To: Institutions using the HEDS COVID-19 Institutional Response Staff Survey
From: Charlie Blaich and Kathy Wise
Re: How college and university staff are experiencing their institution's COVID-19 response
Date: 7/24/2020

The HEDS COVID-19 Institutional Response Staff Survey was open for two-and-a-half months, from mid-April through the end of June. In this memo we review the trends we're seeing in how staff are experiencing their institution's response to COVID-19 and the key variables that are influencing those experiences.

Data for this report

The data we used for this report are from 6,220 staff members at 29 colleges and universities. The response rate for this survey was 57%. These institutions are a mix of private and smaller public institutions. Sixty-five percent of the staff who took this survey are women and about eighty-five percent are White.

Following our practice with previous COVID-19 survey reports, we've included the details of our analyses in the Appendix so that you can see how we arrived at our conclusions and have the option of using what we've done as a starting point for your analyses. Our analytic approach is simple and, we hope, straightforward. We are glad to hear any questions you have about this work or any suggestions about how we could make it more useful to you. Our contact information is at the end of this report.

Worries and stress

We asked staff how often they worry about 11 different areas of their lives that COVID-19 could impact. Roughly two-thirds of the staff we surveyed worry frequently about the health and well-being of friends and family, and about the same proportion worry frequently about the impact of COVID-19 on the future of their institutions (see Figure 1 below).
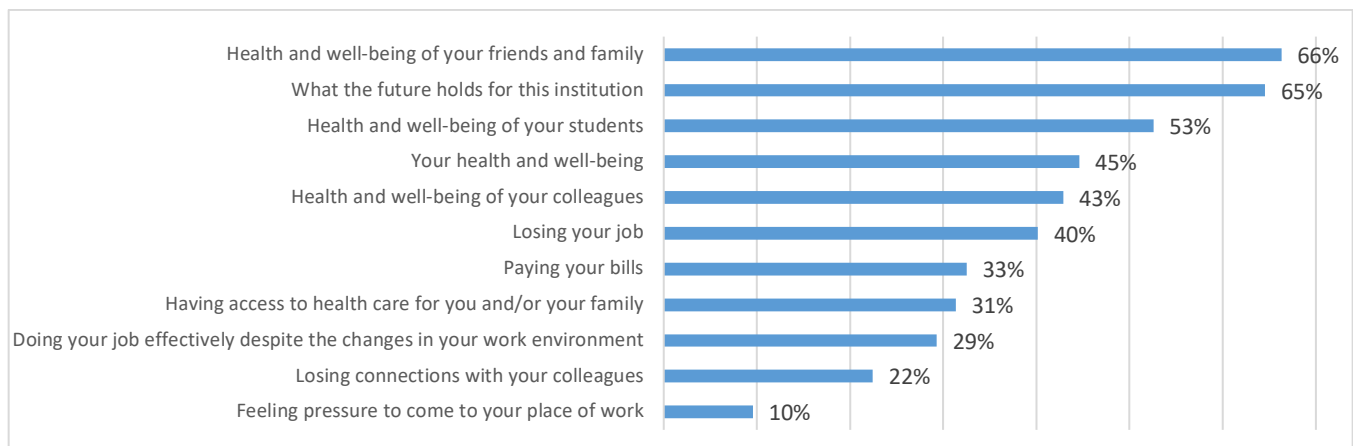

Figure 1: Percent of staff who worry often/very often

It's interesting to note that, overall, staff are more concerned about the health and well-being of students than their own health and well-being or about losing their jobs. Staff worry less often about doing their jobs effectively in their new work environments or losing connections with their colleagues. But worrying "less often," in the context of data showing such high levels of worrying, means that "only" about a fifth of the staff report worrying often or very often about these two areas.

Finally, staff of color worry more often than White staff members about the 11 areas listed above, and women worry more often about them than men.[1]

While the data in Figure 1 can help us understand how many staff members are worrying about particular things, it doesn't give a proper sense of the heavy bundle of worries that many staff are carrying. Here's a sample of what some staff report worrying about in their open-ended comments in response to our question, "What are your biggest worries or concerns as you think about what's coming up in the next few months?":

- "My biggest worry is the well-being and health of the students and how they are doing. Many of them have never experienced true adversity or hardship, and do not have the mental capacity to process how to work through such things without help from professors, coaches, and friends. However, those allies are not available in the capacity they need. I had one student say she just wishes she could sit in my office, talk and laugh like we did before COVID."
- "Life never returning back to normal, being afraid when someone sneezes or coughs around me, missing the contact with people, hugs, etc."
- "Getting laid off. Students not getting service they need for academic and health support. Students and employees not taking 6-foot space and stay-at-home options seriously. I have a medical condition that if I get ill, I will be very ill, and I do not know who will care for my family members who need care."
- "I don't want to lose colleagues to lay-offs. I don't want to have more work to do because colleagues may be laid off. I will struggle (emotionally and financially) if I have to take a significant pay cut but still be expected to continue to work the same number of hours. BUT, I am grateful to have a job but tired and emotionally exhausted so thinking about continuing like this is hard."
- "The changes to our way of life: Will we wear masks and stay 6 feet away forever? Will we always worry that going to the grocery store could bring death to our households? Will there never be live meetings and celebrations again?"
- "The mental and physical health of my family, the long-term effects this situation will have on our economy, the future of my institution, will my spouse and I still have jobs, can we pay our mortgage, etc."
- "I am very concerned about students returning from all over the country and living together in campus housing. How can the college have social distancing in classrooms, housing, and dining services? These areas are always packed with people. I am concerned about my health and my co-worker's health once fall semester starts. Not to mention the health of family members who I might have contact with after being required to work in an environment that cannot ensure non infection by people who might carry the virus but be asymptomatic. The lack of testing makes it impossible to know who might be infecting people and as all staff, faculty, and students return, the chance of getting the virus increases exponentially. It weighs on many of us as fall semester looms."
- "The unknowns: Will my colleagues get sick and who will take care of their work? What will happen to students if we make the wrong choices as we return? How much more anxiety will public transportation give me (it was super high before we were in the midst of a pandemic)? If we make a full return to campus, what will the plans be for keeping us safe and what will happen when people inevitably get sick? Will there be repercussions if I am scared to come to the office?

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[1] See the Appendix (p. 17-18) for more information on this analysis.

Will staff be furloughed/laid off? Who will pick up that work? How many new students will we actually have enroll?"

- "Student return. New protocols as we live in post-quarantine world. Grief - loss - anxiety - stress - academic distress - technological needs. Keeping students safe. Hoping that if I get furloughed, that I am asked to return to the team, when the time is right."

- "Additional furloughs feel inevitable, but will there be more layoffs? Trying to work full-time while caring for a small child at home has been physically and mentally exhausting - how long will I need to continue it? Will campus be open in the fall? It feels highly unlikely right now. Will campus ever be able to operate as it did pre-COVID-19, or is that world gone forever?"

