

College Employee Satisfaction Survey

2024 SUMMARY

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS) is licensed by Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL). The college has administered the survey every three years since 2015. It is designed to assess the campus environment for college and university employees (faculty, staff, and administration). There are five sections:

1. **Campus culture and policies:** 30 standard, 2 added by HC, 1 open-ended item
2. **Institutional goals:** 10 standard, 1 custom, 2 open-ended items
3. **Involvement in planning and decision-making:** 8 standard items
4. **Work environment:** 21 standard, 3 custom, 1 open-ended item
5. **Demographics:** 3 standard, 1 custom item

The 2024 survey was active from September 24 to October 14, 2024. An anonymous link was sent to all employees, including adjuncts. Employees received periodic reminders. RNL sent results to Helena College in mid-October, including a summary, national comparison report, raw survey data, and an interpretive guide. The Dean’s Cabinet and Campus Coordinating Committee reviewed and discussed the results in December 2024 and January 2025.

Overall Response Rates

- Total respondents: 54
- Including adjuncts: 42%
- Excluding adjuncts: 62% (2021: 56%)

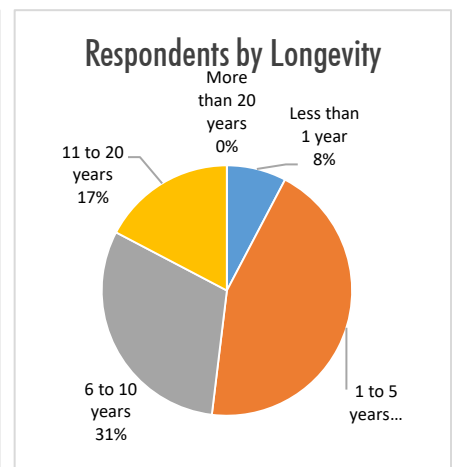
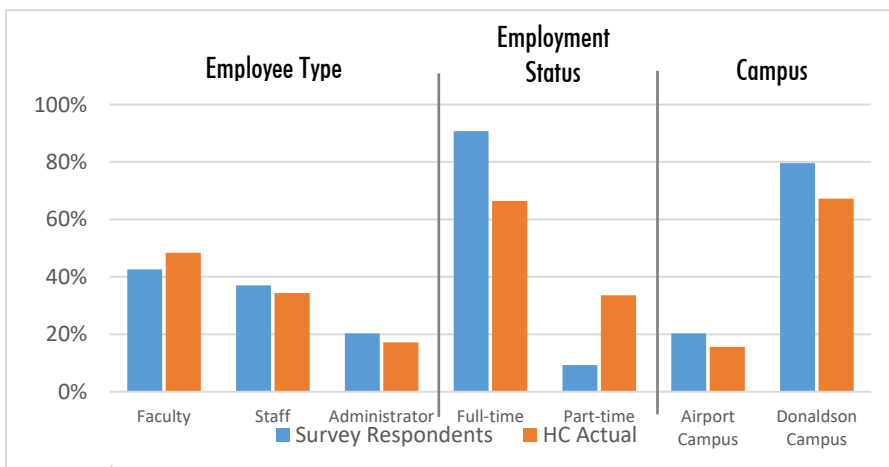
Reports

Results from the survey are presented in two reports, both with open-ended responses removed:

1. **HC CESS 2024 Summary Report Public:** Full summary of 2024 results, along with comparisons to 2021 and 2018
2. **HC CESS 202 Comparison Group Report Public:** Full summary of 2024 results compared to the national cohort of community colleges administering the survey in the last five years.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

Survey responses represent a higher proportion of full-time employees and staff than the actual Helena College population. Comparatively few part-time employees responded, though this category includes adjunct instructors and temporary employees. Faculty were slightly under-sampled, while staff were slightly over-sampled. Responses are nearly evenly split between newer employees (0-5 years) and veteran employees (6 or more years).



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SECTION 1: CAMPUS CULTURE & POLICIES

Respondents were presented with statements and asked to rate their importance to them as employees and their satisfaction. A five-point rating scale is used for both importance and satisfaction. From the responses, a chart was created, plotting the relative importance vs. satisfaction to rank institutional priorities.

