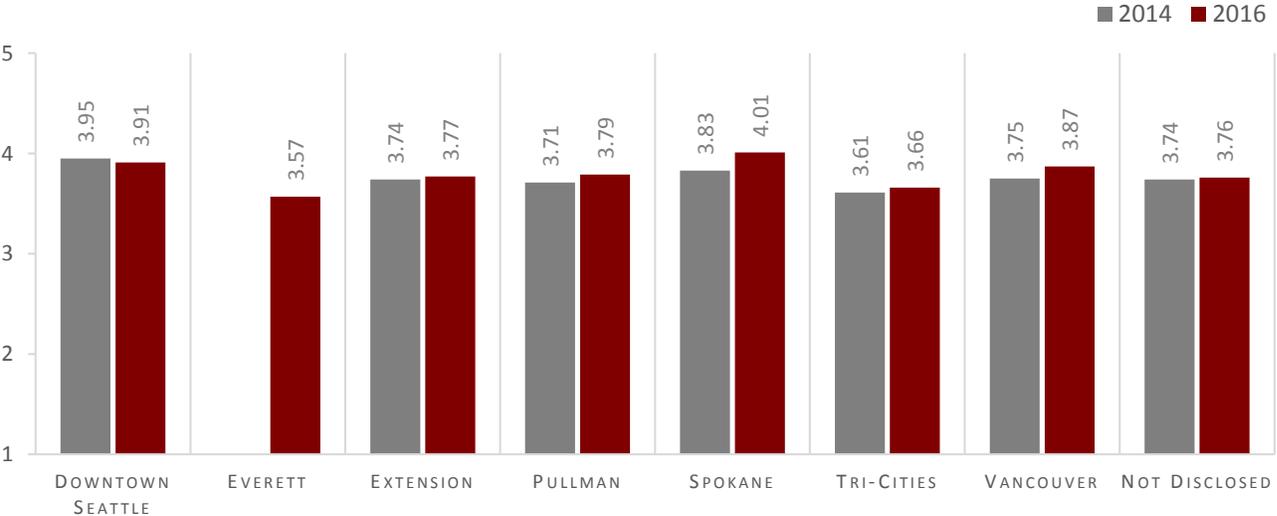
### BREAKDOWN BY NUMBER OF YEARS EMPLOYED BY WSU, CONTINUED:

For faculty specific responses, respondents employed for less than one year had the highest response average of 4.02, while those who have been employed with WSU for 5 to 10 years indicated the lowest response average of 3.52. Detailed breakdown can be found in [Appendix D.4](#).



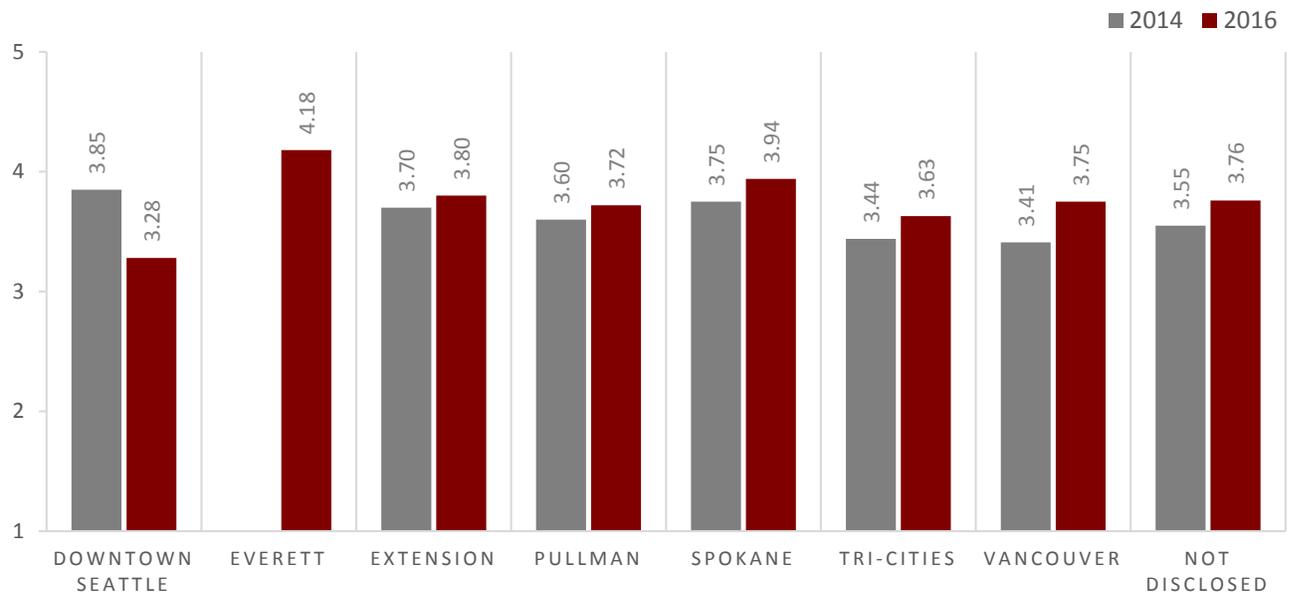
### BREAKDOWN BY WSU LOCATION / CAMPUS:

Overall, the respondents located in Everett indicated the lowest averages for statements 1-38 of 3.57, however they made up less than 1% of the total respondents. The respondents located in Spokane (9.53%) indicated the highest average for statements 1-38 of 4.01. The majority of 2016 respondents were from Pullman campus (68.63%). Detailed breakdown can be found in [Appendix B.6](#).



