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Retaining the Essential During the Great Resignation: Intentional Practices in Improving Employee Engagement Within the Division of Student Affairs

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Consultancy Project & Report

Organization:	Gardner-Webb University College of Education
Project Title:	RETAINING THE ESSENTIAL DURING THE GREAT RESIGNATION: INTENTIONAL PRACTICES IN IMPROVING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
Candidate:	Candice C. Dew
Consultancy Coach:	Dr. Elizabeth Jones
Defense Date:	October 27, 2022
Authorized by:	Dr. Kellie M. Dixon, Director of Student Affairs Assessment and Staff Development

Approval

This consultancy project was submitted by Candice C. Dew under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to Gardner-Webb University College of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

Dr. Elizabeth Jones, Faculty Advisor
Gardner-Webb University

Date

Dr. Kellie M. Dixon, Site Advisor
North Carolina A&T State University

Date

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I want to thank God, for without him, I am not sure where I would be. I want to thank my family for staying with me and reminding me who I am and to whom I belong. Mom, thank you for pushing me beyond my perception of myself. Thank you for all your sacrifices to break generational curses to raise two strong Black queens. To my little, since the day I laid eyes on you, you gave me purpose. I strive to show you that it gets better, and you have no one else to prove anything to but yourself. I am so proud to be your big. Lastly, to my cohort, project coach, and peers, thank you for listening and guiding me on this journey. This is only the beginning.

Abstract

INTENTIONAL PRACTICES IN IMPROVING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS. Dew, Candice C., 2022: Consultancy Project, Gardner-Webb University.

The COVID-19 pandemic stirred up trends in the higher education industry that impacted many student affairs employees to the point that many had chosen to retire early or transition to another type of industry for employment. This exodus of employees turned into what is now called the Great Resignation. Organizations benefit from employees having pride in what they do, but what happens when they start to feel undervalued or disposable? Employee engagement is a substantial factor that affects workplace retention. Many student affairs employees have either changed their career paths or retired early in the past few years due to the excessive use of "other duties as assigned" to balance employee gaps within various departments or unclear practices brought on by the pandemic. Having those shared experiences of seeing coworkers reluctant to return to work or change labor markets altogether awakened dialogues about the importance of employees' physiological, mental, spiritual, and financial health. This project seeks to understand how higher education leaders can intentionally utilize employee engagement principles and strategies within the student affairs division in higher education. The goal is to analyze employee engagement within student affairs and determine what theories, techniques, and resources are necessary to maintain a caring culture as an equitable practice that will increase employee engagement and satisfaction. The research for this review topic is based on the Great Resignation and intentional workplace principles that can positively impact employee engagement within student affairs.

Keywords: student affairs, higher education, essential employee, employee engagement

and satisfaction, intentionality, and care culture

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project Purpose

The purpose of this project was to analyze and implement strategies that will improve student affairs employees' engagement and satisfaction amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The project aims to address critical issues identified within the participating organization's 2020 University System Employee Engagement Survey, specifically for the division of student affairs. As part of the University System's strategic plan, the employee engagement survey was held previously in 2018 and will be repeated every 2 years at all institutions within this system. The following were areas of concern from the 2020 University System Employee Engagement Survey:

- communication (same from 2018 survey results)
- fairness
- collaboration (same from 2018 survey results)
- shared governance (same from 2018 survey results)

This Consultancy Project collaborated closely with the Partnering Organization host and their Professional Development Advisory Team to develop a strategy to enhance employee engagement and satisfaction for their student affairs division. As the chair of this committee, my goal was to support the Professional Development Advisory Team to focus on organizing, incentivizing, and planning learning opportunities to encourage professional development for all student affairs employees while acknowledging and supporting their differentiated needs, which can help mitigate employee dissatisfaction.

Terms and Definitions

Essential Employees	Essential employees such as health services, university law enforcement, facilities, and residential housing provide onsite support for students who must remain on campus (Merriam & Bierema, 2013).
Nonessential Employees	A nonessential worker is anyone who works in a job that is not critical during a crisis. Because their duties do not affect health and safety infrastructures, nonessential workers are not required to maintain business operational functions during natural disasters (Merriam & Bierema, 2013).
2020 University System Employee Engagement Survey	The System Office compares systemwide results to the aggregate results of 4-year public UNC institutions. The survey's results assist the System Office in identifying issues, such as those related to human resource policies, and advocating for state-level improvements. Each university's leaders are expected to use their results to develop action plans that capitalize on their strengths while addressing areas that require improvement (see Appendix A).

1.2 Project Qualification

For this project, I searched for an opportunity to transition my skills in student engagement and retention to employee engagement and culture. I completed this project at a higher education institution because I wanted to understand how universities engaged their essential and nonessential employees during the pandemic. The project host was the director of student affairs assessment and staff development of my partner organization. The project host assisted me with streamlining the assessment side of employee engagement. Understanding assessment and employee development allowed me to gain new knowledge and comfortability in engagement metrics. After reviewing the project expectations, we agreed on the parameters for the project that related to improving overall engagement within the division of student affairs. Developing these improvement strategies was based on the biannual University System survey report from 2020. The survey report expressed a need to improve the following areas within the division: collaboration, communication, shared governance, and fairness. All but one of the areas was a reoccurring concern from the 2018 University System survey report. Cultivating a caring and engaging environment for employees during crises is essential because it provides them with a foundation of holistic support as they manage day-to-day operations and work-life balance. The significant resources for this project included the Professional Development Advisory Team and human resources.

The division of student affairs includes the following 19 departments:

Campus Recreation Center	Student Center
Counseling Services	Office of Leadership and Civic Engagement
Dean of Students	Student Government Association
Greek Life	TRIO Student Support Services
Health Services	Student University Activities Board
Housing & Residence Life	TRIO Programs
Intramural Sports	University Events Center
University Band	Upward Bound Program
Office of Intercultural Engagement	Veteran & Military Affairs
Student Activities	Student Center

By partnering with this organization, I became the chair and content expert. While chairing this committee, my role was to implement transformative ways to improve the engagement of student affairs employees during the pandemic and help the division reach its improvement goals. This project piqued my interest because it allowed me to expound on my adult learning and talent management of employees with various career band levels. Throughout this project, I enhanced my visibility and credibility as a visionary, coach, and student affairs professional. This opportunity was a vehicle for establishing valuable networking connections and confidence that will help broaden my knowledge of student affairs and university system expectations.

1.3 Project Complexity and Impact Assessment

As the chair of the Professional Development Advisory Team, I used the Project Assessment Matrix (see Appendix B) to assist with understanding the project's scope,

magnitude, and overall objectives. To complete the Project Assessment Matrix, I reviewed the feedback from each member of the Professional Development Advisory Team, which provided valuable insight into their various engagement experiences within their individual departments in the division of student affairs, and reviewed the data summary from the 2018 University System Employee Engagement Survey.

1.3.1 Project Complexity

The project complexity matrix criteria included delivery timescales, stakeholders, operational change, contract complexity, in-house expertise, and dependencies. It was found that this would be a major project because of the following:

- It will take at least 18 months to complete.
- Significant operational change and restructure of processes and work areas.
- The Professional Development Advisory Team completed similar strategies to improve engagement but never during a pandemic where nonessential employees worked from home.

1.3.2 Project Impact

The project impact matrix criteria included strategic contribution, return on investment, and operational effectiveness. It was found that factors such as communication, fairness, collaboration, and shared governance significantly impact the Partnering Organization. Depending on how well the employees respond to the strategies, organizational improvements will be seen within the next 2 years.

1.4 Project Charter Information

A project charter is a declaration of the project's scope, objectives, and participants. It initiates by defining the shared responsibilities and roles of the participants and highlights the project's goals and objectives. The charter also identifies the key stakeholders and the project manager's responsibility. The project participants for this project charter included the project host, the director of student affairs assessment and staff development, and team members from the Partnering Organization, the Professional Development Advisory Team (see Appendix C).

2. Project Objectives

2.1 Outline of Partnering Organization's Objectives

2.1.1. Objectives

The Partnering Organization took on this project because it needed strategies to effectively engage and improve the satisfaction of the essential and nonessential employees within the division of student affairs during the pandemic. Having to factor in the pandemic and its continuous policy changes provided more insight into employee engagement and satisfaction than ever. According to Hastings (2018), the more engaged employees are at their workplace, the happier they are and the more productive the work department is. Developing and executing an effective strategic plan for improvements will improve employee retention, increase productivity, and enhance employees' sense of belonging to the university.

Identifying employee engagement needs is one of the ways the Partnering Organization can obtain division-wide data about its essential and nonessential employees. Understanding how essential and nonessential employees perceive their engagement experiences, especially during times of crisis, can provide valuable insight into the division's communication, fairness, collaboration, and shared governance practices.

2.1.2 Success Criteria

The success of the Partnering Organization's project is measured by the following:

- improvement in 2020 University System Employee Engagement Survey
- increased campus and community collaboration and communication
- active meeting attendance and participation
- improved employee engagement

2.2 Student's Personal Leadership Objectives

2.2.1 Objectives

- To assist in the development and growth of student affairs employees in self-awareness, self-efficacy, mental health, work-life balance, and self-preservation.
- To increase workplace belonging and connectedness to assist student affairs employees in reaching their full potential and employee competencies.