Observations

- Satisfaction has increased in most areas since 2021.
- The most notable increases were in communication between departments (14%), a spirit of teamwork and cooperation (11%), and the level of respect the community has for the institution (11%).
- The highest area of satisfaction were in all types of employees taking pride in their work and the institution treating students as its top priority.
- The lowest areas of satisfaction were in retaining employees and orienting and training employees. Both were seen to increase from 2021, when they were also the lowest scores.
- HC employees indicated higher satisfaction than the comparison cohort (scores were 12% higher overall), with the biggest differences in use of employee suggestions to improve the institution, communication between departments, and clear hiring process.
- Challenges and other areas of low satisfaction centered around planning, budgeting, and employee involvement in those processes.

Strengths

- This institution treats students as its top priority.
- This institution is well-respected in the community (was a challenge in 2021)
- The leadership of this institution has a clear sense of purpose.
- Administrators, faculty, and staff take pride in their work.
- The institution promotes excellent employee-student relationships (increase in relative importance from 2021).
- This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of its students (was a challenge in 2018).
- The reputation of this institution continues to improve
- Administrators share information regularly with faculty and staff.



Challenges

- There is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation at this institution (has been a challenge since 2018).
- This institution does a good job of retaining its employees (HC custom question).
- This institution makes sufficient budgetary resources available to achieve important objectives (increase in importance from 2021)

Areas Where Effort/Resources Could Be Redirected

- Efforts to improve quality are paying off at this institution.
- This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of its administrators and faculty.
- Most employees are generally supportive of the mission, purpose, and values of this institution.

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- The goals and objectives of this institution are consistent with its mission and values.
- The institution follows clear processes for selecting new employees.
- The mission, purpose, and values of this institution are well-understood by most employees.

Assess Priorities

- This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of its staff.
- Employee suggestions are used to improve our institution.
- This institution consistently follows clear processes for recognizing employee achievements.
- This institution consistently follows clear processes for orienting and training new employees.
- There is good communication between the faculty/staff and administration at this institution.
- This institution has written procedures that clearly define who is responsible for each operation and service.
- This institution plans carefully.
- There are effective lines of communication between departments.
- This institution involves its employees in planning for the future.
- This institution makes sufficient budgetary resources available to achieve important objectives.
- This institution makes sufficient staff resources available to achieve important objectives.

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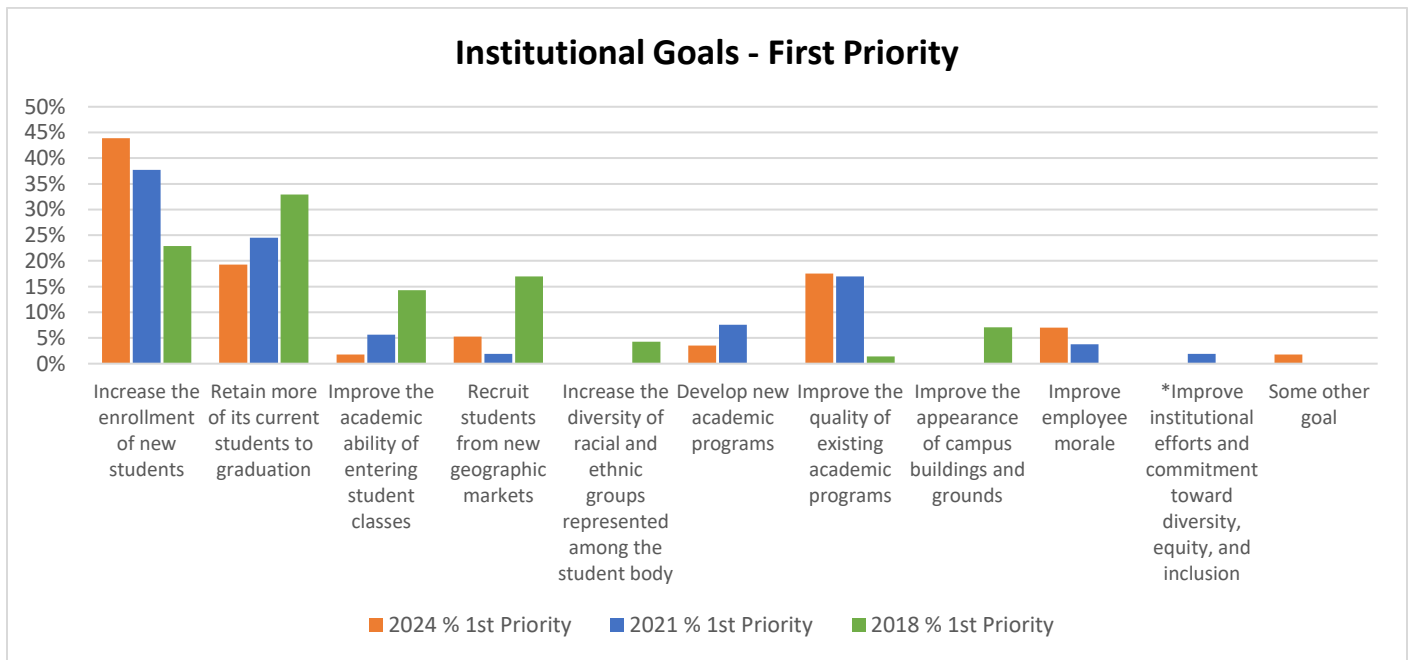
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SECTION 2: INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

