



MINUTES

**Meeting of the Administration Committee
of the Board of Trustees of the
State Universities Retirement System
Friday, September 13, 2019, 9:00 a.m.
State Universities Retirement System
1901 Fox Drive, Main Conference Room
Champaign, Illinois**

The following trustees were present: Mr. Collin Van Meter, Chair, Mr. Aaron Ammons, Mr. Richard Figueroa, Ms. Jamie-Clare Flaherty, Dr. Fred Giertz, Dr. Steven Rock, Mr. Antonio Vasquez and Mr. Mitch Vogel.

Others present: Mr. Martin Noven, Executive Director; Mr. Doug Wesley, Chief Investment Officer (CIO); Ms. Bianca Green, General Counsel; Ms. Kristen Houch, Head of Legislative Affairs; Mr. Albert Lee, Assistant General Counsel; Ms. Emily Vock, Associate General Counsel; Ms. Brenda Dunn, Chief Human Resource Officer; Ms. Tara Myers, Chief Financial Officer; Ms. Suzanne Mayer, Chief Benefits Officer; Ms. Ellen Hung, Deputy CIO; Ms. Kelly Carson and Ms. Annette Ackerman, Executive Assistants; Mr. T.R. Cox and Ms. Ruth Ann Eledge of Segal Waters Consulting.

Administration Committee roll call attendance was taken. Trustee Rock, present; Trustee Van Meter, present; and Trustee Vasquez, present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Trustee Van Meter presented the minutes from the Administration Committee meeting of June 7, 2019. Trustee Rock made the following motion:

- That the minutes from the June 7, 2019 Administration Committee Meeting be approved as presented.

Trustee Vasquez seconded and the motion carried with all trustees present voting in favor.

APPROVAL OF CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

Trustee Van Meter presented the Closed Session Minutes from the Administration Committee meeting of June 7, 2019. Trustee Rock made the following motion:

- That the Closed Session Minutes from the June 7, 2019 Administration Committee Meeting be approved as presented and remain closed.

Trustee Giertz seconded and the motion carried with all trustees present voting in favor.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

There was no formal chairperson's report.

EMPLOYMENT ENGAGEMENT SURVEY UPDATE

Ms. Brenda Dunn presented the results of an employee engagement survey. The survey included seven categories: leadership, strategy, customers, measurement, analysis, knowledge management, workforce, operations and results. Ms. Dunn stated that 75 percent of employees completed the survey and provided a brief analysis regarding the accomplishments, improvements and recommendations provided in the survey results.

A copy of the survey results titled "Employee Engagement Survey" is incorporated as part of these minutes as [Exhibit 1](#).

CLOSED SESSION

Trustee Rock moved that the Administration Committee go into closed session under the Open Meetings Act, pursuant to §2(c)(1). Trustee Ammons seconded and the motion carried in a roll call vote:

Trustee Rock	- aye
Trustee Van Meter	- aye
Trustee Vasquez	- aye

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Upon motion by Trustee Giertz that was seconded by Trustee Rock and carried, the Administration Committee resumed its meeting in open session.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no further business before the board and Trustee Van Meter moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Trustee Flaherty and carried with all trustees present voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,



Mr. Martin Noven
Secretary, Board of Trustees

MMN; kc

Employee Engagement Survey for State Universities Retirement System, Illinois

Prepared by: Sheldon D. Goldstein
Quality Training Solutions, LLC
September 2019

Executive Summary

A survey of all Staff and Management personnel was conducted in August 2018. Of the 117 Staff, 88 responded by completing the online survey. Of the 22 Managers, 17 completed the survey.

Seven categories of engagement were surveyed, with 40 questions. They are: Leadership; Strategy; Customers; Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management; Workforce; Operations; and Results. The overall average score, on a scale of 1 to 5, is 3.71 for Staff and 3.88 for Managers, where 1 represents "Strongly Disagree," 3 represents "Undecided," and 5 represents "Strongly Agree." This is very close agreement between Managers and Staff with a substantial improvement in the satisfaction of Managers from 2018.

Managers and Staff are both supportive of the leadership of your Executive Director as well as the direction of the organization under his leadership.

This score is a positive result; and the scores, along with write-in comments, offer direction for improvement. This year's survey results represent an improvement over last year's baseline in 6 out of the 7 categories of satisfaction for both Staff and Managers.

