

BMCC Staff Survey: 2015-2016 Qualitative Report



Office of Institutional Effectiveness
and Analytics

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the month of June 2016, the Borough of Manhattan Community College conducted its comprehensive Staff Satisfaction Survey. Almost 300 staff members across all classifications responded for an approximately 20% response rate. The survey gathered opinions on job satisfaction, College and departmental culture, work/life balance, recognition and appreciation, promotion and advancement, and other topics related to the desirability of employment at the College. In addition to the multiple choice questions, there were opportunities to provide comments for 17 of the 30 questions. Indications are that the staff at BMCC were willing and eager to be heard as there were nearly 1,100 individual comments offered. This report provides a qualitative analysis of the comments through the use of a three-stage coding process and guided by a conceptual framework.

The comments were analyzed first by question and then across all questions to ensure a deep, rich source of data from which to learn. After analyzing the final codes from each of the questions, an analysis of all the final codes occurred to provide a series of College-wide codes that will inform the institution. The final eight codes and a sample of the subcodes that emerged and which can provide a starting point for the development of recommendations, strategies, and action are:

-  1. There is a Need to Address Inequities and Improve Perceptions of Inequality
 - Recognition of Staff is not Evenly or Equitably Demonstrated
 - Promotion and Advancement Opportunities are Perceived as Inequitable
 - Sufficient Professional Development Opportunities for Advancement are not Accessible
-  2. The Condition of Facilities is Negatively Impacting Perceptions of the Work Environment
 - The College Infrastructure is Reducing Job Satisfaction
 - Enhance the Atmosphere and Facilities
 - Provide Spaces and Services that Promote Work-Life Balance
-  3. Ineffective Communication is Negatively Impacting Perceptions of the College
 - Significant Communication Issues at All Levels
 - Lack of Effective Communication Negatively Impacts Perceptions of Governance
 - Ineffective Communication Impacts Staff Understanding of Vision and Priorities
-  4. Address Impressions of Ineffective College Leadership and Management
 - Potential for Administration to Overcome Ineffective Leadership
 - Opportunities exist for Administration to Improve Governance Perceptions
 - Perceptions of Recognition are Influenced by Leadership
-  5. Address Impressions of Ineffective Department Leadership and Unhealthy Departmental Climates
 - Opportunities to Strengthen the Perception of Departmental Leadership
 - Opportunities to Improve Departmental Climates
 - Improve the Departmental Climate and Surroundings

6. Ensure Consistency, Clarity, and Communication of Policies and Procedures

- There are Institutional Practices that Reduce Workplace Satisfaction
- Develop Clear, Concise Work-Life Balance Policies

7. Identify and Address Elements Negatively Impacting the Work Environment

- Collaboration and Positive Work Relationships Shape Job Satisfaction
- The Nature and Structure of the Work Impacts Job Satisfaction
- Ensure that Staff Experience Recognition and Equity

8. Identify and Mediate Behaviors and Actions Incongruent with the Mission

- Institutional Focus on Supporting a Diverse Student Population
- The College is Moving Towards Achievement of the Mission
- Providing Promotion and Advancement Opportunities for Staff is not Prioritized

To fully understand the context behind these codes, it is necessary to review the question by question analysis provided in the report, however, these codes document the issues raised by the BMCC staff. While there were a number of positive comments, there is clearly frustration and an opportunity for the College to address these frustrations.

It is important to note that it is very common for reports that elicit opinions about satisfaction to skew negative. It is much more common for individuals who have had negative experiences to take advantage of opportunities to respond. As stated in the accompanying quantitative report that analyzed the scale based questions from the staff survey, a substantial majority of staff indicated they were satisfied/very satisfied or agreed/strongly agreed with statements presented in each of the questions. This report was developed through the use of qualitative methodology, which provides insight, but which is not equipped to quantify the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The purpose of the quantitative report is to answer the question – *what is the desirability of employment at BMCC for staff* while this report is designed to gain insight into *what are the reasons for their opinions*. Another important point is that qualitative analysis is not about right or wrong, but about perception, opinion, and understanding.

Again, this report represents one half of the analysis conducted on the BMCC Staff Survey. The other half, which is the quantitative report, provides guidance on what information to focus on most within this report. While it will be useful to read and consider this document in totality, findings from the quantitative report, which includes both areas of note and areas of concern, are helpful in determining the areas that should receive the most attention. The **Areas of Note** reflect responses to questions where more than 25%, but less than 30% of staff provided negative views. The **Areas of Concern** reflect responses to questions where more than 30% of staff provided negative responses. Both of these are included in the quantitative report, but for the purpose of this report, only areas where 35% or more of staff provided negative responses are presented. In addition, questions where 45% or more of staff provided negative responses have been highlighted. These questions, as well as the percentage of staff holding negative opinions, can be found in the table below and the corresponding topics are flagged in the full report for ease of review.

Table 1: Questions where 35% or more of Staff Provided Negative Responses

Question	Final Code #	% Negative Response
The College is committed to its staff	1	38%
The administration promotes transparency	4	37%
<i>The College has an adequate number of staff to serve students</i>	7	45%
College policies are communicated clearly	6	38%
I have the opportunity to express opinions about College policies	4, 5	41%
College decisions are communicated clearly	3	39%
<i>I have the opportunity to participate in College decision making</i>	1	54%
<i>I have the opportunity to participate in College priority setting</i>	1	54%
<i>I had the opportunity to help shape the mission and goals</i>	1	47%
I understand the College planning process	1	41%
<i>I have the opportunity to participate in College planning</i>	1	56%
<i>I understand the College budget process</i>	4	61%
<i>I have the opportunity to participate in the budget process</i>	4	72%
<i>I have the opportunity to participate in departmental decision making</i>	5	46%
<i>I have the opportunity to participate in departmental priority setting</i>	5	45%
I have the opportunity to express opinions about departmental policies	5	35%
<i>The College Council represents my interests¹</i>	5	46%
<i>I am satisfied with my salary</i>	7	58%
BMCC assists me in maintaining an appropriate work/life balance	7	38%
My department encourages me to take advantage of health/well-being improvement opportunities	7	35%
I am recognized by the administration for my efforts	1	37%
I am valued by the administration for my efforts	1	37%
<i>I have been provided with advancement opportunities</i>	1	53%
The College provides sufficient professional development opportunities	1	42%
My department provides sufficient professional development opportunities	5	38%
The College is committed to cultivating new leaders	1	36%
My department is committed to cultivating new leaders	1	38%
Level of satisfaction with bathrooms	2	35%
<i>Level of satisfaction with building temperature</i>	2	45%

¹ Although only questions with a negative response rate of 33% or more are reported, all questions in the leadership and governance section received negative response rates of at least 28%.

In examining the questions listed in the above table, there are a number of themes that can provide guidance on which areas to focus on for improvement. These include:

- Respondents don't feel they have ample opportunities to participate in College-wide or departmental planning, priority setting, and budgeting;
- Staff indicate that they don't feel there are sufficient professional development opportunities provided by the College or in their departments;
- There is a perceived lack of focus on assisting staff with maintaining work/life balance;
- Respondents have concerns about the effectiveness of leadership and the cultures within their departments;
- There is a lack of transparency; and
- Individuals don't feel as though they are valued or recognized.

While there are numerous other areas for discussion, as demonstrated by the eight overarching codes, these areas have been identified, quantitatively, as important and there is substantial information provided on a question by question basis to offer understanding about these opinions. By examining the two reports, there is a significant amount of insightful and useful data that can be used to make progress towards achieving Strategic Planning Outcome 18 – Increased staff satisfaction with work/life balance and with BMCC offerings for personal/professional growth.

INTRODUCTION

The College conducted the BMCC Staff Satisfaction Survey in June, 2016. Developed as a digital survey, the instrument was left open for three weeks and was answered by 297 staff members. Respondents represented every job classification with the majority emanating from the HEO classifications or representing college assistants. The survey contained 30 questions and 17 provided an opportunity for individuals to provide comments. In total, there were 1,091 comments offered. This report presents a detailed, rigorous analysis of these comments for the purpose of understanding strengths and weaknesses, developing plans for mediating issues that are uncovered, and establishing a baseline from which improvement can be measured.

As indicated in the 2015-2020 BMCC Strategic Plan, *Reaching Greater Levels*, enhancing staff satisfaction with employment at the College is a priority. The College has developed and will be communicating about and rolling out an operational planning process designed to measure progress towards achievement of the strategic plan outcomes and objectives included in the report. Strategic Plan Outcome 18 is focused on work/life balance and increasing personal and professional development opportunities. This survey, which will be conducted annually for the foreseeable future, is the primary mechanism for gathering the data necessary to address this institutional priority.

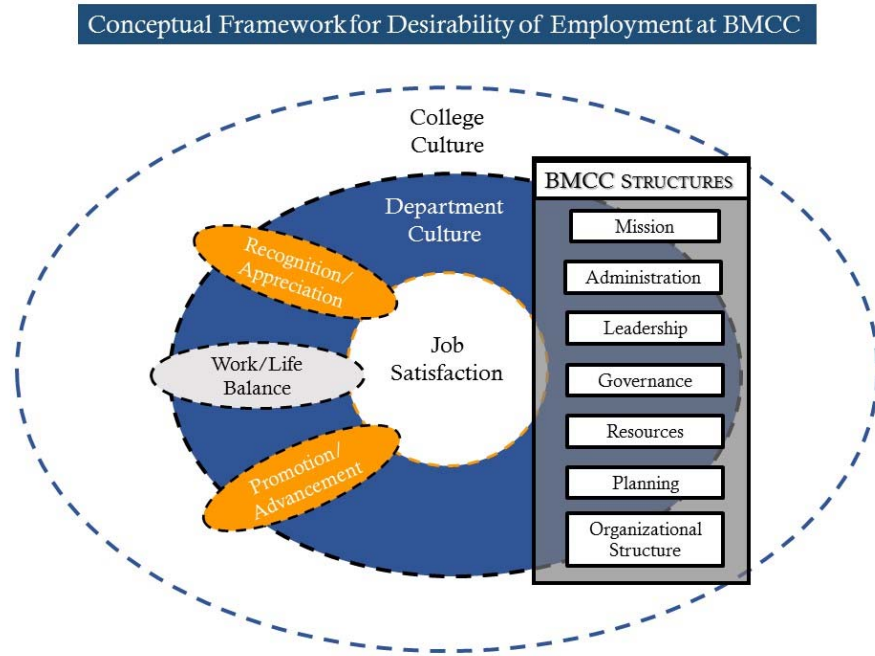
METHODOLOGY

To appropriately and effectively analyze the nearly 1,100 comments offered by survey respondents, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics (IEA) utilized qualitative methodology to conduct an analysis consistent with the case study approach. The propositions guiding the study are presented in the conceptual framework that was used to develop the questions and to guide the analysis. The framework and the propositions are discussed in further detail below.

Data were analyzed through the use of a three-stage process of coding commonly associated with grounded theory. The first stage, which is titled *open coding*, involved thorough line-by-line analysis of the 1,091 comments to uncover specific elements. The second stage, which is known as *axial coding*, ensured that categories were established from common themes emerging from the open coding process. The third and final stage, *selective coding*, results in a final set of codes based on thematic similarities uncovered during an analysis of the axial codes. The three-stage process was conducted for 13 of the questions. In addition, the selective codes that emerged from the question by question analysis were then treated as axial codes for a College-wide analysis. Survey-wide selective codes were then established by analyzing the question by question codes. These selective codes provide BMCC with a framework for enhancing the desirability of employment for staff.