2.2.2 Success Criteria

The success of my personal leadership objectives was measured by the following:

- improvement in 2020 University System Employee Engagement Survey which included belief statements categorized by topics such as communication, collaboration, professional development, employee well-being, and COVID-19 response
- quality of improved processes and resources
- number of participants in professional development and educational sessions
- number of active participants in planning and committee sessions
- increased sense of belonging and connectedness to the university

3. Project Scope

3.1 Definitive Scope of Work

As the chair of the Professional Development Advisory Team, I was responsible for developing a strategic plan for employee engagement of essential and nonessential student affairs employees during the pandemic. Included in that plan were a professional development curriculum, planned retreats, and other strategies to improve communication, fairness, collaboration, and shared governance.

3.2 Project Benefits

Increased employee engagement and satisfaction for essential and nonessential employees in the division of student affairs, as well as improved communication, fairness, collaboration, and shared governance, would be tangible benefits of this project.

3.3 SMART Goals

SMART GOALS	Metrics for Improvements	Deadlines
Goal 1: To create an effective employee retention strategy that will increase employee satisfaction and, ultimately, decrease turnover rates.	Improvements will be measured by increased engagement in weekly development activities, increased participation, division check-in survey, two wellness retreat analyses, and the next university system report.	January 10, 2022
Goal 2: To investigate and implement effective strategies for professional development and onboarding program.	Improvements will be measured by increased engagement in weekly development activities, increased campus partner engagement, increased communication with supervisor and peers, increased participation, division check-in survey, and next university system report.	October 1, 2021
Goal 3: Implement intentional wellness strategy for division	Improvements will be measured by two wellness retreat analyses and the next university system report.	December 17, 2022

4. Disciplined Inquiry

4.1 Introduction and Theoretical Framework

Employee engagement is a hot topic in student affairs. Employee engagement integrates organizational traits of fairness, shared governance, communication, and collaboration. This project sought to resolve the following problem: How can the division improve employee engagement? Both causal-comparative and ethnography were the theoretical frameworks used for this research. In research by Lowry (2001), the causal-comparative technique aims to find causal connections between events and contexts. Ethnography was the most effective qualitative research method for capturing and interpreting employee responses to their current engagement experiences during the pandemic. According to Lillis (2008), ethnography is a method in which a researcher investigates a specific social or cultural group to gain a better understanding of underlying or undefined issues. Using these methods helps define deeper-rooted employee engagement-related issues within the division. These frameworks helped discover significant differences in employee engagement levels between essential and nonessential employees.

4.2 Hypothesis

This project indicates the following hypothesis: There is a significant difference in employee engagement levels between essential and nonessential employees.

4.3 Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- What is the difference between essential and nonessential employee engagement during the pandemic?
- What does engagement look like within different departments?
- How do intentional workplace principles influence employee engagement and satisfaction?

4.4 Literature Review

Understanding best principles for engagement, satisfaction, and well-being in the workplace during the pandemic needs to be viewed with an equitable lens for employees of all levels, especially those who are considered essential employees (see Appendix D).

4.5 Methodology

I utilized mixed methods to capture and interpret employee answers to the current employee engagement. For this study, I used both quantitative and qualitative. I reviewed data from the 2020 University Systems Employee Engagement Surveys and compared similarities and differences with the surveys from the two divisional wellness retreats.

For my quantitative research, I used the causal-comparative research approach to see a significant difference in employee engagement and satisfaction between essential and nonessential employees. Causal-comparative research looks at the link between variables in studies where the independent variable has already happened, making the study descriptive rather than experimental. In research from Salkind (2016), causal-comparative research, like all other types of qualitative research, necessitates using reliable tools and the ability to derive correct findings. The following surveys were used for this process:

- 2020 University System Employee Engagement Survey (see Appendix A)
- Two Virtual Wellness Retreats post- and pre-survey (beginning and end of the semester)

I utilized word clouds to retrieve real-time feedback from employees about engagement and other pandemic-related topics such as wellness, stress, fear, and anxiety in the workplace. After the surveys were completed, I pulled themes for the word cloud surveys and key quotes that were submitted from the pre-retreat surveys. Reeves et al. (2008) expressed that inductive thematic analysis of ethnographic data is studied to discover and categorize themes and important topics that emerge from the data. Using ethnography as a qualitative allowed me to construct a narrative of the employees' engagement experiences within the division. Observing the interactions at the wellness retreat and reviewing the feedback from the Professional Development Advisory Team allowed me to use overt and covert observations. Examining student affairs employees in various

group settings provided a closer look into what fairness, communication, collaboration, and shared governance looked like within the division.

5. Continuous Improvement Systems

This project aims to get to the heart of the issues concerning employee engagement during the pandemic. Developing adequate support-based resolutions for continuous improvement processes corresponds to supporting employee commitment. Based on the research for this project, recommendations were made for the Partnering Organization to seek opportunities to differentiate the root causes of the various challenges that impact essential and nonessential employees within the division of student affairs. Prior efforts to resolve the Partnering Organization's significant challenges, such as staff shadowing and sharing resources such as a list of professional development organizations and literature references related to higher education and student affairs, have been made. The retreats, survey feedback (pre- and post-retreat), and strategies implemented aided in mitigating the identified challenges for this organization and have provided continuous improvements by setting trends for progressive change within the division. The recommendations implemented for this project are listed below.

Recommendations Implemented	Concerns Addressed	Performance Indicator
1. Develop standard operating procedures	Communication, fairness, collaboration, and shared governance	100% of functional units have professionally written and established SOPs on file
2. Develop and implement a work-from-home procedure for each department within the division as it relates to day-to-day operations of the area	Communication and fairness	Procedure is distributed to all staff within the division no later than May 2021
3. Develop and implement an intentional coaching model of the performance appraisal training for supervisors and employees	Communication and shared governance	45% of staff will participate in a workshop
4. Develop and implement training and guidelines fostering high-quality collaboration efforts between employees across the division/departments	Communication, collaboration, and shared governance	100% of staff will participate in collaborative practices

6. Deliverables

6.1 To Partnering Organization From Candidate

The deliverables listed below helped create initiation that improved the issues of communication, fairness, collaboration, and shared governance. There were no deferred deliverables to the process of this project (see Appendix E).

1. Strategic Plan – To develop methods for the division of student affairs to define and prioritize actions for improving employee engagement. This plan enabled leaders to identify the key factors that influence employee engagement, identify employees' triggering hygiene and motivating factors in the workplace, and create unique initiatives to address to mitigate or eliminate those issues (see Section 5).
2. Assessment Plan – To better gauge the level of equity and fairness distributed within departments, identify and rank significant employee dissatisfaction, motivating factors, and expectations from the employees' perspective of fulfillment within the workplace.
3. Professional Development Curriculum – To provide holistic guidelines for developing the knowledge, skills, practices, and self-efficacy that student affairs employees require to assist their departments in meeting institutional goals.

7. Communications Plan

7.1 Communications Plan Development

The Communication Plan assisted in determining who needed to be aware of and informed about the project. How frequently the information was distributed was based on the schedule set between the director and me. I had direct contact with the director of student affairs assessment and staff development and the Professional Development Advisory Team for this project. The agreed-upon plan called for me to meet with the director of student affairs assessment and staff development on Tuesday to discuss my findings and obtain information for the vice-chancellor. We held team meetings on Thursday to discuss feedback from initiatives from the previous week and project updates. Most communication for this project was completed through Zoom meetings or emails. There was also a shared drive created so I could share and save essential information with the director in a timely manner (see Appendix F).

7.2 Stakeholder Engagement Plan

For this project, we needed to have active participation, direction, and agreement from a diverse group of employees across the division to be effective. Before starting the project, the vice-chancellor of student affairs appointed the director of student affairs assessment and staff development to develop the Professional Development Advisory Team to create, initiate, and retrieve feedback from various activities to assess collaborative efforts. Any deterrence from collaboration or engagement from the leaders of each department can become a roadblock to the project's success if they do not understand or follow the project's objectives or execution plan. Getting stakeholder buy-in early from the vice-chancellor of student affairs and the director of student affairs assessment and staff development helped the project progress faster.

In research from Pandi-Perumal et al. (2015), the power-interest grid method was used to identify project stakeholders based on their power and interest. Power-interest can be assessed by understanding who has a high or low ability to affect the project and who has high or low interest by plotting stakeholders on a power-interest grid. I continued to

monitor the progress and ensured that things aligned with the plan. If anything was delayed during the project, I immediately consulted with the director to provide strategies to get things on track. Having the buy-in of the Professional Development Advisory Team was also imperative to the project. If the team felt that the recommendations were valuable to their departments, it was easier to get information disseminated to those areas.

