



Employee Satisfaction Working Group Final Report

Prepared for President Mahony
June 30, 2020

I. INTRODUCTION

a. Charge

The charge of the Employee Satisfaction Workgroup was to identify sources of information which would provide insights regarding the state of employee satisfaction within the SIU system, to identify programs and initiatives which have supported employee satisfaction, and to identify additional strategies which could improve employee satisfaction.

b. Workgroup Members

The Employee Satisfaction Workgroup was comprised of faculty and staff from the Carbondale, Edwardsville, and East St. Louis Center campuses. The team included:

- Jamie Ball, Director for Equal Opportunity, Access & Title IX Coordination at SIUE (co-chair)
- Tracy Bennett, Human Resource Associate for Labor/Employee Relations at SIUC (co-chair)
- Dave Dilalla, Associate Provost for Academic Administration at SIUC
- Carolyn Jason, Assistant Program Director for Head Start at ESL
- Tom Jordan, Coordinator/Associate Professor at SIUE
- Nicole Klein, Professor of Applied Health at SIUE
- Jeff McCoy, Director for Exploratory Advisement at SIUC
- Jim Wall, Senior Lecturer in the College of Mass Communication & Media Arts at SIUC

II. CHALLENGES

a. COVID-19 Pandemic

As this workgroup began reviewing strategies for gathering information relating to employee satisfaction, one of the first and obvious options to consider was to develop and administer a survey to assess dimensions and predictors of employee satisfaction. However, the consideration of survey options intersected with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has created extraordinary impacts and circumstances which may have some effect on employee satisfaction. To conduct a survey at this time would be to make assessments through the lenses of uncertainty and fatigue which are affecting most employees at this time.

Because data gathered during the spring of 2020 would necessarily be affected by the impacts of the pandemic, the contemplated survey project has been deferred at this time. While some of the changes to work within the University which have been necessitated by the pandemic will be temporary, the pandemic has pushed us to reconsider and modify structures and policies which affect various aspects of the employee experience. Some of these modifications will become part of “the new normal” as we continue recovering.

Accordingly, the timing of future survey activity will consider the ongoing effects of the pandemic.

b. Salaries/Allocation Questions

For purposes of this report, questions surrounding budget issues are not a primary focus. However, it is important to recognize that budgetary issues generally, and salary in particular, are a factor which influences employee satisfaction. Intersecting with questions about salaries is the ongoing conversation regarding the allocation of resources as between the Carbondale and Edwardsville campuses. One of the themes in that conversation is the perception that employees on the Edwardsville campus are generally asked to do more with less, and this has been a source of ongoing frustration.

On the Edwardsville campus, there have been ongoing and recent efforts to evaluate faculty salaries in order to ensure that they more closely approximate average salaries for individual disciplines. This has resulted in significant equity adjustments for FY 2020.

III. DATA SOURCES

a. Surveys

The workgroup identified a group of likely data collectors across the University. This group was comprised of senior leadership and those in roles which focus on collecting and organizing data for the campuses. This group was asked to identify the surveys which had been administered in the recent past which included indicators of employee satisfaction. Attached as Appendix 1 is the information which was collected as part of this exercise.

This exercise helps us to appreciate that the campuses have been administering different instruments at different times, thus creating challenges for pulling together data for developing system-wide initiatives.

b. Research

i. Commercially Available Survey Tools

The Chronicle of Higher Education Great Colleges to Work for Program

One survey which is being used to assess faculty and staff satisfaction at institutions of higher education across the United States is the recently-launched *Chronicle of Higher Education* “Great Colleges to Work For” Survey. This survey forms part of the larger “Great Colleges to Work For” Program, which is designed to “recognize institutions that are great places to work and to compile detailed benchmarking data about industry trends.”

The program is loosely based on the Forbes Magazine “100 Best Companies to Work For” list, but recognizes groups of colleges for specific policies and best practices. The survey includes 12 features of an excellent academic workplace divided into four main categories: leadership, careers, compensation, and the workplace. These 12 features, and their definitions, are presented below.