As in most organizations, better communication at all levels is a major focus for improvement. Communication improves employee engagement as well as organizational performance. Many of the areas identified for improvement were also present last year. This is a strong call for action.

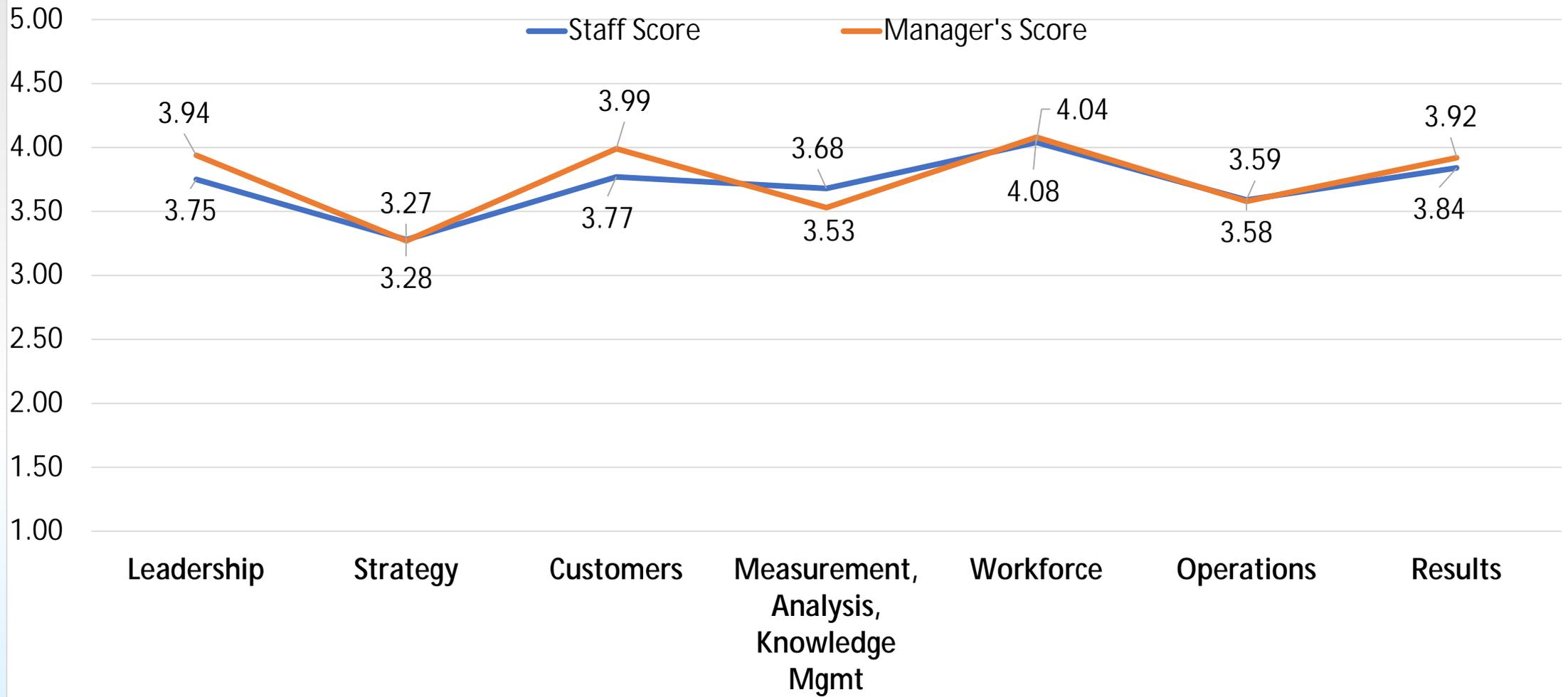
How to Interpret This Survey

- A score of 3 means that the respondent neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. This is a neutral response. We want to get to a score of 4 to indicate agreement with the criteria. Improvement to scores above 4 represent excellent organizations.
- These questions are linked to the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria and are correlated to successful organizations. Concentration on these attributes mirrors activities that are present in the highest performing companies, regardless of industry. They are also representative of organizations that receive the “Best Places to Work” award.
- The process of improvement includes leveraging on those things that we’re good at, getting to the root causes of issues and resolving them, and then demonstrating measurable improvement over time. Engagement surveys give us a window into the aggregate thinking of our Staff. Showing increasing satisfaction year-over-year is the mark of a dynamic organization. Listening to our Staff, and acting on their suggestions, is one of the ways we show that they are valued assets in the company.

