Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW RESULTS

February 2019
Stakeholder Interview Results

Summary of Interview Themes

- **Attraction and Retention**: Employees have a strong sense of affiliation with the University and their colleagues, citing the institutional mission and innovation focus among the top reasons why they came to and stay at TAMU-CC. University location provides a recruiting challenge, compared to other metropolitan areas in Texas.

- **Market for Talent**: The majority of talent is found regionally or within the state of Texas, but in some circumstances, the talent market must be considered nationally to source qualified candidates.

- **Turnover**: Turnover is not perceived to be a major issue across the University, but there are pockets of concern.

- **Compensation Competitiveness**: Concerns exist regarding competitiveness of salary levels, partially driven by location and budgets for new or back fill positions. However, participants are pleased overall with the value of benefits and perquisites offered.

- **Salary Increases**: Strong desire for regular merit increases, preferably through the administration of a merit-based pay program to reward high performers, paired with a scheduled across the board increase.

- **Classification**: The TAMUS system is not aligned necessarily with existing jobs/responsibilities given the differences in positions at the TAMUS institutions, and jobs are not reviewed frequently enough to keep pace with changes.

- **Communication**: Participants would like more transparency and communication regarding the University’s compensation strategy and the decision-making process.
Factors for Attraction and Retention: Interviewees cited benefits, opportunities for career advancement, institutional mission, and drive for innovation as top recruitment and retention factors.

- Other factors for attraction and retention include “island time” culture, cost of living, flexibility (e.g., work-life balance), location, students, and job security.
- Prior affiliation with TAMU-CC is common (e.g., alumni) as well as a desire to return to the area after retirement (second career post-military or government roles).
- Some staff note that there have been reductions in benefits and betterment programs that make TAMU-CC less attractive to existing and potential employees.
- Different perspectives exist as to whether Corpus Christi is a desirable place to work, especially compared to Austin, Houston, and San Antonio.
- Lack of job and social opportunities for spouses was cited as a deterrent for candidates to join TAMU-CC.
- Efforts to attract and retain diverse staff and students have not been successful.
Recruitment and Retention (continued)

➢ **Market for Talent:** For staff positions, many candidates come from the local labor market, unless there is a need for specific expertise or a difficulty in hiring locally
  - Police Department and IT hire wherever the talent can be found as recruiting challenges are significant for those groups
  - Research often must grow talent organically with interns or recent alumni because salary levels and locations are not attractive to external candidates
  - Local competitors for talent across functions include Corpus Christi Independent School District (CCISD), Corpus Christi Police Department (CCPD), and oil refineries

➢ **Turnover:** Overall, there is not a perception that turnover is an issue, but there are pockets throughout the University including Development, Enrollment Management, Police Department and Sciences
  - Enrollment Management often serves as entry point into the University and then employees move to other areas of the University within 1-2 years
  - Low budgets for salaries result in hiring employees that are not as qualified for roles and do not last long in some positions
Compensation

➢ **Competitiveness:** The majority of participants feel that the institution’s pay is not competitive (within higher education or general industry), particularly at entry levels. However, some employees are willing to accept lower compensation based on compensating factors such as benefits and work-life balance.

- The “pin” or budgeted amount when attempting to back fill positions perpetuates the competitiveness issues and creates internal equity issues.
- Leadership or HR often cap salaries for grant-based positions below the allowable range in an attempt to solve internal equity issues.
- Salary ranges are often not included in job postings, as it has had a negative effect on candidates’ desire to apply for the role.
- New hires receive competitive market salaries, often filling positions vacated by employees that were asking for less money to stay at TAMU-CC.
- Almost all participants expressed concern that pay increases have been very low in recent years.
Compensation (continued)

> **Other:** Additional concerns regarding compensation at TAMU-CC include:

- Consensus that there is no established compensation strategy or philosophy and very little transparency or consistency regarding how or why compensation decisions are made
- Participants would like to see more communications from HR and managers regarding compensation levels, decisions, practices and policies
- Pay scales are not fully utilized – attempts to pay employees higher in the range receive pushback from HR and budget managers
- Perception of internal inequity for roles with fewer responsibilities being compensated higher than roles with greater responsibilities
- General lack of temporary pay or recognition bonuses for assuming additional duties
- Culture of not wanting to accept any extra work because employees believe they will not be paid for it, and it will permanently become their responsibility without a job reclassification or adjustment to pay
- Concerns of salary compression caused by new hires being paid near competitive market rates, close to the same rates being paid to more senior/experienced employees
- Participants would like to see additional benefits such as subsidized parking
- Concerns regarding the institution’s fiscal ability to implement pay adjustments as a result of this study
Stakeholder Interview Results

Classification and Career Paths

- Placing TAMU-CC positions into the TAMUS classification system results in misalignment due to the differences in the roles at TAMU-CC vs. other institutions in the TAMU system
- System is also complex with the usage of classification titles, working titles and the TAMUS pay plan
- Concern that classifications are not evaluated and do not change as jobs change over time
- Positions are consolidated/condensed to a point where the position descriptions are not applicable in many cases
- Lack of career paths throughout the University (either undefined or nonexistent) which causes star performers to leave due to lack of clear career advancement opportunities

Pay for Performance

- **Merit:** Merit budgets have not been significant in recent years, and amounts provided are often spread equally across the population, functioning as across-the-board increases rather than merit
- **Desire for Pay for Performance:** Strong desire to reward high performance through compensation. Employees perceive no connection between performance and compensation because everyone gets the same increases no matter individual evaluations
- **Merit Distribution:** Lack of confidence in the ability of managers to have difficult performance conversations or distribute merit increases