- "How many people will die from this disease. Whether there will be shortages that cause more death, disease, and/or civil unrest. That essential workers will go back to being unappreciated, treated like third class, underpaid citizens, and that society won't retain the lessons they are learning right now if life becomes safe again. Also worried that my institution may not survive, and if it does, those of us working underpaid jobs could not expect our financial situations to improve until the College's financial situation improves."

- "I am very anxious about all the people who have left or will have left (seniors, retirees, visitors, etc.) who I did not get to say goodbye to and some I am unlikely to see again. There is grief there for all the realizations that will come when familiar faces don't appear."

In addition to asking staff about their worries, we also asked them about their stress levels. Specifically, we asked staff, "Overall, how much stress are you feeling about the potential consequences of the spread of COVID-19?" As we began looking at the data, we wondered whether there was a difference between "worries" and "stress" or if they were just two words for the same construct. It turns out that there is a subtle difference, and that's important to understand if we are to get a better understanding of the psychological load that many staff are carrying. The stress that staff report is influenced by the worries we reviewed above. But that's not all that impacts their stress levels. It's also influenced by what staff are experiencing in their jobs given their institution's response to COVID-19.

Let's unpack that. In addition to asking about their worries and stress, we also asked staff, "Since your institution started responding to COVID-19, how often have you:
- Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?
- Felt that you were on top of things?
- Had too many worries?"[2]

The more often staff report that things are piling up, that it feels like they aren't on top of things, or that they have too many worries, the more stress they report, *above and beyond the stress related to how much they worry about the 11 areas we reviewed above.* In essence, the overall stress that staff report is the double-barreled combination of their worries about their health, the health of their friends, families, and students, and concerns about the future of their institution *PLUS* the impact of the difficulties of doing their jobs in the COVID-19 mandated work environment.[3]

Given that background, it's not surprising that staff report a considerable level of stress overall. As shown in Figure 2 below, about 90% of the staff who took this survey report either "some" or "a great deal" of stress about the consequences of COVID-19.

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[2] These items on the survey are from the Lack of Control subscale developed by: Lehman, K. A. et al. (2012). Development of the Brief Inventory of Perceived Stress, *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *68*, 631–644.
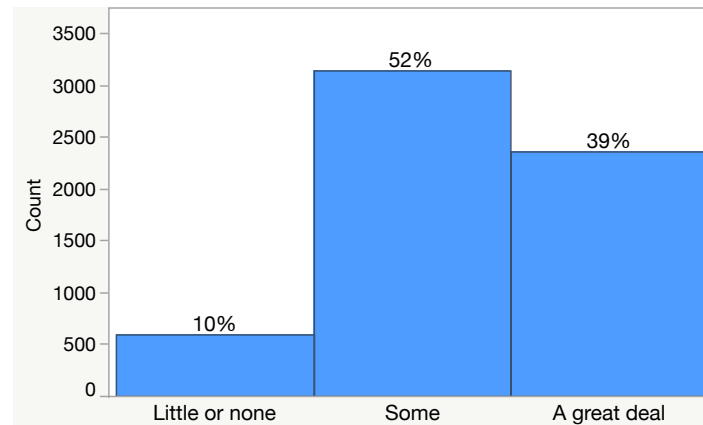[3] For more details on this analysis, see the Appendix (p. 19).

Figure 2: Overall, how much stress are you feeling about the potential consequences of the spread of COVID-19?

There are large differences in the level of stress reported by people with different gender identities. About 41% of women and 72% of nonbinary staff members report feeling a great deal of stress, while only 30% of men report experiencing this level of stress. In addition, staff who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native, African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander report higher levels of stress than White staff members. Finally, salaried staff report higher levels of stress than non-salaried staff.

Earlier we gave examples of some of the worries that staff report. Given the additive influence of work-related issues on overall staff stress, we've provided some examples below of the kinds of work-related stress staff describe experiencing in their open-ended comments:

- "There seems to be more work than there was before the COVID-19 changes. I feel that we may be overcompensating for working remotely by increasing frequency of meetings, deadlines, and 'high priority' projects that normally would have been more balanced and manageable. This is a time to give everyone a little more room to breathe, and the opposite seems to be happening."
- "My biggest worry? The workload will just continue to increase. More work to do with less staff."
- "The amount of work, quite literally, thrown at us with no direction. It is drowning worthy. We are not properly equipped to handle the emotional toll we are asked to handle."
- "There is a divide in responsibilities between employees who are on the same pay grade. In our department, we have higher-level employees that are working 20+ hours a week and higher-level employees who have essentially been absent since March. We have employees who are excused from work because they have small children, and we have employees who have to work every week despite having small children. We have employees with health conditions that justify their absence, and we have employees with the same or worse preexisting conditions who are expected to be here every week."
- "I hope and anticipate that my workload will slow down a bit in the next month, but am concerned about staying ahead of recruitment and other upcoming tasks for Fall semester. The biggest challenge in our household thus far has been juggling workloads and childcare, so I hope we can get a break from that intensity. (Thankfully, I also anticipate being able to have relatives help with childcare again soon.)"
- "The staff who always work extremely hard, significant hours, and care deeply about the students are still doing so. The expectations specifically of my supervisor appear that he feels we are all on a holiday, doing yard work, and enjoying daytime adult beverages. We are not. The

amount of time spent answering emails, texts, messages, and holding Zoom meetings with students has been significant in addition to keeping up with our regular work tasks and should be acknowledged. We are responding to student stress and questions over everything imaginable and need to be more supported in these roles."

- "I am actually concerned that my workload this summer will be massive as we prepare for uncertain scenarios in teaching this fall. I usually need the somewhat less-chaotic pace of summer to rest and prepare for a busy new school year, but I fear this summer will be rather frantic. That is not necessarily something the college needs to address, but something I need to be prepared to manage on my own in some ways and with my supervisor's support and guidance in others."

- "Adjusting to working remotely - it's too easy to be in front of the computer for long hours. While I am lucky to not have many distractions, it causes me to have guilt to not be online 12 hours a day. I want to be available for my supervisor and those I supervise but am exhausted most days."

- "I also feel as though expectations need to be adjusted for some of us. I was coming off of two of my busiest months when this happened and was looking forward to a slower spring season. That did not happen and was, in fact, busier than the preceding months. I have now gotten to the point where I am able to use some vacation time, but I am burnt out... Even when requesting vacation time, I and my coworkers have been told, 'That's fine as long as the work gets done since that's what matters.' No, what matters right now is getting through this. Workloads were already strained before this happened and nothing has been lifted from responsibilities. Instead, we are having to find new ways to do what we already had to do (more work) and create new resources and processes for students (even more work). We may return to offices on campus late-June/early-July (maybe), but then that heads right into an entirely new academic year/busy season where we will still be re-imagining things."

