

# XSEDE

Extreme Science and Engineering  
Discovery Environment

# 2018 **XSEDE Staff Climate Study Executive Summary**

February 2019



# **The eXtreme Science and Engineering Discovery Environment 2018 XSEDE STAFF CLIMATE STUDY REPORT**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Purpose**

In June 2013, the eXtreme Science and Engineering Discovery Environment (XSEDE) initially requested an annual organizational climate study to understand working conditions and staff satisfaction. This executive summary report includes key findings from the 2013–2018 survey data and provides recommendations for improving organizational climate.

### **Key Findings**

- Most dimensions continue to increase from 2013 baseline scores and meet or exceed comparable project ratings.
- Wiki & Website ratings increased significantly in 2018. Respondents found the wiki particularly more helpful for finding information across the project this year.
- Significant gains were made across the Communication Tools index. Compared to last year, XSEDE staff found new project supported collaboration resources (i.e. Zoom, JIRA, and Confluence) considerably more useful than previous tools.
- Decision Making ratings significantly surpassed index scores for 2017. Increases are attributed to improved decision-making efficiency, staff understanding of the decision-making process, and XSEDE's ability to learn and adapt based on past experience. Some Level 2 differences were found.
- Over one third (35%) of respondents and nearly all (97%) Level 1-3 managers report utilizing key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics to guide program area activities.
- Workload balance across a distributed project continues to challenge XSEDE staff. This is further complicated by increasingly time-consuming administrative responsibilities according to respondents.
- Equity ratings increased in 2018 with all groups rating the index positively. Some gender, racial/ethnic, and level 2 area differences were found.
- Staff would like more leadership and management training in order to perform their XSEDE work more effectively.

## Recommendations

- **Communication Tools:** Continue to transfer all meetings from Skype for Business to Zoom based on positive feedback gathered this year. Also continue migrating key project processes to JIRA with Confluence wiki integration.
- **Workload Balance:** Pursue the development and implementation of formal staff evaluation policies that make it possible for staff to receive local recognition and compensation for XSEDE work that may be distributed across sites.
- **Equity:** Consider partnering with organizations that study and promote representation in HPC such as the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT), Women in HPC (WHPC), or the Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute (WISELI) to explore how gender equity can be improved within the organization. Also work with organizations aimed at improving racial and ethnic representation in STEM such as the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics & Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), and the new Constellations Center for Equity in Computing at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Couple these activities with additional training to improve cultural competence beyond race, ethnicity, and gender to include non-HPC disciplines.
- **Staff Training:** Expand staff training offerings to include leadership and management topics. When possible, leverage partner resources and promote relevant asynchronous offerings. Incorporate live training sessions into Quarterly meeting agendas, particularly for in-person meetings.