

A message from Dr. Janet Morrison



COVID Employee Engagement Survey results

December 18, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Like most everyone else at Sheridan, I'm looking forward to the coming break. Before we all head off for a very well-deserved holiday, however, I want to share the results of the second run of our employee engagement survey, which closed on November 26.

Consistent with the first wave in May, over 1,100 people participated, which provided us with a healthy sample size. Thank you for leaning in and sharing your input; this data will continue to inform our actions and planning.

Key findings

Several good news stories emerge from the data. Most notably:

- **Sentiment around remote work has improved** (85% have a place to work comfortably, without distraction; 83% are able to collaborate effectively; and 82% have the resources needed to do their job well)
- **Employees are engaged** (93% understand what's expected of them on the job; 89% feel the work they do is just as valuable now as it was before; 78% feel motivated to do their best work every day)
- **Certain stressors have decreased since the first wave** (10% drop in people worried about losing their job; 4% drop in the need for additional training to perform a job well)
- **Employees are more positive about the transition and response** (82% feel the college has managed the transition well, an increase of 8%; 77% feel Sheridan has responded appropriately to employee needs, an increase of 4%; 74% feel senior leaders have provided a clear direction for the future, an increase of 6%)
- **Our pandemic communications are appreciated** (87% feel the frequency is right, an increase of 6%; 81% feel that senior leaders are open and transparent, an increase of 5%; 77% are happy with our communications, 75% feel the content is relevant and 78% agree the level of detail is appropriate – all of which are on par with wave one results)
- On a new question asked during this round, we learned that **employees agree that some benefits have been realized since March** (52% report being able to spend more time outdoors; 47% have found an improvement in their amount of personal time; 45% feel their productivity has increased; and 44% report an increase in collaboration with their peers)

The results also show areas of concern. Most notably:

- **Fewer feel that work-life balance is manageable** (57% feel it is difficult, an increase of 12%; 67% feel workload is manageable, which has dropped by 6%)
- **Stress and anxiety are a concern** (63% report that anxiety and worry have risen since March; 55% feel they have more work-related stress or anxiety now than earlier in the pandemic)
- **Fewer report check-ins by their managers** (59% reported regular check ins on well-being, a decrease of 7%)
- **Employees are tired and feeling negative physical effects** (while this was another new question, employees were asked to rate how they felt now compared to March. We learned that 54% report an increase in fatigue; 51% report an increase in neck, back or other physical pain; and 50% report sleep disruption)

When compared to our 2019 employee engagement baseline data, a number of positive shifts continue to emerge, specifically:

- **Motivation to do one's best work is trending upward** (Wave 2 results show an increase of 25% in sentiment over 2019 baseline)
- **There's a strong recognition of the openness and transparency of communications** (37% increase over baseline)
- **Employees feel more strongly that they have the resources to do their job well** (37% increase)
- **Employees feel that senior leaders provide a clear direction for the future of Sheridan** (31% increase)

Surviving the pandemic fog

As I've said from the outset: this pandemic is a marathon, not a sprint. The adrenaline-fueled days of our early crisis response are over. Amidst a second wave, rising case numbers and a backdrop of evident fatigue, we must continue to channel our endurance, stamina, and resilience. Finding balance is key; each of us must remain personally focused on that goal. I remain very open to feedback about how Sheridan – your employer and learning community – can better support those efforts.

I commit that we will continue to make evidence-informed decisions to better understand how we might extend existing supports. I'm under no illusion that flipping the calendar from December to January will magically resolve concerns, but I am hopeful that our holiday shut-down will afford everyone at Sheridan time to rest and rejuvenate.

With 2021 around the corner, I believe there is much to celebrate. First and foremost, Sheridan has navigated this unfathomable crisis together, with kindness and grace. Further, we've always put the needs of our learners first. Those two things alone fill me with pride and joy.

I hope you share my sense of bounded optimism for 2021 as we continue to live out our organizational purpose, innovate, and lay the foundation that will help us emerge stronger and even better positioned to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.

Warmly,

Janet Morrison, PhD
President and Vice Chancellor

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