Initial development of the questions and subsequent analysis of responses were guided by a conceptual framework. The purpose of the framework was to organize ideas and constructs, based on an underlying philosophy, into a graphic illustration that demonstrates the interconnection of multiple elements. In short, it is a mechanism for organizing, explaining, and analyzing data.

FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE BMCC STAFF SATISFACTION SURVEY



The purpose of the survey was to better understand College staff’s experience and opinions regarding their feelings about the desirability of employment at BMCC. Central to this question is the issue of job satisfaction. As shown in the above graphic, there are many factors, both internal and external, that affect perceptions and feelings of job satisfaction. While satisfaction is in the center, there are two circles surrounding the center – those being the department and College cultures. Clearly feelings of satisfaction “live within” these two cultures and are influenced by the atmosphere, sense of community, and climate at both levels. The circles have dotted lines to represent the constant state of change central to College and departmental cultures.

To the right of job satisfaction are the BMCC structures that can influence feelings of satisfaction. These structures are located inside of a grey rectangle with solid lines to represent the more rigid nature of the elements listed within. While these are areas outside the direct control of staff, they nevertheless have a strong impact on satisfaction. It should be noted that the structures box crosses into all of the circles, which demonstrates its’ connection to all areas of the college as well as overall job satisfaction.

The ovals located to the left constitute opinions internal to staff and which also impact job satisfaction. The two orange ovals reflect areas proven over the years to be most intricately connected with job satisfaction – recognition/appreciation and promotion/advancement. These areas encompass both perceptions and tangible displays of value to the department and College. Finally, the grey oval, which is also an area associate with job satisfaction, was highlighted because work/life balance is an institutional priority. This framework guided the survey and ensured the integration of all the disparate elements. It also presents the philosophy used to frame the study, guide the development of questions, and focus the analysis of the qualitative data (staff comments).

RESULTS

The results of the data analysis are presented in two ways. First, the findings are presented on a question by question basis². For each question, the narrative is broken down into the selective codes (3rd stage of coding) that emerged from the analysis. The information underneath each of the selective codes is further broken into paragraphs, one for each of the axial codes (2nd stage of coding). The text in quotations used throughout the report are the direct quotes from respondents, which were the open codes (1st stage of coding)³. Instances where brackets or ellipses are used reflect an adjustment of language, which was necessary to formulate coherent sentences.

QUESTION 5 – DESCRIPTIONS OF THE COLLEGE’S CULTURE

Question 5 asked respondents to comment on their feelings about the College’s culture. There were 81 comments to the question and among the most common words and phrases emerging from the word map were students, good place to work, collaboration, support, busy, promotion and rude⁴.

Complex Institution with a Changing Culture

A clear theme that emerged from an analysis of the comments is that the College has both experienced significant cultural shifts in recent years and that it is a very complex institution. There were some that noted that culture is positive in nature with comments that include BMCC being “very team oriented [with a] mission to make sure everyone is treated the same and with respect”, “a generally supportive environment”, and a place that “values its community diversity.”

There were, however, significantly more negative comments about the culture, the majority of which came from individuals with a HEO classification. There were numerous references to a lack of trust, low morale, and a lack of respect for staff and students. Additionally, there were concerns about the lack of innovation as illustrated by comments like “this is an institution where ideas and motivation die” and “not forward thinking or innovative.” Another repeated refrain is that the culture is one where individuals don’t feel that the environment is “safe.” An individual with a HEO classification summed this point up with the statement “BMCC has cultivated a culture of fear, intimidation and apathy.”

There were also indications that the culture is one which embraces productivity and which is changing for the positive. A common theme was that individuals with long tenures at the College view the culture differently and that there appears to be “a battle between people who are new and people who have been employed with the school for a long time.” One individual notes that “the progressive changes that are occurring throughout the college provide a welcoming work environment and school.”




² The final comments question was not analyzed qualitatively because it was not connected with the conceptual framework.

³ Grammatical errors within the quotes were corrected in this report.






⁴ During the process of analysis, the Survey Monkey tool created word maps to identify the most commonly used words for each question. This information is provided to offer additional context.

Institutional Focus on Supporting a Diverse Student Population

An oft repeated theme not only for this question, but throughout all responses, was that BMCC is about students and student success. Three quotes that sum up this theme include:




-  “The college’s culture overall is of servicing the best way possible our students which is fantastic and the main reason why we are here”
-  “The College culture is mostly directed to the assisting of the students and their needs”
-  “BMCC truly helps students achieve their goals in many different careers”

Respondents also noted that both the student diversity as well as the number of students entering BMCC unprepared for College work is “a rewarding part of the work experience.” Despite the fact that working with the students makes BMCC not just an “excellent place to work”, but the “best place to work”, there are concerns about the College’s ability to effectively meet student needs. For some respondents, their concern was a lack of customer service. Others were concerned about the lack of quality service, while still others felt there was, on occasion, an incorrect focus. Some comments illustrating these points include:

-  “Too many staff members do not give quality help to the students”
-  “I feel terrible for students that are just thrown around all over the school [so] when they arrive at my desk, I find myself apologizing to them all the time”
-  “Just keep in mind, it’s not always about numbers because without the staff efforts the school would malfunction at some point”
-  “[Too many] staff in many offices are not friendly and are rude at times”
-  “I believe staff across the college, particularly in the offices in the Main Building, can be helpful and more courteous to students who visit and call for help”

Inappropriate and Unequal Treatment of Staff Members




“Employees do not seem appreciated.” This sentiment was repeated numerous times and in different ways throughout the analysis. Another respondent indicated that “this college touts that they are committed to serving students. However, they should also consider being committed to serving the people that take care of these students.” This perceived lack of concern aligns with the notion that staff also don’t receive the support necessary to effectively meet student needs, receive appropriate training, or be promoted to higher positions. Some comments include:

-  “Very cliquish...if you are not part of a specific group you will not advance to the next level”
-  “There is not enough support for tutors to be heard and what they need to expand their ability and skills to different positions”
-  “In my department for instance I don't see much training [as] everything is held by one single person [there is] so much to do but that person isn't willing to train or release”

The most commonly stated opinion within these comments, however, was that staff are not treated equally. Concerns ranged from the protection afforded to faculty because of the “academic freedom given [to] professors” to the perception that “college assistants are treated with little to no respect when they really are the backbone of the college” to a repeated declaration that “certain departments receive more support than others.” Generally speaking, there were numerous comments questioning why the College allows for inequitable treatment across and within groups.

Institutional Practices that Reduce Workplace Satisfaction


Respondents provided many comments about how BMCC’s culture encourages practices that reduce overall workplace satisfaction. Chief among the themes is a lack of collaboration. A central assertion is that the College operates in silos represented by statements such as “departments do not communicate with many other departments”, “offices work in isolation from one another and staff are not properly cross trained” and “most offices are very helpful, but it would be nice if more offices/departments/programs had a better sense of what each other did.” Other practices identified by respondents were the lack of communication, transparency, and consistent policies and procedures. A respondent noted that these issues “are more from complexity of the system”, however, there were several comments including:


-  “The college culture needs to improve on transparency”
-  “There seems to be a disconnect in the conveying of information from the President and Cabinet level to the administrative offices and departments”
-  “There is consistent confusion regarding college's policies (both an understanding of other departments' policies as well as how our department's policies align and interact with other department policies) the college's strategic plan (recruitment, retention, etc.), and budget”

Respondents indicated that these practices are the result of poor judgement and decision-making from college and departmental leadership. At the College level, staff have observed a “micromanagement and blame culture”, “consideration of staff is not a priority from the college leadership or human resources” and “[that] leadership falls short of bringing this institution to the next level.” One individual with a HEO classification provided the following example to demonstrate the perceived lack of leadership at the departmental level:

“There have been episodes where the department leadership has been belligerent and disrespectful including outright yelling at staff and belittling them during staff meetings...[it] makes it very difficult to stay in this type of situation.”

Despite these issues, staff also expressed positivity about how new practices and approaches are beginning to improve morale. There were expressions of gratitude for opportunities to advance and receive recognition with an indication that appreciation has become a more common element of the College culture. Insightful remarks include:

 “I think the College does a good job of awareness to faculty and staff recognition in years served to the College”

 “I appreciate that job searches are done until the RIGHT person is found because it makes me feel like I really earned my position...and it makes for better hires overall!”

 “Assistants have an opportunity to grow as well”


QUESTION 6 – DESCRIPTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENTAL CULTURE


Question 6 asked respondents to comment on their feelings about the department’s culture. There were 82 comments to the question and among the most common words and phrases emerging from the word map were positive, support, teamwork, improvement, needs, students, and poor.


Negative Impacts on Departments Resulting from Leadership


The titles for these sections were developed from a coding scheme premised on accurate and appropriate inventorying of responses. Although there are numerous negative statements about individuals directing units and departments, it would be inappropriate and a misreading of this report to view these statements as indictments of departmental leaders as a group. Overall, there were numerous comments about the negativity of the culture within departments. Among the statements are “my department culture is one of I've been here for so long I'm untouchable”, the culture is “rigid and reluctant to change [with] no opportunities for growth or advancement”, and there is “no transparency, inconsistent, intimidating, depressing.” The issues identified have a common connection, that being the leadership within certain departments.


The leader characteristics and actions identified as detrimental to the department include a lack of respect, inability to manage, and a lack of vision. Illuminating comments include:

 “The leader does not respect the staff and too many times, this person creates more problems than solutions”

 “I believe most of our staff do not look forward to coming to work to be directed by this individual”

 “Our director lacks leadership skills or the background to supervise us effectively”

 “It is frustrating to be led by someone who lacks strategic planning and long term goals and vision”

 “A lot of micro-managing exists within the department”

Respondents also explained that there were issues, which while not always directly connected with managers, were largely a result of ineffective leadership. These include a lack of collaboration, resources, and effective communication. Some comments associated with these concerns include:

- “Staff members often concern themselves with responsibilities outside their areas of expertise”
- “There is not support when a position is vacant...it takes too long to fill and takes a toll on the remaining employees”
- “It almost feels like we are working in solitude instead of together because we do not know other people from other departments”
- “The [communication] disconnect seems to emanate from the President's area and the Cabinet”

Departments are Committed to Excellence

Despite concerns associated with departmental leadership, a number of respondents believe their departments are excellent places to work and do indeed improve their job satisfaction at BMCC. For one, individuals noted that their departments are committed to the same mission as the College – that being student success. This is illustrated through the comments “the underlying goal is to support students and to achieve their goals” and “our department has a diverse group of people who works very hard, to make sure our students successfully complete their studies and move into employment.” Additionally, there were remarks about the quality of colleagues within the department. Respondents stated “most of the staff and faculty work extremely hard to achieve their goals”, “I enjoy working with my colleagues and my supervisor to help students”, and “staff are willing to help each with tasks and assignments.” Finally, there was an indication that professional development opportunities were achieving their intended outcomes of improving the culture of the department. One individual explained that “conflict due to restructure is evident but it appears to be decreasing...I think recent trainings have helped.”