8. Risks

8.1 Mitigation and Contingency

Risk Assessment		
Risk	*Level	Mitigation Plan (if high or medium)
There is a disconnect in communication trust and relationships which create team silos.	HIGH	Providing best principles for discussing updates and changes
Employee disengagement because of dissatisfaction can cause a trickle-down effect to the quality of service provided to the students.	LOW	Provide development opportunities of best principles and types of workplace appreciation such as pay, promotion, validation, etc. Provide time for self-directed learning and collaborative efforts within campus partners.
Employee mental health and physical health	HIGH	Educate and engage employees about workplace mental health and include mental health policies and stress management tips. Provide reasonable accommodation and resources to employees with certain high-risk conditions, even if the condition would not have previously warranted accommodation.
Lack of understanding of self-awareness from leadership	HIGH	Practice consistency throughout division. Focus on nonverbal communication and soft skills.
Lack of understanding of equity workplace practices	MEDIUM	Creating care culture best principles for the current environment that show support for essential and remote employees.
Lack of understanding of professional expectations	MEDIUM	Establish shared goals and set milestones to allow the team to gauge progress, including deliverables.
Brave and safe spaces to communicate conflict or concerns	HIGH	Provide space for focus groups or workshops to address trending issues and discuss HR policies reflecting issues such as promoting sensitivity

		and mental health issues. Also, create a way for employees to report workplace abuses without fear of retaliation.
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*High, Medium, or Low (see Appendix B)

Contingency Plan (Plan B): Taste of leadership workshops and team-building opportunities throughout the year to focus on fairness, communication, collaboration, and shared governance.
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8.2 Constraints

Due to the pandemic and work-from-home protocols, this project faced technical and environmental constraints. As pandemic cases fluctuate across campus, the division collaborates with human resources to determine the best practices. The most difficult challenge is keeping employees engaged while navigating work-life balance and supporting themselves and their families. To work around these constraints, I surveyed university partners across the state to see what kinds of individual and family support activities could be implemented. Next, I needed to figure out how to actively engage in virtual learning and development and create a virtual retreat experience that would fulfill the team building and communication exercises of a traditional face-to-face retreat. Organizations that engage their employees in these activities learn new skills, and developing themselves will improve retention and belonging.

9. Budget

A finance department is the business unit in charge of obtaining and managing funds on behalf of the division. This department manages revenue and expenses while ensuring that the organization runs efficiently. The finance department's responsibilities include analysis to improve critical strategic initiatives and the conventional roles of handling payroll, earnings, and expenditures. This project's budget was based on utilizing resources that would meet the division's goals and financial projections during the pandemic. Multiple financial options were provided to the finance department for review when planning events for the division (see Appendix F).

Services	Payment
Virtual Wellness Retreat - Summer	\$4,271.79
Virtual Wellness Retreat - Winter	\$4,233.23
Professional Development\Onboarding Manual	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$8,505.02

10. Analysis and Recommendations

After reviewing data from the employee engagement survey, wellness retreats, and other feedback from the Professional Development Advisory Team, I recommend the following:

- create a strategic plan that will allow leaders to identify the significant factors that affect employee engagement
- create an assessment plan to gauge the level of equity and fairness distributed across departments and identify and rank significant employee dissatisfaction, motivating factors, and expectations from the employees' perspectives of workplace fulfillment
- create a professional development curriculum that provides comprehensive guidelines for developing student affairs employees' knowledge, skills, practices, and self-efficacy.

11. Reflection

11.1 Professional Learning

The universe will reroute you into the places you need to be just because you have a vision of where you want to be regarding your progress. I have always taken pride in being an expert in diversity work and welcomed my role in the background in curriculum development, but this project has clarified that this is not all I have to offer. Speaking truthfully as a leader without worrying that my voice would be suppressed made me remember who I am. A change that has awakened self-awareness and preservation was inspired by how fluidly I showed up for myself and others. Being creative and diligent comes with so many intersecting identities that occasionally I think leaders forget that the powerful ones are also people. They experience fatigue, exhaustion, and even anxiety. Being a member of the Professional Development Advisory Team at my Partnering Organization allowed me to advocate for change while conveying concerns and national trends that have been emerging within the student affairs community. The capacity to be perceived as an expert enables tasks to be completed quickly and favorably by the business.

11.2 Personal Development

This project was made possible by the opportunity to collaborate and grow professionally with many people who work at various senior leadership levels in student affairs, employee engagement management, and wellness organizations. I have had the chance to learn from folks who excel at helping others and fostering open discourse, thanks to this experience. By ensuring that leaders and managers satisfy the demands of their employees in terms of achievement and equity, this program and project gave me the confidence I needed to unleash the workforce's potential and maintain employee excitement. This experience allowed me to provide employees with the tools, resources, flexible processes, and participatory mechanisms they need to carry out the company's strategy. I achieved my professional development goals by joining various leadership-based organizations during the previous 2 years. I also developed employee engagement techniques that addressed important issues like retention and satisfaction. To foster an environment of participation and all-

encompassing support for faculty, staff, and students, I mustered the courage to take advantage of more public speaking and training opportunities. Making way for more deliberate practices of diversity and cultural transformation requires aiding individuals in their motivation, development, and retention of actively engaged employees.

Appendix A

University System Employee Engagement Survey



UNC SYSTEM EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY
Core Survey Elements
Revised: 1-14-2020

The following elements are included in the UNC System Office funded portion of the survey. Institutions cannot alter these questions.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

Consider your typical day at work. For each statement, mark the response option that best describes your experience using a five-point agreement scale (*Strongly Agree, Agree, Sometimes Agree/Sometimes Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree*). Additionally, there is a *Not Applicable* response option.

1. My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.
2. I am given the responsibility and freedom to do my job.
3. My supervisor/department chair makes his/her expectations clear.
4. I am provided the resources I need to be effective in my job.
5. I understand how my job contributes to this institution's mission.
6. I am given the opportunity to develop my skills at this institution.
7. I receive feedback from my supervisor/department chair that helps me.
8. When I offer a new idea, I believe it will be fully considered.
9. I am regularly recognized for my contributions.
10. I understand the necessary requirements to advance my career.
11. I am paid fairly for my work.
12. I believe what I am told by my supervisor/department chair.
13. We have opportunities to contribute to important decisions in my department.
14. I can speak up or challenge a traditional way of doing something without fear of harming my career.
15. My supervisor/department chair regularly models this institution's values.
16. Promotions in my department are based on a person's ability.
17. Our review process accurately measures my job performance.
18. Issues of low performance are addressed in my department.
19. My supervisor/department chair is consistent and fair.
20. My supervisor/department chair actively solicits my suggestions and ideas.
21. In my department, we communicate openly about issues that impact each other's work.
22. Changes that affect me are discussed prior to being implemented.
23. People in my department work well together.
24. I have a good relationship with my supervisor/department chair.
25. Overall, my department is a good place to work.
26. I can count on people to cooperate across departments.
27. Senior leadership provides a clear direction for this institution's future.
28. My department has adequate faculty/staff to achieve our goals.
29. The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a safe and secure environment for the campus.
30. Our orientation program prepares new faculty, administration and staff to be effective.
31. The facilities (e.g., classrooms, offices, laboratories) adequately meet my needs.
32. Our senior leadership has the knowledge, skills and experience necessary for institutional success.
33. There is a good balance of teaching, service, and research at this institution.
34. This institution's benefits meet my needs.
35. Our recognition and awards programs are meaningful to me.
36. I am proud to be part of this institution.
37. Senior leadership shows a genuine interest in the well-being of faculty, administration and staff.
38. The role of faculty in shared governance is clearly stated and publicized.
39. Faculty are appropriately involved in decisions related to the education program (e.g. curriculum development, evaluation).
40. Teaching is appropriately recognized in the evaluation and promotion process.
41. Senior leadership communicates openly about important matters.
42. Faculty, administration and staff are meaningfully involved in institutional planning.
43. At this institution, we discuss and debate issues respectfully to get better results.
44. This institution's policies and practices ensure fair treatment for faculty, administration and staff.
45. At this institution, people are supportive of their colleagues regardless of their heritage or background.



UNC SYSTEM EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY
Core Survey Elements
Revised: 1-14-2020

46. Faculty, administration and staff work together to ensure the success of institution programs and initiatives.
47. My supervisor/department chair supports my efforts to balance my work and personal life.
48. Senior leadership regularly models this institution's values.
49. This institution actively contributes to the community.
50. This institution places sufficient emphasis on having diverse faculty, administration and staff.
51. There is appropriate recognition of innovative and high quality teaching.
52. We celebrate significant milestones and important accomplishments at this institution.
53. This institution's policies and practices give me the flexibility to manage my work and personal life.
54. This institution has clear and effective procedures for dealing with discrimination.
55. There is regular and open communication among faculty, administration and staff.
56. I believe what I am told by senior leadership.
57. This institution is well run.
58. There's a sense that we're all on the same team at this institution.
59. This institution's culture is special — something you don't find just anywhere.
60. All things considered, this is a great place to work.
61. My institution is committed to building a culture that actively promotes diversity and inclusion for students, faculty, and staff. (Diversity and inclusion means the intentional efforts undertaken to create an institutional culture and a working and learning environment that offers acceptance, support, and respect for a diversity of individuals.)