Given a list of priorities, respondents rate how important it is them that the institution pursues each of the goals. A five-point rating scale is used.

Observations

- Top three goals stand out and remain unchanged from 2021 (ranked by % selected as first priority goal):
 1. Increase the enrollment of new students (A)
 2. Retain more of our current students to graduation (B, was highest first priority in 2018)
 3. Improve the quality of existing academic programs (G, was lower priority in 2018)
- Goals ranked first priority are similar to national cohort, though Helena College employees placed a greater emphasis on increasing enrollment of new students (15% more voted as first priority at HC than at cohorts). Conversely, more employees at cohort institutions selected retention of students to graduation as their first priority (30% of cohort employees compared to 20% of HC employees).



Goals

A	Increase the enrollment of new students
B	Retain more of its current students to graduation
C	Improve the academic ability of entering student classes
D	Recruit students from new geographic markets
E	Increase the diversity of racial and ethnic groups represented among the student body
F	Develop new academic programs
G	Improve the quality of existing academic programs
H	Improve the appearance of campus buildings and grounds
I	Improve employee morale
J	Some other goal

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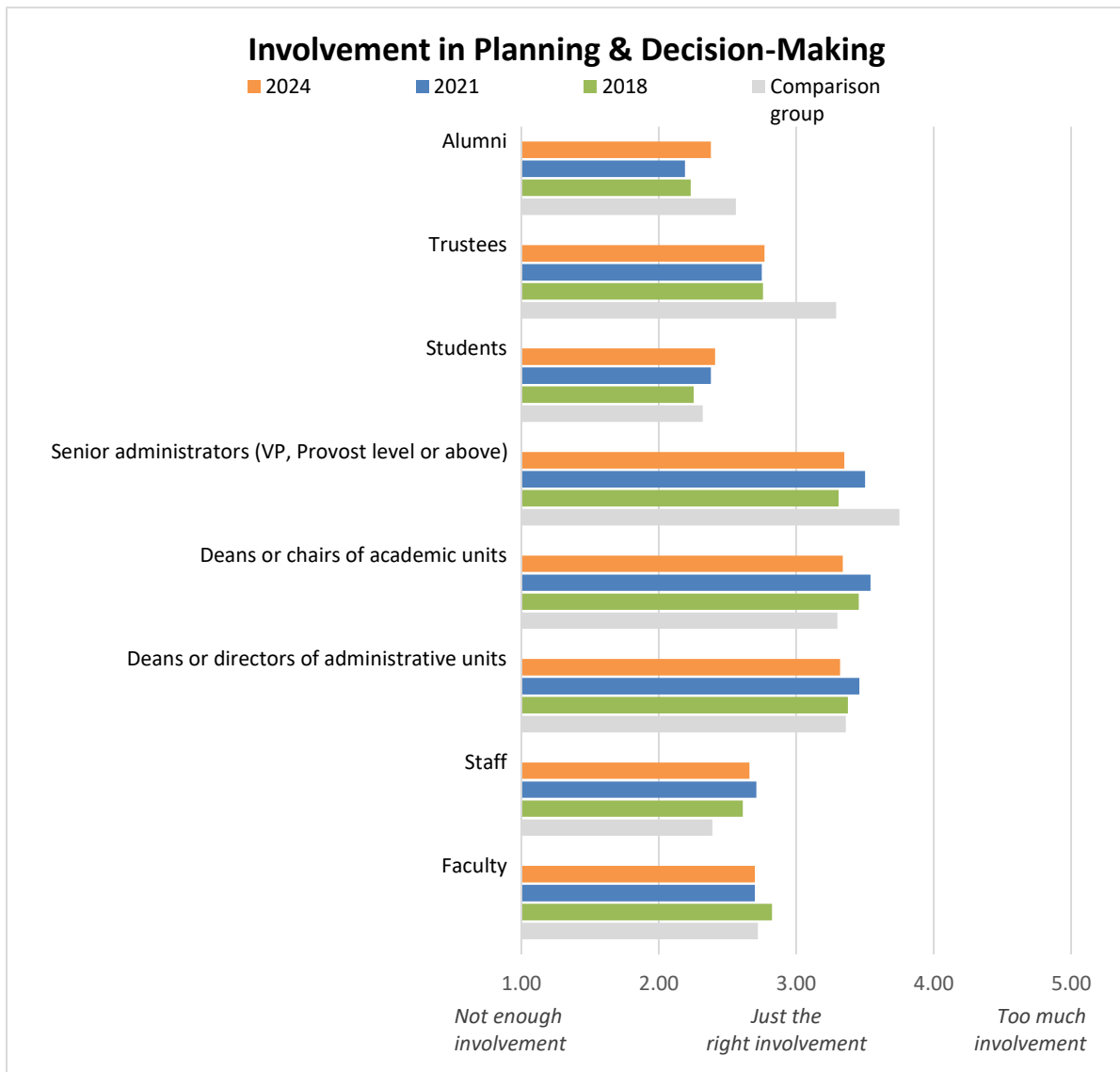
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SECTION 3: INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING & DECISION-MAKING