QUESTION 8 – INSIGHT REGARDING THE COLLEGE’S ADMINISTRATION

Question 8 asked respondents to comment on their feelings about the College’s administration. There were 48 comments to the question and among the most common words and phrases emerging from the word map were structure, policy, decisions, support, leadership, and not agree.

Significant Communication Issues at all Levels





A common theme throughout was that communication is a problem at the College and departmental levels. Regarding the administration, the primary concerns are that individuals do not actively listen to or seek input from non-administrators. One individual noted that “besides meeting with the directors of departments, I'm not sure how often the administration hears from the staff”, while another indicated that “the college administration can do a better job at listening and

addressing the needs and concerns of the faculty and staff without brushing them off to the side.” Other statements highlighting the perceived failure to listen include:

-  “There is no inclusion of ideas or suggestions taken from staff members who work on the front lines and deal with daily students' challenges and/or activities”
-  “There is a show of apparent participation and inclusiveness in decision making, but the actual decisions do not seem to be made with that input”
-  “I do not feel that adjunct faculty have any voice in what the administration does at BMCC”

Participants also noted that intra-departmental communication has historically been problematic as the directors don't always share information with the staff. Two quotes that exemplify this issue are “they have most meetings when I don't work and I don't get updated by my supervisor on what was spoken about in the meetings” and “I have little contact with administration at BMCC as my director prefers to manage most interaction with external constituents.”

In addition to the specific communication issues related to the College administration or departmental leadership, participants provided several examples of how poor communication has led to a lack of understanding and information.

-  “Basic information competency about policies, procedures, offices and events would help us all give better customer service to students”
-  “The onboarding support after being hired was a nightmare - I only just discovered several months ago that I was not an actual union member”
-  “I do not know what college priority setting means”
-  “If you are not in the main building, you are left out of the loop a lot”

Issues about Workplace Culture at All Levels

Another area of concern identified by the respondents are the issues with institutional and departmental culture due to a perceived lack of effective leadership. A topic addressed in many of the questions is the inequality of treatment for staff. In addition to a concern that some employees are bound to a time clock while others are not, staff indicated that the promotion process is not fair (“more staff members should be promoted to higher position if they are doing the work”) and that “certain voices and people have a lot of power and control of decisions and choices.”

Respondents also noted that departments tend to be insulated from the College at large, and that the disconnect impacts student support. Other issues discussed, in relation to the departmental culture, are that individuals view themselves as “above everyone else”, which reduces teamwork, and that certain directors will not examine issues because they do “not want to hear anything negative.”

Prevalence of Institutional Structural Issues

Staff expounded on three primary areas where they view structural issues to be the result of ineffective leadership. These three areas are policy development and implementation, support, and flexibility. Regarding policy development and implementation, statements indicate both that policies are unclear and implemented inconsistently. These include:

- “There have been many times throughout my time at BMCC where I only discovered the existence of a policy through attempting an action only to be told ‘no, that’s not the procedure’”
- “It is very unclear why policy that does exist was created in the way it was created; how to impact policy change and often policy is not reviewed for many, many years”
- “It is very unclear how to create policy or offer policy for review”

Individuals also noted that there is a lack of support provided to staff and departments, including support for advancement. In general, however, the quotes taken from staff primarily note that there are not enough employees to support student success. Two of the quotes provided are “the enrollment at BMCC is too high and there are not enough faculty/staff to adequately serve our students” and “many of [our students] are first generation and/or under-prepared and require extra support and guidance.”

Potential for Administration to Overcome Ineffective Leadership

Even considering concerns voiced by staff regarding the lack of communication and follow through from the College administration, a number of respondents expressed a belief that many of these issues can be solved. Pertinent statements include:

- “The College Administration as represented by the Provost has made an attempt to listen to the faculty and staff and communicate with the members of the college”
- “They seem to care about promoting the success students, staff, and faculty”
- “Priorities are financially supported [for] new ways of solving issues”
- “I’m hoping that the latest member of the administration will start to change the institutional culture and environment”
- “The administration promotes openness and willingness to listen to different opinions”






To sum up this hopeful and positive outlook, respondents noted both that “the college administration has been doing an excellent job” and that “BMCC is under good leadership.”

QUESTION 10 – INSIGHT REGARDING THE COLLEGE MISSION, PLANNING, AND BUDGETING

Question 10 asked respondents to comment on their feelings about the College’s mission, planning, and budgeting processes. There were 30 comments to the question and among the most common words and phrases emerging from the word map were departments, college, education, shared, support, mission, and staff.




Issues are Preventing Individuals from Fully Embracing the Mission

“It’s a shame with all the students, money and resources this institution has [that it] still struggles to be a leader in higher education.” This statement illustrates participant sentiment that BMCC is not able to achieve its mission and some reasons provided include a lack of global focus in the mission, inadequate visibility of institutional statements, and insufficient transparency and clarity. Staff expressed consternation both that globalization is not mentioned in the mission as well as the fact that “for such a diverse campus, it is a shame that internationalization is not something the administration cares to commit efforts towards.” In regard to the visibility of the College mission, one respondent suggested that “the mission statement and goals of the college need to be visible in places where everyone can see it...it should be in the elevators, in or near the cafeteria, admission, bursar, and financial aid offices.” Finally, the most common sentiment for why the mission has not been achieved is based on a perceived lack of transparency and clarity. The comments reflect a lack of awareness and confusion and include:

-  “I have never worked at an institution that is so opaque when it comes to these areas [mission, planning, and budgeting]”
-  “It doesn’t appear that the connection between conceiving the goals and understanding what is going on to carry them out is clear”
-  “The budget process is anything but transparent or participatory below the Cabinet level, at least as shared with me”
-  “It comes back to transparency, we do not understand how the budget is reached or why”
-  “The mission statement of the college seems to be evolving and even with input the mission seems not to reflect the stated goals that the college community has agreed on”

The College is Moving towards Achievement of the Mission

Despite the issues listed, staff expressed a belief that the College can achieve its mission. One participant noted that what is most important, regarding the College mission, is the BMCC remains committed to “[serving] the students to reach their highest possible potential.” Others noted that the opportunity to be involved is one of the central reasons why the mission can be achieved. Reflections include:

-  “I feel each person has some direct and some indirect opportunity to help shape the mission and goals of the college”
-  “The college does a good job at including the college community in the planning/strategic goal setting process”
-  “[I am] now aware of all the specific details of budgeting at that college”




Finally, multiple respondents noted that the College philosophy in regards to allocation of funds positions the College to achieve its mission. Individuals stated that BMCC “seems to be fairly conservative in the way it allocates funds”, that “I have seen a respect for the College’s resources” and “the administrative planning department has done a very good job for the College.”

Feelings of Exclusion Prevent Full Impact of Planning

Whether due to a lack of involvement or perception of inequitable treatment, some staff indicated they have not been a part of the planning process. One staff member indicated displeasure in having duties removed, which has led to fewer opportunities for involvement, while another explained that different departments receive different levels of support.

“One thing I have experienced is that certain groups or departments get the necessary tools and support to perform their jobs while others don't, and I often wonder why I am treated as a second class citizen.”

The larger concern, however, was a lack of formal engagement and involvement with the budgeting process. Some quotes associated with the lack of opportunities include:

-  “As an advisor, I don't have a say in budgets”
-  “I think college budgetary matters should be open to those who are interested”
-  “In my role, I don't have much participation with the budget process”

Opportunities Exist to Increase Investment in Budgeting and Planning

To address these concerns, respondents spoke of three solutions to this issue. The first is to improve communication, which has emerged as an institution-wide issue based on the analysis. Staff expressed discontent with the level of communication they receive and stated that “the [decision making] process is open to the Executive Council only...meetings that take place in closed settings and are not open to managerial or support staff” and “information is only shared at all staff meetings with limited details provided.” Another method for increasing investment, according to respondents, is to increase the degree of administrative communication and outreach to departments. A telling statement provided in the survey was “I believe senior leaders should ask staff members their opinions more on how to make [the College] better as a whole.” Finally, departments were discussed as place where investment in budgeting and planning will ultimately occur. Statements affirming this position include:

“Also, while there has been much talk of each department establishing a mission statement of their own, there has been no action by our director to officially approve a mission for our office...I would like to see more action in this area”

“Understanding how the budget works can help departments if deputy chairs and others who are interested are offered a workshop”

“I have given budgets for my office, [however I] don't have any control over an office budget”

QUESTION 12 - INSIGHT REGARDING THE COLLEGE LEADERSHIP/GOVERNANCE

Question 12 asked respondents to comment on their feelings about the College's leadership and governance structures. There were 27 comments to the question and among the most common words and phrases emerging from the word map were college council, staff, college leadership, policies, and priorities.

The College Council is Underleveraged

“To be honest, [I'm] not sure what the College Council does.” Similar statements were made by multiple respondents regarding the question seeking their input about the College Council. There appears to be confusion as to the role as well as a lack of knowledge about the Council as illustrated in the following quotes:

“Who is the 'College Council'? That is very unclear - I didn't even know there was such a council at BMCC”

“I am not familiar with the College Council and don't know what they do...I may receive their agenda but I'm not sure”

“I have no idea if the College Council represents my interests or even what their priorities are”

“I do not know what the College Council does”

Additionally, some who were aware of the Council expressed skepticism as to whether it is effectively serving the College. Quotes offered include:

“I am not sure if College Council represents my interests”

“The college governance policy has been ignored many times”

“I do not feel that we receive adequate updates from the HEO representation on College Council”

“The only communication I receive is College Council minutes and agendas, nothing specifically sent by HEO representative”





Lack of Effective Communication Negatively Impacts Perceptions of Governance

Communication, identified numerous times as a concern, was noted by respondents as an issue that negatively impacts how they view leadership and governance structures and actions. Of particular concern were the lack of information as well as the perceived lack of alignment. One respondent explained that “certain priorities are indicated by the administration/ leadership/ governance, however resources are not always provided to appropriately support these priorities.” Another stated that “it appears that the college leadership participates in decision-making that impacts our department, but does not communicate directly with our department to discuss those decisions.”

In addition to communication issues, some staff expressed concern about the College’s priorities, noting that pursuing inappropriate priorities is detrimental to staff morale. One respondent stated that “overall priorities seem to change frequently which makes long term planning harder to do or assess” while another indicated his/her displeasure that “sometimes it feels all they care about are numbers and it doesn't matter how overworked the staff have to be to get the numbers they want.”

Opportunities exist for Administration to Improve Governance Perceptions

Some staff indicated that the College administration is effective and is moving the College forward. One staff member noted that “The college leadership seems to be very good in providing scholarships for our students” while another stated “the new Provost has shown a commitment to shape the college to better serve students and help staff do their jobs.” The majority of comments, however, are negative in scope and provide insight into how actions and decisions coming from College administration are impacting perceptions of leadership and governance. These comments reflect a belief that the administration does not connect with staff and some of the stronger statements offered are:

-  “Leadership does not acknowledge our existence”
-  “The college leadership should also divert their attention to individual department, especially those departments that [are] on the front lines of the college”
-  “Management should not only meet with leaders of departments, but also staff”
-  “The College leadership/governance has had no input from me”

QUESTION 13 – INSIGHT REGARDING THE DEPARTMENT’S LEADERSHIP/GOVERNANCE

Question 13 asked respondents to comment on their feelings about the department’s leadership and governance structures. There were 28 comments to the question and among the most common words and phrases emerging from the word map were leadership, decisions, policies, professional, and staff members.