BENEFITS <note: some labels have changed>

Please rate your institution's benefits using the following satisfaction scale:

Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, Not Applicable.

1. Medical Insurance
2. Dental Insurance
3. Vision Insurance
4. Disability Benefits (Short-Term, Long-Term, and Supplemental)
5. Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
6. Life Insurance
7. Post-retirement Medical Benefits
8. Leave & Holidays (vacation, sick, bonus, community service, etc.)
9. Retirement Savings (TSERS, ORP, 403(b), 401(k), 457)
10. Educational Assistance Programs (tuition waiver, educational leave, etc.)
11. Overall satisfaction with benefits
12. Professional/career development programs
13. Tenure clarity and process
14. Wellness Programs
15. Physical work space conditions
16. Flexible work arrangements (Telecommuting, compressed work weeks, etc.)
17. Work/life balance programs (Relocation services, discount programs, child care programs/support, etc.)

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. What do you appreciate most about working at this institution?
2. What would make this institution a better place to work?

Appendix B

Project Matrix

Project Impact Assessment Matrix

Criteria	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4	Score 5
Strategic Contribution	None	Contributes indirectly to the org. mission	Contributes indirectly to >1 strategic themes	Contributes directly to 1 strategic theme	Contributes directly to >1 strategic theme	Very Significant strategic Impact
ROI	>5 years	4-5 years	3-4 years	2-3 years	1-2 years	<1 year
Operational Effectiveness	None	Improves work of a small group of staff < 6	Improves work of a large team of staff > 5	Improves work of whole department	Some improvement across whole organization	Significant improvement across whole organization

Project Impact Assessment Points 13 (0 – 15)

Project Complexity Matrix

Criteria	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4
Delivery Timescale (months) – 10%	1-6	6-12	12-18	> 18
Stakeholders 20%	Internal and within single organizational area	Internal across more than one business area	Mainly external	Internal and external
Operational change 15%	Very minimal	Some new processes and possible some re-training	Significant restructure of processes and work areas	Major change/ large scale restructure, outsourcing
Contract complexity 20%	No new contracts required	Single contract with known supplier	Multiple contracts with	Contract(s) with new suppliers(s)

			known suppliers	
In-house expertise 20%	Have done this before many times,	Have done this before once or twice	Have done similar before, but not the same	Have not done anything like this before
Dependencies 15%	Very minimal links with other projects	Links with other projects but little impact	Links with other projects upon which this project depends	Other projects depend upon this project

Project Complexity Matrix Points ____19____ (5 – 24)

Mark the intersection on the matrix below using an X

24															
23															
22															
21															
20															
19													X		
18															
17															
16															
15															
14															
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9															
8															
7															
6															
5															
4															
3															
2															
1															
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

Impact

	Not a Project
	Minor Project
	Medium Project
	Major Project

Matrix Result **Major Project**

Appendix C

Project Charter



Doctor of Organizational Leadership Program

CONSULTANCY PROJECT CHARTER

1. General Project Information				
Project Title:	Employee Engagement Strategic Plan (Division of Student Affairs)			
Project Host(s):	Dr. Kellie M. Dixon			
Project Sponsor (GWU):	Dr. Elizabeth Jones			
Project Manager:	Candice C. Dew	Date: 2/12/2021		
Project Description	The project manager will work alongside the project host to develop a strategic plan for employee engagement for the division of student affairs. The plan will impact 165 employees. The project manager will utilize results from the UNC system employee engagement survey, which was distributed in February 2020.			
2. Project Participants and Roles (add or delete lines as needed)				
	Name	Role	Telephone	E-mail
Project Manager:	Candice C. Dew			
Team Members:	Dr. Kellie M. Dixon	Project Host		
	Finance Dept.	Professional Development Advisory Member		
	University Band	Professional Development Advisory Member		
	Student Center	Professional Development Advisory Member		
	Office of Leadership and Civic Engagement	Professional Development Advisory Member		
	Intramural Sports	Professional Development Advisory Member		

	Counseling Services	Professional Development Advisory Member		
3. Stakeholders (e.g., those with a significant interest in or who will be significantly affected by this project)				
Vice-Chancellor of Student Affairs and the Division of Student Affairs (89+ employees)				

4. Project Purpose Statement	
<i>Project Purpose Describe the need this project addresses</i>	
The purpose of this project is to address critical issues found in the 2020 UNC system employee engagement survey specifically for the division of student affairs.	
<i>Resources Describe the resources made available by the project host for this project.</i>	
OneDrive folder and raw data from the University System employee engagement survey	
<i>Project Deliverables List the high-level "products" to be created (e.g., improved xxxx process, employee manual on yyyy)</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic Plan 2. Assessment Plan 3. Professional Development Curriculum 	
<i>Project Milestones Project significant accomplishments anticipated over the life of the project with the estimated timeline.</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentations during executive senior leadership retreat (May 2021) 2. Professional Development Curriculum (July 2021) 3. Follow-up assessments; focus groups base on new professional development plan and curriculum. 	
<i>Project SMART Objectives Include 3 to 5</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a strategic plan for professional development by April 2021 2. Create a professional development curriculum by June 2021 3. Articulate an understanding of professional development across generational differences by March 2021 4. Create and implement assessments from February to December 2021 	
<i>Major Known Risks (including significant Assumptions) Identify obstacles that may cause the project to fail.</i>	

Risk	Risk Rating (Hi, Med, Lo)
If the project host finds a new job	Hi
Lack of staff participation	Med

<p>Constraints <i>List any conditions that may limit the project team's options concerning resources, personnel, or schedule (e.g., predetermined budget or project end date, limit on number of staff that may be assigned to the project).</i></p>			
<p>COVID-19/the virtual experience and budget cuts within the division</p>			
<p>External Dependencies <i>Will project success depend on coordination of efforts between the project team and one or more other individuals or groups? Has everyone involved agreed to this interaction?</i></p> <p>Yes, this would include the leadership team.</p>			
<p>5. Communication Strategy (specify how the project manager will communicate to the Host, Sponsor, Project Team members and Stakeholders, e.g., frequency of status reports, frequency of Project Team meetings, etc.</p>			
<p>Bi-weekly meeting (Thursday) with the team and weekly meetings (Tuesdays)</p>			
<p>6. Sign-off</p>			
	Name	Signature	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Project Host			
Project Sponsor			
Project Manager			
<p>7. Notes</p>			
<p></p>			

Appendix D

Professional Literature Review

Over the past few years, the COVID-19 pandemic has stirred up trends that have heavily impacted the higher education industry and its student affairs professionals. One trend that has become prominent among student affairs employees and the students they serve is a rise in disengagement and disillusionment. According to Schroeder (2021), higher education psychologist Anthony Klotz coined this wave of events as the Great Resignation. Student affairs stated that professionals had emphasized self-reflection on their career trajectory and revolted against any workplace practices against their well-being. In research from Gilbert (2021), student affairs professionals are now being more vocal about feeling drained from a lack of consideration of safety concerns, work-life balance, and employment stability. The lack of intentional, inclusive, and equitable considerations during such a global shift in societal norms has been a major contributing factor to how disillusioned employees have become within their current organizational climate (Schroeder, 2021). It is essential that institutions, both private and public, uphold best employee engagement practices to support and retain student affairs professionals because they analyze and implement strategies that improve institutional and student performance.

It is more important than ever for leadership within the higher education industry to understand the heavy load that student affairs professionals manage to meet the needs of their students and institutions. The best way to emphasize that understanding is through engagement. In research from Merriam and Bierema (2013), Howard McClusky's Theory of Margin stated that leaders must understand their employees' workload and backgrounds as they attempt to meet various demands or goals within the organization. As an adult learning theorist, McClusky

believed that employees face continuous growth and developmental needs. An intentional effort must be made to use the energy available to meet day-to-day work and life expectations. As employees progress, they have less control over many aspects of their lives, and they must find ways to remain sustainable through the unpredictable. It was the unpredictability of the pandemic that raised the topic of care culture within organizations. When the pandemic ascended upon the higher education industry in 2020, the work expectations of student affairs professionals shifted. Some professionals were afforded leave or work-from-home opportunities to support the needs of their families. Those who support the more critical operations of the institutions are considered essential employees. Essential employees such as health services, university law enforcement, facilities, and residential housing provide onsite support for students who must remain on campus (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). The emphasis on care culture in higher education was initially strategized for students and faculty to ease their transition into a virtual experience. Based on many conferences and training topics, there was little planning on how to better support student affairs employees whose focus is to enhance the living and academic experiences outside of the classroom. Merriam and Bierema stated that student affairs constitute a significant core component of higher education organizations of all sizes. To further emphasize the importance of employee engagement within the student affairs profession, this professional literature review comprises supporting content from scholarly and professional organization articles, journals, documents, and reports. The exploration of these sources brought about the identification of three employee engagement-based themes:

- employee development
- engagement and satisfaction
- best principles and theories to consider

Employee Development

Unquestionably, student affairs have been an impactful part of developing student self-efficacy as they transition on their journey to degree attainment. Student affairs professionals take on this task while attempting to meet their department's expectations, including benchmarking trends of peer institutions, preparing for competitions, and presenting or attending conferences (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Leadership suggests that student affairs professionals frequently engage in these activities to strategize and develop tactics to prepare them for their student population's unexpected personal, mental, social, and academic needs. Completing these tasks will allow them to become content experts and fulfill their job description's student services personnel requirement. In Merriam and Bierema's (2013) research, student affairs professionals' student services personnel requirement provides several outlets and services such as health, financial aid, student work and internships opportunities, and housing. Depending on the institution, services may be available outside student affairs or lessened depending on the budget, staffing, size, and institution type. According to Torres et al. (2016), much of the guiding practices of these professionals come from student development organizations such as the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International and American College Personnel Association (ACPA), or student affairs practitioner organizations such as NASPA (student affairs administrators in higher education) and Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. Resources such as these provide a guide for individuals seeking senior-, mid-, or entry-level positions within student affairs. Organizations such as these are presented as mixed-method, self-directed, and progress-learning developmental resources accessible through discounted annual membership fees.

