

2008 Staff Advisory Council (SAC) Survey Results

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This is an abbreviated version of the longer, more complete 62-page report that has been made available on the SAC webpage.

During the first two weeks of December, 2008, Macalester's Staff Advisory Council (SAC) surveyed all Macalester staff employees. Each staff member received a copy of the 2008 survey, administered through Survey Monkey. A complete version of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

Through the survey, SAC wished to:

- a) Gain insights from the community to help shape our direction and initiatives
- b) Inform senior staff of data and trends gathered from the survey.

While much has changed in the world and at Macalester since the time this survey was administered, we believe its results are still relevant. They can serve as a useful tool for senior staff, supervisors, and all employees, as a way to celebrate what makes Macalester a special working environment, as well as where we can all improve.

What we report in these pages is by no means comprehensive. We also fully anticipate that many in the college will interpret the survey's results differently. While we recognize that, we wish to highlight some of our key findings that can perhaps guide future conversations at the college. To this end we are also releasing all the quantitative data from the survey in the full version of this report, in the hopes that all staff will think broadly about issues across campus. We hope that this shorter summary of the results will give you a quick glance at what the data say about staff and their thoughts on Macalester.

We would like to thank all members of the Macalester community who took the time to complete this survey. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Staff Advisory Council (SAC)

Response Rate:

SAC sent the 2008 survey to all staff employees, with the enticement of a free SAC-sponsored lunch in Café Mac upon completion of the survey. Of the surveys sent, 283 surveys were submitted. Submitted surveys fell into the following five institutional divisions:

283 Total Responses

		% of Total Responses
Academic	81	28.6%
Admissions and Financial Aid	27	9.5%
Advancement	49	17.3%
Finance	56	19.8%
Student Affairs / Athletics	55	19.4%
No Answer	15	5.3%
	283	

Results Summary

Highlights:

- While there are areas where staff feel less satisfied, 87.9% of all respondents said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their job overall.
- Staff members responded very highly to the use of the Leonard Center and college facilities.
- 80.1% of respondents feel there is a sense of community at Macalester.
- 87.1% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with their interaction with students.
- 89.3% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with Macalester’s vacation policies.

Challenges:

- Only 27% of respondents reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that they could professionally advance at Macalester.

SAC Recommendation:

While the organizational structure in Higher Ed may inherently place limits on opportunities for advancement, SAC believes the college should investigate and encourage more advancement opportunities. When combined with the low responses found to questions on professional development and the performance review process, it seems apparent that we can do a better job cultivating the professional growth of our employees once hired, thus enhancing the work that we do at Macalester.

- 47.9 % of all staff agreed or strongly agreed that their division is adequately staffed to accomplish departmental goals. Many in divisions across the campus continue to feel overwhelmed by the amount of work to be done in their department.
- At the time of this survey, only 55.7 % of staff agreed or strongly agreed that they are sufficiently compensated for their work.
- Staff in some divisions reported dissatisfaction with their physical work environments.

Differences between Divisions:

- Performance Evaluation Process

There are divisions where staff members feel the performance review process is inadequate or, in some cases, non-existent. Some staff members believe that their supervisors don't value performance evaluations or that adequate time isn't devoted to them. Staff also questioned whether or not management and supervision is valued within the institutional culture at Macalester.

SAC Recommendation:

SAC believes that all staff benefit from annual performance reviews and recommends that supervisors should be evaluated on their performance review process and yearly implementation by their own supervisors.

- Professional development opportunities are inconsistent

SAC Recommendation:

Staff members in some divisions reported that professional development opportunities were rare or not supported. Yet staff members believe that professional

development will enhance their daily work and help make connections to others in their specific fields. Addressing and resolving this tension would help create a better environment, promoting professional growth. SAC recommends that the college consider allocating more funds to all types of professional development opportunities. Additionally, SAC supports efforts to promote equality of opportunity across the college divisions.

- Communication

There are divisions that do a better job of promoting communication up-and-down the divisional line. Some staff do not believe that they have the opportunity, power, or right to provide constructive feedback to supervisors.

If you would like to view the full report, please head to the SAC website to view or download your copy. The longer report features statistical summaries of each survey question as well as an analysis of the open-ended responses. We encourage you to take the time to read through it if interested!