Ineffective Communication Impacts Staff Understanding of Vision and Priorities

Respondents indicated that there are both a lack of priorities as well as concerns with how department leaders communicate. Regarding communication, some quotes associated with ineffectiveness at the departmental level include “they need to communicate better with all staff




members” and “[my manager is] inconsistent, not transparent, lacks [the] ability to communicate decisions or make decisions clearly.” These issues regarding communication are compounded when there is also a perceived lack of direction and vision. Staff expressed frustration noting that “I don’t have an understanding what the long and short term goals are as part of the bigger department I fit into” and “[there is] no clear long term planning for my department and there is a lot of discussion about wanting to support certain departments.”

Opportunities to Strengthen the Perception of Departmental Leadership

“With all due respect, it stinks to the abyss of hell.” This comment represents an oft repeated sentiment throughout the survey in regards to departmental leadership⁵. Another respondent stated that “simply put, in all my years as an administrative professional, my present manager is the worst I’ve ever had”, while others commented that “[my manager] lacks long-term vision” and there is “a complete lack of [departmental] leadership.” A thread within this larger issue revolves around ineffective and inappropriate behavior. Some comments include:

-  “This department’s leadership promotes, protects and defends incompetence, vulgarity and unprofessional behavior”
-  “The behavior/practice of the leadership of my department is a liability to both BMCC and CUNY”
-  “Every discussion has been met with the same response ‘I am chair and I set the rules’”




While there were a number of strongly negative sentiments expressed about departmental leadership, others expressed satisfaction with and appreciation for their department’s managers. This dichotomy of responses lends credence to the argument that there are opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of leaders across all departments. “My department leadership has worked hard to bring harmony and cooperation into the work environment on several levels” reflects one such sentiment. There were other strongly worded positive comments that demonstrate shared authority and responsibility. These include:

-  “I understand and accept my position is the bottom of the totem pole, however, I never think or feel that my contribution is seen by department leadership as less than anyone else”
-  “As advisors, we definitely have the opportunity to voice our opinions, and our feedback does matter--we just don’t make the final decisions on departmental changes”
-  “The department leader has everyone’s best interests at heart”

⁵ As stated previously, these comments should not be taken out of context. They are presented to illustrate the frustration by some with the management in their departments. The survey results are anonymous, so it is impossible to determine how many departments are associated with these comments, but the strong tone should be considered as an indication that the issue deserves a deeper analysis.

Opportunities to Improve Departmental Climate

Unsurprisingly, based on the high number of negative comments about departmental leaders, there were a number of negative comments about the climate within the departments as well. In addition to brief, direct comments like “Dysfunctional [department]”, staff provided examples of an unproductive departmental climate that negatively impacts staff. These include:

-  “Though I reported the climate of this department to management [on] more than one occasion, nothing was done about it”
-  “While plans are made in our department, they are rarely followed through upon and things often change on a whim”
-  “In our department we do not understand how or why decisions are made, the policies the decisions are based on or when they were enacted”

There were, however, some comments that reflect more helpful and healthy departments. Comments such as “[the department] is a collaborative environment” and “due effort is made to receive input in departmental decisions” reflect productive and inclusive departments where staff appear to be thriving. With a nod to willing and adaptable leadership, one respondent noted that “change was needed and change is working.”⁶

QUESTION 15 – INSIGHT REGARDING ISSUES THAT ARE POSITIVELY IMPACTING YOUR JOB SATISFACTION

Question 15 asked respondents to comment on their feelings on factors that are positively impacting their job satisfaction. There were 47 comments to the question and among the most common words and phrases emerging from the word map were opportunities, enjoy, working, staff, benefits, serve the students, and job.

The Nature and Structure of the Work Impacts Job Satisfaction

“The job itself - meaning, my responsibilities on a day to day basis - I find very rewarding.” Research on the subject of job satisfaction usually indicates that a connection to the position is among the most salient factors that determine the degree to which people are satisfied with their employment. Another respondent noted that they feel as though they have found their calling:

“For me personally, I am finally doing the job I feel like I was meant to do and getting paid a livable salary to do so.”




Perhaps the most telling statement, however was the simply refrain, “I like it here.”

Other important factors, unsurprisingly, are the salary and benefits. The majority of comments regarding salary, which came almost exclusively from administrative assistants, were negative. One individual noted that “worrying about the day to day bills and responsibilities detract from my satisfaction with my job.” Another, unhappy with what he/she perceives as an unequal pay scale,

⁶ Emphasis was added for impact.




opined that “college assistants should be paid more [than] the work study students, [but] we are all making the same hourly rate.” Respondents also felt that they were not being paid an appropriate salary based on their responsibilities with one explaining that “I would have to hold two sometimes three jobs just to make ends meet.”

The commentary on benefits was more positive, although one respondent was unsure about why the price of healthcare increased so much. Some of the positive comments include:



-  “I appreciate some of the benefits”
-  “The benefits are good, the salary is adequate and I am hopeful to assist with making a positive impact on the students and change for the betterment of the college”
-  “Leave policies are relatively generous”


Collaboration and Positive Work Relationships Shape Job Satisfaction


There were more comments about the joy received from working with students than any other category for this question. Respondents expressed that “students are great”, “I love the setting and the students”, and “[I get to] work with a diversity [of] students.” One respondent explained that “The foremost insight here is the opportunity to serve the students at this college” while yet another staff member stated “I enjoy working with students and find great enjoyment through my interactions with the students.” Some individuals provided thoughtful responses as to how working with students impact their daily work life:

-  “I am able to get satisfaction from my job...being told that because of my reaching out to tell someone about a new major made them decide to come back [was] extremely gratifying”
-  “Amid the adversities and the arduous journey, it is always a delight to help another human being to achieve that upward mobility, so they in turn, could contribute their knowledge and talents for the improvement of themselves and for a better society”
-  “Though the work can sometimes be challenging, I enjoy the smiling faces of students who are really satisfied with the level of tutoring they have received”


Other aspects of the work environment that respondents identified as positively impacting job satisfaction include working with great colleagues, engaging in collaborative activities, and receiving encouragement to be creative. In describing working with colleagues, one respondent said “I enjoy working with people and working with the people I work with”, while another stated “I am impressed by how creatively the faculty and staff are, and how dedicated [they are] to positive student outcomes.” A common thread within the topic of working with colleagues was service for students. Comments included:


-  “[My colleagues] are like family to me and I know that they put students first”
-  “I enjoy the respect shown by each [and] the desire to give an educational environment to whom we serve”


 “I enjoy working with my colleagues and feel that we are equally dedicated to serving students and helping individuals reach their potential”


 “It is satisfying to have a positive impact on the health and quality of life for the students and staff”

Staff also noted that they don’t like working within departmental silos. Maintaining opportunities for engagement with other offices and professionals was cited as important for job satisfaction. Respondents stated “I appreciate the times I have been able to get involved in projects that allowed me to collaborate with others” and “at times I have been allowed to become involved in CUNY-wide initiatives which allows for further networking and professional development.” Finally, staff explained that being treated as trusted professionals, with the opportunity to create and be creative enhances satisfaction “Having autonomy to plan and execute program goals and the confidence of your supervisors to meet their expectations is rewarding.” Other comments reflect this sentiment:

 “I enjoy reaching out to colleagues [to] create networks of student support and opportunities for them to grow”

 “I have the opportunities to work on projects other than routine duties”

 “I have been given a great deal of latitude to ensure that my job is completed and done well”

 “Generally my decisions are not questioned and usually supported”

If the work environment encourages satisfaction, it stands to reason that there is effective leadership working to maintain and enhance the environment. Respondents provided statements to this effect indicating that “my boss is outstanding” and “the director of my department has an open door [and] listens to all his staff and incorporates their ideas where applicable and possible.” Staff also noted that “new management is better therefore I am happier”, “I am also very grateful for having a coordinator that is understanding of when life situations occur but doesn't hold it against us” and that “Financial Aid Directors are simply amazing!”




The College Infrastructure is Reducing Job Satisfaction

In addition to providing examples of factors that are enhancing satisfaction, respondents offered a number of useful comments on issues they believe detract from their job satisfaction. While not all concerns can be readily addressed, it is helpful to understand the perceptions from staff representing multiple groups. The first issue identified is the size of the College. One respondent stated that “BMCC is an OK place to work, [but] the college is way too big.” Another comment associated with the size of the college, but which addresses the practical implications of size is “[the] student population is too large, as I see it, and the IT Department can't deal with the high demand on computer equipment.” Another topic of concern reflects perceptions about the facilities. While addressed in more detail under the question on facilities, one individual stated that “air conditioning and a building properly maintained [affects] my job satisfaction” while another asserted that “I believe that this place is NOT very environmentally HEALTHY to its COMMUNITY.” Finally, and not surprisingly, a respondent indicated that departmental issues negatively impact overall satisfaction. The staff member commented that, “while I love BMCC and what it means to the

students, I do not like my department and feel as if knowing what I know now I wouldn't recommend anyone to work here.”

Ineffective Leadership Diminishes Job Satisfaction

Just as effective leadership positively impacts job satisfaction, perceptions that individuals in leadership positions are ineffective decreases overall satisfaction. While two respondents expressed issues with the administrative structure, noting that “I was saddened when they took away most of our administrative rights as computer technicians” and “We have to go through many channels when we need to address a problem in the computer lab”, most comments addressed perceptions of inequitable treatment from administrators or department heads. One individual indicates that “only a certain group are included and encouraged to be creative and innovative and that [the] group follows the behavior of the leader.” A common theme is that individuals view themselves or their offices as working harder than others without the appropriate compensation and appreciation. Statements include:

-  “BMCC would be a great place to work if we were appreciated for the amount of work we do compared to the lack of work that other offices put out”
-  “[There] needs to be no favoritism [and] staff who work hard should be rewarded”
-  “In my office, the workload is much higher than other offices”

QUESTION 16 – INSIGHT REGARDING ISSUES THAT ARE NEGATIVELY IMPACTING YOUR JOB SATISFACTION

Question 16 asked respondents to comment on their feelings on factors that are negatively impacting their job satisfaction. There were 53 comments to the question and among the most common words and phrases emerging from the word map were college assistants, department, students, support, complicated, staff, and management.

Ineffective Leadership Negatively Impacts Satisfaction

Communication, again, is identified as an issue within the college. Respondents indicated that the “lack of communication from college leadership” negatively impacts the departments. Citing one example of how individuals impacted by decisions don’t feel they are involved, a staff member lamented “the changing of the late night hours without being asked about it.” Another comment highlighted that staff are not always on the same page due to faulty communication. “I feel that information is never clear between all the staff members so there's always misinformation being given out or confusion.”