Professional development has become more of a self-directed campaign through

technology that encourages employees to view themselves at their own pace and be accountable for their growth. Adult learning theorist Malcolm Knowles (1984) stated that directed learning assumes that employees are intrinsically motivated, but sometimes it is not enough to maintain motivation as we see with students. To effectively promote development within an organization, leadership must include both self-directed and progressive learning in the world of student affairs. Leadership must consist of a self-directed group or individual facilitation to help learners better absorb the content (Knowles, 1984). Utilizing both self-directed and progressive learning methods will meet the learning needs of employees and provide them with mixed methods for development. These methods are also helpful for those tenured individuals who may be thinking about advancing their skills or position. Leadership has to keep in mind that meeting these developmental needs will help employees meet expectations more efficiently and make them as marketable as their students.

Based on Torres et al. (2016), ACPA and NASPA published a series that outlined more expectations of student affairs professionals called "Learning Reconsidered." This series highly emphasized that the role of student affairs professionals in higher education as educators are not equally respected as their academic faculty counterparts. Keeling (2004) highlighted a high expectation for student affairs professionals to work with campus partners to create a collaborative and interactive learning environment to achieve academic and institutional goals. Also, some other handbooks and journals are available to provide developmental support for professionals—many of the student services handbooks researched for this review targeted graduate- and entry-level employees. Torres et al. stated that many required skills and competencies must maintain functionality within student affairs. This would lead some to assume that previously expressed requirements are mainly for entry-level employees. Some other

competencies and skills may be expected to include implementing assessments to improve student learning and development, legal issues, planning and implementing programs, building management, campus crisis, and technology (Torres et al., 2016). Those employees who may not be as vital in these skills and competencies will have to make time to utilize those developmental resources to keep them updated with the trends while completing their day-to-day operations.

Employee Engagement and Satisfaction

In research from Hastings (2018), employee engagement can be defined as the motivation that provides employees with direction and focus and supports an organization's overall success. As the pandemic became a prominent concern within higher education, the expectations of student affairs employees shifted in a more mental health and wellness direction. Employees delivered personal items and meals to support students in quarantine. They helped those students who could not return home because they had family members within their households with underlying conditions. This shift caused many employees' engagement and satisfaction levels to dwindle downward, which made the concept of work-life balance begin to feel like a thing of the past. Mahmudah et al. (2021) stated that individuals who worked from home found themselves putting in more time than they would if they were working in the office or being inundated with tasks that extended after their usual work hours. Some employees struggled with finding or understanding what resources could be provided to complete their day-to-day operations from home. Since there is such a high response in providing equitable resources for students, some institutions did not inform their employees of the available technology resources (internet, laptop, internet access, etc.) to complete their jobs at home. Many employees discussed paying out of pocket for resources that would have been provided if they were on campus. It could have been frustrating trying to navigate ways to have substantial connectivity for work and your

children who have to be on Zoom to meet their educational requirements as a parent or caretaker. Similar issues also impacted those essential employees. Recent research has shown that essential employees came onsite each day during the pandemic to support students regardless of their anxiousness about their new work environment and additional responsibilities (Gilbert, 2021). In research from Torres et al. (2016), essential employees supported students who remained on campus by resolving conflicts, injuries, and other emergencies. These individuals are also responsible for enforcing health and safety requirements and coordinating quarantine housing. Since no official planning or training could have prepared them for this circumstance, employees became extremely dissatisfied and burned out. Hastings stated that employee engagement levels are influenced by how well organizations effectively

- communicate their goals as strategies,
- set directions for senior leaders,
- support employees on all levels, and
- compensate employees based on their performance.

Over time, this became a heavy load for student affairs professionals to carry. Other things such as fear of furlough or layoff circled the minds of many employees, making them question whether student affairs is the right fit for them. Mahmudah et al. (2021) stated with fewer job security options than their faulty counterparts, student affairs professionals (onsite and work-from-home) took on overlapping positional tasks to plan and collaborate with peer institutions across the country to carry out their institutions' missions. At the same time, some private institutions remained virtual, while others planned tediously to improve the return-to-campus plans for fall 2020. The fear of budget cuts and other staff reduction concerns also impacted employee engagement and satisfaction to the point where some employees have

reported becoming actively disengaged since working through the pandemic (Mahmudah et al., 2021). During some of the NASPA and ACPA professional development, professionals have expressed their health and safety-related concerns while supporting student needs, impacting employee engagement and satisfaction. Closing campuses nationwide could have buffered some of the employees' anxiety levels or rotated out the essential employees to give them a break. These decisions will always remain a challenging part of the student affairs culture because they impact the students the most. New research from Mahmudah et al. stated that student affairs professionals, like teachers, understand that students are the driving force of everything they do. They must have equitable considerations for those who may not have reliable technology, may not have housing, or may have food insecurities.

Conversely, there is already an equitable consideration for the needs of the students: How can leadership within these institutions transition that same effort of intention and care to their employees? Many organizations attempted their initial attempt of care with their employees by updating their websites. In Prossack's (2019) research, hundreds of Fortune 500 organizations and institutions have attempted to express a culture of care and intentionality for the customers. Some people do not want to acknowledge students as customers because higher education is an education-based industry. Still, higher education is a business in which students invest in their degrees. Based on research from Shore et al. (2010), to provide students with the best customer services within higher education, the stakeholders must be conscious of the criteria put in place for student affairs professionals. Many individuals come into the profession with one or more graduate degrees. Some professionals are introduced into the workplace culture of student affairs by taking on internships or para-professional job opportunities that transition them over to professional positions (Shore et al., 2010). Once individuals transition to the professional side of

student affairs, the lens shifts. This shift may be due to a lack of trust, fairness, communication, collaboration, or shared governance. Engagement and satisfaction seem to be unfortunate trends among institutions. Experiencing concerns with the same competencies and requirements as student affairs professionals' expectations and hiring requirements can be disheartening for individuals working in these departments. Prossack stated that there is a correlation between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. Since student affairs professionals are the driving force behind student success outside the classroom, there is a high need for positive interactions with these employees. According to new research, administrators gradually require their employees to be efficient with less resources, which can trigger disengagement and decrease their performance (Hastings, 2018). For example, when student affairs professionals are dissatisfied due to burnout, they will become less interactive than before in an attempt to self-preserve and maintain enough energy to complete their daily tasks. Hastings (2018) stated that to prevent burnout and increase employee satisfaction, organizations need to

- provide brave space for dialogue,
- provide opportunities for development and networking,
- show an intentional commitment to their employees' well-being, and
- be understanding of how their employees would like to be recognized.

By doing this, leadership can create a workplace culture in which their employees will gain a sense of belonging, security, and purpose. It is a daunting task to support students' mental and social needs when the employee is experiencing some of the same issues related to their work environment. Gilbert (2021) stated that student affairs professionals had experienced an increased level of anxiety and burnout due to leadership's frequent use of the statement "other duties as assigned." This statement implies that they must take on outside or additional tasks

outside of their regular duties. Workplace issues such as these were relevant pre-pandemic but overlooked. Still, they broadened their concerns during the pandemic because it made employees reflect on the self-preservation of their mental health and wellness needs. It is more important now than ever for institutions to place the same effort into intentionality supporting the care culture of their student affairs employees as they do for their students.

