

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA®

Arizona's First University.

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New Employee Survey

Introduction

In support of enhanced employee engagement, development and retention, Human Resources conducted a survey of new employees to determine the challenges that faced them in their new roles and to identify opportunities to support their success. In March of 2006, employees hired within the eighteen month period of June, 2004 - December 2005 were asked to comment on their new hire experiences and suggest programs and resources to help new employees succeed in their new positions and more quickly adapt to the University's culture. Surveys were administered to 1,514 individuals and completed by 476, for a 31.4% response rate.

Why focus on new hires?

Employee engagement literature¹ suggests that critical employment decisions are made in the first two years of employment and turnover trends at the University of Arizona bear this out. While the average UA turnover rate is 15%, 45% of employees hired leave the University within their first two years of employment. Table 1 reveals that turnover rates drop significantly after five years of employment.

Table 1. Turnover rates during FY04 - FY06

Years of Service	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06
0-1	26.7	28.6	28.1
1-2	27.8	22.7	22.5
2-5	18.2	20.1	21.7
5-10	11.7	11.6	10.6
10+	6.9	7.5	7.7

Findings

Survey responses revealed significant interest in programs, services and resources to support efficient integration into the University community.

Top New Hire Program and Resource Requests (by Employment Type)

Appointed Personnel (excluding faculty and research personnel)

- Programs to understand UA compensation systems at the UA
- Support in handling supervisor feedback and improving communication
- An online question and answer service targeted to new employees
- Information and advice to facilitate job transitions
- Additional new employee orientation specific to the department

Classified Staff

- Programs to understand UA compensation and job classification systems
- An online question and answer service targeted to new employees
- Support in handling supervisor feedback and improving communication
- An online career advising question and answer service
- Support with assessment of skills, competencies and interests

Faculty

- Programs to understand UA compensation systems
- An online question and answer service targeted to new employees
- Programs to understand university and department cultures
- Additional new employee orientation specific to the department
- “Lunch and Learn” workshops around issues that affect new employees

Research and Postdoctoral

- Information and advice to facilitate job transitions
- Support in handling supervisor feedback and improving communication
- Tools and support to write effective resumes, CVs and cover letters
- Additional new employee orientation specific to the department
- An online question and answer service targeted to new employees

Top Concerns (by Employment Type)

In addition to rating their interest in New Employee programs and resources, survey participants were given the opportunity to provide open end-ended comments in response to the question, “What has been the hardest part of adjusting to your new role at The University of Arizona?” Comments were submitted by 346 individuals. Appendix 2 includes representative comments that illustrate the following themes:

Appointed Personnel (excluding faculty and research personnel)

- Need for support in making benefit enrollment choices
- Difficulty navigating UA systems and understanding “who does what”
- Lack of departmental orientation
- Limited opportunities to network and connect with peers across campus
- Difficulty navigating policies and procedures

Classified Staff

- Challenges adjusting to the University and department culture
- Need for support in making benefit enrollment choices
- Difficulty learning and gaining access in the UA computer systems
- Need for more job-related training and resources
- Difficulty navigating the policies and procedures

Faculty

- Limited opportunities to network and connect with other peers
- Need for support in making benefit enrollment choices
- Difficulty navigating UA systems and understanding “who does what”
- Challenges adjusting to the University and department culture

Research and Postdoctoral

- Limited opportunities to network and connect with other peers
- Need for support in making benefit enrollment choices
- Adjusting to the culture in US

Other Findings

Survey results revealed that only 45% of new employees are aware of existing HR resources to support career, job and performance related issues.

Recommendations...

The data indicate that the University needs to revamp its approach to orienting new employees to more efficiently and effectively integrate new employees into the University community. Based on the survey responses we received, HR will implement the following initiatives:

- Extend New Employee Orientation to include a combination of online resources and targeted workshops available to employees during the first year in the job.
- Work in partnership with the Provost's Office, to develop a cadre of university and community members to welcome prospective faculty and administrative candidates new to the Tucson area.
- Develop workshops and online tools to facilitate the process of benefit election decision-making.
- Develop resources and training for departments to deliver orientations for the new employees at the department level.
- Work in partnership with the Provost's Office to develop a year-long welcome and orientation program for new faculty members and their families.
- Develop a "Getting to Know U" program which includes online resources and networking opportunities to increase knowledge about the University community.
- Develop a series of programs to engage employees at various stages of employment (e.g., online resources; question and answer services; workshops around critical job aspects such as "Feedback;" "Dealing effectively with difficult co-workers or supervisors;" and "Networking").
- Launch a Career Management Portal which includes career assessment tools, self-paced online training, information on available career paths, and frequently asked questions to support employee career success.
- Conduct a University-wide engagement survey to identify the drivers of commitment and discretionary effort.