12 Features of an Excellent Academic Workplace	
Leadership	
Collaborative Governance	Faculty members are appropriately involved in decisions related to academic programs.
Confidence in Senior Leadership	Leaders have the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience necessary for institutional success.
Supervisor or Department-Chair Relationship	Supervisor makes expectations clear and solicits ideas.
Compensation	
Compensation and Benefits	Pay is fair, and benefits meet the needs of employees.
Job Satisfaction	Overall job satisfaction.
Respect and Appreciation	Employees are regularly recognized for their contributions.
Careers	
Professional/Career-Development Programs	Employees are given the opportunity to develop skills and understand requirements to advance their careers.
Teaching Environment	Faculty members say the institution recognizes innovative and high-quality teaching (faculty only).
Tenure Clarity and Process	Faculty members say requirements for tenure are clear (4-year colleges only; faculty only).
The Workplace	
Diversity	The institution makes a concerted effort to create a welcoming and fair environment for all its employees.
Facilities, Workplace & Security	Facilities meet needs, campus appearance is pleasing, and steps are taken to provide a secure environment.
Work/Life Balance	Policies give employees the flexibility to manage their personal lives.

All accredited institutions in the United States are invited to participate in the “Great Colleges to Work For” Program, and participation is free. Participating institutions are asked to survey full-time faculty, administrators, and exempt professional staff at their institution, and should provide a random sample of 400-600 individuals from these three job categories. This sample of 400-600 individuals should be proportionally divided, “meaning that each group should represent the same proportion of the sample as it does of the entire combined population of all full-time Faculty / Administration / Exempt Professional Staff.”

If an institution’s population from these three job categories represents less than 400 individuals, then the institution should survey all full-time faculty, administration, and exempt professional staff. For a fee, institutions participating in the program can broaden

their survey audience to include additional full-time faculty, administration, or exempt professional staff. Institutions can also pay a fee to broaden the survey to other populations, including part-time faculty, administration, or exempt professional staff, or non-exempt staff.

All institutions participating in the program receive three free reports, detailed below:

Topline Survey Results Report – A one-page “graphical summary” which shows the institution’s overall survey results within each of the different survey “themes” such as “job satisfaction” and “supervisor relationship.” Institutions also receive benchmarking data so that they can compare their results against “Best in Size” as well as by Carnegie Classification.

Topline Results by Job Category Report – This report “shows you both the overall positive responses (percent who ‘*Strongly Agree*’ or ‘*Agree*’) and the overall negative responses (percent who ‘*Disagree*’ or ‘*Strongly Disagree*’) broken out by your Administration, Faculty and Exempt Professional Staff.”

Higher Education Trend Report Excerpt – A five-to-ten page excerpt from a larger report detailing aggregate data compiled from the ModernThink Institutional Questionnaire (IQ). This report features “aggregate statistics on turnover rates, applicants per hire, salary ranges, training hours, paid holidays, and much more. The report also includes an inventory of the most popular benefits, policies and communication tools.”

Respondents can purchase additional reports, including detailed survey data and benchmarking data which allow an institution to see how its employees’ responses compare to those at other institutions. With regard to benchmarking, peer averages are available for institutions within five categories including: “Best in Size, Carnegie Classification, Enrollment Size, Geography, and Public/Private.”

Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey

Another survey instrument used by a variety of institutions of higher education to measure faculty and staff satisfaction is the “College Employee Satisfaction Survey” offered by the higher education consulting firm Noel-Levitz. The survey features questions which deal with issues central to colleges and universities, such as campus mission, decision making, and interdepartmental communication.

It can be administered in either online or pencil-and-paper formats and is appropriate for all levels of employees, including administrators, faculty, and other staff.

The College Employee Satisfaction Survey features 70 items in five different areas:

Campus culture and policies – In the survey, employees rate their “importance and satisfaction” levels regarding various issues including employee training and recognition, pride in their work, departmental communication, and budgets and human resources, among other topics.

Institutional goals – Survey respondents rate the importance of different institutional goals such as staff morale, diversity efforts, and staff retention. The survey also asks respondents to rank the three goals which should comprise the top three campus priorities.

Involvement in planning and decision making – Survey respondents rate the level of involvement various campus constituents have in the decision-making process, from “not enough involvement to too much involvement.”

Work environment – Respondents are asked to rate the importance of and satisfaction with issues such as “employee empowerment,” “supervisor relationships,” “professional development,” and “fulfillment and job satisfaction.

Demographics – Respondents provide information on their overall satisfaction, their job position, and length of employment at the institution.