More specific than communication, however, more than a dozen comments expressed concerns about the overall effectiveness of some department heads. Respondents noted that “not everyone is equipped for managerial positions” and that the College “need[s] better management with more effective leadership skills.” Citing the impact of ineffective leadership, a staff member stated “my colleagues are consistently negative in demeanor, which is a direct reflection of the lack of leadership

in my department.” There were also numerous quotes that demonstrated that some department heads are not showing appreciation or effectively supporting their staffs. While an individual declared that “I feel like supervisors do not appreciate staff members,” other comments detailing a perceived lack of support include:

- “I do not feel professionally or creatively supported by my department director”
- “My job satisfaction is impacted [by] the feeling that my supervisor does not like any of us and would not advocate for any of us if needed”
- “[I experience a] lack of support, both personally and professionally from my supervisor”

The Workplace is not Conducive to Satisfaction

Respondents spoke of three aspects of the BMCC workplace that are negatively impacting satisfaction. The first, which is funding, was identified because, according to one individual, they have “no budget to do anything.” Additionally, there were concerns with tight budgets because “the budget is always tight which limits innovative ideas” and “funding for programs can be an issue as well because it limits our ability to build community.”

Another issue that was repeated across multiple questions deals with the lack of space. In addition to noting that “no closets means we are surrounded by clutter much of the time” and “[the] lack of space to move ourselves [does not provide a] good experience to the students”, one staff member felt that the lack of space creates an unwelcoming environment for staff and students.

“[Not having the] space in general to bring people together makes the job harder, as does a lack of storage space to create a more welcoming and receptive environment to work with students.”

Finally, respondents voiced concerns about some of the practices and policies at the College. Citing opportunities for confusion and irritation, they stated that “the on boarding process is confusing, the benefits are not clearly defined, the paperwork process for certain benefits are complicated, and cumbersome” and that “in some instances certain protocols were repetitive and duplicated.” Staff also expressed a desire for more flexible work options since, in their view, “productivity and happiness would be much higher with some modern workplace practices like flex time and opportunities to work remotely.”

An Atmosphere that Reduces Satisfaction

“Sometimes one has to cry out to God for understanding, wisdom, and help just to cope.” This statement codifies the feelings of some staff that the College has, maintains, and perpetuates an unhealthy atmosphere for staff. Another staff member stated that “to work in an atmosphere that has brought me so much pains and sadness is not encouraging to find job satisfaction.” Still another respondent spoke of the resiliency that he/she feels you need to survive at the College:

“You have to have a strong stomach and back to tolerate some of the things that one will experience”

Other comments indicate that individuals feel that the unhealthy atmosphere at the College is and will continue to negatively impact staff retention:

- “This is a place where new staff do not stay long due to the atmosphere and culture”
- “This type of environment is not conducive to me remaining at BMCC long-term”
- “I have to take care of my own well-being, and a negative and sometimes very hostile work environment does not support my long-term goals”

“It's also embarrassing when behavior can get to the point where students ask why some people are treated differently than others in the office and express that they are uncomfortable by such behavior.” This was a statement by a staff member in an attempt to demonstrate the impact of inequitable treatment of staff on students. In speaking about inequitable treatment, other comments reflected a feeling of subjugation to unfair salary and work responsibilities. These include

- “I feel the amount of work I do as a part time worker is that of a full time worker”
- “I feel that for the amount and quality of work I do the pay rate doesn't fit”
- “[I am] being asked to work out of title without compensation”

Ineffective Support for Job Satisfaction

Some staff members indicated that, generally speaking, they don't feel as if they are properly supported by the College or their department. Staff stated that “due to numerous factors, there are not many safe places for support in the area”, “[I am] not always feeling supported by [my] department”, and “there is never enough time to work with others on larger programs within the division because some areas do not [have] the support staff they need and staff are overwhelmed at times.” More specifically, however individuals spoke of both issues with pay and benefits as well as ineffective and insufficient professional development and advancement opportunities. Regarding pay and benefits, staff shared that:

- “I believe pay could be higher for college assistants considering the work that is put into their role”
- “Not having 100% attendance has impacted my chances of receiving a raise in salary, [so] there should be a change to that rule”
- “[I] wish I was paid more”
- “I would be more satisfied with my current position if it met the needs the cost of living here in New York City”
- “I do not have healthcare or retirement benefits”

“The issues that negatively impact my job satisfaction are the [lack of] growth opportunities from within.” There were numerous comments about the lack of opportunities for growth as well as a desire for the College to mediate this issue. Noting that “there are absolute no job growth [opportunities] for a college assistant”, staff would like to see the following:

- “If possible, it would be nice to know that you can transition into a full time position after a probation period, but that's not what happens”
- “It would be a benefit to the school and worker if college assistants can go to school and work for CUNY”
- “I would feel more secure in my job as a college assistant if we were given a permanent role as well as the opportunity to be promoted to another position”

Connected with advancement, individuals stated that there was a dearth of quality professional development opportunities. Staff noted that increasing professional development for departmental leaders would benefit the College since “[we need] effective training of department heads” and “BMCC should provide leadership trainings to all management staff.” Observing that “opportunities for professional development and encouragement seem rare...” respondents highlighted the fact that “staff can use events and activities to help with team building and morale” and that “a real retreat away from the college filled with professional development and team building would benefit our working environment.”

QUESTION 18 – INSIGHT REGARDING WHAT BMCC CAN DO TO HELP MAINTAIN AN APPROPRIATE WORK/LIFE BALANCE

Question 18 asked respondents to comment on their feelings about the degree to which the College is assisting staff in maintaining a healthy work/life balance. There were 77 comments to the question and among the most common words and phrases emerging from the word map were work from home, professional development, flexible, balance, work schedule, hours, family, resources, and nice.

Ensure that Administration and Staff Support Work-Life Balance

“Ensure a positive work environment and staff that are genuinely interested in working with and helping students.” This comment helps illustrate a common theme present in the responses to question 18 – that the environment, which is influenced primarily by the administration, must be positive and that professional development, both for those managing and those managed, is necessary. While one respondent simply states that the College needs to “hire better department directors and managers”, others note that “personal and professional development services” would assist managers in becoming more efficient, effective, and humane. Another respondent adds that the College should “treat your staff and administration better by offering them more opportunities for professional development outside of CUNY.” Additionally, there is some confusion as to what work/life balance means, so there is a recommendation that BMCC “give people guidance on what that means and how BMCC can help in this regard.”

A separate, but connected category, revolves around providing training for new faculty and staff. There were a number of comments throughout the survey indicating that orientation to BMCC and CUNY would benefit both the person and the College. Some comments include:

- “There is NO ON-BOARDING HERE FOR NEW STAFF”
- “There should be mandatory and formalized trainings for all new staff”
- “Create a new hire orientation so new hires can learn about college policies, benefits, opportunities and employee responsibilities”

Staff also indicated that a barrier to maintaining work/life balance is failing to ensure that adequate and appropriate staffing is maintained. While one respondent commented that the College needs “sufficient staffing” and another explained that BMCC should work to “reduce workload”, other comments reflect perceptions that some staff are not meeting their work responsibilities. They explain that failure for some to fulfill their assigned duties results in others picking up the slack. Responses include:

- “There are many incompetent people who are unable to do the things that I do [and] as a result, I am assigned many very important, time sensitive tasks to handle all at once”
- “I often have to take my work home with me to complete by said "deadlines", [but] if we rewarded the capable staff that we have instead of hiring mass numbers of additional staff with less skills/knowledge/drive/competence, the morale would be higher and the staff, both new and present, would be able to balance out everything better”
- “Work load plays a factor in work life balance, [so] discipline staff who may not pull their weight”

Provide Spaces and Services that Promote Work-Life Balance




Given that work/life balance requires that more time is spent at work, respondents suggest that the College finds more ways to bring family to the College. In imploring the College to “understand [the] fact that families are MORE important than work”, one individual requests that BMCC “create work events that involve options to bring family.” Another staff member offered the idea that the College could help individuals at work feel more like family. “Since we spend more time at work than at home with family, it would be nice to have areas, services, activities geared to our "work" family.” In support of those staff with children, there was also a suggestion that “providing childcare would be a great way to assist staff.”

A major part of balance includes health and wellness, so respondents provided opinions regarding methods in which the College can encourage greater levels of health and wellness for staff. A suggestion from the respondents is that the College “possibly provide more seminars to improve health and well-being”, while another offers the more targeted option of “[providing] more wellness incentives and better discounts with NYC fitness centers.” Some individuals stated that they “are waiting for the pool to re-open” and one respondent wants the College to “complete renovations on the pool [and] provide lap swim hours at convenient times before/after work and during midday.”

Finally, the issue of communication was raised once again. Respondents noted that communication is a problem and that “clear goals” should be shared with the entire community. Demonstrating the impact of poor communication, staff commented on the question of work/life balance with the responses “I’d like to know what resources are available and open to college assistants, since I haven’t even thought about looking it up until this survey mentioned life balance” and “I’m unaware of any work/life balance policies at BMCC.”

Develop Clear, Concise Work-Life Balance Policies

One individual, concerned about advancement opportunities, implores the College to “Be clear about implications to advancement opportunities should time need to be taken for familial responsibilities.” This statement reflects the overall concern regarding the existence, clarity, and communication of institutional policies. Specific to work/life balance, staff offered a series of policies that the College could consider established to assist with work/life balance. These include:




-  “Commutes are long - working from home 1 day a week would be a big benefit”
-  “Implement work from home policies when appropriate”
-  “Implement a flex-time policy [since] as it stands now support staff see their pay checks docked in the event of an unforeseen emergency”

The issue of fairness also emerged in regards to policy development.

“When managerial staff arrives to work late there is no such policy in place. However, when this occurs for them they simply do not reflect it in their time sheets...there should be an across-the-board [schedule] policy for all.”

Ensure that Staff Feel Welcome and Valued




Continuing the theme of fairness and equity, staff indicated that ethical treatment of staff is a work/life balance issue. In addition to “[treating] people with respect and with dignity”, staff suggest that the College “be fair and treat your hardworking reliable, competent staff with appreciation and not stress us out to death.” Respondents added that:

-  “We are here to serve, not to be mistreated and to be abused”
-  “Too many competent staff have had to move on because of poor treatment and intimidation”
-  “[The College should] treat their employees nice”

An extension of “nice” treatment is associated with demonstrations of recognition and appreciation. While expanded upon in other sections, a respondent suggested that recognizing staff would help them maintain a better work/life balance. “[The College should] appreciate and value all the extra activities I am doing on behalf of our students and to represent BMCC.”

Enhance the Atmosphere and Facilities

“It would be nice if departments had their own kitchenettes with fridges and sinks (no stoves or ovens).” This sentiment reflects the desire of some respondents to see changes made to the facilities and grounds of the College. Other recommended upgrades include:





-  “More campus park spaces (with trees, flowers and benches) would be great”
-  “Move us to a bigger more spacious place where we can breathe and have space to attend our students with privacy and respect”
-  “Quiet zones to decompress at school where one can rest (sleep pods)”

There were also more practical recommendations provided such as addressing the thermostats since “sometimes the [temperature] in my department is not good (too cold/too hot).”




Improve the Benefits Staff Receive for Working at BMCC

A common and unsurprising recommendation emanating from this question is the desire for increases to both pay and benefits. In addition to the more general comment that an individual wants “more pay and more hours”, individuals indicated that their current pay is insufficient to meet their needs. One respondent wants the College to “increase my salary so that I may provide adequate food on my table” while another explains that “the current pay rate is not good enough for someone's work life balance because I need to hold at least 2 jobs to make ends meet, which causes excess stress on my health and body.”