- "This has only been so hard because I love where I work and the people with whom I work so much. My college is the people. Plenty of employees are unhappy with working from home because it's harder, more complicated, child-filled, and just generally not an ideal work environment. People at my college miss working on campus because of our students and our colleagues. It's just not the same without the community...in the dining hall, walking around on campus, concerts and lectures, athletic events, etc. If anything, my love for my place of work has been further affirmed by this pandemic."

It is not surprising that a world-wide pandemic creates widespread worry and stress. But it is important to remember two things. First, people's worries and stress have been building, and will continue to build, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues its relentless and undetermined course. Second, people who have identities with less power or status will likely feel the negative impact of COVID-19 even more profoundly than those who have more power and status. Even though COVID-19 will have a powerful impact on nearly everyone in a community, that impact will be heightened for some members of the community because of who they are, who they love, or where they come from.

Is there anything institutions can do to reduce staff stress?
We can't control the impact of COVID-19 outside of our institutions. But we can control how our institution's response to COVID-19 affects the people who are helping to hold our institution together. Based on the data from this survey, our institutions can do three things to help reduce staff stress and worry: help people manage their work, communicate effectively, and provide support. Specifically, after

controlling for race/ethnicity, gender, and job status, three factors play an important role in the extent to which staff experience worry and stress.[4] In order of impact, these are:

1. The extent to which people feel like they are on top of and can manage their work. The more staff feel that things are "piling up so high that they cannot overcome them" or that they are not "on top of things," the more they experience stress and worry.
2. The quality of the communication they are getting from their institution about its response to COVID-19. The more satisfied they are with institutional communication, the less they worry and the less stress they experience.
3. The level and quality of support they are getting from their supervisors and senior leaders at the institution. The better the support, the less they worry.

We'll start by unpacking what the data say about high quality communication. Then we'll move to more detail on supportive leadership and supervision. When we discuss support from leaders, we'll also describe things that seem to help staff stay on top of and manage their work.

Effective communication

We asked staff to indicate how satisfied they are with four areas of communication from their institution related to COVID-19. In Figure 3 below, we show their level of satisfaction with each.
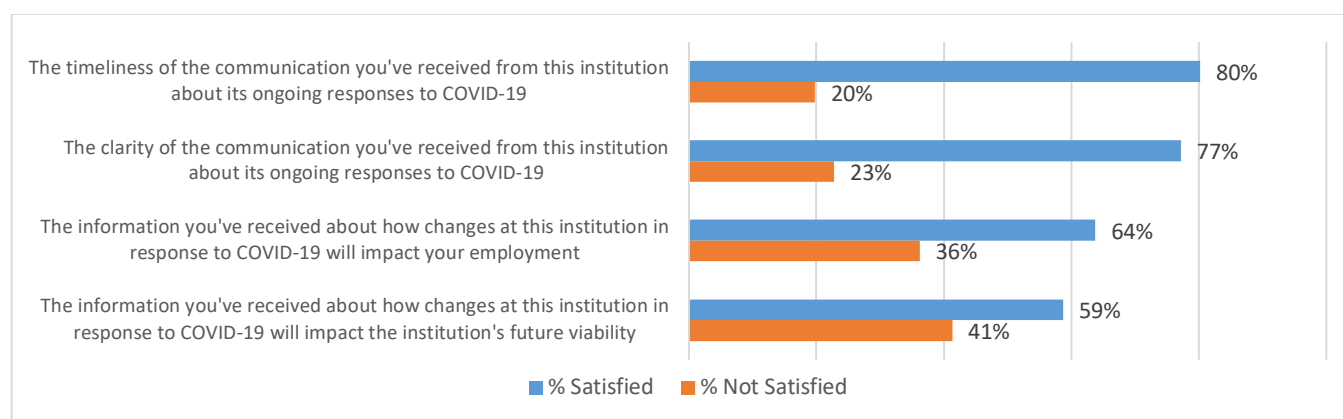

Figure 3: Percent of staff who are satisfied vs. not satisfied

Overall, the results indicate that most staff are satisfied with the quality of their institutions' communications. This is good news. Staff give the strongest marks to the timeliness and clarity of the information that they're getting about their institution's response to COVID-19. However, the level of satisfaction among staff is somewhat lower for the quality of the communication they are getting about how COVID-19 may affect their jobs or their institution's viability. What we found in our review of open-ended comments from staff is consistent with this split. By and large, the staff know that COVID-19 is having a big impact on their institution and that their leaders are grappling with hard decisions, but beyond a sense of foreboding, many of them have difficulty more precisely gauging the level of risk they or their institution are facing.

How do we make sense of the small but notable differences we see in the level of satisfaction with communication about current institutional responses compared to communication about the implications of COVID-19 for the future? We suggest that three factors are at play. First, COVID-19 has created a

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[4] For more information on these analyses, see the Appendix (p. 17, 18, and 20). Supervisor support was related to the worries scale and senior leadership support was related to overall stress.

world in which it is hard for us to reasonably estimate many of the risks we face. This is true for us personally, and it is true for the people who lead our institutions. Even when we think we've developed some sense of clarity about what's coming next, sudden changes in the prevalence of the virus can quickly erase that momentary clarity.

Second, it's important to remember that many staff and faculty don't understand the nuts and bolts of the business models by which our institutions operate. They know in general about the importance of tuition or state funding, but they may not know the details about discounting, auxiliary revenue, net versus gross tuition, and everything else that goes into institutional business models. So, many staff may not see the ways that a COVID-19-produced downturn can ripple through an institutional budget.

Finally, we've seen evidence that some institutional leaders are afraid to be open about what they know, because they don't want to scare people or create panic. When we were developing this survey, along with our COVID-19 student and faculty surveys, some institutional leaders didn't want to ask detailed questions on what faculty and staff are worrying about or students' intentions to return to their institution. They worried that simply asking a question on a survey would create fear and panic among staff, faculty, and students.

Fear and panic are bad things, both for the people who suffer from them and for the effects they may have on our capacity to attract and keep students. But not asking hard questions or talking about challenging news may promote even more fear and panic. As one staff member said in response to the question, "Is there anything else that you'd like to tell your institution?":

> "COMMUNICATE MORE. Be honest. You may be concerned about saying too much and scaring people with different scenarios, but WE ARE MORE SCARED KNOWING NOTHING."

Indeed, many of the open-ended comments from staff that compliment their institution's communication efforts focus on the transparency and honesty of that communication. Here are some examples from staff members' responses to the open-ended question, "What have you appreciated most about this institution's response to COVID-19?":
- "Transparent communication from my president."
- "Thank you! Thank you for making the difficult and unpopular decisions that needed to be made. Thank you for being honest with faculty and staff about the possibilities we are still facing. Thank you for trying to reassure us as much as you could. Thank you for doing your best to be as transparent as possible."
- "Leadership is transparent and honest. I would rather hear the truth about how this affects the University and staff from leaders than rumors."
- "It would be a nice gesture to reassure additional location faculty and staff that their jobs are secure and that their campuses aren't being looked at for closure. Unless of course you can't say that with all honesty. We want administration to be up front and honest with us about our future with [institution removed], and right now we are not getting those messages. We are seeing dramatic changes that don't make many of us feel very secure in our positions or that our campus will even exist in another year or two."
- "How thorough and transparent my institution has been through all of this. It seems to me that [institution removed] has really taken their time to make sure that all the information they are sending out or tough decisions having to be made were looked at in full before acting. Which is

relieving to me. I know that sometimes we can act quickly or foolishly due to conflict, but we have made great, intelligent, informed decisions. THANK YOU."