The survey asks employees to rate both the importance of various survey items and their satisfaction with these items using five-point scales (“1=not important at all and 5=very important”) and (“1=not satisfied at all and 5=very satisfied”) Since the survey allows respondents to rate both the importance of many items and their satisfaction with these items, institutions can easily identify areas for improvement (items which respondents rate as highly important but that they are also dissatisfied with).

In addition to the 70 items on the College Employee Satisfaction Survey, institutions can add up to 29 custom questions.

The cost of administration depends on how many surveys are completed. Institutions are charged a \$500 “setup fee” and are then charged a per-survey fee based on the number of respondents. These per survey fees are as follows:

- Up to 749 surveys - \$2.50
- 750-999 surveys - \$2.20
- 1,000 surveys or more - \$2.00

Institutions are also charged \$200 if they plan to administer the survey either as a paper survey or as a combination paper and online survey. Institutions are also charged for a number of optional services, such as if Noel-Levitz sends email invitations to the survey (instead of the institution itself sending such invitations to faculty/staff) or if Noel-Levitz mails surveys directly to potential respondents. Finally, the survey does not provide nationally normed data for comparison purposes.

ii. Modeling of Employee Satisfaction

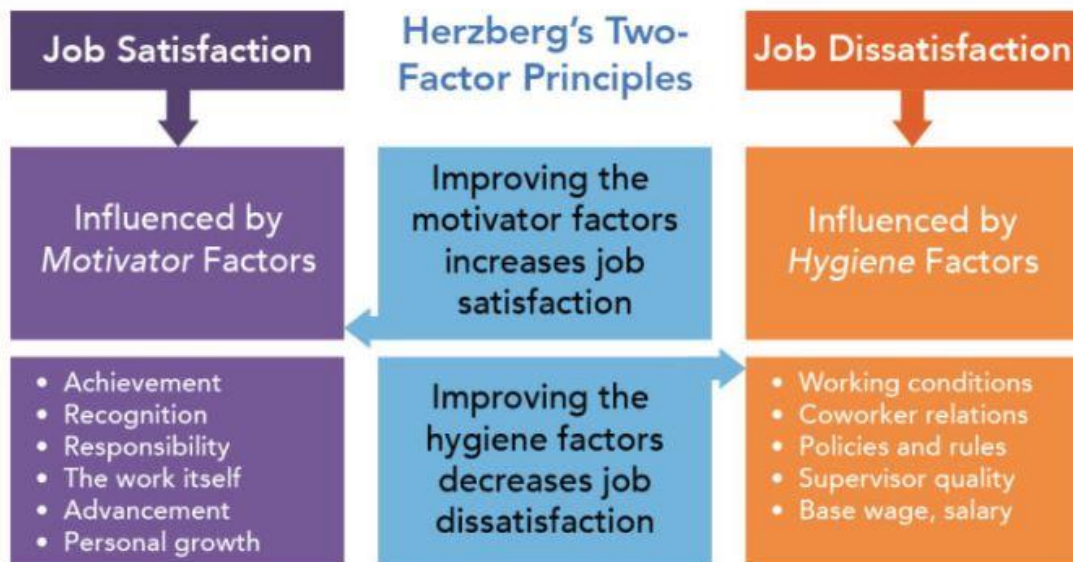
A review of the literature relating to employee satisfaction both inside and outside of higher education helps us to identify and conceptualize the factors which predict employee satisfaction.

One of the most enduring theories of employee satisfaction come from the work of Dr. Frederick Herzberg. In the late 1950s, Frederick Herzberg, considered by many to be a pioneer in motivation theory, interviewed a group of employees to find out what made them satisfied and dissatisfied on the job. He asked the employees essentially two sets of questions:

- Think of a time when you felt especially good about your job. Why did you feel that way?
- Think of a time when you felt especially bad about your job. Why did you feel that way?

From these interviews Herzberg went on to develop his theory that there are two dimensions to job satisfaction: motivation and “hygiene”. Hygiene issues, according to Herzberg, cannot motivate employees but can minimize dissatisfaction, if handled properly. In other words, they can only dissatisfy if they are absent or mishandled. Hygiene topics include company policies, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations and working conditions. They are issues related to the employee’s environment.