References

- ¹ Branham, L. (2005). The 7 Hidden Reasons Employees Leave. New York: American Management Association.
- Corporate Leadership Council. (2004). Engaging the Workforce: Managing the Critical Leverage Points of Employee Engagement. Corporate Leadership Council 2004 HR Executive Survey: Corporate Leadership Council research. Washington, D.C.
- Towers Perrin HR Services, (2003). Working Today: Understanding What Drives Employee Engagement. The 2003 Towers Perrin Talent Report – U.S. Report (TP373-03). New York, N.Y.

Appendix 1: Methodology and Respondent Profile

Methodology

A web-based survey (Appendix 3) was sent to employees hired within the 18-month period of June 2004 - December 2005. The survey invitation was sent via UA email to 742 individuals and via campus mail to 772. Surveys were completed by 476 new hired employees, for a 31.4% response rate. The response rate for those who received the survey via email recipients was 47.2%, but just 16.3% for those who received it via campus mail.

Respondent Profile

Total **Invited** to participate in survey: 1,514 Total **Responded**: 476

	<u>Invited</u>		<u>Responded</u>	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<u>Gender</u>				
Female	735	48.5%	274	57.6%
Male	779	51.5%	202	42.4%
<u>Age Range</u>				
<25	48	3.2%	16	3.4%
25 - 34	616	40.7%	167	35.1%
35 - 44	451	29.8%	152	31.9%
45 - 54	229	15.1%	90	18.9%
55 - 64	150	9.9%	49	10.3%
65+	20	1.3%	2	0.4%
<u>Employee Category</u>				
Faculty	253	16.7%	88	18.5%
Appointed Non-Faculty	630	40.8%	125	26.3%
Classified Staff	631	41.6%	263	55.3%

In addition, we collected the following information from the respondents about the length of employment at The University and their job role.

	<u>Responded</u>	
	Number	Percentage
<u>Length of UA Employment</u>		
New Employee: 0-6 months	91	19.1%
New Employee: 6-12 months	175	36.8%
New Employee: 12-18 months	210	44.1%
<u>Employee Role</u>		
Administrative/Professional	125	26%
Clerical/Office	64	13%
Computer/Engineering/Technical	50	11%
Faculty	64	13%
Medical Health Professions	19	4%
Non-Faculty Academic/Instructional	23	5%
Postdoctoral Research	47	10%
Public Safety/Protection/Enforcement	6	1%
Research	57	12%
Trades/Maintenance	21	4%

Appendix 2: Sample Written Comments by Employee Type

Question

What has been the hardest part of adjusting to your new role at The University of Arizona?

Representative Comments

Faculty

"We need more social events – on and off campus to meet people in other departments."

"Developing working relationships across multiple academic units across campus."

"Being a new faculty member can be a very lonely experience. Your colleagues already have their network or family and friends. You often spend more time with students than with anyone else. It is difficult to create friendships. More social events that encourage new faculty to gather in the first semester might help."

"Learning what the new procedures are for things such as reimbursement for trips, forms that need to be filled out for just about everything, etc."

"Figuring out the process for getting some tasks done, who to ask, where to find forms."

"Getting up to speed on the department culture and unwritten expectations of students and fellow faculty. Each department and university does things in different ways and getting a sense of the expectations (unfortunately, often by finding out that you have not met them) is difficult. The first few months are overwhelming as it is as you figure out basic logistical and other systems all at once."

"Understanding, and choosing and getting signed up for the benefits package"

"Dealing with all the relatives who want to visit and navigating the labyrinthine health and retirement benefits."

"Lack of departmental orientation. No one told me how to get a key to my office, how to get my email address listed in the directory on-line, when I get paid, or how to get my reserve readings on line."

"Learning about this institution and my department - very different culture than what I was used to."

"Understanding exactly what I am supposed to do, particularly with tenure procedures"

Appointed Personnel (excluding faculty and research personnel)

"Coming from the corporate culture, it was difficult to understand the academic environment with regards to funding, budgeting, etc."

"Not knowing who to call with questions or lack of help from specific departments."

"Not knowing policies and procedures, e.g. proper handling of bills to be paid, etc."

"For the first couple of months - feeling isolated and not meeting many people on campus."

