

ERAU Faculty & Staff Climate Survey
Spring 2002
Comments
Extended Campus Headquarters

Office of the Senior Vice President & Chief Academic Officer
Office of Institutional Research
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ERAU Faculty & Staff Climate Survey, Spring 2002

Comments – Extended Campus Headquarters

BACKGROUND AND UNIVERSITY SUMMARY

The Spring 2002 Faculty & Staff Climate Survey included a space at the end for employees to offer additional, free-form comments. Of the 847 employees who responded to the survey, 348 (41%) chose to comment.

Employees elaborated on a broad range of topics. While analysis of qualitative data such as this is a subjective exercise, an effort was made to summarize the most frequently cited issues by reviewing all comments and identifying common themes. Comments from all campuses were examined to determine the overall themes at Embry-Riddle. These themes are listed below, along with excerpts from actual comments. The themes are sorted by the number of comments which cited the theme (from most frequent to least frequent). Note that the most frequent theme, “wages/salary/benefits” garnered approximately 72 mentions out of 348 total comments; this demonstrates how varied the topics were.

Wages/salary/benefits (~72 comments, 21% of all comments). “I believe the salaries of the staff and probably the faculty as well are at the very lowest end of the spectrum compared to the rest of the country. I would like to see structured periodic merit and cost of living increases in salaries as well as some type of monetary incentives in place for employees.”

Lack of respect/trust with senior leadership/organization (~50 comments, 14% of all comments). “There are concerns among the work force that the University has become “Top Heavy” (Executive staff and reinstitution of the Chancellors) along with excessive spending at that level (jet, etc.).”

One University (PC/EC isolation) (~32 comments, 9% of all comments). “The biggest factor in my more negative responses is a perception that the ‘one university’ philosophy has not been firmly established in everyday work-a-day life.”

Lack of communication (~30 comments, 9% of all comments). “There is much that I like about life here; but the internal communications and shared governance are not among them. These areas need a lot of work.”

Diversity (~27 comments, 8% of all comments). “The importance of diversity has taken a giant step backward instead of forward in a very short period of time.”

Poor facilities (office/classroom/general areas) (~27 comments, 8% of all comments). “The rundown condition of the student center and library for example are a disgrace.”

Survey results/actions (~25 comments, 7% of all comments). “Hopefully this climate survey will be used as a tool to make improvements but it will be up to the administration to listen to people and take action.”

Lack of computers/technology (~24 comments, 7% of all comments). “Our computers are so old and slow that even the students complain. Trying to use the internet to connect to another site is not worth the effort.”

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Happy with job (~24 comments, 7% of all comments). “I think ERAU is a great place to work and I am proud to say I work here.”

Lack of development opportunities (~22 comments, 6% of all comments). “It’s truly discouraging when an educational institution does not support educating their own.”

Strategic planning/budget (doubt of effectiveness/confusion) (~20 comments, 6% of all comments). “I hope the strategic planning process gets streamlined and that it is someday tied directly to funding!.”

FORMAT FOR DISTRIBUTION OF ALL COMMENTS

The comments are organized by “location”, and are available in four separate MSWord documents:

Daytona Beach (includes University Administration)
Prescott
Extended Campus – Headquarters
Extended Campus – Field

While each document contains the same introduction, the comments are specific to those made by employees of that location only. Comments are listed in random order. No distinctions are made as to the gender, employment status, or position of the respondent, unless somehow alluded to by the respondent within his/her own comment. Comments made by each respondent are contained in a single paragraph; a blank line between paragraphs represents a comment made by a different respondent.

All individual comments, with the exception of nine, are shown in their original format. Of the nine edited comments, four were modified simply to exclude “signatures” provided by the respondent; these instances are noted with the text “[edited – signature removed]”. The remaining five edited comments originally included derogatory language that was deemed inappropriate for mass distribution; these instances are noted with the text “[edited]”. Even in these cases, only a subset of the text was removed or edited so that the context of the comment remained intact. Readers should note that comments regarding ERAU’s senior management are listed as provided by the respondent; these were not included in the five comments that were edited for content.

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I learn more about what's going on at ERAU in the News-Journal than I do at work! That shouldn't happen. Also, I am concerned that the hefty tuition increases every year place too great a burden on our current and prospective students.

The job descriptions and work load rarely matches the education and pay requirements. They should be analyzed and assessed better. There are high levels of training needed to do certain jobs here at EC that people in those positions are not paid appropriately for.

In regard to #14; I have only been here one year so I have left this one blank. However, in re. to benefits specifically, I have heard many complaints about Florida Health Care and am disappointed that the University does not look into other HMO options. If they did I would love to switch to the HMO. In regard to #15, reverse discrimination can also be an issue. I strongly feel that that person having the best qualifications for a position should receive the position/promotion, etc. Definitely not based on sex or race. In re. to #18, although I feel that there is a lack of trust between the staff and different departments, I do not get involved and therefore, my answer to #19 is very satisfied.

Communication, communication, communication! Respect, respect, respect! Without them, total chaos. In regards to the evaluation process: for a better understanding of someone's performance, we might want to get (anonymous) input from those supported by their position.