In addition to transparency, honesty, and the willingness to have tough conversations, many staff compliment the sense of care and concern that they feel in their institutions' communication and actions. Here are some examples of positive comments that staff made about their institutions' communication efforts and the actions that were communicated in those efforts:

- "I really appreciate how thoughtful and caring the campus has been in regards to its response to COVID-19."
- "In a lot of other sectors, employees are just seen as a means to an end of maximizing profits for the organization. [Institution removed] has done very well at treating its employees as people and trying to make sure we aren't put in harm's way."
- "I feel really cared for as a staff member. We've shared communications in a timely and efficient manner, which I know our staff and students appreciate. It's definitely hard - there are a lot of big decisions being made while the situation continues to evolve - but I believe we're doing our best given the time and our resources."
- "I very much appreciate that the basic humanity of administrators comes through in their communications. Their forthrightness and willingness to share their own vulnerability makes me trust them more than I already did."
- "The leadership truly cares about the employees and students as demonstrated by their continual meetings about COVID-19 changes, taking furlough too, and checking in with employees and students."
- "I have really appreciated how much care there is for all of us. I truly feel that we are in this together and have never felt the 'family' environment more than I do now. I'm very grateful for cabinet members, board members, and other leaders on campus. Though I'm feeling a little stress and uncertainty, I couldn't be more grateful to work at [institution removed], and I have all the faith in the world that we'll emerge even stronger and that we'll show the world who we are."
- "I have truly appreciated [institution removed]'s response to the situation and the focus on the health and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. I am sure that administration knows how much the college means to the entire campus community, and I support whatever measures are suggested in order for us to return."
- "Overall, I wish for [institution removed] to know that the response has been very good. There have been many steps along the way (and will continue to be) where the right action is not entirely clear and there are very hard calls to make. I think my institution has also done a great job navigating this series of unfortunate events with a lot of compassion, which is vital to so many right now."

One striking thing about these comments is how similar they are to comments that we've heard students make about their best faculty. In describing these faculty, students say that they care for their students and they are invested in their students as whole people, not just someone who happens to be taking their class. If the analogy holds true, it means that staff are looking to their leaders to see if they are listening, present for their concerns, being transparent but kind, and showing care for the people they lead in what they communicate and what they do.

Spreading a sense of kindness and care will be important going forward. At the time we're writing this report, COVID-19 is surging and evidence is mounting that aerosol transmission might play a role in its spread. It is no exaggeration to suggest that bringing staff back to work, even with masks, distancing,

and all of the other safety procedures that we're developing, will put some people's lives at risk. Having a sense that their lives matter and that decisions about the institution's future are not calculated primarily for the bottom line will be essential—both for people's peace of mind and for their effectiveness.

Support from leaders

When we reviewed the open-ended comments from staff, we found that many of their comments about staying on top of, or managing, their workload focus on *how* their supervisors are helping them adapt to their new work environments. So, we'll include those comments in this section of the report. But first, we'll review the quantitative data about support from senior leaders and supervisors. As you'll see below, the news here is good as well.
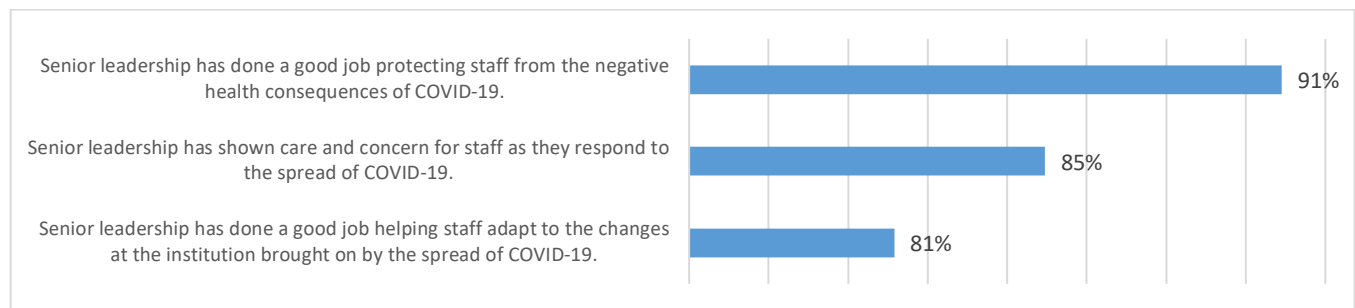
Figure 4: Percent of staff who agree/strongly agree

Most of the staff who responded to this survey agree that senior leadership at their institution is doing a good job in responding to COVID-19 to: protect their health, show care and concern for them, and help them adapt to institutional changes. Staff also gave positive responses about their supervisor's efforts to support them through this crisis (see Figure 5 below).
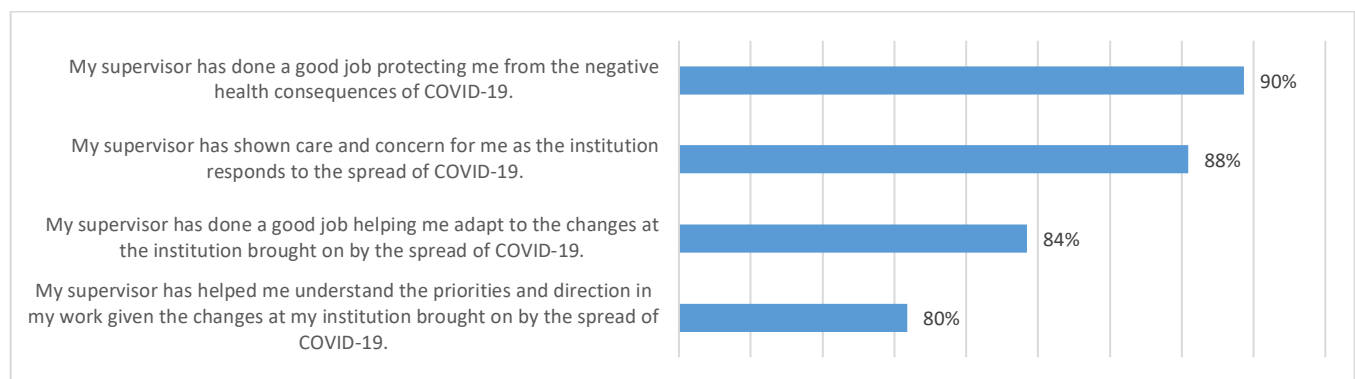
Figure 5: Percent of staff who agree/strongly agree

In addition to indicating that their supervisors are protecting their health, showing care and concern, and helping them adapt to changes, most staff credit their supervisors with helping them understand priorities and direction in their work given the changes brought on by COVID-19.