"Learning how things really work at the UA. It takes awhile to figure out who you need to speak to in order to get efficient help from other departments."

"Learning who does what, where I fit in the pecking order."

"Paperwork related with benefit options."

Classified Staff

"Understanding how my department fits in with the rest of the university."

"The hardest part was all the abbreviations and lingo."

"Learning about my benefits as a UA employee."

"Finding information on various items, from training to listservs to various university offerings."

"Learning the organizational structure, personnel rules, the little details that only come with time and experience."

"Knowing my responsibilities and how I fit into the functioning department."

"Academic hierarchy and the multitude of policies, rules and guidelines to navigate."

Research and Postdoctoral

"Meetings/informal networking sessions after work where junior post-docs and associates can meet senior PIs and professors and discuss career."

"Paperwork related with benefit options."

"Trying to understand the financial services office policies and procedures."

“My only difficulty was with adjusting with US lifestyle and University culture since I come from a different country.”

Appendix 3: Survey Instrument

We need your support in completing this brief online survey. The purpose of the survey is to shape future programs for Human Resources Employee & Career Advising at The University of Arizona. We recognize that adjusting to a new job and organization can be difficult. That's why we are targeting people like you who are relatively new to the University for this survey. Through this survey we hope to enhance our services that support your career and employment decisions. Your participation is confidential and the survey will take less than 5 minutes to complete. If you prefer to complete a paper version of the survey, please contact us at 626-0850.

I. General Information

- Length of employment at The University of Arizona:
 - 0-6 months
 - 6-12 months
 - 12-18 months
 - Re-hired to the University within the past 18 months
- Employment type:
 - Faculty
 - Appointed (Non-Faculty)
 - Classified Staff
- Which best describes your role at The University of Arizona:
 - Administrative & Professional
 - Clerical & Office
 - Computer, Engineering, & Technical
 - Faculty
 - Medical Health Professions
 - Non-Faculty Academic & Instructional
 - Postdoctoral Research
 - Research
 - Public Safety, Protection, & Enforcement
 - Trades & Maintenance
- Department: _____

II. Research has shown that the first few months of employment are critical for the long-term success of employees at The University of Arizona. We need your feedback to enhance and expand our programs for new employees in the future.

On the scale below, rate your interest for each New Employee Program: (4=Most Interest, 1=Least Interest)

	Most Interest		Least Interest	
	4	3	2	1
Follow up New Employee Orientation after 6 months of employment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Program to understand university and department cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional New Employee Orientation specific to your department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online New Employee question and answer service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lunch and learn workshops to address New Employee issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- *(short answer question)* **What additional ideas do you have for New Employee Programs?**
- *(short answer question)* **What has been the hardest part of adjusting to your new role at The University of Arizona?**

III. Career Advising has become increasingly more important for University of Arizona employees. As we consider new ideas and programs to support career development, your feedback is important.

On the scale below, rate your interest for each **Career Advising Program**: (4=Most Interest, 1=Least Interest)

	Most Interest		Least Interest	
	4	3	2	1
Assessment of skills, competencies and interests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workshop on developing short term and long term goals and milestones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tools and support to write effective resumes, CVs and cover letters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategies to handle career transitions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online Career Advising question and answer service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

➤ (short answer question) **What additional ideas do you have for Career Advising Programs?**

IV. We continue to assess our Employee Advising services to meet the needs of University of Arizona employees. Your ratings of the programs and ideas in Question 4 will help define future Employee Advising services for all employees.

On the scale below, rate your interest for each **Employee Advising Program**: (4=Most Interest, 1=Least Interest)

	Most Interest		Least Interest	
	4	3	2	1
Handling supervisor feedback and improving communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding compensation systems and job classifications at The University of Arizona	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responding to a performance appraisal feedback about which you disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workshop on developing an individual performance plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dealing effectively with problem co-workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

➤ **What additional ideas do you have for Employee Advising Programs?**

V. Were you aware that the following services are available through Human Resources?

(Yes=I was aware of this service No=I was not aware of this service)

- Y N Advising for career related issues?
(Setting career goals, skill assessments, developing resumes)
- Y N Advising for employment related issues?
(Understanding the job classification system, handling supervisor feedback, layoff and non-renewal policies)
- Y N Advising for performance appraisal issues?
(Preparing for and responding to a Performance Appraisal, handling feedback)

Thank you for your participation in the New Employee Survey!

For more information on Employee & Career Advising, visit:
www.hr.arizona.edu/ecadvising