Respondents rate how much involvement each type of individual (faculty, staff, deans, trustees, alumni, etc.) has in the planning and decision-making process at the institution. A five-point rating scale is used.

Observations

- Level of involvement of deans and administrators has decreased slightly from 2021, bringing them slightly closer to “just the right level of involvement.”
- Staff involvement decreased slightly, indicated employees feel they are farther away from the appropriate amount of involvement.
- Surprisingly, perceived involvement of alumni increased 9%, bringing their roles closer to the appropriate amount of involvement.
- In comparison the other institutions administering this survey, our senior administrators are closer to the ideal amount of involvement.



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SECTION 4: WORK ENVIRONMENT

Respondents were presented with statements and asked to rate their importance to them as employees and their satisfaction. A five-point rating scale is used for both importance and satisfaction.

As in section 1, a chart was created, plotting the importance vs. satisfaction to rank institutional priorities.

Observations

- Overall, satisfaction in this area increased slightly. The biggest increases were in opportunities for advancement, fair pay, and feeling comfortable answering student questions about institutional policies and procedures.
- HC respondents also indicated higher satisfaction than the comparison cohort with all areas in this section, most significantly in fair pay and opportunities for advancement and training.

Strengths

- The employee benefits available to me are valuable.
- My supervisor pays attention to what I have to say.
- My job responsibilities are communicated clearly to me.
- The work I do is valuable to the institution.
- My supervisor helps me improve my job performance.
- The type of work I do on most days is personally rewarding.
- The work I do is appreciated by my supervisor.
- I am proud to work at this institution.

Challenges

- I am paid fairly for the work I do.
- I have the information I need to do my job well (was a strength in 2024)
- My department has the staff needed to do its job well.
- My department has the budget needed to do its job well.
- It is easy for me to get information at this institution.