Regarding benefits, respondents are looking for increases to their leave balances. Some comments include:

-  “Give more vacation days”
-  “Give more sick days after a major illness [since] people returning after being sick are stripped of annual as well as sick days”
-  “More vacation time”
-  “More annual leave and sick leave”

A benefit that individuals would like to see the College consider is a “more flexible schedule to all staff.” Some staff commented on changes to the summer schedule with statements such as:

-  “Summer hours are incompatible with employees who have children to pick up before 6pm and who have no other help...it is always a struggle and stressful time to coordinate childcare carefully”
-  “During the summer, fast track remedial courses should end at 5:00 pm, so that those with children have enough time to commute and pick up their children without having to rush before aftercare closes”
-  “More summer Fridays”

In general, however, the majority of the numerous comments speak to developing and “adopting a more flexible work from home policy.” Explaining that “a work schedule [should] allow for flex time [and] an opportunity to work from home if needed and necessary” and that work/life balance requires that individuals “have more days to spend with family”, individuals are advocating strongly for more flexibility. Other comments include:

- “Work from home flexible scheduling resources to access your work remotely all when appropriate and if applicable”
- “I am comfortable with the hours, but I think there should be a way to allow some employees be able to work from home if needed”
- “BMCC, through my department, has adjusted my working time to accommodate me dropping off my kids at school so I can come in from 9:30 - 5:30 and this has been so helpful for me and my family”
- “More consideration of flexible office hours for employees with dependents”

Respondents also included some logical arguments on why they believe BMCC should establish flex scheduling. One individual states that “not many companies/institutions have a 9-5pm work schedule” while another suggests that he/she would like to “work remote a few days a month to focus on data analysis, research and reporting without constant interruptions.”

QUESTION 19 – INSIGHT REGARDING WHAT OUR DEPARTMENT CAN DO TO HELP MAINTAIN AN APPROPRIATE WORK/LIFE BALANCE

Question 19 asked respondents to comment on their feelings about the degree to which the department is assisting staff in maintaining a healthy work/life balance. There were 57 comments to the question and among the most common words and phrases emerging from the word map were work from home, professional development, flexible, balance, students, workload, allow, increase, and leader.

Improve the Benefits Staff Receive for Working at BMCC

Although the coding resulted in similar categories for both question 18 and 19, the comments regarding desires for changes to benefits are different, likely because the department is the day to day home for our staff. In addition to comments requesting “more pay and more hours” and a “salary increase”, there was the specific request to “increase [the] pay rate to at least \$15.” Regarding benefits, the comments were more personal and included asking to “have more days to spend with family”, “allow time for medical appointments”, and “provide opportunities to work and study with tuition waivers.”

The majority of comments regarding flexibility reflect the desire for “flexible work hours” and providing the “flexibility of choosing a 4-day work week”, but also reflect a different understanding of flexibility. One respondent seeking to increase productivity suggests that “having the office closed for half a day will allow staff to have meetings, gatherings, [and] catch up on desk work.” Another individual wants the College to “allow the possibility to transition from part-time to full-time after a




probation period and review.” There were also more personal requests that reflect a closer connection to leadership such as “offer [a] more flexible schedule and respect the decision for the changes” and “ask me about changing my hours and date of working late.”

Improve the Departmental Climate and Surroundings




“To move us to a bigger more spacious place where we can breathe and have space to attend to our students with privacy and respect.” This request was made by an individual echoing the responses from others who indicate they would like to “have more space” in their departments. Another theme that emerged within this category is the need for professional development. In an effort to improve the climate, one staff member promotes the idea to “offer workshops and consultations with specialists.” Another, focused on ensuring an adequate skill set from staff in the department would like to see the department “give staff more training so that if people are out sick or on vacation they can help pick up the slack instead of dumping the work load on only 1 or 2 people.” Some comments are even harsher and reflect a high level of frustration.

“Incompetency affects the work/life balance, and I am always being asked to back-up supervisors and many times doing their work without training”

The lion’s share of the comments, however, reflect the oft mentioned concern that departmental leadership is not meeting the needs of the staff or the College. Some of the comments reflect a lack of communication, such as “communicate better and recognize employees' strengths” and ensure “open communication [in] staff meetings.” Other quotes document an issue of time management and respect and include “it would be good if our leader could respect the staff's time... [he/she] will say that we have so much to do but keep us in meetings for 2 hours” and ensure “timeliness in responding to time-off/vacation requests.” Still others are more critical in content and tone and, again demonstrate a high level of frustration with the leadership:

-  “Don't waste people’s time working on projects that are not implemented”
-  “Get rid of the nepotism/favoritism going on”
-  “Discourage incumbent information hoarding”

One commenter even went as far as to say “replace the leader of the department.” Perhaps as a result of the frustration, respondents offered a series of suggestions they believe will help “provide a positive work environment.” These include

-  “Don't call or text me on my day off or when I am taking care of a personal situation [as] I should not have to feel like I'm on call”
-  “Have departmental field trips for team building that help both mentally and physically”
-  “Team-building exercises and team de-stressing activities”

Ensure there is a Sufficient Number of Qualified Staff





Staff operate on the front lines with our students, drive and support our backbone operations, and ensure the safety, security, and functionality of our buildings and grounds. Accordingly, they expressed concerns about ensuring that staffing is sufficient for meeting the goals of the department. In regards to ensuring appropriate staffing, respondents explained that the College needs to “reduce [the] workload”, “encourage staff to complete their tasks during their assigned hours”, and ensure that “the work [is] distributed more accurately.”

Staff also commented on the hiring process. Providing some thoughtful statements, respondents implore the College to “[Employ] staff that are genuinely interested in working with and helping students” and to “maintain staff [because] vacancies and shifts can lead to an increase in workload for extended periods of time such as 6 months or longer.” There was also a concern about role confusion and, as such, the recommendation that “job descriptions [remove] the expectation that team means working on projects outside of your skill set or job description.”

Ensure that Staff Experience Recognition and Equity

Staff members also offered comments on the degree to which the departmental culture enhances their work experience. In addition to a request for empowerment and the ability to “use the creative side of the brain”, there were numerous comments about a lack of equitable treatment and a failure to appropriately recognize and appreciate staff contributions. In regards to equity, concerns were raised that departments do not “treat everyone equally”, “allow for compensation when one staff member may need more support”, or “provide clear information on each staff role, and divide the work evenly.”

In addressing the lack of recognition and appreciation, respondents expressed frustration with the current state in their departments. Comments include:

-  “When you give your input on a project [people should] give you due credit for it”
-  “Acknowledge me and the service I provide”
-  “[Offer] recognition for going above and beyond”
-  “[I want] to be recognized not only by seniority but also by rank”





An interesting comment from an individual who appeared to be happy with his/her current leadership was a desire to recognize management and to “[keep] management happy so they stay.”

QUESTION 21 – INSIGHT REGARDING RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION

Question 21 asked respondents to comment on their feelings about recognition and appreciation at BMCC. There were 40 comments to the question and among the most common words and phrases emerging from the word map were appreciation, recognition, department, exceptional, nice, students, and administration.




Recognition is Most Valuable when Provided Formally

“I received an award this year that took me by complete surprise and really showed me that at least someone was noticing my work and effort. This was NOT from the department, but from the college. It means/meant a great deal to me.” Among the most important factors for retaining staff is recognition and appreciation from executive leadership. Individuals were very appreciative of the College’s recognition as illustrated by the opening quote as well as the comments that “I am very thankful for my 20 years of service at BMCC recognition” and “I am always happy when the college recognizes members of the college for their years of service...it is always very uplifting.” Staff members provided other comments and suggestions including:

-  “Some additional recognition like quarterly awards for exceptional service may help some staff with morale”
-  “The college can provide a Recognition/Appreciation ceremony, luncheon, or event”
-  “Secretaries had a nice luncheon and [were] able to leave an hour early before a holiday...it would be nice to have that back and making employees happy”
-  “I think the college should pick one person each month from a different department (randomly) and give them a little recognition [like] a blurb in the digital magazine, free coffee & cake from the cafeteria...[and] a small pat on the back”

Respondents also suggested that BMCC could establish some formal incentives to demonstrate appreciation for staff. One staff member suggested that the College could “implement incentive programs for work excellence among all levels of staff” while another offered the option to “provide metro cards to tutors.” These comments are even more relevant when considering that one staff member stated that “in 25 years I have never gotten a raise from my department.”

In addition to formal ceremonies and incentives, staff noted that opportunities for advancement provide tangible displays of recognition and appreciation. Comments include:

-  “I love taking on new challenges and I believe I am a hard worker, however, I feel like there is no growth in my field”
-  “If I were recognized/appreciated I would be given opportunity to advance with administrated guidance, [however] I get neither”
-  “Faculty who show extraordinary leadership should be given opportunities to participate in leadership workshops or retreats in an effort to develop them for upper administrative positions”

Perceptions of Recognition are Influenced by Leadership

Comments provided by respondents to the BMCC staff survey clearly indicate that individuals are not perceiving that either College or departmental leadership effectively recognize the work of staff members. Regarding the College administration, there were feelings that the administration is focused only on enrollment and, therefore, is not recognizing the work of staff. One individual stated

that “my only interactions with the College administration have been regarding our enrollment numbers [and] as a Student Services office member, I found this very disappointing”, while another explained that “the only reason why I am in this field is to better facilitate student support [and] I was not informed prior to my hire that my job would also entail ensuring that the ‘numbers increase’ and had I known that that was this administration's goal, I'm not sure that I would have taken this position.”

Staff also took issue with recognition efforts at the department level, but were focused on the lack of formal recognition. There was one positive comment, that “my supervisors appreciate how I show love and respect to the students and make their lives easier in starting the processes of a new life in the college”, however, other comments either reflected a lack of recognition or appreciation:

- “Every now and then I am ‘recognized’ within the office, but not really by the department leadership”
- “Please note the contributions of the staff and students of the [department, because] with no recognition or appreciation, we have to fight for everything we have or do”
- “I am valued by my colleagues because they rely on my knowledge to perform their jobs but I am not respected and appreciated”

Another member indicated that he/she is only “recognized and appreciated by my department due to the fact that I am one that has been here the longest and because of what I know.”

Recognition of Staff is not Evenly or Equitably Demonstrated




“I only slightly agree on the above [question] since I have not experienced appreciation or recognition, but I am hopeful that I and the department will for its efforts.” A recurring theme throughout the survey is a perceived lack of equitability regarding recognition. While some individuals’ views about the lack of recognition is based on a belief that “sometimes people fall through the cracks” others communicate an unequal structure where some individuals “are low on the totem pole.” Another explains that the formal awards and recognition ceremonies are nice, but that “outside of the staff recognition/appreciation ceremony at BMCC there are no rewards, commendations or financial merits for staff efforts.” There are also numerous comments that demonstrate a perceived lack of recognition for successfully completing their, and sometimes other’s, assignments:

- “No recognition and appreciation for my efforts and expertise...especially since I have been given responsibilities that are above my pay grade”
- “We do EVERYTHING, and are expected to continue to do everything, including catching and fixing all mistakes of other offices”
- “I do not feel appreciated [and even though] I love to help people, at the same time I feel like I am being taking advantage [of]”

As a result of these perceptions, some people have become jaded as illustrated in the following statement:

“After working in BMCC for [years],...in [position] with no advancement, [there] is a clear sign that there is no indication of recognition and appreciation.”