Most of the comments from staff about support from their senior leaders focus on the quality of communication and institution-level decisions, which is something we touched on earlier in this report. Comments from staff about the support they receive from their supervisors are different. Staff comments about supportive supervisors focus mostly on the *flexibility* and *understanding* that their supervisors exhibit in helping them continue to work productively in their new, socially distanced, family-intensive,

and more chaotic work environments. Here's a sample of the kind of comments staff made about how supervisors support their work:

- "The trust from my supervisor to allow me to work from my parent's house, being alone during this time would be difficult mentally, so it is great to be home with my family."
- "The flexibility of colleagues as we negotiate our work, particularly with how my supervisor set very human expectations and provided support without lowering expectations for excellence."
- "My supervisor's support and guidance and the support of the college for our programming."
- "I especially appreciate my supervisor for her compassion, consideration, understanding, and decision when I discussed with her my personal situation."
- "Respecting and accommodating the family and other personal needs/distractions/priorities of the College employees."
- "Flexibility with regard to working at home or in the office."
- "My immediate bosses have been 'led by the science' as the current phrase goes, and they have done their best to make my job safe while also caring about the university's mission of education."

We can now circle back to the factor that has the biggest impact on staff members' stress and worries: the extent to which people feel like they are on top of and can manage their work. Much of the change in staff workloads is unavoidable because we're all trying to figure out how to work effectively in new and changing environments. What helps is when supervisors show flexibility, support, and concern because that allows staff to continue to find ways to do good work regardless of the conditions they face in their new work environments.

Conclusions

First, the staff who responded to this survey are experiencing a heavy combination of worry and stress brought on by the impact of COVID-19 on them, their families, their communities, and their institutions. It is sobering to review survey data pointing to such consistent and widespread negative consequences of a phenomenon. COVID-19 is a relentless disaster from which it is difficult to find any respite. It's on the news, it's in social media, it's changing our jobs and our lives, it's the topic of many conversations, it affects how we interact with our communities, and it creates persistent uncertainty. And the less power, privilege, or status someone has, the more deeply they experience these negative impacts.

We are in a unique position because we see the data and comments on this survey, and at the same time, we have the chance to work with staff at institutions across the country, some of whom probably filled out this survey. Every day we hear about and feel the challenges they are facing. We hear and feel the challenges with our colleagues on the HEDS staff. But we also see the courage and dedication these staff members bring to their work despite their worries, the stresses they feel, and the challenges they confront. We hope that leaders at institutions can make a concerted effort to thank their staff for the work they are doing under extraordinary circumstances. Our institutions couldn't survive without it.

Second, based on what staff report on this survey, most senior leaders and supervisors have done an exceptional job of communicating with and supporting their staff. Once again, given all of the stress, difficult decisions, and frightening insider knowledge these leaders are dealing with, they appear to be doing a remarkably good job. It's important to take note of the good work that so many people are doing in such a difficult time. It's a bit of good news that we can relish in a very challenging environment.

Our third finding is that effective communication and humane support matter for the people who work at our institutions. When staff receive a) clear and honest communication and b) flexible support from their senior leaders and supervisors, it helps them manage their work and stay on top of things, and it also lowers their worry and stress. Moreover, good communication and support from leaders helps build and maintain the sense of connection that staff members have with their institution.[5]

In reviewing the open-ended comments from this survey, many leaders appear to be following good practices in crisis communication. According to a report from the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota,[6] these principles are:

- Don't over-reassure, which typically backfires and lowers your credibility. This is the most common crisis communication mistake.
- Proclaim (not just acknowledge) uncertainty, because doing so is paradoxically more credible than voicing overconfidence. Be willing to speculate responsibly and acknowledge opinion diversity.
- Validate emotions—your audience's and your own. The two most important emotions to validate in most crises are fear and misery.
- Give people things to do. Better yet, offer a menu of things to do: what's required as a minimum, what's recommended, and what's available for those who want to do more.
- Admit and apologize for errors—which is often difficult for leaders to do even though we all make mistakes. At least admit and apologize for the errors everybody already knows you made.
- Share dilemmas, including the various options for moving out of lockdown (see sidebar on page 10 of the CIDRAP report). And rebut the seductive, dangerous myth that we can rapidly come out of lockdown and rebuild the economy without cases and deaths climbing.
- Accept that the principles of crisis communication are counterintuitive, and that crisis communication is a field of study and practice. Make sure you or someone on your team learns how to do it right.

The open-ended comments that we've highlighted in this report focus on not over-reassuring, proclaiming uncertainty, and validating your audience's and your own emotions. These good practices have had an impact as our institutions first responded to COVID-19. As many of our institutions implement or revise their plans for the fall, the three additional good practices of giving people things to do, admitting and apologizing for errors, and sharing dilemmas will become even more important.

We are now more than four months into the COVID-19 pandemic. As chaotic and stressful as it has been, the results from this survey and from our COVID-19 survey for students point to the good work that people at institutions across the country have done to support their staff and students. Going forward, it's important to remember that COVID-19 will be a marathon, not a sprint. We are only in the early phases of the pandemic, and as we're learning with the recent surge in infections we're experiencing, there will be many twists and turns. To weather this storm, the level and quality of the communication strategies and support we've created to meet a crisis must become a normal part of our work.

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[5] After controlling for gender, race/ethnicity, part-time or full-time status, and whether staff are hourly or salaried, there's a significant positive relationship between the quality of communication, support from senior leaders, and support from supervisors on staff members' sense of connection with their institution. See the Appendix (p. 21) for more information on this analysis.
[6] https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/sites/default/files/public/downloads/cidrap-covid19-viewpoint-part2.pdf

Please do not hesitate to drop us a line if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions. We are going to modify this survey so that institutions can administer it in the fall, and we'd like to know the modifications that would be most helpful to you. Our next report will focus on faculty members' reports of their experiences grappling with COVID-19.