Best Principles and Theories to Consider

Intentionality of Care Culture Practices

As the workplace climate shifts to include a diverse generation of Boomers, Millennials, and Gen Z professionals within student affairs, employees challenge their organizations to provide more than just a salary and retirement plan to keep connected or engaged with their institutions. This shift in perspective does not mean that employees are not invested in their institutions. Still, their institutional pride and love for their students were the foundation of their resiliency to perform jobs each day before the decline of consideration of employee wellbeing in day-to-day operations during the pandemic. If you take away the pride and the love for students, what remains? Showing employees that their work is valued is hard for some institutions to grasp. What framework or continuity plan is in place to support student affairs employees who are charged with the responsibility of being loco parentis (in the place of a parent) of thousands of students annually (Torres et al., 2016)? Intentionality is a great place to start. Practicing intentionality brings awareness to what is important to you and the individuals connected to your organization (Keeling, 2004). It brings clarity and perspective to what needs to be achieved and how it can be accomplished. Just as clear as leaders believe that their strategic plans and vision are to their audience, there must be the same level of intent and practice of care culture. Intentionality is a forward-thinking process that proactively connects back to the institution's

mission and vision and gives the employees within the organization a sense of connection and purpose. In research from Tan (2013), an employee who is dissatisfied or disengaged does not mean they may want to leave their organization but that they feel like they are being overlooked and unappreciated. Employees wanted to know that their contributions had made a difference and that their opinions could contribute to an equitable change. Just as student affairs professionals expect to create innovative, healthy, and positive environments for students, the same should remain for the work environment and experiences of employees. As stated previously, leadership within higher education can provide a plethora of professional development opportunities that cover content on best practices for hiring, retention, and how to help our students become successful (Torres et al., 2016). Still, it seems as if leaders have skimmed over the content based on what care culture would look like within their organization. Many institutions' initial focus on a culture of care started with the students. It was not until employee retention decreased immensely during the pandemic that leaders saw a need to retain their workforce in fear that no one would support employees or their students (Gilbert, 2021). Otter (2020) stated that when the climate began to normalize, there became more interest in the practice of care culture within an organization intentionally becoming more relevant. Care culture is what gives the organization the fuel to face challenges. Care culture is the values, pride, and beliefs that institutions practice that distinguishes them from their competition (Otter, 2020). It is what brings and retains students and employees to organizations. It drives and aligns behavior. Care culture outlines how well employees communicate and collaborate and the level of authenticity they have to support one another when leadership is not watched or delegated (Otter, 2020). As stated before, there is an urgent need for employees to feel valued now while working and not when they are leaving or about to retire. Individual divisions or departments can

create their own care culture even if the organization does not practice it by developing policies, incentives, family, or care trajectory initiatives that support the needs of their employees.

Leaders must understand and acknowledge what their employees' intersecting identities bring to the workspace and incorporate them within their care culture practices (Shore et al., 2010). Just as it is expected for student affairs employees to engage and seek out intricate things about their students, such as names and interests, this should be the same for employees. Utilizing the care culture lets employees know that leadership is aware of their presence and appreciates their contributions to the institution's competitive advantage (Otter, 2020).

Two-Factor and Motivational Theories

Moreover, why do humans do the things they do? Leadership should understand how motivation affects their organization because it impacts the efficiency of their overall production. In research from Tan (2013), a manager cannot just expect that because an employee is being paid to do a job, it will be completed or completed in its entirety. If managers thoughtfully align their employees' needs with their organization's goals, there can be a noticeable increase in performance and engagement. Leaders must understand what factors keep employees motivated throughout the week. Management aspires for their employees to wake up motivated to do their jobs. Naturally, that is not the case. Intrinsic and extrinsic major motivating factors spark their performance. Galbraith (2003) stated that intrinsically motivated employees find purpose and passion in helping their organization achieve its mission and goals; however, intrinsic motivation does not keep all employees motivated. Other employees need a little more daily encouragement within the workplace. Extrinsic motivation opens opportunities for leaders to develop effective motivating techniques for their employees. Extrinsic processes can also allow managers to offer rewards for completing essential tasks such as benefits, salary increases, promotions, and other

small tokens of appreciation. Galbraith stated that an important thing to remember when dealing with intrinsically and extrinsically motivated employees is more emotional and purpose-driven. The other is more competitive and status-driven. To successfully support both types of employees within the workplace, they must determine which motivational theory fits their organization the best. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and McClelland's Motivation Theory can help show management how to utilize intrinsic and extrinsic motivation interchangeably.

For instance, utilizing Fredrick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory is one way to measure employee motivation in the workplace. In research from Tan (2013), Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory suggested that motivators and hygiene are two prominent work factors that impact satisfaction. Hygiene factors that satisfy physiological needs such as work conditions, supervision, work balance, salary, and interpersonal relationships with other employees and administration significantly affect employee retention (Tan, 2013). For example, employees love what they do each day but can be negatively impacted by their supervisor, who creates a chaotic work environment. Hygiene factors can cause an employee to perform lower than others or seek a higher appreciation background. Herzberg described motivator factors as elements that impact the psychological needs of employees. Utilizing these factors will create a high level of commitment and employee satisfaction. Motivators include recognition, responsibility, opportunities for growth and advancement, and status (Tan, 2013). Employees can come to work each day and do their best even when no one looks over their shoulders. At the monthly department meetings, the team's supervisor should give them kudos for a job well done on the last assignment and explain how their contributions can further support the organization. This makes employees feel noticed and a part of something bigger than what they do each day. Additionally, in research from Hitt et al. (2015), McClelland's motivation theory proposes that

employees' needs for achievement, power, and affiliation constantly impact retention. This theory states that three types of motivations affect everyone regardless of age, sex, race, or culture (Hitt et al., 2015). The need for achievement, power, and affiliation derives from their intersecting life experiences and their culture's opinions. Employees who are achievement-driven prefer working on challenging tasks, tend to be loners, and receive constant feedback on performance. Achievement-based individuals tend to avoid both high-risk and low-risk situations. Hitt et al. stated that low-risk situations are too easy to be valid, and high-risk situations are more situational than the achievements individuals made. These employees are motivated by accomplishment in the workplace and an employment hierarchy with promotional positions. Employees with a strong desire for affiliation prefer to spend time creating and maintaining healthy social relationships, enjoy being a part of a team, and want to be accepted (Hitt et al., 2015). Employees who need affiliation are neutral to the workplace culture and typically do not change the workplace's norms for fear of rejection (Shore et al., 2010). These employees need to understand the critical resources within the workplace to keep them connected, such as contact information, GroupMe, Microsoft Teams, and other team-directed resources. They also would prefer the engagement of face-to-face meetings and team lunches rather than email to disseminate information. According to Hitt et al., regarding the need for power, McClelland stated that individuals seek personal or institutional power. Employees with the need for high power value discipline and love to be in control. The downside is that power often must be shared or lost to fulfill the organization's needs. Hitt et al. stated that institutional capacity is critical for high-performing leaders. The need for institutional power seems to be more important than the need to create managerial success. As leaders, we must use emotional intelligence to effectively manage these needs and make sure they work cohesively as a team

despite their differences.

Conclusion

To conclude, there is a fixed mindset among leaders in higher education about where they should utilize their investments. Pouring into those who have a major impact on their student's success should be a priority because it impacts retention. Organizations must transition to the ideal that satisfying their employees' potential financial needs (salary, benefits, etc.) is not enough for engagement (Tan, 2013). There needs to be an equitable consistency of practicing care culture within student affairs to balance those hygiene factors within the workplace to keep employees intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. In research by Shore et al. (2010), higher education organizations need to understand motivation and how it drives employees to engage within the workplace. Leaders also need to know how to use extrinsic and intrinsic motivators as techniques to change employee performance and engagement more efficiently. Employees receive internal gratification from their work experience, but leadership must look beyond the norm and reconnect with their employees. Understanding individuals' intersecting identities that make them unique can help drive positive engagement trends within an organization. More equitable and holistic training efforts may soon spark an interest in creating a caring culture implemented in different organizations within student affairs. Keeping up with the needs and demographics of those within your organization can significantly impact employee retention and productivity. The lack of employees within the organization that you had 10 years ago may not align with the team that you have now. This last team may be retirement- and tenure-focused, while your current team may look at this position as a stepping stone to a greater goal or ambition. Leadership can seek more equitable care culture options to help support motivating opportunities and see how you can promote growth to help them pursue a long-term position that

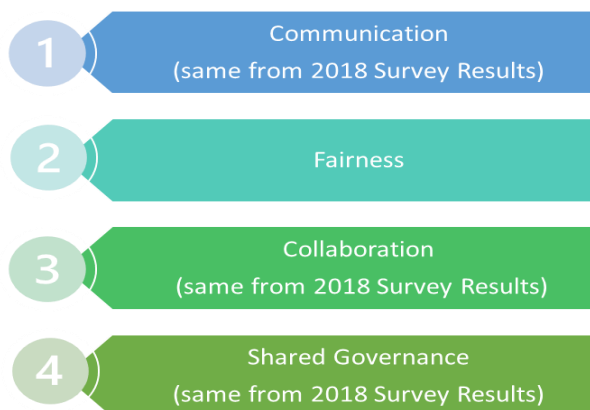
can satisfy their needs. Care culture is infinite, and it will keep organizations sustainable through change. It is the connection to the staff and students that will keep institutions thriving.