In addition to feeling slighted by not receiving recognition for meeting and exceeding expectations, respondents indicated that they have observed individuals receiving undeserved recognition and appreciation. Some quotes include:




-  “Those who have poor performance and bad work habits are recognized”
-  “Some of my department supervisors show their appreciation for certain staff members”
-  “Inclusion is always appreciated”

QUESTION 23 – INSIGHT REGARDING PROMOTION AND ADVANCEMENT

Question 23 asked respondents to comment on their feelings about promotion and advancement at BMCC. There were 68 comments to the question and among the most common words and phrases emerging from the word map were advancement, department, promotion, opportunities, college assistants, evaluation, HEO, and salaries.

Promotion and Advancement Opportunities are Inequitable

As demonstrated throughout the survey, the perception of unfair practices and inequitable treatment is well established. Additionally, as was the case with recognition and appreciation, there are perceptions that promotion and advancement are, at times, withheld from deserving individuals while undeserving individuals, at times, are provided with these opportunities. Comments speaking to a lack of opportunities include:

-  “As previously stated, after [numerous] years of service, I am still at [position] with good performance”
-  “I think we have a lot of people with great knowledge of the school work and they deserve to move within the job area as well as better salaries”
-  “It is very difficult for staff who have been working in the department for years giving of their time, talent and expertise to be recognized for their efforts”




Regarding undeserved opportunities, one staff member explained that “too many times, people who are inexperienced, incompetent and lack concern for the department and the institutional goals and mission are placed in position of authority.” Another indicated that to get promoted, one simply has “to keep the boss happy and [even with] poor performance [they will] have a higher title and higher salary.”

Interestingly, a number of comments emerged that specifically speak to advancement opportunities for college assistants. In two instances, there were comments that compared college assistants and work study students. One individual noted that “college assistants and work study students are

limited to 20 hours [and] college assistants should not have the same limitations as work study [since] our work is far more complex” while another stated “the college assistants at BMCC feel underappreciated. We should have opportunities to work more hours and our salary should be higher than those who are work study.” Another lamented the fact that “college assistant positions vary within each department on skill sets required and responsibilities, yet advancement is not an option.”

Sufficient Professional Development Opportunities for Advancement are not Accessible

“Professional development and connecting to the larger work of the College is often a motivation for staff retention.” Respondents recognize the importance of professional development as both a resource for improving effectiveness and increasing job satisfaction. Statements like “I want to take more online classes and get certification in computer technology like Office” also indicated that there is a desire from staff to obtain more development opportunities. There is significant concern expressed in the responses to this question, however, about the lack of access to professional development. First, respondents noted that certain groups appear to be excluded from opportunities as one individual states “professional growth opportunities seem pretty much for full-timers, not adjuncts.” Secondly, there is the question of permission to attend professional development opportunities. One individual explains that “sometimes things are offered by the college, but we are unable to get ‘permission’ from our department to attend/be involved” while another states “it would be nice if there were more opportunities and if we were able to take advantage of opportunities that are provided.” Finally, there were several responses that spoke of funding as an issue, including:

-  “I’ve had exposure to the process of attending and paying [for] training, through the [College], so I’m not sure I will be taking advantage of that opportunity again”
-  “If one receives approval [for professional development] than it’s on the individual to pay for the experience and get reimbursed [and] many staff don’t have extra funds to allow for participating [so] this makes professional development not accessible”
-  “The department is supportive and accommodating [of professional development], [but] BMCC...not so much”

Providing Promotion and Advancement Opportunities for Staff is not Prioritized

“There is a caste system in the college.” This comment reflects a concern that has been voiced throughout the survey – that being inequality and uneven treatment. Respondents offered numerous comments in this section expressing the perception that advancement for staff is not an institutional priority. Staff expressed the opinions that “promotion/advancement/salary increases are not common” and that “They don’t give promotions.” Even more concerning are statements like “I feel like I’m at a dead end job” and “there’s no room for advancement.” Further highlighting the perception that advancement is not a priority, individuals commented that

- “There is no promotion or advancement opportunities...just additional job duties and promises for raises which never happen”
- “There are no clear avenues for advancement [and] it is unclear what needs to be done for someone to move”
- “I feel like there could be more improvement in regards to staff promotions. I feel like I have shown in my work that I am a good manager and can handle the work”
- “I would like to stay [in my unit], however [I] see little room for advancement in my position unless one was created for me [and] this factor has caused me to look at other higher education institutions for possible opportunities”

One individual, considering the impact of not making advancement a priority, stated “once again, opportunities for advancement are few and competitive salaries are not readily available, therefore many good people move on.”

One of the reasons that staff believe that professional development opportunities are not readily available and accessible is the perception that leadership, at all levels, are not providing the encouragement and implementing the policies and practices that make development an option for staff. While one individual indicated that “there seems to be plenty of opportunities within the CUNY system in general”, staff expressed concern about CUNY’s role in supporting professional development. Comments include:

- “I hope that changes in the PSC contract do allow for more than one HEO in a department”
- “I believe that if the work is done well why I should be penalized with a test”
- “The city has to implement more tests for promotion [as] people become overburdened with additional work with little compensation”




Staff also cited concerns about College administration’s support of professional development. Staff believe “there is a lack of supporting administration to become leaders” and state that “In order for a leader to promote, respect and encourage their team members to grow, the leader must himself/herself be knowledgeable and professional.” Staff saw similar issues within their departments, explaining that there “needs [to be] more opportunity to train in different areas of the department to build better skills.” Other comments stating the lack of support within the department include:

- “Besides applying for a totally different position, I’m not sure how one would even have a chance of promotion/advancement [since] it certainly doesn't feel as though it would be encouraged through our department leadership”
- “I am not aware that this [promotion/advancement] is even an option within my department”
- “I am part time and would like to be full time but that cannot be done according to my department”




Another reason offered by staff for why professional development opportunities are not readily accessible and available is due to the College's focus on external hiring over internal promotion. Reiterating that "it costs more to hire and train new employees", staff believe that "there should be more opportunities for internal promotion" and that "the college seems to prefer bringing in new people to promoting from within." Respondents also state that "all recruitments should first be internally done and if a fit is not found external recruitment is resorted to" and that a failure to promote "qualified staff [should never be] based on a personal dislike." Emphatically emphasizing this point, one individual offered the following comment:

"There should be more in-house promotion rather than hiring people from the outside. Promote from within first!!! This is why BMCC is losing good (unvalued) employees!!!"

Commenters also expressed frustration with the perceived lack of consistency regarding practices that influence promotion and advancement. Stating that "[the department] should take fair approaches for promotion and advancement [as] some employees are with the same title for many years [but] lack opportunities for advancement", staff offered the following critiques:

-  "Rules should be uniform for all personnel"
-  "Advancement opportunities and reviews are given to some and not to others"
-  "Evaluations are not consistently completed"

Finally, as is the case with most categories in this report, communication, or rather, lack of communication was listed as a factor impacting the accessibility of professional development. One respondent expressed concern that "I don't usually find out about promotional opportunities until after the fact" while another asked "Is there any formalized evaluation in place at BMCC...[and if so] please let me know, or at least inform our Director." Another individual shared that "while I have not participated or seen anything first hand in this area, I did hear Leadership say this was important and it was encouraged." There were also statements from staff indicating that communication is a two-way street and that there is a responsibility to find out what opportunities exist. Comments include:

-  "As I've stated before, it's also the responsibility of the staff to find out about opportunities available for him to advance in his workplace"
-  "I look forward to becoming more knowledgeable about this [since] I know you are not eligible until your third year at BMCC"
-  "The reason I chose disagree for many of this section, is not so much of a disagreement, it's more for my own lack of knowledge regarding promotion/advancement/professional development"

QUESTION 25 – INSIGHT REGARDING FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES






Question 25 asked respondents to comment on their feelings about the state of facilities and technology at the College. There were 50 comments to the question and among the most common words and phrases emerging from the word map were campus, access, space, technology, renovations, Wi-Fi, Fiterman, clean, and water.

The Buildings and Grounds can be Improved

There were numerous comments recorded about the overall condition of the main building. Noting that “things are getting better with recent renovations” there were still statements referring to ensuring that “ceilings [are not] open in the hallway”, that the College does not have “windows with duct tape” and that the College needs to “upgrade water fountains.” Referring to specific spaces, respondents “[invited] leadership to take a look at the sad state of our office in the basement” and suggested that “the Admissions Office should have been the first renovation project for BMCC, since it's the first place most visited by all that enter the building!!”

Another concern, which is a byproduct of the College’s growth, is space. Individuals expressed a desire “as a professional [to] have my own office” and noted that the College “needs more workspace/meeting space for staff/students.” Further commenting on the need for space for faculty, one respondent explained that “there is no private work area for adjuncts in the Murray Hall building.”

The topic repeated the most in reference to building repairs was the lack of consistent building temperatures. While one individual said that “the building temperature is hardly ever comfortable [as] it's either too hot or too cold”, most responses reflected the opinion that the building is always cold. Statements include:

-  “This office is FREEEEZING all year round...everyone has to have coats/sweaters on throughout the entire department”
-  “Personal heaters are being used in many offices, as we would likely get sick without them”
-  “Now that it's spring and nearing summer, it's much colder, as the unnecessary AC is ALWAYS blasting in an already 60 degree room”
-  “It's usually quite chilly in the main building”
-  “Sometimes it is very cold and there are times when the water in the faucet is freezing”





In addition to comments about the building, there were a few comments about the outdoor space at the College. Looking to create a more inviting College exterior, one respondent suggested that BMCC “be creative and make our outdoor community spaces gardens to community.” Another individual suggested that a more attractive exterior appearance would provide a respite for faculty and staff.

“The outdoor spaces in the main building would benefit tremendously from a little landscaping, strategic gardening to create a comfortable haven for our students, faculty and staff to escape the overcrowded building.”





College Technology can be Improved

“The College is very good when it comes to the facilities/technological resources.” “Technological resources are good and adequate.” “I love the new computers.” “IT rocks.” Although this category was created and named according to concerns regarding technology, it is important to note that positive comments were also provided.



