



MEMORANDUM

To: Senior Leadership Team
From: Daniel Vainner, Chair of the Administrative Professional Executive Committee
Subject: Fall 2021 AP Survey Results
Date: February 11, 2022

CC: AP Executive Committee, Mychal Coleman (Chief Human Resources Office), Deb Sanders (Director of Staff Relations & Compensation), and Ruthanne Griffin (Director of HR Administration & Technology)

In September 2021, the Administrative Professional (AP) Executive Committee conducted a survey of all AP staff at GVSU. There were 243 responses, representing approximately 33% of the AP staff. The intent of the survey was to measure job satisfaction as it relates to the following categories: recognition, compensation and benefits, professional development, and communication. Overall, AP staff have high levels of satisfaction in their roles when interacting or working with students. They also feel valued and appreciated by colleagues in their office, but feel a lack of recognition by the wider university community (Only 45% strongly or somewhat agree that AP staff are recognized for their work). AP staff are highly satisfied with their benefits (93% of respondents strongly or somewhat agree), but less so with their overall compensation (54% strongly or somewhat agree). Professional development opportunities had mixed views by AP staff with some desiring more time to participate, greater availability, and options specific to various roles on campus.

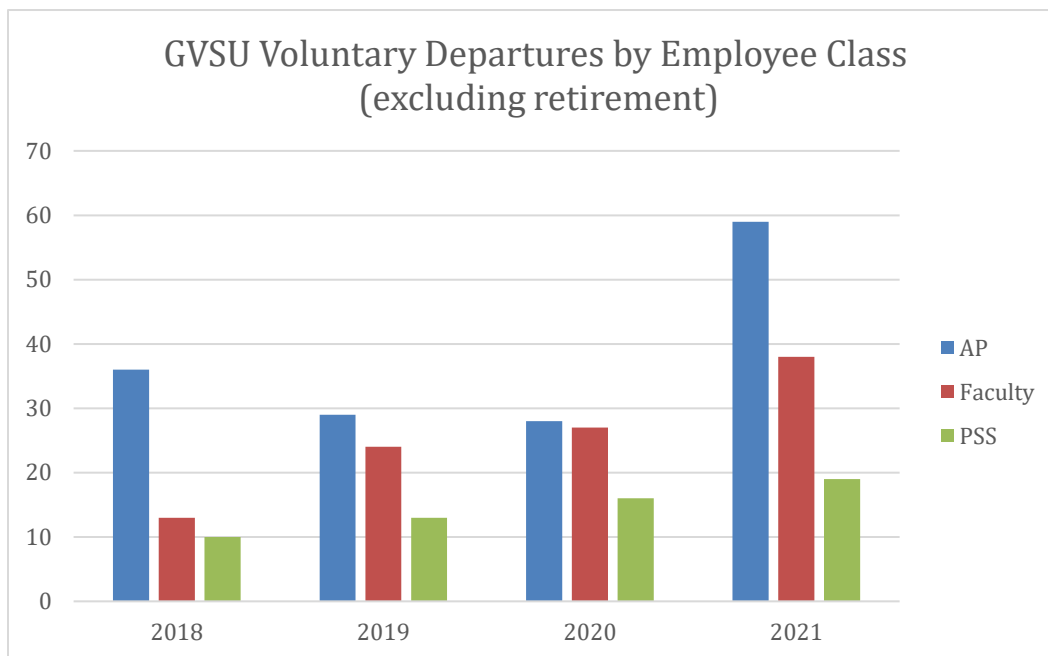
Most notably, only 46% of respondents somewhat or strongly agree that GVSU leadership communicates with staff in a way that allows input into the direction of the university (35% somewhat or strongly disagree). Survey comments included staff desiring greater input and transparency on university changes, especially when it significantly impacts their work. AP staff feel overworked and as if they are operating beyond the capacity of their role. When asked what changes could be made to improve the workplace, staff cited workplace culture, work from home/flexible work arrangements, workload concerns, and communication as areas of greatest need.

The AP Executive Committee welcomed President Mantella for dialogue and specific questions regarding these survey results and current morale of AP staff on December 9, 2021. During our discussion, President Mantella offered to have AP Executive Committee representatives as guests at the March 11th President's Council meeting in an effort to elevate the voice of AP staff across campus. The AP Executive Committee is most appreciative of this invitation from President Mantella and looks forward to engaging with other members on the council next month and at future meetings when necessary.

A consistent theme in the survey results and in anecdotal conversations among AP staff across campus is a perceived lack of transparency by the Senior Leadership Team. Specifically, the survey noted budgetary concerns, campus culture, and lack of involvement in decisions that impact their work. AP staff perceive that the Senior Leadership Team is not communicating in a satisfactory manner. The AP Executive Committee brings these concerns forward and requests the Senior Leadership Team strive for the highest level of transparency, improved communication, and when appropriate, involving more AP staff in the decision-making process.

The AP Executive Committee appreciates that the members of the Senior Leadership Team have made presentations to the AP Executive Committee and have answered our questions thoughtfully and intentionally. This allows us to communicate highlights to the entire AP staff population via the AP Newsletter. The AP Executive Committee recognizes the importance of communication and looks forward to continued collaboration with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure AP staff feel informed about decisions and initiatives at the university.

The university has lost a considerable number of AP staff since 2020. While two major factors, general retirements and “VRIPs”, can account for the high number of departures in the pandemic-era, there remains a record number of AP staff departing the university for other reasons. The chart below illustrates the total number of voluntary departures from GVSU by employee class each calendar year (excluding retirements):



Much has been written about “The Great Resignation” and the impact that is having on the job market in the United States and GVSU is certainly not immune to this phenomenon. The AP Executive Committee posits that the increase in departures may be related to factors discussed on the previous page in tandem with trends of “The Great Resignation”. Additionally, it should be noted that these trends are impacting our minority staff at an even greater rate.

The AP Executive Committee is aware of the seismic shifts occurring with the Human Resources Office and have benefited from having Mychal Coleman and Deb Sanders serve as ex-officio members on the committee. In the survey, AP Staff identified a desire for enhanced professional development opportunities to grow as a professional and also as a means to be promoted within the institution. The AP Executive Committee requests an opportunity to work closely with Human Resources to create an enhanced development program to better prepare internal candidates for opportunities within GVSU, recognizing that some AP staff may eventually become university leaders.

As the representative voice for AP staff at GVSU, the AP Executive Committee looks forward to working together with the Senior Leadership Team to address the issues raised within this memorandum.