Appendix E

Deliverables

Division of Student Affairs Employee Engagement Strategies 2021-2022 (Based on 2020 Survey Results)

Employee Engagement Areas of Concerns



Strategies	Concerns Addressed	Performance Indicator
Develop Standard Operating Procedures	Communication, fairness, collaboration, and shared governance.	100% of Functional Units have professionally written and established SOPs on file
Develop and implement a work from home procedure for each department within the division as it relates to day-to-day operations of the area.	Communication, fairness	Procedure is distributed to all staff within the division no later than May 2021
Develop and implement an intentional coaching model of the Performance Appraisal training for supervisors and employees.	Communication and shared governance.	Staff will participate in a workshop; employees will have an increased sense of purpose and contribution to their own development within their perspective department and the division.
Develop and implement training and guidelines fostering high quality collaboration efforts between employees across the division/departments	Communication, collaboration, and shared governance.	Employees will have an increased understanding of the importance of creating connections and engaging workspace outside of their perspective department and the division.

Professional Development Guide (Cover, Table of Contents, Performance Appraisal and Training Outline)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

Division of Student Affairs



North Carolina A & T State University



"Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do."
- Steve Jobs

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THE STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE WILL INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- New Employee Orientation
- Divisional and Departmental Meetings
- Team Building
- Training and Development Resources
- Career Trajectory Coaching
- Professional Development Planning & Evaluations
- Retreats, Conferences, & Workshop,
- Student Affairs Technology and Media
- Care Culture within the Workplace

The Division will also inform team members of opportunities that are being presented by the Professional Development team relating to professional development training.

Virtual Wellness Retreat Data (Summer and Winter)

NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY VIRTUAL RETREAT

A Project Passport Mental Empowerment Virtual Retreat ****SUMMER RETREAT****

PROJECT PASSPORT® PROPOSAL FOR THE NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY TEAM BY ARIANA RINTZ, RETREAT COORDINATOR AND WELLNESS COACH

OVERVIEW

Description: Project Passport provides hands-on, blitz style virtual retreat experiences where participants have the opportunity to truly take part in their mental wellness journeys. This particular retreat will involve interactive topics to help participants:

- 1) Reconnect with their personal values and purpose pertaining to career trajectory and professional growth, while cultivating a creative mindset and increasing confidence.
- 2) Improve their connection, communication, and collaboration with fellow peers through interactive team building exercises and self-disclosure opportunities.
- 3) Learn new self-awareness practices to promote emotional intelligence.
- 4) Develop an awareness about generational differences and how team members from all ages and backgrounds can contribute to a dynamic workforce.
- 5) Identify their fears surrounding change and learn tangible tools on how to tackle fear with a positive mindset.
- 6) Connect with and have access to a personal accountability partners for continued emotional support and personal growth.

.....

The retreat is led by Life Discovery Expert and Wellness Professional, Sabriya Dobbins, with certifications in NLP, CBT, REBT, and Mindfulness. The retreat is also co-led by Project Passport-certified retreat specialists.

Time Length: 3 hour retreat experience | Date: May 27th, 2021 (9:45am-1pm EST)

Number of Participants: ~75-150

Retreat Inclusions (Custom Package)

- 3 hours of retreat content
- 10 retreat activities + 3 movement/mindfulness activities
- 6 dynamic retreat focuses (Purpose in Career + Communication and Team-Building + Tapping Into Creativity + Confidence in the Workplace + Connecting the Generational Gap + Fighting the Fear of Change)
- Copy of retreat activities (provided after the retreat)
- Optional recording
- Assigned accountability partners during retreat
- Team Wellness Report (providing analytics on retreat outcomes and team needs)
- Entire team will have access to the FREE Project Passport Wellness Hub for continued support

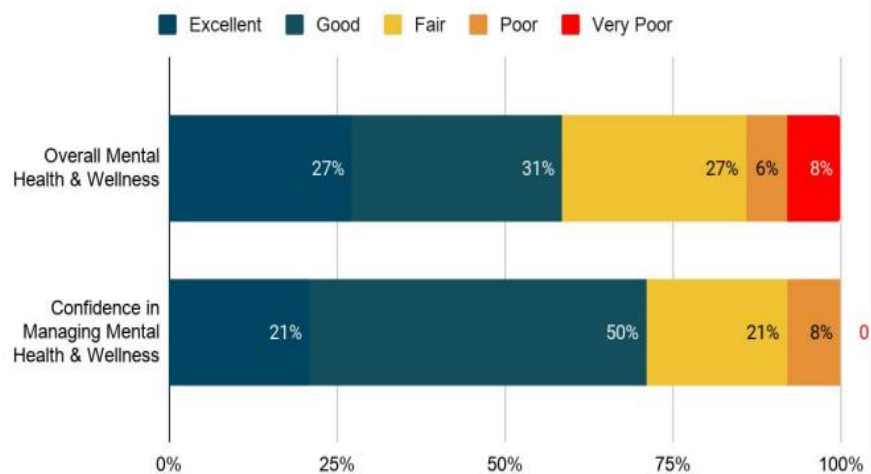
Total cost for this Project Passport Retreat: **\$2,700**

Mental Health and Wellness (48 Respondents)



The NC A&T Team's Mental Health and Wellness

Rate your overall MH&W | Rate your confidence in managing your MH&W



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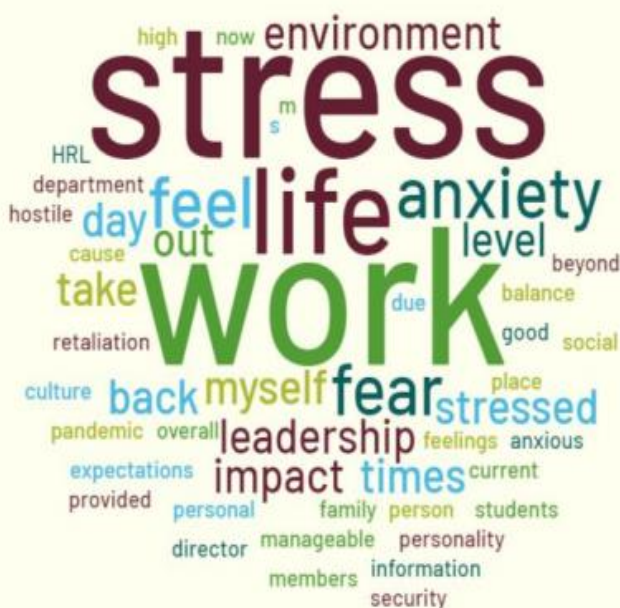
98%

Of respondents believe that
mental health/wellness impacts workplace performance.
 (46 out of 47)

The remaining respondent stated
"Varied depending on person; somewhat believe we use this as a crutch."

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Word Cloud of team responses about Stress, Fear and Anxiety



43% of Respondents (22) shared stresses ranging from **workplace stressors, work/life balance, COVID** and **personal issues**



Key Quotes

"The HRL department is sinking at a rapid pace, and our leadership is at the helm. The morale of the entire department is beyond low. There is a culture of fear and retaliation that stems from the current leadership, and the working environment is beyond hostile. Several members have sought out professional counseling due to the turmoil that has been endured under this leadership. The stress level is at an all time high, and when that is coupled with being forced to interact with students in person during a national pandemic it is mentally crippling for some. Many HRL members have recently suffered from anxiety due to the toxicity of the work environment, and not knowing which personality of the Executive Director they will be interacting with. **TO WHOMEVER IS READING OR EVALUATING THIS SURVEY THIS IS AN SOS AND A CRY OUT FOR HELP.** It's disheartening that we are suffering in silence, and when we bring our thoughts to leadership they are dismissive of our feelings."

"Recently there has been a high level of anxiety when coming to work. When we have meetings I feel like I have to prove myself and validate what I do every day. When I go home it is hard for me to rest because I have to find ways to not feel targeted in conversations pertaining unfit capabilities. I come to work each day having to shift my body language and personality to portray confidence, when I feel like nothing I do is good enough."

Stress, Fear and Anxiety

Please describe your current feelings about your stress, fear, and/or anxiety right now if relevant. You can relate them to life, work, etc.

41 Respondents

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Key Quotes (cont'd)

"Feelings: not included or informed; not provided any opportunity; none or infrequent communication; continually giving of information and no sharing from those who should disseminate information..... only communicated with when something is needed"

"I feel stressed, anxious and scared. I work in a **toxic work environment** where there is a culture of fear from the current director. I fear retaliation because anytime someone makes any complaints, the director strikes back. **This is a very hostile work environment.**"

"I have a **fear of retaliation/ termination** when it comes to work. I am stressed on whether I am meeting the standards and expectations of the department when expectations were not provided at the beginning."

"We are short staff and the work pace is very stressful. **Staff is overwhelmed and under valued.** The stress has caused a negative impact on my overall health & mental well being. Member of the Administration is verbally abusive and explosive behavior."

"Some people are not social distancing or believe in wearing a mask"

"I fear I will be made to return without any concern for me or my family."

"Currently, I feel a some stress about the state of our world. Covid-19 has further polarized the US and with the restrictions lessening, it feels that I am unable to protect myself from others when out in public. I am concerned for the impact this will have on us returning to campus."

Stress, Fear and Anxiety

Please describe your current feelings about your stress, fear, and/or anxiety right now if relevant. You can relate them to life, work, etc.

