

REPORT ON NTEU SCU STAFF MORALE SURVEY

The NTEU's survey into staff morale at Southern Cross University (SCU) was open from 11:30am Friday 17 October until 12pm Wednesday 22 October. During this time, 385 staff members responded to the survey which was conducted online through Survey Monkey. This response rate equates to 41% of the full time equivalent (FTE) staff of 939 (*Source: SCU 2013 Annual Report*).

Rationale for survey

Following the refusal of the Vice-Chancellor (VC) to acknowledge problems with staff morale at a meeting of staff in the School of Education (14/10) Jenny Johnston, Education staff member and NTEU Branch Vice-President, wrote to forum-l.

In her email, Jenny expressed her frustration and despondency and called on colleagues to e-mail the VC to let him know that low staff morale was real. While there were many supportive public responses, there were more private responses which stated that people were too scared to speak publically for fear of what would happen to them.

The idea of an anonymous survey came from among this group of initial respondents who made the argument that people would feel more secure engaging in this way. They were right. Within 10 minutes of the survey being opened 39 people had responded, this jumped to 94 in the first half hour and by 3pm Friday 200 staff had already completed the survey.

Information about respondents

Respondents were asked to provide information about themselves and their employment. The following responses demonstrate that a good cross section of the University completed the survey. Of particular note, especially as it relates to the issue of staff morale over time, is that 61.78% of respondents have been at SCU for more than 5 years and 31.94% for more than 10 years.

Q1 – 5 skipped this question

Answer Choices	Responses	
Female	59.74%	227
Male	40.26%	153
Total		380

Q2 – 1 skipped this question

Answer Choices	Responses	
Academic staff	50.00%	192
General staff	50.00%	192
Total		384

Q3 – 2 skipped this question

Answer Choices	Responses	
Permanent	66.84%	256
Fixed-term	10.70%	41
Casual	22.45%	86
Total		383

Q4 – 3 skipped this question

Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 1 year	1.83%	7
1 year	1.05%	4
2 years	6.54%	25
3 years	9.69%	37
4 years	9.69%	37
5 years	9.42%	36
6 years	5.76%	22
7 years	7.85%	30
8 years	4.97%	19
9 years	2.62%	10
10 years	8.64%	33
11+ years	31.94%	122
Total		382

Issues of satisfaction and confidence

Respondents were asked to rank their level of satisfaction or confidence in relation to five statements. Approximately 80% of all respondents indicated that they either somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed with each of the statements – with the cutting of staff numbers as a mechanism to reduce the budget deficit the statement most strongly disagreed with.

Q 5 – 0 skipped this question

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Average Rating
I am satisfied with the level of involvement I have in decision making around decisions that will effect me.	3.65% 14	7.03% 27	6.77% 26	31.25% 120	51.30% 197	384	4.20
I am satisfied with the level of consultation around the current significant changes.	2.89% 11	3.94% 15	4.46% 17	24.93% 95	63.78% 243	381	4.43
I am satisfied with the decision of senior management to deal with the budget deficit by cutting staff numbers.	2.62% 10	4.46% 17	5.25% 20	18.64% 71	69.03% 263	381	4.47
I am satisfied that the senior management of SCU are acting in the best interests of the University and its community.	3.68% 14	3.95% 15	8.42% 32	23.16% 88	60.79% 231	380	4.33
I am confident that if I spoke out about these issues that there would be no negative repercussions for me.	4.72% 18	4.46% 17	4.46% 17	23.88% 91	62.47% 238	381	4.35

Morale

Respondents were asked whether staff morale was better or worse than it was 12 months ago. A small number of respondents commented in the open question that they would have liked an option to select 'same' for their own staff morale. Notwithstanding that, the overwhelming result was that morale is worse now than it was 12 months ago – even staff who indicated theirs was personally better, recognised that in their work area and across the University it was worse.

Q6 – 9 skipped this question

	Better	Worse	Total	Average Rating
Is it better or worse for you personally?	8.56% 32	91.44% 342	374	1.91
Is it better or worse for staff in your work area?	6.18% 23	93.82% 349	372	1.94
Is it better or worse for staff across the University?	2.68% 10	97.32% 363	373	1.97

Other comments

Respondents were given the opportunity in the final question to make other comments. Of the total respondents, 223 or 57.92% took this opportunity.

As the responses total over 20 pages in length we are still collating them and ensuring, before we release any publically, that all identifiers have been removed.

Overwhelming though, those who responded to this question spoke of their anger, fear, frustration and sadness.

What next?

The NTEU has secured a meeting with the Vice-Chancellor on 6 November to discuss the survey results and we will be asking how management intend to address the issues in the short, medium and long term.

Kate Mitchell
NTEU SCU Branch President
24 October 2014