Motivators, on the other hand, create satisfaction by fulfilling individuals' needs for meaning and personal growth. They are issues such as achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility and advancement. Once the hygiene areas are addressed, said Herzberg, the motivators will promote job satisfaction and encourage production.



According to Herzberg, having a work environment with high hygiene is vital in order to keep employee dissatisfaction at bay. Because the two-factor theory holds that motivational factors and hygiene factors need to be addressed independently, it’s important for employers to understand what hygiene factors are and how to improve

them. Here's a list of some of the primary hygiene factors (also known as maintenance factors) according to Herzberg:

- **Pay:** Low pay will quickly cause dissatisfaction among employees. Employees should be adequately compensated in order to keep dissatisfaction down.
- **Benefits:** Fringe benefits are expected by most full-time employees and therefore fall into the category of hygiene. An employer should ensure that the benefits they provide are competitive with what other companies are providing in their industry.
- **Job security:** When employees feel like they are secure in their positions, it's much less likely they will feel a sense of dissatisfaction at work. Employers looking to improve workplace hygiene should let employees know they are valued and that their jobs are safe.
- **Work conditions:** Safe and comfortable working conditions are a basic need that employees require from their employers. In order to maintain high hygiene, employers shouldn't cut corners when it comes to the welfare and safety of employees.

The difference between low motivation and high motivation in the workplace can be massive in terms of productivity and overall worker happiness. Herzberg explains that the factors that give employees the motivation to work often have to do with giving them a greater sense of purpose and significance in their current position. Some of the motivating factors that can increase work motivation include:

- **Recognition:** Part of increasing job satisfaction is recognizing employees for the good work they've done. Motivation theory holds that job performance improves when employees are praised and recognized for a job well done.
- **Autonomy:** An important part of Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory is giving employees greater autonomy and responsibility within an organization. Employees tend to feel a greater sense of achievement and motivation when they feel that they have an important job with a large degree of self-direction.
- **Meaningful work:** As much as possible, employers should strive to give their employees meaningful work and help them see how their labor contributes to a greater end product. Many jobs involve a certain degree of mindless, menial labor, but the more employers can give employees the sense that their jobs are meaningful, the more motivated they will be to work.

IV. OPPORTUNITIES

There are current projects and initiatives which have the potential to meaningfully improve employee satisfaction. Some of these initiatives are targeted efforts which could be adapted and expanded for greater impact.

a. Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process provides the opportunity to review, affirm, re-focus, or modify the mission, values and goals of an institution. As the SIU System and each campus works through their planning process, it would may be valuable to include employee satisfaction concerns in the conversation. As an example, in early 2019, a new Strategic Planning committee was formed to help SIUE to update their Strategic Plan. A group of approximately 120 people was charged with reviewing six updated goal statements. The resulting revised statements include Goal 4, which is to “[r]ecruit, support and retain high quality, accomplished, student-centered and diverse employees who continually strive for excellence in achieving University goals.” This goal contemplates the essential investment that the University makes in its employees.

As SIUC works through the strategic planning process in the near future, the committee should consider employee satisfaction and how best to recruit, support and retain high quality employees.

b. ADVANCE Grant work

SIUE’s TIME focuses on strategic initiatives and activities to improve the recruitment, retention and promotion of STEM women, particularly women from underrepresented groups. Initial funding was provided by grants from the National Science Foundation ADVANCE program (IT-Catalyst Award 1008696 and Adaptation Award 1936141). SIUE joins a network of colleges and universities committed to redressing long-standing inequities in the recruitment, retention and advancement of women faculty in social and behavioral sciences (SBS) and STEM. The work of this grant team has begun in earnest this year.

As there is a significant intersection between issues of equity and employee satisfaction, these initiatives have the potential to expand beyond the STEM/SBS faculty and create a more supportive and inclusive campus climate overall. The work of this grant team has begun in earnest this year and their outcomes could be considered for modeling at SIUC and School of Medicine.

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c. Anti-Racism Efforts and Diversity Initiatives

President Mahony’s recent message to the SIU system included the establishment of task forces at SIUC, its School of Medicine and SIUE to address critical issues facing equity and justice in our country and what we can and must do to address those same issues within the SIU System. Our efforts to meet this moment has created an extraordinary opportunity to make fundamental changes that will improve the employee experience.