41 Respondents

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30% of Respondents (12) indicated that their stress levels are manageable.

17% of Respondents (7) shared their thoughts about stress and stress management

Key quotes

They can be overwhelming at times, but being able to know, understand and believe it could be worse and to not take the little things for granted but appreciating that I am Blessed, Loved, Respected, & Valued makes it easy to stay on top, rather than letting it take over or take me to a place I am not able to retreat from. Having Faith and trusting not only in my Lord and Saviour but in who I am, what I want and need but also genuinely knowing that I have a purpose and it is up to me to learn from the good as well as the bad.

I address these feelings as they come by analyzing, prioritizing, breathing techniques, and understanding I am only in control of myself and my actions, and how I let things affect me.

Currently, I have boundaries in place that help with my stress levels in all aspects of my life. I feel good about my mental wellbeing.

Workplace Engagement (47 Respondents)

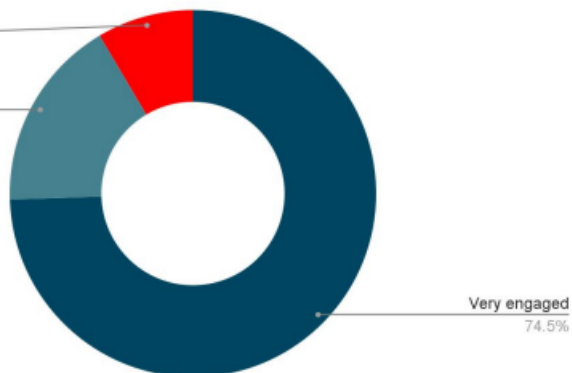


NC A&T's Workplace Engagement

How would you describe your overall engagement at your organization in your role?

Not Engaged
8.5%

Sometimes engaged
17.0%



Very engaged
74.5%

Additional Comments:

"I am very engaged in the work I do! however, I do not feel others in my area value and appreciate the position I have nor am I permitted to perform my normal work duties as I previously. There have been a lot of changes and they have caused a great deal of stress and anxiety for a lot of people but for fear of a negative reaction, people stay silent. Not ok!!!"

"I was once engaged and excited about my role; however, I'm no longer engaged or have a desire to be engaged."

RECAP OF NC A&T X PROJECT PASSPORT RETREAT AND THE FUTURE RETREAT PLAN

According to the team wellness report for the last NC A&T x Project Passport retreat held virtually on May 27, 2021, team members left feeling more empowered, supported, and more connected to one another. However, there were crucial areas that still needed to be addressed based on the leadership debrief call and team member survey comments: [Winter Retreat \(Renewal Retreat\)](#)

- Team members report low levels of trust in leadership and amongst one another.
- Team members report feeling disconnected and anxious at work.
- There is a fear of retaliation for speaking up and sharing one's opinions and values.
- There is a mis-match in understanding the goal drivers, motivations, and values of team members amongst leadership and staff, leading to obstacles in meeting expectations.
- The work environment has been reported to be "toxic" and "hostile" due to a lack of communication, empathy, trust, and support amongst staff members.
- A call for help for the mental health and wellbeing of staff has been reported.

We have crafted a proposal related to the needs provided from the last assessment and we are committed to helping the team remedy these issues to improve the student and staff experience.

Presenting: The NC A&T Team Renewal Retreat

.....

IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT THIS PROPOSAL:

Please note that the proposal on the next few pages is our highly RECOMMENDED retreat program but we do not require it to be the final one selected. In order to address budgetary needs as well as staff time allocations, the retreat can be shortened as needed (although this results in a reduction of content coverage). In addition, extras such as workbooks, team wellness reports, and copies of retreat activities can be eliminated to adjust to the needs of the NC A&T staff and the budget.

Our goal is to be as accessible as possible to clients with our dynamic, preventative mental wellness practices. While this proposed series is broad and contains multiple sections, it focuses on key problem areas of the NC A&T team. The sessions to follow can hone in even more on the section topics where additional work may need to be done to help the staff thrive.

1:1 EMPLOYEE PERSONAL WELLNESS COACHING:

As an a la carte item in addition to this proposed package, we recommend investing in a bundle of 1:1 coaching hours for staff members who seem to be struggling most internally and externally within their roles at NC A&T across areas like mental health, professionalism, and consistency. With a non-biased perspective, our certified coaches are able to help employees become more guided towards their goals. Therefore, staff members can experience exponential growth personally and professionally, benefiting the team at large.

Our coaching fee is typically \$125 per staff member per hour however when hours are purchased in bundle packages, this discounts the rates greatly to as low as \$75 per hour. Coaching hours can be allocated among several staff. Contact us for more information about this offering.

NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY VIRTUAL RETREAT

A Project Passport Signature Mental Wellness Retreat

Winter Retreat (Renewal Retreat)

OVERVIEW: THE NC A&T TEAM RENEWAL RETREAT

Description: Project Passport provides hands-on, blitz style virtual retreat experiences where participants have the opportunity to truly take part in their mental wellness journeys. This particular retreat will involve interactive topics to help participants:

1. Experience an improvement of psychological safety in the workplace, which affords them the confidence to speak up when they need something to create a more productive environment.
2. Develop the trust and commitment of fellow staff in supporting one another on a day-to-day.
3. Get to know one another, new and existing staff, on a more personal basis to increase empathy and help team members understand the communication styles and values of one another.
4. Explore employee self-concept and emotional awareness to help them improve their own personal views on their capabilities through self-love and self-compassion development work.
5. Connect with and have access to personal accountability partners (documented for long-term continuance) for ongoing emotional support and personal growth.

.....

The retreat is led by Life Discovery Expert and Wellness Professional, Sabriya Dobbins, with certifications in NLP, CBT, REBT, and Mindfulness. The retreat is also co-led by Project Passport-certified retreat leaders, specializing in multiple disciplines.

Time Length: 3 hour retreat experience | Date: Thursday, December 9, 2021 from 9-12PM EST

Number of Participants: ~75-150

Retreat Inclusions (Custom Package)

- 3 hours of retreat content
- 8 retreat activities + 2 movement/mindfulness activities
- 3 dynamic retreat focuses (Boosting Workplace Trust & Team Building (combined) + Improving Emotional Awareness and Self Acceptance in the Workplace)
- Assigned accountability partners during retreat (documentation provided post-retreat)
- Team Wellness Report - part 2 continuation from prior report based on new retreat content
- Entire team will have access to the FREE Project Passport Wellness Hub for continued support
- Copy of retreat activities (provided after the retreat)
- Optional recording

Special pricing for returning client (\$150+ savings):

- Total Investment for this Project Passport Retreat (virtual option): **\$2,550**

Appendix F
Communication Plan

Date	Meeting Types	Due Date
2/12/2021- 2/18/2021	Meeting, Follow-up meeting, Professional Development Advisory Team Meeting	3/4/2021
2/23/2021- 3/4/2021	Consultancy Project Meeting: Employee Engagement; Professional Development Advisory Team Meeting	4/16/2021
3/8/2021- 3/17/2021	Retreat Planning, Consultancy Project Meeting: Employee Engagement, Summer Retreat Planning	4/16/2021
3/18/2021-	Vendor meeting, Retreat Planning Proposal, Professional Development Advisory Team Meeting	4/16/2021
3/22/2021- 3/26/2021	NASPA Virtual Conference	3/26/2021
3/29/2021	Consultancy Project Meeting: Employee Engagement, vendor meetings, Professional Development Advisory Team Meeting	4/16/2021
4/15/2021	Professional Development Advisory Team Meeting, Consultancy Project Meeting: Employee Engagement, Professional Development Advisory Team Meeting	4/16/2021
5/27/2021	Wellness Retreat	n/a
6/9/2021	Consultancy Project Meeting: Employee Engagement	9/23/2021
6/16/2021	NC A&T Retreat Debrief	During meeting
6/21/2021	Consultancy Project Meeting: Employee Engagement	During meeting
8/26/2021	Professional Development Advisory Team Meeting	9/23/2021
9/15/2021	Value Rubric Workshop/Training	During meeting
9/21/2021	Consultancy Project Meeting: Employee Engagement, Professional Development Advisory Team Meeting	During meeting
10/5/2021	Consultancy Project Meeting: Employee Engagement	10/6/2021
10/7/2021	Professional Development Advisory Team Meeting	During meeting
10/19/2021	Consultancy Project Meeting: Employee Engagement	No items due
10/21/2021	Professional Development Advisory Team Meeting	No items due

11/2/2021	Consultancy Project Meeting: Employee Engagement	No items due
11/4/2021	Professional Development Advisory Team Meeting	No items due
11/16/2021	Consultancy Project Meeting: Employee Engagement	No items due
11/18/2021	Professional Development Advisory Team Meeting	No items due
11/30/2021	Consultancy Project Meeting: Employee Engagement	No items due
12/17/2021	Wellness Retreat	No items due
1/24/2022	Wellness Retreat Debrief, Consultancy Project Meeting: Employee Engagement	n/a

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