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HEDS Consortium – www.hedsconsortium.org

Appendix

Analysis of the quantitative data

Below we've included information on how we scored and analyzed the data for this memo. As always, we are happy to send you SPSS syntax for our scales or for instances in which we reverse-coded the data. We've posted a copy of the survey on our website at the following address:

https://www.hedsconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/HEDS_COVID-19_Institutional_Response_Staff_Survey_2020-04-08.pdf

Worries Scale (Overall Cronbach's alpha = 0.86 with similar alphas across gender and ethnic identities)

We measured this construct using the following 11 items from Question 6 on the survey:

- *Question*: Given the changes caused by the spread of COVID-19, how often do you worry about the following?
  - Doing your job effectively despite the changes in your work environment
  - Feeling pressure to come to your place of work
  - Losing connections with your colleagues at [Institution Name]
  - The health and well-being of your colleagues
  - The health and well-being of your students
  - The health and well-being of your friends and family
  - Your health and well-being
  - What the future holds for [Institution Name]
  - Having access to health care for you and/or your family
  - Paying your bills
  - Losing your job
- *Response options for these questions*: Never; Almost never; Sometimes; Often; Very often
- *Scoring for each response option:* Never = 1; Almost never = 2; Sometimes = 3; Often = 4; Very often = 5

Staff Stress Question

We used Question 8 to measure staff members' overall level of stress:

- *Question*: Overall, how much stress are you feeling about the potential consequences of the spread of COVID-19?
  - Little or none
  - Some
  - A great deal
- *Scoring for each response option*: Little or none = 1; Some = 2; A great deal = 3

Pushed Scale (Overall Cronbach's alpha = 0.93 with similar alphas across gender and ethnic identities)

We measured this construct using the first three items on Question 7 on the survey:

- *Question*: Since [Institution Name] started responding to COVID-19, how often have you:
  - Had too many things to do?
  - Felt you were in a hurry?
  - Felt under pressure from deadlines?
- *Response options for these questions*: Never; Almost never; Sometimes; Often; Very often

- *Scoring for each response:* Never = 1; Almost never = 2; Sometimes = 3; Often = 4; Very often = 5

Lack of Control Scale (Overall Cronbach's alpha = 0.74 with similar alphas across gender and ethnic identities)

We measured this construct using the last three items on Question 7 on the survey:
- *Question*: Since [Institution Name] started responding to COVID-19, how often have you:
  - Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?
  - Felt that you were on top of things? (reverse-scored)
  - Had too many worries?
- *Response options for these questions*: Never; Almost never; Sometimes; Often; Very often
- *Scoring for each response option for the first and third items:* Never = 1; Almost never = 2; Sometimes = 3; Often = 4; Very often = 5
- *Scoring for each response option for the second item:* Never = 5; Almost never = 4; Sometimes = 3; Often = 2; Very often = 1

The Pushed and Lack of Control scales are sub-scales from the Brief Inventory of Perceived Stress (BIPS) Scale. For more information, see: Lehman, K. A., Burns, M. N., Gagen, E. C., & Mohr, D. C. (2012). Development of the Brief Inventory of Perceived Stress. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 68*(6), 631-644.

Senior Leadership Support Scale (Overall Cronbach's alpha = 0.88 with similar alphas across gender and ethnic identities)

We measured this construct using the three items in Question 1 on the survey:
- *Question*: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about senior leadership at [Institution Name].
  - Overall, senior leadership at [Institution Name] has done a good job protecting staff from the negative health consequences of COVID-19.
  - Overall, senior leadership at [Institution Name] has shown care and concern for staff as they respond to the spread of COVID-19.
  - Overall, senior leadership at [Institution Name] has done a good job helping staff adapt to the changes at the institution brought on by the spread of COVID-19.
- *Response options for these questions*: Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree
- *Scoring for each response option:* Strongly agree = 5; Agree = 4; Neither agree nor disagree = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly disagree = 1

Supervisor Support Scale (Overall Cronbach's alpha = 0.92 with similar alphas across gender and ethnic identities)

We measured this construct using the four items in Question 2 on the survey:
- *Question*: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about your supervisor at [Institution Name].
  - Overall, my supervisor has done a good job protecting me from the negative health consequences of COVID-19.
  - Overall, my supervisor has done a good job helping me adapt to the changes at the institution brought on by the spread of COVID-19.

- o Overall, my supervisor has helped me understand the priorities and direction in my work given the changes at my institution brought on by the spread of COVID-19.
  - o Overall, my supervisor has done a good job helping me adapt to the changes at the institution brought on by the spread of COVID-19.
- *Response options for these questions*: Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree
- *Scoring for each response option:* Strongly agree = 5; Agree = 4; Neither agree nor disagree = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly disagree = 1

Communication Scale (Overall Cronbach's alpha = 0.90 with similar alphas across gender and ethnic identities)

We measured this construct using the four items in Question 5 on the survey:
- *Question*: Please indicate your level of satisfaction with [Institution Name] about the following:
  - o The timeliness of the communication you've received from [Institution Name] about its ongoing responses to COVID-19
  - o The clarity of the communication you've received from [Institution Name] about its ongoing responses to COVID-19
  - o The information you've received about how changes at [Institution Name] in response to COVID-19 will impact your employment
  - o The information you've received about how changes at [Institution Name] in response to COVID-19 will impact the institution's future viability
- *Response options for these questions*: Very satisfied; Generally satisfied; Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; Generally dissatisfied; Very dissatisfied
- *Scoring for each response option:* Very satisfied = 5; Generally satisfied = 4; Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied = 3; Generally dissatisfied = 2; Very dissatisfied = 1

Staff connection with their institution

We used Question 13 to measure the strength of staff's connection to their institution:
- *Question*: How connected do you feel to [Institution Name]?
- *Response options*: Very strong connection; Some connection; Very little connection; No connection
- *Scoring for each response option*: Very strong connection = 4; Some connection = 3; Very little connection = 2; No connection = 1

Gender

We used the following question to determine staff members' gender identity:
- *Question:* What is your gender?
- *Response options:*
  - o Man
  - o Woman
  - o Non-binary, please specify: _____

Race/ethnicity

Using multiple questions from the survey, we derived the following racial/ethnic identities:

- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian
- African American/Black
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- White
- Hispanic/Latino/a
- Not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident
- Two or more races
- Unknown

Variables that influence scores on the Worries Scale controlling for employment type

Response Worry Scale

▶ Effect Summary

▼ Lack Of Fit

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio
Lack Of Fit	3634	173793.32	47.8242	0.8385
Pure Error	1164	66386.31	57.0329	**Prob > F**
Total Error	4798	240179.63		0.9999
				Max RSq
				0.7849

▼ Summary of Fit

RSquare	0.221915
RSquare Adj	0.220131
Root Mean Square Error	7.075188
Mean of Response	34.36466
Observations (or Sum Wgts)	4810

▼ Analysis of Variance

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio
Model	11	68500.76	6227.34	124.4018
Error	4798	240179.63	50.06	**Prob > F**
C. Total	4809	308680.39		<.0001*