Overall Comparison of Employee Satisfaction 2018 to 2019

	2018	2019
Staff	3.64	3.71
Managers	3.57	3.88

2019 Scores for Engagement by Category



What Does SURS Do Well?

	Staff	Management
People I work with cooperate as a team	4.06	4.18
I have a safe workplace	4.24	4.41
I am committed to my organization's success	4.35	4.40
My organization obeys all Laws and Regulations	4.36	4.53
My organization practices high standards and Ethics	4.17	4.35
My organization is a good place to work	4.10	4.29

Where could SURS use the most improvement?

	Staff	Management
My organization is flexible and makes changes quickly	2.80	2.43
My organization removes things that get in the way of progress	2.95	2.88

- These same two areas for improvement were prominent in our 2018 survey and are not resolved.
 - Scores are consistent with last year, but Managers rated flexibility lower this year.
 - These are the only attributes that scored a “2” rating, and they are rated below neutral for both Managers and Staff.

The Strategy Category Scores The Lowest

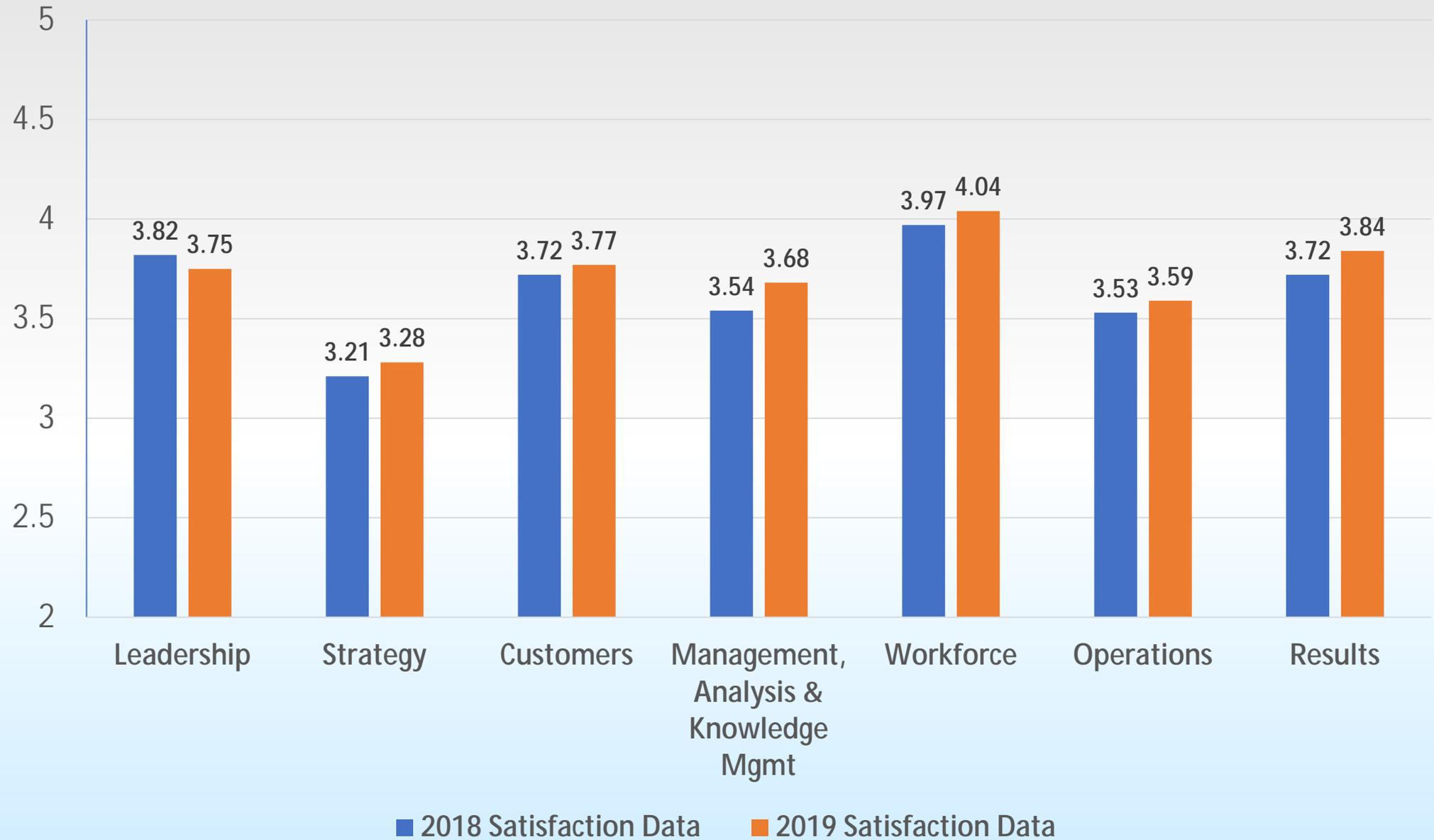
2. Strategy	Staff Score	Management Score
Asks for My Ideas	3.33	3.65
Encourages New Ideas	3.23	3.35
Know Plans Effects on Work	3.59	3.41
Know If We are Making Progress	3.47	3.53
Organization is Flexible	2.80	2.43
Average Score	3.28	3.27