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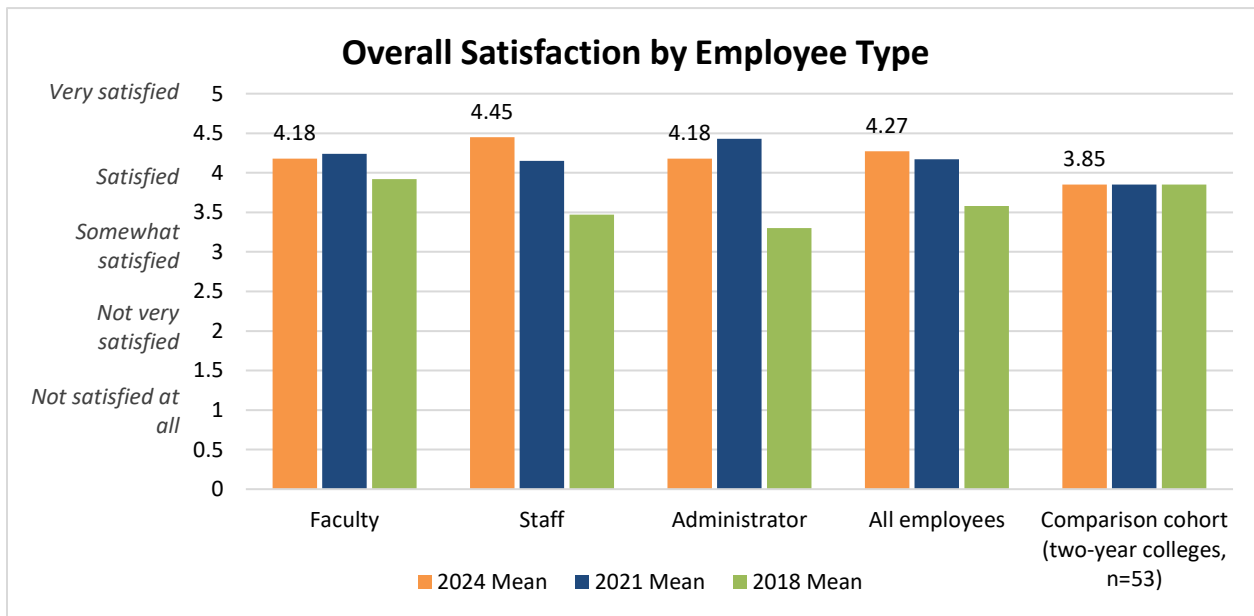
Areas Where Effort/Resources Could Be Redirected

- I have adequate opportunities for training to improve my skills.
- I have adequate opportunities for professional development.
- I am free to be myself at this institution (HC custom question).
- I see myself working at this institution one year from now (HC custom question).

Assess Priorities

- I have adequate opportunities for advancement.
- My department or work unit has written, up-to-date objectives.
- I am comfortable answering student questions about institutional policies and procedures.
- My department meets as a team to plan and coordinate work.
- I learn about important campus events in a timely manner.
- I am empowered to resolve problems quickly.
- I feel a sense of belonging at this institution (HC custom question).

SECTION 4: OVERALL SATISFACTION



Observations

- Employee satisfaction has increased since 2021 for all employee groups except administrators, though satisfaction remains higher than in 2018 for all groups.
- In 2024, 89% of employees who took the survey indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their employment at HC, compared with 62% in 2021.
 - In 2021, nearly a third of employees were only somewhat satisfied with their employment here, while fewer than 10% responded the same in 2024.

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Key Findings: Strengths

- Nearly 90% of the employees taking the survey indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their employment at Helena College.
- Big improvements were seen with internal operations, including lines of communication; communication and teamwork; and orienting, training, and retaining employees.
- Increases in satisfaction were also seen with the institution's reputation and degree of respect in the community, which have moved from challenges in 2021 to strengths in 2024.
- The college's ability to meet the needs of students has also moved from a challenge to a strength.

Key Findings: Challenges

- Despite improvements in satisfaction with new employee orientation and training, it remains one of the lower satisfaction scores and areas of high importance for employees.
- The college also identified a need to better involve employees in planning for the future.

Priorities

These results highlight priority areas for improvement and align with some efforts already underway.

1. **Employee orientation:** Academic leaders have been working to improve onboarding for both full-time and adjunct instructors, and the Dean's Cabinet is looking to revive efforts to update the onboarding process for all employees.
2. **Involvement in planning:** This was also a recommendation brought forward from our NWCCU Year 7 review for reaccreditation.
 - a. The Dean's Cabinet has developed a more thorough organization chart, identify each Cabinet member's scope of responsibility and institutional councils and committees that contribute to their decision-making.
 - b. A review of all institutional committees is also underway, initiated by a new policy clarify the role and authority of councils, committees, task forces, and work groups.