Summary of 2012 Employee Follow-up Survey Results

College's long term goals and plans
You indicated that you do not have a clear understanding of SVA's long term goals and plans. What do you feel uninformed about?

Many respondents felt they did have a clear understanding of SVA’s long term goals and plans. This was due in part to the Annual All Staff Meeting and the posting of the Strategic Plan.

Of those who indicated they were not informed, the comments most frequently focused on the planned growth of SVA - overall enrollment targets, the addition of new graduate departments, and the increased number of international students. However, most of these questions were not truly regarding strategic long term concerns. Rather the respondents were concerned that more short-term growth is planned and they will be unable to deliver services at the level the students deserve and require. They note, SVA has experienced a period of significant growth that has already challenged the capacity of the organization and there has been no corresponding reallocation or addition of resources.

Working additional hours
You have indicated that on average you work more than your regularly scheduled hours. Why are you working more than your regularly scheduled hours? Does this happen often?

This question generated a very large number of responses. Employees mention the inescapable mathematics of the current situation. More applicants and students equal a greater workload.

Because the number of employees has not risen proportionally, additional hours are needed to provide services for them. As this happens, employees are stretched too thin. Quality of work and attention to detail begin to suffer, and employees risk “burning-out”. Some even mentioned the inability to schedule vacation time due to departmental workloads.

Many are concerned this new workload is a permanent condition. While it might be easy to dismiss this as employee griping, the responses actually demonstrate the passion and commitment the employees have for their jobs, the students and the School of Visual Arts as a whole.
Unrewarded for a job well done and lack of advancement

You expressed concerns about not being rewarded and a lack of advancement. What could have been done to make you feel rewarded? What advancement opportunities would you like to see?

Three main sources of frustration were voiced in response to this question. First was salary. A large number of respondents mention that base salaries are too low and a 3% annual increase is not enough to keep pace with the cost of living in New York area. Long-time employees also complained that new hires make almost as much money as they do. Ideas including the granting annual bonuses and the use of titles as a non-monetary way to reward high performers were suggested.

Second, many complained that there was no room for advancement. Departments are small, limiting the potential for upward mobility and vacant positions are filled by outside hires instead of internal candidates.

Third, many felt their immediate supervisors (and above) did not appreciate their efforts and sacrifices. The desire to hear a simple thank you was repeatedly mentioned.

Additional Comments

Here are the additional comments left by the survey takers:

Due to the open ended nature of this question, the respondents brought up a broad array of topics. Some mentioned how the lack of inter-departmental communication and coordination exacerbates existing work load problems. Some felt their supervisors were disconnected or acting “irresponsibly” and should be subjected to a 360 review process, or that a protected channel of communication be opened to report questionable behavior. Many felt that long overdue annual performance appraisals were symptomatic of a general lack of respect for employees and that due dates should be enforced. However, the most common response was an expression of gratitude for having been given the opportunity to voice their opinions.