Communication is a major problem with our department. My direct supervisor is strong in this area, it is the people above her. We are told how to do one thing one way then a few weeks later, we are told to do the same thing another way and then later on it changes. Sometimes when you ask the manager a question you are given a very demeaning answer with no respect and you are made to feel stupid. We all work very hard and are underpaid for the position we are in. In regards to our building, this is a 'sick' building and needs a major overhaul. Poor lighting, mold, poor air quality and dust is a major concern and the cause of frequent sickness with employees. I understand that ERAU has just signed another 4-yr lease, I would strongly suggest that these health issues be looked at closely. Thank you for listening.

I think a great idea would be to add a space below each field for specific areas of improvement and comments. Since these questions are open ended it would be beneficial for a comments area.

Our building at extended campus is not conducive to conduct business. It is noisy, damp and there is no ventilation, making many employees cough and sneeze all day. We have had our food vending machines (bagels, sandwiches, milk etc.) removed with no real explanation and no recourse to put them back in.

The Extended Campus Headquarters building is HORRENDOUS! We work in cramped conditions, with no fresh air, and no windows. The air quality is so poor employees are always sick. The recycled air is filled with dust, mold and germs. I suffer from headaches at least three times a week. I have seen rodents in the ceiling lights. When reported, rat poison was placed in the ceiling tile. A lot of good a box of rat poison will do in a

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rodent infested building. It is hard working in cramped office conditions. The make shift offices block out no noises; it is hard to carry on a conversation or to think. The walls and ceilings are dingy yellow. When SAC's came to visit the entire conference room was painted and pictures were hung. It looked really nice. It's sad that this was done not for the hardworking employees but to impress a group of people that used it for three days. I urge you to visit the Extended campus to see the about first hand. It is disheartening that the Extended Campus, which brings in the most income of the university is treated like a dirty old shoe.

The building we work in is awful. Most employees constantly have headaches, allergies, colds etc. This is a sick building. Also, we are told to restrict from wearing heavy fragrances because on one individual that has allergies.

ERAU is a wonderful place to work. I have seen significant advances in the positions that women hold at ERAU. I would like to see middle-management; direct supervisors have more influence with Human Resources. I find the Human Resource Department with the exception of Marge Carleton and Terry Mead to be uncooperative and difficult to work with. It is very difficult to feel that Human Resources is a good place to turn to. ERAU is a beacon in this community. KEEP up the good WORK!!!

I believe Building #2 is in need of some Spring Cleaning. People are always sneezing and coughing when they arrive here after being away for a weekend or vacation. Many people are sick at the same time and it spreads very fast making me think the air is not as pure as it could be. Our department does not have windows at all and has a yellowish cast all the time due to light covers being dull and overall color scheme. If we had sky lights that would help a great deal to make us happy and more productive. During the fires this department was full of smoke and would fill up immediately upon each new fire. The a/c and heating system runs constantly and is not regulated throughout the department. Some of us are always in a hot area and some a cold area. We adapt but would welcome any changes for betterment. Thank you for your time.

Resources, both financial and infrastructure could be more effectively and efficiently allocated.

WEQC: Needs to represent ALL employees and not just non-exempt. Needs to make recommendations to the CEO through the WEQC chair. The CEO should form an ADHOC team pertinent to the issues, scope out the resources when applicable and make a recommendation to the CEO. The CEO would render the final decision. I have heard that rules of how the meetings are conducted and outcomes fall short of processing ideas and suggestions and therefore are never heard by the decision makers.

With the direction of more and more automated processing , (web, email, EDI, etc.) I would like to see more training, updated equipment, and uniformity in the equipment we communicate with between campuses. I have seen progress toward improving the pay and benefits toward my position however not personally. My position has been reclassified twice in the last 2 1/2 years and a few times more over the years. However my longevity has precluded me from receiving "any" additional pay. Thus I train people so they can perform the same job as I've been actively doing for 20+ years and I only gross slightly more money than they do because of reclassifications. The message this relays is ERAU doesn't appreciate longevity in their employees.

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The following comments were made by employees who did not indicate a location:

Bad communication in our department, bad lighting, bad air, SICK BUILDING!

Communication between departments is nonexistent. Very frustrating place to conduct business. The building needs to be checked out for "sick" building syndrome. Poor light, bad air. Mold, Dust, Asbestos.

I believe ERAU is a great place to work. It should continue to place emphasis on a quality work environment and on attracting and retaining good employees. Ultimately, the success of this emphasis will benefit our students and the institution as a whole. Planning and assessment are very important processes, but I believe they need to be a bit less complicated. Could some departments be allowed to try a new method that would still be consistent with the needs of the university?

ERAU could be a unique and positive force in post-secondary education if administrators and faculty would work together to (1) preserve the natural environment of its campuses, especially the Prescott Campus; (2) create checks and balances on all people in power; (3) encourage and reward effective teaching, not just work resulting in "external recognition" for ERAU. The first wish stems from an increasing need for and awareness of the importance of open space. A few campuses ahead of their times have recognized this priority and are preserving their land instead of building on it. The second wish evolves from seeing some crazy actions of people in power at ERAU, such as one individual losing a great deal of money for ERAU, another individual giving or not giving merit raises without any explanation, to name just two. People may claim such checks and balances exist, but they do not, as is evident by what some people in power have been able to do, to the detriment of ERAU. The third desire is catalyzed by seeing faculty receive tenure and other rewards mainly because of their research, not because of their teaching or involvement with students. Good research and decent teaching can lead to tenure and promotion; decent research and good or even fine teaching does not. When will staff and faculty see the results of and plans in response to the survey?