Among the key questions relating to employee issues that the Anti-Racism Task Force will focus on include:

- How do we augment the Strategic Hiring Initiative to more successfully recruit Black, indigenous and other faculty and staff of color? Can cluster hiring within designated disciplines be an effective approach?
- How do we better equip our search committees to challenge racism and enhance the diversity of SIUE? How do we address inequities in our current search process?
- How do we increase the number of mentors that students have to inspire them, to challenge them, to instruct them?
- Could we invest in Black, indigenous and other graduate students of color (e.g., doctoral scholarships; leadership training), so they might become SIUE faculty and staff of the future?
- Similarly, can we create partnerships with HBCUs to develop pipelines for future faculty and staff?
- How do we enhance faculty P&T processes and staff development to increase retention of Black, indigenous and other faculty and staff of color at SIUE?
- How do we recognize faculty contributions to diversity and inclusion efforts in the P&T process?
- What opportunities exist to promote Black, indigenous and other faculty and staff of color to leadership positions? Can Leadership Academies and/or Fellowship Programs build capacity?
- Can we enhance our own faculty and staff through Scholar in Residence programs in partnership with HBCUs through year-long SIUE residencies?
- How do we support advocacy by our own faculty and staff?
- What University policies present barriers for faculty and staff retention, promotion and success? Also review government and agency regulations that present barriers (SUCSS).
- How do we acknowledge and reward the invisible labor of Black, indigenous and other people of color?

The exploration of these questions are meant to spur critical and creative thinking about how the University can change and innovate. Recommendations are expected by the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester.

Similar work will be going on at Carbondale once the new Chancellor begins work on July 1. Incoming Chancellor Lane has already appointed his task force members and will begin identifying critical issues to address.

d. Ombuds Services

At SIUE, the Faculty Ombuds Service was established in 2001 to provide full and part-time faculty and administrators on the SIUE campuses with an option other than formal grievance procedures for resolving conflicts. The two faculty ombuds serve as neutral listeners, information resources, and intermediaries.

Currently, the Ombuds program is a resource that is available primarily for faculty. Staff Senate has expressed interest in having a comparable resource available for staff, and should be considered for inclusion.

SIU Carbondale had an Ombudsman's Office several years ago but as financial resources were reduced, the decision was made to eliminate the office. The topic of re-establishing an Ombuds Service on the Carbondale campus has been discussed periodically and should be considered for inclusion in conversations surrounding employee satisfaction surveys.

V. NEXT STEPS AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

a. Planning and Coordination of Survey Efforts

As described above, currently, the system does not have a not a coordinated approach to collecting employee satisfaction data. It is recommended that the leadership of each campus work together to identify an instrument which can be administered across all of the campuses. This would provide a broader and more complete perspective and afford system leadership the opportunity to conduct a meaningful comparison and analysis of how factors influencing employee satisfaction are showing up in survey data across campuses.

Additionally, since some of the programmatic efforts described above are relatively new initiatives, these initiatives will benefit from assessment. These assessment efforts will inform decisions about whether and how to expand or replicate these initiatives across the campuses.

b. Staff Focus

Another observation which emerged from the review of the current approach to employee satisfaction data collection and initiatives is that efforts tend to be focused on faculty. To the extent that staff do not see an investment made in understanding and improving their work experiences, this will, in and of itself, contribute to a decrease in job satisfaction. Accordingly, as new and additional efforts are considered, it will be important to include and prioritize the needs of staff as well as faculty.