Respondents provided a number of comments reflecting frustration with certain aspects of the College’s technological infrastructure and support. Individuals with teaching responsibilities stated that “I don't know what insight I can offer except to say how frustrating it is to go into a classroom and the technology just doesn't work and wires are unplugged by either other faculty or the techs” and “technology should be the least of our worries [when] we go into the classroom to use the technology.” Respondents also offered multiple comments regarding College and CUNY systems including:

-  “A real single sign [on] would make such a difference”
-  “The BMCC portal is problematic and SharePoint is difficult to use”
-  “It is too much to have to navigate the BMCC Portal, CUNYFirst, and Degreeworks just to take care of one task in each...this should all be put in one network”
-  “They need to fix CUNYFirst”

Respondents also expressed concerns with the quality of the College Wi-Fi. Recognizing the efforts being made by the College, respondents stated that “I appreciate that BMCC keeps up to date with facilities and technology” and “I love the phone system and the Wi-Fi work well.” Other comments regarding the Wi-Fi, however, were not as positive and include:

-  “The Wi-Fi is extremely unreliable and doesn't work most of the time”
-  “BMCC secured never works, and the unsecured constantly logs you out of the system... there should be work to improve the wireless in the building”
-  “On-campus Wi-Fi is sporadic in operation and often is not working at all”
-  “On-campus Wi-Fi can have spotty reception”

Finally, individuals also spoke of technological difficulties when attempting to access technology from off-site. While one individual noted that “the off- campus email access (outlook app) is not very efficient but it gets the job done”, most comments recounted access issues experienced by the respondents. Comments include:

-  “We do not have off campus files access”
-  “I am unable to access Staff VDI off-campus”

“I do not have access to the department drive off campus, which limits work that can be done from home”

“I don't have any access to my work files off campus...it would be nice to have access”

QUESTION 28 – WHAT ARE THE THREE THINGS YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT WORKING AT BMCC?

Although not part of the final coding analysis, the responses to this question were coded to provide context to the report and further information about factors that are positively impacting the desirability of employment at the College. Individuals were asked to rank the top three things they like most about the College and the comments were gathered into categories and then counted.

Table 2: Ranking the Top Three Aspects of Working at BMCC

Voted #1	Times Chosen	Voted #2	Times Chosen	Voted #3	Times Chosen
The Students	28	Colleagues	21	Colleagues	13
Colleagues	20	Administration	13	College Culture	12
College Mission	12	College Mission	12	College Mission	8
College Culture	12	Students	11	Professional Development	7
Location	10	Flexibility	9	Job Responsibilities	7
		College Culture	9		

QUESTION 29 – WHAT ARE THE THREE THINGS YOU LIKE LEAST ABOUT WORKING AT BMCC?









Although not part of the final coding analysis, the responses to this question were coded to provide context to the report and further information about factors that are negatively impacting the desirability of employment at the College. Individuals were asked to rank the top three things they like least about the College and the comments were gathered into categories and then counted.

Table 3: Ranking the Top Three Worst Aspects of Working at BMCC

Voted #1	Times Chosen	Voted #2	Times Chosen	Voted #3	Times Chosen
Facilities	21	Facilities	20	Facilities	13
Salary	13	Professional Development	9	Salary	8
Service to Students	7	Promotion	7	Service to Students	6
Professional Development	7	Recognition	7	Professional Development	6
Communication	7	Salary	6	Communication	6
Recognition	7				

FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS






This section of the report provides the results of the final coding process described in the methodology. Through an analysis of the selective codes from each question, eight overarching, College-wide themes emerged. These themes include the following:

-  There is a Need to Address Inequities and Improve Perceptions of Inequality
-  The Condition of Facilities is Negatively Impacting Perceptions of the Work Environment
-  Ineffective Communication is Negatively Impacting Perceptions of the College
-  Address Impressions of Ineffective College Leadership and Management at the College
-  Address Impressions of Ineffective Department Leadership and Unhealthy Departmental Climates
-  Ensure Consistency, Clarity, and Communication of Policies and Procedures
-  Identify and Address Elements Negatively Impacting the Work Environment
-  Identify and Mediate Behaviors and Actions Incongruent with the Mission

Rather than restate the quotes that were included within the question by questions results, this section of the document is designed to provide the final, College-wide codes based on additional analysis of the final question by question codes.

THERE IS A NEED TO ADDRESS INEQUITIES AND IMPROVE PERCEPTIONS OF INEQUALITY






Perceptions of inequality, inequity, preferential treatment, and exclusion were identified throughout the report. Respondents offered opinions on the impact of the inequality that included lack of promotions and advancement, lack of recognition for deserving staff, and lack of professional development opportunities. As a result of the coding process, the following were the themes associated with perceptions of inequality:

-  Inappropriate and Unequal Treatment of Staff Members
-  Recognition of Staff is not Evenly or Equitably Demonstrated
-  Promotion and Advancement Opportunities are Inequitable
-  Sufficient Professional Development Opportunities for Advancement are not Accessible
-  Feelings of Exclusion Prevent Full Impact of Planning

THE CONDITION OF FACILITIES IS NEGATIVELY IMPACTING PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT




The building at 199 Chambers Street, which was the focus of much of the commentary, is a very large facility that is under significant strain from the thousands of facility, staff, and students who occupy this space. Despite its tremendous amount of square footage, it is substantially undersized when considering the sheer number of individuals who utilize it. Additionally, some commenters

noted that the size, overuse, and lighting are part of the reason that the facility is given poor marks. Despite a general understanding of these issues, there were numerous negative comments regarding the impact of the facility on job satisfaction. As a result of the coding process, the following were the themes associated with negative perceptions of the facilities:

-  The Buildings and Grounds can be Improved
-  Perceptions that the Building is not Clean
-  The College Infrastructure is Reducing Job Satisfaction
-  Enhance the Atmosphere and Facilities
-  Provide Spaces and Services that Promote Work/Life Balance






INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IS NEGATIVELY IMPACTING PERCEPTIONS OF THE COLLEGE

Communication is a broad and potentially nebulous term, however, it is also a construct that is central to an effective organization. If staff were asked at any college in the country to name one of the primary issues at their institution, they would undoubtedly identify communication. It should also be noted that communication requires interaction from the sender and receiver, so there may be perceptions of miscommunication when, in actuality, there may simply be a lack of listening. Still, communication can always be improved and BMCC should examine avenues for improvement. As a result of the coding process, the following were the themes associated with negative perceptions associated with communication:

-  Significant Communication Issues at All levels
-  Lack of Effective Communication Negatively Impacts Perceptions of Governance
-  Ineffective Communication Impacts Staff Understanding of Vision and Priorities

ADDRESS IMPRESSIONS OF INEFFECTIVE COLLEGE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

One of the themes that emerged throughout the report were concerns about the effectiveness of College leadership. While some of the concerns centered on management abilities and skills, others dealt with shared governance, lack of recognition, policy incoherence, and cultural/structural issues. Given the responsibility and accountability of College leadership in ensuring achievement of the mission, institutional compliance, and maintenance of a healthy culture, addressing these perceptions is important. As a result of the coding process, the following were the themes associated with negative perceptions about the College leadership:

-  Concerns about the Effectiveness of Administration and Staff
-  Potential for Administration to Overcome Ineffective Leadership
-  Prevalence of Institutional Structural Issues
-  The College Council is Underleveraged
-  Opportunities exist for Administration to Improve Governance Perceptions

- Ineffective Leadership Diminishes Job Satisfaction
- Ensure that Administration and Staff Support Work-Life Balance
- Perceptions of Recognition are Influenced by Leadership

ADDRESS IMPRESSIONS OF INEFFECTIVE DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP AND UNHEALTHY DEPARTMENTAL CLIMATES

Staff live out their work lives in their departments and, therefore, dealing with perceptions of climate or leadership issues at this level is essential to student and College success. Throughout the report, there were numerous examples of unhelpful behaviors, attitudes, and actions from departmental leaders reported by the staff. Since the department is the level responsible for ensuring that day-to-day College responsibilities are met, it is imperative that actions be taken to improve the perceptions of leadership and climate in the departments. It should also be noted, with recognition, that there were enough examples of effective leadership to develop a code highlighting the positive leadership approaches occurring in some departments. These could be examined with the expectation of expanding these effective practices and approaches across the College. As a result of the coding process, the following were the themes associated with negative perceptions about the departmental leadership and climate:

- Negative Impacts on Departments Resulting from Leadership
- Departments are Committed to Effectiveness
- Opportunities to Strengthen the Perception of Departmental Leadership
- Opportunities to Improve Departmental Climates
- Improve the Departmental Climate and Surroundings

ENSURE APPROPRIATENESS, CLARITY, AND COMMUNICATION OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES









Respondents indicated that there are a number of institutional practices negatively impacting their job satisfaction and perception of the work environment. They also indicated that there are important and needed policies that have not been developed as of yet. As a result of the coding process, the following were the themes associated with negative perceptions about the institutional policies and practices:

- Institutional Practices that Reduce Workplace Satisfaction
- Develop Clear, Concise Work-Life Balance Policies

IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS ELEMENTS NEGATIVELY IMPACTING THE WORK ENVIRONMENT








This is a very broad category due to all of the various areas and issues that impact perceptions of the work environment. The comments that helped establish this category include the nature of work, level of inter-departmental collaboration, positivity of work environment, impressions of technology, and support provided through salary, benefits, and available technology. As a result of the coding

process, the following were the themes associated with the elements impacting perceptions of the work environment:

-  College Technology can be Improved
-  Collaboration and Positive Work Relationships Shape Job Satisfaction
-  The Nature and Structure of the Work Impacts Job Satisfaction
-  Improve the Benefits Staff Receive for Working at BMCC
-  Ensure there is a Sufficient Number of Qualified Staff
-  Ensure that Staff Experience Recognition and Equity
-  Ensure that Staff Feel Welcome and Valued
-  Opportunities Exist to Increase Investment in Budgeting and Planning

IDENTIFY AND MEDIATE BEHAVIORS AND ACTIONS INCONGRUENT WITH THE MISSION

Respondents clearly indicated throughout the survey that they understand and support the mission of the College. There were numerous statements that indicated that serving students and observing student success were among the main reasons individuals enjoy their jobs. There were a series of issues, however, that in the view of the staff, prevent the College from fully realizing its' important mission. As a result of the coding process, the following were the themes associated both with support for the mission as well as the behaviors and actions incongruent with mission achievement:

-  Issues Around Workplace Cultural at All Levels
-  Complex Institution with a Changing Culture
-  Institutional Focus on Supporting a Diverse Student Population
-  Inability to Effectively meet Student Needs
-  Issues are Preventing Achievement of the Mission
-  The College is Moving Towards Achievement of the Mission
-  Providing Promotion and Advancement Opportunities for Staff is not Prioritized

CONCLUSION

“I am happy to see surveys like this which will help to begin to address these issues and overall make BMCC a great place to workfor everyone.” This quote helps summarize why this survey is important. It demonstrates an institutional commitment to understanding staff perceptions regarding the desirability of employment at BMCC. With nearly 300 respondents representing numerous job classifications, the results represent a broad specter of opinions from a diverse pool of respondents.

Simply conducting the survey and writing reports, however, is not enough. The College has a significant amount of data to help address perceptions of job satisfaction and the elements that are negatively impacting these perceptions. BMCC has established improving the work environment as an institutional priority and this data will allow the College to move forward in making progress.

In conclusion, it must be noted that the information provided in this study comes from a qualitative analysis of perceptions and opinions. As such, the information represents accurate recollections of events as well as honest feelings, however, one should not look at the information from the perspective of correct or incorrect. Certainly there will be information that is not accurate and not everything in the document can or should be addressed, but, again, the information is based on personal opinions and emotional reactions. The report provides a deep analysis that when examined in conjunction with the quantitative report will provide a comprehensive understanding of staff opinions on job desirability. Taken together, the information will provide an opportunity for data influenced decision-making as well as tangible evidence of BMCC’s commitment to College staff.