▼ Parameter Estimates

Term	Estimate	Std Error	t Ratio	Prob>|t|	Std Beta
Intercept	33.728812	0.924364	36.49	<.0001*	0
Senior Leader Support	0.0831056	0.068507	1.21	0.2252	0.023127
Supervisor Support	-0.161094	0.040518	-3.98	<.0001*	-0.06372
Communication	-0.413147	0.03916	-10.55	<.0001*	-0.18477
Lack of Control	1.1231736	0.043609	25.76	<.0001*	0.357562
Full-time or part-time[Part-time]	-0.285484	0.188593	-1.51	0.1302	-0.02023
Salaried or hourly[Hourly (non-exempt) without responsibility for supervising staff]	0.4295415	0.193357	2.22	0.0264*	0.040851
Salaried or hourly[Hourly (non-exempt) with responsibility for supervising staff]	0.2646082	0.30135	0.88	0.3799	0.018744
Salaried or hourly[Salaried (exempt) without responsibility for supervising staff]	-0.241859	0.177066	-1.37	0.1720	-0.02443
Gender[Man]	-0.333779	0.34467	-0.97	0.3329	-0.02043
Gender[Woman]	0.4409292	0.336093	1.31	0.1896	0.027613
Race/Ethnicity Staff of Color-White[Staff of Color]	0.603968	0.144485	4.18	<.0001*	0.053517

▼ Effect Tests

Source	Nparm	DF	Sum of Squares	F Ratio	Prob > F
Senior Leader Support	1	1	73.667	1.4716	0.2252
Supervisor Support	1	1	791.305	15.8077	<.0001*
Communication	1	1	5571.994	111.3101	<.0001*
Lack of Control	1	1	33205.378	663.3344	<.0001*
Full-time or part-time	1	1	114.706	2.2914	0.1302
Salaried or hourly	3	3	541.607	3.6065	0.0128*
Gender	2	2	625.470	6.2474	0.0020*
Race/Ethnicity Staff of Color-White	1	1	874.694	17.4735	<.0001*

Gender

Least Squares Means Table

Level	Least Sq Mean	Std Error	Mean
Man	34.131268	0.26222562	33.5147
Woman	34.905977	0.22923652	34.7535
Nonbinary	34.357898	0.97037807	36.6727

Least Squares Means Plot
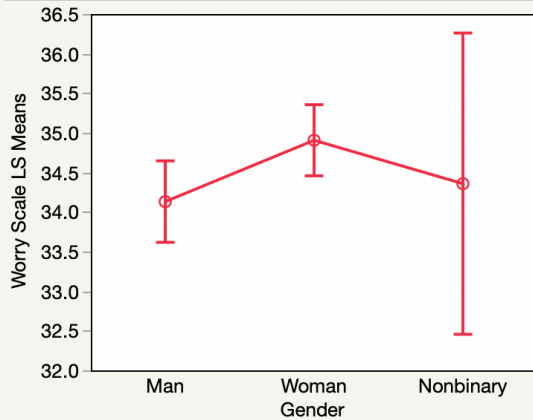
Contrast

Test Detail

Man	1
Woman	-1
Nonbinary	0
Estimate	-0.775
Std Error	0.22
t Ratio	-3.521
Prob>|t|	0.0004
SS	620.61

SS	NumDF	DenDF	F Ratio	Prob > F
620.6	1	4798	12.3977	0.0004*

Race/Ethnicity Staff of Color-White

Least Squares Means Table

Level	Least Sq Mean	Std Error	Mean
Staff of Color	35.069016	0.42963852	35.6414
White Staff	33.861080	0.36681645	34.1432

Least Squares Means Plot
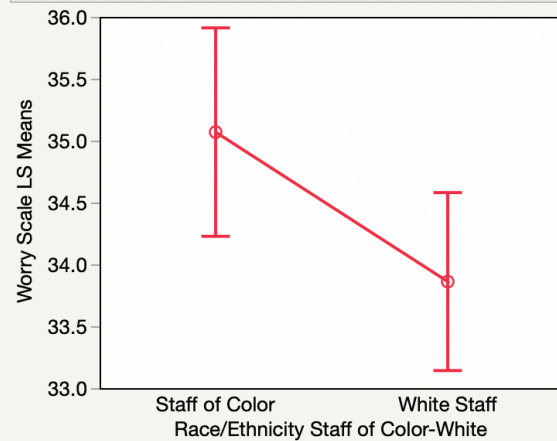
Contrast

Test Detail

Staff of Color	1
White Staff	-1
Estimate	1.2079
Std Error	0.289
t Ratio	4.1801
Prob>|t|	3e-5
SS	874.69

SS	NumDF	DenDF	F Ratio	Prob > F
874.7	1	4798	17.4735	<.0001*

The relationship between worries and stress

Both the Worries Scale and the Lack of Control Scale (which asks about job related conditions) contribute to overall stress, controlling for gender, employment type, and race/ethnicity.

Response Overall, how much stress are you feeling about the potential consequences of the spread

Effect Summary

Source	LogWorth		PValue
Worry Scale	179.090		0.00000
Lack of Control	30.298		0.00000
Gender	10.885		0.00000
Salaried or hourly	3.839		0.00014
Full-time or part-time	0.651		0.22321
Race/Ethnicity Staff of Color-White	0.309		0.49050
Pushed	0.284		0.51951

Remove Add Edit ☐ FDR

Lack Of Fit

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio
Lack Of Fit	4113	1169.0885	0.284242	1.1433
Pure Error	768	190.9310	0.248608	**Prob > F**
Total Error	4881	1360.0195		0.0091*
				Max RSq
				0.9010

Summary of Fit

RSquare	0.294931
RSquare Adj	0.293487
Root Mean Square Error	0.527859
Mean of Response	2.285977
Observations (or Sum Wgts)	4892

Analysis of Variance

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio
Model	10	568.8985	56.8899	204.1731
Error	4881	1360.0195	0.2786	**Prob > F**
C. Total	4891	1928.9180		<.0001*

Parameter Estimates

Term	Estimate	Std Error	t Ratio	Prob>|t|	Std Beta
Intercept	0.8793077	0.045883	19.16	<.0001*	0
Worry Scale	0.0310865	0.001042	29.84	<.0001*	0.39734
Pushed	0.0021381	0.003319	0.64	0.5195	0.010913
Lack of Control	0.0493922	0.004235	11.66	<.0001*	0.20086
Gender[Man]	-0.13807	0.02566	-5.38	<.0001*	-0.10785
Gender[Woman]	-0.036283	0.024956	-1.45	0.1460	-0.02898
Full-time or part-time[Part-time]	0.0169249	0.013893	1.22	0.2232	0.015423
Salaried or hourly[Hourly (non-exempt) without responsibility for supervising staff]	-0.035954	0.014337	-2.51	0.0122*	-0.04363
Salaried or hourly[Hourly (non-exempt) with responsibility for supervising staff]	-0.040884	0.022138	-1.85	0.0648	-0.03701
Salaried or hourly[Salaried (exempt) without responsibility for supervising staff]	0.0463355	0.013075	3.54	0.0004*	0.05956
Race/Ethnicity Staff of Color-White[Staff of Color]	0.007354	0.010665	0.69	0.4905	0.008336

Effect Tests

Source	Nparm	DF	Sum of Squares	F Ratio	Prob > F
Worry Scale	1	1	248.02456	890.1401	<.0001*
Pushed	1	1	0.11561	0.4149	0.5195
Lack of Control	1	1	37.90453	136.0363	<.0001*
Gender	2	2	14.03956	25.1934	<.0001*
Full-time or part-time	1	1	0.41350	1.4840	0.2232
Salaried or hourly	3	3	5.67701	6.7914	0.0001*
Race/Ethnicity Staff of Color-White	1	1	0.13249	0.4755	0.4905

▶ **Effect Details**

Variables that influence staff members' response to the question about overall stress, controlling for gender, employment type, and race ethnicity

▼ ⚏ Response Overall, how much stress are you feeling about the potential consequences of the spread of COVID-19?