## BREAKDOWN BY WSU LOCATION / CAMPUS, CONTINUED:

For faculty specific responses, respondents located in Everett indicated the highest response average of 4.18, however they made up less than 1% of the total respondents. The respondents located in downtown Seattle (1.12%) indicated the lowest response average of 3.28. Detailed breakdown can be found in [Appendix D.5](#).



## BREAKDOWN BY AREA:

Respondents who identified themselves within WSU Everett had the lowest response average, for statements 1-38 of 3.20, while respondents who identified themselves within the Graduate School had the highest response average for statements 1-38 of 4.26. The detailed breakdown of all colleges and administrative areas can be found in [Appendix C.1](#)

Faculty respondents who identified themselves within the Graduate School had the highest response average of 4.61. Those who identified themselves within the Student Affairs had the lowest response average of 3.21. The detailed breakdown of all colleges and administrative areas can be found in [Appendix C.2](#)

## EMPLOYEE OVERALL COMMENTS

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At the end of the survey, employees were given the opportunity to provide comments regarding subjects not addressed in the survey. A total of 464 respondents, approximately 23.7% of those who responded the survey, provided feedback which was valuable in assessing employee engagement.

Multiple respondents provided feedback on more than one subject resulting in 495 comments; 70 comments were appreciation for conducting the survey as for working with WSU, 74 comments were regarding the survey and 351 comments provided feedback on a number of areas for improvement.

### EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK:

#### **Input on survey subjects and/or questions:**

Respondents identified a number of subjects not addressed within the survey which they felt were important for assessing employee engagement:

- Additional questions regarding compensation and employee satisfaction tied to increases and merit based rewards
- Advancement, mentoring, and training/professional development opportunities provided
- Employee support from WSU as a whole
- Cross campus or community collaboration and connectivity
- Burnout, job/work stress, time pressures, and conflicting priorities
- Employee empowerment, input in employee involvement shaping decisions about their work and WSU as a whole
- Physical condition of the workplace

#### **Additional Feedback:**

While the majority of comments identified areas for improvement or concern, there were a number of positive responses regarding specific supervisors and those within leadership roles at all levels of the University. A number of those who provided positive feedback loved their department, their college, and/or WSU as a whole. Additionally, there were also a number of responses showing appreciation for conducting the survey and soliciting feedback from faculty and staff.

## AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Respondents provided specific feedback on a number of areas for improvement or evaluation throughout the University. Each of the employees' comments were evaluated and the following themes were identified:

### Communication:

- Communicating change across department, Area, and/or WSU
- Transparency of information being communicated at all levels
- Secrecy and/or information sharing at all levels
- Dissemination of information top-down and across varying geographical locations

### Compensation:

- Inequities across employee types; top-heavy compensation
- Lack of merit, incentive, and/or retention pay
- Pay for non-tenured faculty (adjunct, post-docs, and clinical)
- Low pay for cost of living
- Lack of competitive pay and/or benefits
- External applicants paid more than internal applicants

### Employee Appreciation:

- Inconsistency in employee appreciation across employee types (AP vs CS; CS/AP vs Faculty; and temp Faculty vs tenure/tenure track Faculty)
- Lack of appreciation for work, research, and/or extension activities
- Undervalued by supervisor, department, area/college, and/or university as a whole
- Under appreciation for those with longevity

### Employee Expectations:

- Inconsistent expectations across employee types and/or staff members
- Lack of performance evaluations
- Clarification of role and duties, and what is expected of employees
- Lack of expectation for those in management/leadership roles to participate in training
- Expecting employees to take on more with less staff

### Employee Input:

- Don't have a voice; employee input/feedback is not appreciated or taken into consideration
- Lack of opportunity to provide employee feedback; not asked or encouraged to provide input

### Employee Resources/Services:

- Employee parking; accessibility and cost of parking
- Discount for Recreation Center memberships
- Lack of paid leave programs; inconsistency in shared leave and other leave programs
- More option for flexible schedules
- Availability of continuing education and tuition fee waivers for online education
- Concerns with offices providing employee services; including Graduate School, HRS, Internal Audit, OEO, and Payroll

### Organizational Structure:

- Turnover at the leadership level
- Structure doesn't allow for promotional opportunities
- Reporting and administrative structures across campuses (two reporting lines)

### Policies and Procedures:

- Department, managers, and supervisors need more training on WSU policies and procedures
- Changes in policies and procedures not communicated to those who utilize them
- Clarity on departmental processes
- Inefficiency due to extensive regulations
- Inconsistent accountability for following policies and procedures
- Concerns regarding faculty policies and procedures, change to faculty manual, and contract lengths for non-tenured position

### Professional Growth/Employee Development:

- Clarity on career path/growth across employee types
- Lack of promotional opportunities and/or advancement as adjunct or clinical faculty
- Lack of professional development and/or advancement opportunities across employee types
- Promotional opportunities given to those who do not have the training, aptitude, competency, and/or experience

### Resources:

- Lack of, or outdated, technology to do job
- Not enough staff to get work done, positions/staff not replaced after separating
- Lack of tools and or systems to be innovative and/or efficient in job
- Inadequate facilities, offices, classrooms, and /or workspaces
- Lack of monetary resources

### University Environment :

- WSU focused on making money and athletics, and not academics or research
- Culture of retaliation
- Lack of support for employees

### Work Environment:

- Bullying, intimidation, discrimination, harassment, hostile behavior from co-workers, supervisors, and/or administrators
- Lack of leadership at all levels of the University
- Climate of fear, favoritism, nepotism, and/or silos
- Top-down management and abuse of employees
- Lack of transparency, trust, respect, and/or accountability
- Toxic environment and behavior at all levels of the University