

2024 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

Washington University in St. Louis and Washington University School of Medicine

Employee Exit Surveys

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

1. **Evaluation: Other methods for monitoring climate on an ongoing basis.**
2. **Response: Providing Anonymous and Non-mandatory Reporting Resources and Tools**

Description of Work:

This year (2024), Washington University's Human Resources Office has implemented an Exit Survey for all employees who leave the university. The survey is administered after they have already departed their employment and is tailored for their specific role: faculty, staff, fellow, or postdoc. Individually identifiable information is only shared with a limited group for review and processing. Other groups will receive aggregate data focused on themes, trends, and subgroup analysis based on gender, rank, specialty, etc. Those completing the survey are offered the option of doing so anonymously.

Each survey begins with a reminder to report any possible violation of the harassment, discrimination, or abusive conduct policies via the reporting hotline and includes a link and phone number. Reports can be made anonymously.

The surveys then go on to ask questions about a number of areas, including why they chose to leave the university and levels of satisfaction with their role at WashU. Specific topics covered include workload, satisfaction with opportunities for advancement and development, leadership, climate and culture, inclusivity, feeling valued, respect, policies and procedures, efforts at retention, their new position, and whether they would recommend others apply for employment at WashU.

As we work to gather data about our climate from sources other than large climate surveys, these exit surveys will be a valuable resource. Those who have already departed WashU may be more likely to openly share their concerns and experiences, especially those involving sexual harassment and discrimination. While they are encouraged to share some identifying information, the option to complete the survey anonymously protects those whose fear of retaliation outlives their employment. The responses will also give us a more complete picture of whether and how these incidents affected their decision to leave. Finally, the survey provides respondents with a reminder that we do want them to report these incidents, even after they depart, so that we can improve our climate and culture moving forward.

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