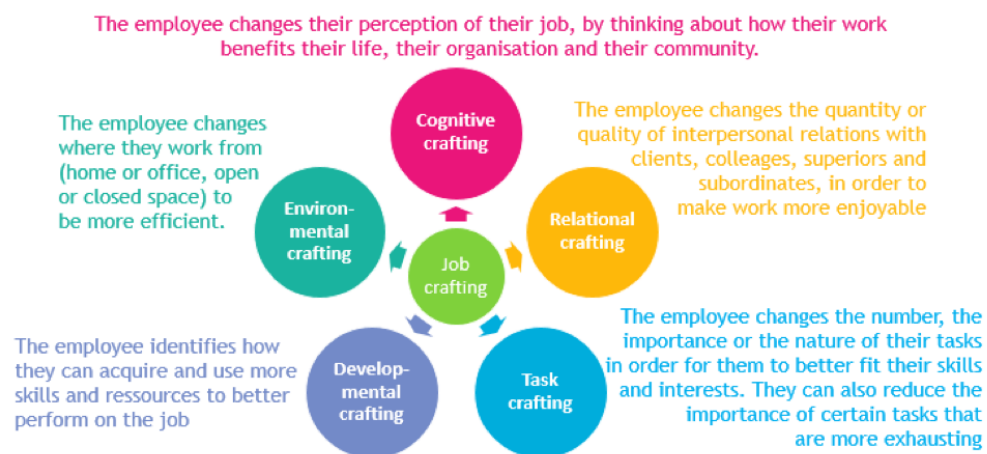
c. Possible Pilot Programs

i. Job Crafting

As noted above, autonomy is associated with greater employee satisfaction. Historically, there has been some rigidity in thinking about both the “what” and “how” of a job, however, the concept of job crafting introduces some flexibility into this process, and thus more autonomy. Job crafting occurs when an employee makes changes to his or her job role in order for it to better fit their personal interests and skills. The central idea behind job crafting is for professionals to explore areas that are of interest to them and grow professionally.

Rather than the traditional model of having the organization write a job description, with job crafting employees are empowered to do this. There are many ways to go about job crafting; it can be about changing the tasks people take on, how they accept or carry out tasks, or how often they work alongside other people. While essential job functions will always be essential job functions, job crafting contemplates creating a space wherein an employee is allowed to personalize their role so that they, and their organization, can make the best use of their talents.

As noted above, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have pushed all organizations, including colleges and universities, to think more flexibly and creatively about how employees can work most effectively. This push creates a moment in which job crafting could create opportunities for improving job satisfaction.



ii. Employee Resource Groups

Employee Resource Groups (or ERGs) are employee identity or experience-based groups that build community. ERGs are sometimes known as Affinity Groups or Diversity Groups. ERGs are generally based on building community, providing support and contributing to personal and professional development in the work environment. ERGs are typically founded by core organizers and have membership in varying size, depending on the topic of the group. Most ERGs are volunteer based though some organizations support organizers with some percentage of paid time or other recognition including leadership development opportunities.

Constituency groups such as Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and the Black Faculty Staff Association have served as ad hoc Employee Resource Groups. However, the potential for additional groups exists within a diverse University community. Additionally, the potential exists for being more intentional about the use of existing groups as Employee Resources Groups.

VI. CONCLUSION

The arrival of a new system leader coinciding with a global pandemic represents a truly extraordinary intersection of circumstances. While so much change all at once can be disorienting, the silver lining of disorientation is that we learn to look at things in new ways. As SIU moves forward, we still have a lot to learn about ourselves and a lot of potential to realize. A continued investment in the system's most valuable resource, its people, will help to ensure that SIU will continue to grow and thrive.

Selected Resources

Herzberg's Two Factor Theory

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-organizationalbehavior/chapter/herzbergs-two-factor-theory/>

Commercially Available Surveys

<https://heri.ucla.edu/heri-faculty-survey/>

<https://www.ruffalonl.com/complete-enrollment-management/enrollment-management-consulting/higher-education-market-research/college-employee-satisfaction-survey/>

<https://greatcollegesprogram.com/>

Strategic Planning

<https://www.siue.edu/about/mission-goals-plans/strategic-plan.shtml>

<https://chancellor.siu.edu/strategic-plan/>

ADVANCE Grant Program

<https://www.siue.edu/time/index.shtml>

Anti-Racism Task Force

<https://www.siue.edu/about/announcements/anti-racism/anti-racism-task-force.shtml>

<https://www.siue.edu/about/announcements/anti-racism/questions.shtml>

Job Crafting

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alankohl/2018/04/11/could-job-crafting-be-a-powerful-tool-for-employee-wellness/#49f9d3944b5d>

<https://www.higheredjobs.com/Articles/articleDisplay.cfm?ID=1558>

Employee Resource Groups

<https://www.cupahr.org/hew/files/HEWorkplace-Vol5No2-A-Roadmap-For-ERGs.pdf>

<https://www.insightintodiversity.com/what-higher-education-can-learn-from-corporations-about-using-ergs-to-develop-diverse-leaders/>