

IT Summary of Faculty/Staff Dissatisfaction Comments (Question 86)

Administration (*Refer FSS/86/01 – FSS/86/04*)

Faculty and staff reported dissatisfaction with administration at all levels, from the President down to Department Chairs. There is uncertainty as to how the administration decides on change and budget cuts with resources being squandered on lavish administrative expenses. Sinking morale in the university was reported as a result of unprofessional behavior, negative attitudes, a corporate mentality, and the culture of privilege among the administration. Lack of transparency, poor communication between administration and faculty, and the ineffectual marketing campaign also contributed to faculty/staff dissatisfaction.

The President was specifically criticized for poor leadership and promotion of self-interest at the expense of the university, while the Board of Trustees has been held responsible for inconsistent and ineffective decision-making. Dissatisfaction with the College of Technology Dean and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences has been explicitly reported. The 'Chairs for Life' concept has been quoted as "the root of negative policies and attitudes at ISU."

Compensation and Benefits (*Refer FSS/86/05 – FSS/86/07*)

Non-competitive salaries and inequity in compensation have been reported by faculty/staff, especially at the junior/adjunct level. Dissatisfaction was noted with flat percentage salary increases, pay differentials between administration and faculty/staff, and graduate assistant stipends. Inadequate travel money for conferences and lack of rewards for research and publications were also reported.

In addition, the Pay-for-Performance process was reported as being virtually non-existent. It is perceived as being divisive and departmentally based, thereby killing morale and fostering hard feelings.

With regard to benefits, faculty/staff expressed displeasure with the health insurance and the health plan suggesting that these should cater to individual health care needs, and not gear only towards older faculty. Lack of support for Special Purpose Faculty and non-representation of temporary employees were also causes of dissatisfaction.

Direction/Focus of University (*Refer FSS/86/08*)

Faculty reported frustration over the conflicting directives from higher administration, i.e. stricter research, tenure requirements, and "service" while the university places more emphasis on teaching. Confusion in the mission, lack of shared vision among administration and faculty, and poor planning in program change resulted in dissatisfaction. Faculty/staff perceive that too many initiatives are pushed through without thought instead of focusing on goals that ISU can attain.

Other (Refer FSS/86/09 – FSS/86/13)

Other causes of dissatisfaction reported by faculty/staff included the requirements for paperwork, quality of students, workload, non-collegiality and complacency, and over-emphasis on experiential learning. The time spent writing reports and excessive paperwork was quoted as seemingly “designed only to feed the administrative system to itself”. Faculty also made observations on the dramatic decline in the quality of incoming students and lax academic and ethical standards, particularly in undergraduate education. The inequitable workload with no extra recognition or reduced expectations was another point of discontent with understaffing reported in some cases. According to faculty/staff, non-collegiality through seemingly conscious fragmentation and alienation as well as complacency among the citizens of Terre Haute and ISU creates a weak sense of workplace community. Finally, experiential learning, although valuable when appropriate, is a cause for dissatisfaction when it is enforced at the expense of traditional and time-tested practices. Primary resources spent on experiential learning at times of declining enrollment and budget cuts were reported as irresponsible.