What are the gaps, where Staff and Management don't agree?

Categories of greatest disagreement are:	Staff	Management
1. Leadership		
My organization asks what I think **	3.41	3.76
2. Strategy		
As it plans for the future, SURS asks for my ideas **	3.33	3.65
3. Customers		
I ask if my customers are satisfied or dissatisfied with my work **	3.39	4.00
4. Measurement, Analysis & Knowledge Management		
I know how to measure the quality of my work **	4.03	3.65
5. Workforce		
My bosses encourage me to develop my job skills so I can advance my career **	4.02	3.65
My bosses and organization care about me **	3.78	4.18

**Attribute is the same as last year

2018 to 2019 Staff Satisfaction Comparison



2018 to 2019 Manager Satisfaction Comparison



Executive Leadership Questions

Staff supports the efforts of the Executive Director:

- Results are consistent with those of last year, except for improving support from the Management personnel.

Executive Leadership	2018 Staff Score	2018 Mgmt Score	2019 Staff Score	2019 Mgmt Score
Leadership Direction	3.97	3.62	3.93	3.94
Leadership	4.01	3.52	3.91	3.82

Write-In Comments

- Internal communication could improve. We need to be informed about what's happening before email blasts go out to members. Give us more notice before we get questions from members. We keep saying communication needs to improve, but it never does.
- Management will decide to do something without asking Staff, or if they survey Staff, they ignore our advice. It feels like they ask us just to be able to say they did. We asked for additional training for the buyout procedures, but so far, nothing. We gave advice on 1801, but it was ignored. We really don't feel valued.
- The computer system is old and inefficient. I can work here 30 years and use the same system.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- At least 1 respondent (possibly the same person) rated all the questions “Strongly Disagree” except for 7 of the 42 questions. There are a few highly discontented Staff.
- More effective and higher frequency communication is needed; i.e., newsletters, town hall meetings, walking around, and formal departmental meetings. Giving Staff more advanced notice to assimilate information would help. Just pull up the timing.
- A new computer system should move to the head of the line in project priority. Set an aggressive timeline. Involve front-line employee representatives in the program.
- Staff believe that you ask for their opinions but don’t act on them. Asking for Staff’s opinions and then not following through on their advice is worse than not asking at all.
- The move to a new location is a concern with Staff. It likely needed more communication, collaboration, and accommodation with the Staff. Space issues and noise issues are mentioned.
- There is a sense, and possibly a reality, that SURS is a big, lumbering organization where change doesn’t come quickly. This doesn’t have to be the case with internal processes. Software improvements create an environment of a fast-paced organization keeping up with the members’ needs.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Reward programs are a way to show Staff they are valued. It must be meaningful, public recognition.
- Participation rate for the surveys was 75%, with the same response rate for Staff and Managers. Often, those who refuse to contribute are saying that they have no faith in the likelihood of change, no matter how compelling their comments. Judging by the low scoring attributes being the same from last year to this year, this argument may have merit. Staff, including Managers, need to see low scoring attributes on the radar for improvement, with action items and periodic updates.
- Write-in comments are valuable. A score of 3 says there isn't enough motivation to provide a positive response, but it doesn't say why. Comments offer actionable suggestions. Yet, only 4 Managers commented out of 17 respondents, and only 18 Staff commented out of 88 respondents.