▼ Effect Summary

Source	LogWorth		PValue
Lack of Control	138.747		0.00000
Gender	12.621		0.00000
Communication	10.238		0.00000
Senior Leader Support	3.027		0.00094
Race/Ethnicity Staff of Color-White	1.657		0.02202
Salaried or hourly	1.564		0.02727
Full-time or part-time	0.345		0.45200
Supervisor Support	0.040		0.91172

Remove Add Edit ☐ FDR

▼ Lack Of Fit

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio
Lack Of Fit	3755	1232.4306	0.328211	1.0658
Pure Error	1236	380.6295	0.307953	**Prob > F**
Total Error	4991	1613.0601		0.0872
				Max RSq
				0.8057

▼ Summary of Fit

RSquare	0.176756
RSquare Adj	0.174941
Root Mean Square Error	0.568501
Mean of Response	2.28403
Observations (or Sum Wgts)	5003

▼ Analysis of Variance

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio
Model	11	346.3338	31.4849	97.4180
Error	4991	1613.0601	0.3232	**Prob > F**
C. Total	5002	1959.3940		<.0001*

▼ Parameter Estimates

Term	Estimate	Std Error	t Ratio	Prob>|t|	Std Beta
Intercept	1.7413024	0.07264	23.97	<.0001*	0
Senior Leader Support	0.0179039	0.005409	3.31	0.0009*	0.063965
Supervisor Support	-0.000354	0.003189	-0.11	0.9117	-0.0018
Communication	-0.02029	0.003091	-6.56	<.0001*	-0.11637
Lack of Control	0.0893634	0.003442	25.96	<.0001*	0.363052
Gender[Man]	-0.142298	0.027202	-5.23	<.0001*	-0.11145
Gender[Woman]	-0.019561	0.026524	-0.74	0.4609	-0.01567
Full-time or part-time[Part-time]	0.0111426	0.014815	0.75	0.4520	0.010137
Salaried or hourly[Hourly (non-exempt) without responsibility for supervising staff]	-0.021966	0.015168	-1.45	0.1476	-0.02683
Salaried or hourly[Hourly (non-exempt) with responsibility for supervising staff]	-0.029492	0.023827	-1.24	0.2159	-0.02667
Salaried or hourly[Salaried (exempt) without responsibility for supervising staff]	0.0370518	0.013993	2.65	0.0081*	0.047744
Race/Ethnicity Staff of Color-White[Staff of Color]	0.0261669	0.011423	2.29	0.0220*	0.029571

▼ Effect Tests

Source	Nparm	DF	Sum of Squares	F Ratio	Prob > F
Senior Leader Support	1	1	3.54126	10.9571	0.0009*
Supervisor Support	1	1	0.00397	0.0123	0.9117
Communication	1	1	13.92433	43.0835	<.0001*
Lack of Control	1	1	217.79600	673.8868	<.0001*
Gender	2	2	18.89486	29.2315	<.0001*
Full-time or part-time	1	1	0.18284	0.5657	0.4520
Salaried or hourly	3	3	2.96211	3.0550	0.0273*
Race/Ethnicity Staff of Color-White	1	1	1.69583	5.2471	0.0220*

▷ Effect Details

Variables that influence staff members' reports about their sense of connection with their institution, controlling for gender, employment type, and race/ethnicity

▼ ▣ Response Connection to this institution

▼ Effect Summary

Source	LogWorth		PValue
Senior Leader Support	21.498		0.00000
Communication	19.015		0.00000
Salaried or hourly	18.004		0.00000
Supervisor Support	8.426		0.00000
Full-time or part-time	3.721		0.00019
Race/Ethnicity Staff of Color-White	1.476		0.03341
Gender	0.927		0.11836

Remove Add Edit ☐ FDR

▼ Lack Of Fit

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio
Lack Of Fit	2519	967.7254	0.384170	1.5481
Pure Error	2487	617.1735	0.248160	**Prob > F**
Total Error	5006	1584.8989		<.0001*
				Max RSq
				0.6764

▼ Summary of Fit

RSquare	0.168993
RSquare Adj	0.167333
Root Mean Square Error	0.562672
Mean of Response	3.514451
Observations (or Sum Wgts)	5017

▼ Analysis of Variance

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio
Model	10	322.3034	32.2303	101.8015
Error	5006	1584.8989	0.3166	**Prob > F**
C. Total	5016	1907.2023		<.0001*

▼ Parameter Estimates

Term	Estimate	Std Error	t Ratio	Prob>|t|	Std Beta
Intercept	2.0444977	0.056868	35.95	<.0001*	0
Communication	0.0275209	0.003014	9.13	<.0001*	0.160248
Supervisor Support	0.0185546	0.003142	5.91	<.0001*	0.095814
Senior Leader Support	0.0520391	0.005342	9.74	<.0001*	0.189079
Gender[Man]	-0.001753	0.027062	-0.06	0.9484	-0.00139
Gender[Woman]	-0.034354	0.026459	-1.30	0.1942	-0.0279
Race/Ethnicity Staff of Color-White[Staff of Color]	-0.023958	0.01126	-2.13	0.0334*	-0.02751
Salaried or hourly[Hourly (non-exempt) without responsibility for supervising staff]	-0.072916	0.014839	-4.91	<.0001*	-0.0904
Salaried or hourly[Hourly (non-exempt) with responsibility for supervising staff]	0.0030782	0.023521	0.13	0.8959	0.002824
Salaried or hourly[Salaried (exempt) without responsibility for supervising staff]	-0.041308	0.013816	-2.99	0.0028*	-0.05401
Full-time or part-time[Part-time]	-0.054743	0.014657	-3.73	0.0002*	-0.05043

▼ Effect Tests

Source	Nparm	DF	Sum of Squares	F Ratio	Prob > F
Communication	1	1	26.395411	83.3715	<.0001*
Supervisor Support	1	1	11.041092	34.8740	<.0001*
Senior Leader Support	1	1	30.040220	94.8839	<.0001*
Gender	2	2	1.351853	2.1350	0.1184
Race/Ethnicity Staff of Color-White	1	1	1.433366	4.5274	0.0334*
Salaried or hourly	3	3	27.764809	29.2323	<.0001*
Full-time or part-time	1	1	4.416319	13.9492	0.0002*

▼ Effect Details

▣ **Communication**

▣ **Supervisor Support**

▣ **Senior Leader Support**

▸ ▣ **Gender**