

2020

XSEDE Staff Climate Study

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The eXtreme Science and Engineering Discovery Environment

2020 XSEDE STAFF CLIMATE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT

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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 2013–2020 survey data and provides recommendations for improving organizational climate.

Key Findings

- All eight study dimensions increased in ratings from 2019 – 2020, a first time observation since this study began in 2013. Six of the eight study dimensions achieved their highest ratings to date. These include Communication Tools, Decision Making, Leadership & Management, Support & Belonging, Value & Satisfaction, and Wiki & Website.
- The Communication Tools index continues to improve annually as regular project changes are made to address study respondent needs and requests.
- The Decision Making index ratings continued to rise in 2020, with respondents reporting significantly improved decision making efficiency, communication effectiveness, adaptability, and organizational innovation compared to previous years.
- Respondents with staffing, budgeting, reporting, and KPI related responsibilities rated the Decision Making index significantly higher than in 2018. Managers also rated the index significantly higher compared to 2017.
- While Decision Making and communication continues to improve, respondents cited delays and limitations in staffing decisions due to limited authority at subawardee sites.
- Communication regarding staff evaluations continues to increase; however, respondent comments suggest more clarity is needed.
- Most respondents rated Equity significantly higher than 2015 – 2019 ratings with major gains made in treatment of staff regardless of field of study/work. While no gender differences were found, staff identifying as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) rated some items lower than other respondents.
- CEE respondents and Women rated the Communication Tools and Support & Belonging dimensions significantly higher than other groups. Unlike previous years, no other gender differences among dimensions were found.
- Wiki & Website index ratings peaked in 2020 significantly surpassing 2015 – 2017 reports. Staff view the wiki as containing useful information and suggested further

improvements should center on increasing access for external collaborators and linking it to other XSEDE tools.

- Staff Training requests centered on emerging techniques, new machines, and resource updates combined with more internal project-wide news dissemination via all-hands meetings as well as online mechanisms.

Recommendations

- **Decision Making:** Continue to clarify and communicate resources for staff evaluations regularly. Remind managers that XSEDE has formal policies for addressing staff issues and consider conducting a brief training on this process. Also increase communication and training for financial processes and reporting timelines tailored to L1–3 managers and subaward representatives. Revisit staffing processes to determine how hiring and reassignment timelines can be reduced.
- **Equity:** Consider inviting external Equity and Diversity experts from partner institutions to present at XSEDE events and discuss cultural sensitivity, awareness, and best practices. Encourage transparency and diverse hiring for future positions, particularly for leadership roles.
- **Wiki & Website:** Further improve wiki usability by linking XSEDE tools (e.g., XDCDB) and increasing access for external collaborators, particularly ECSS project PIs.
- **Communication:** Consider adding an internal newsfeed to the wiki that includes key dates for systems/resources, trainings, events, deadlines, etc.