



XSEDE

Extreme Science and Engineering
Discovery Environment

2019

XSEDE Staff Climate Study Executive Summary

February 2020

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The eXtreme Science and Engineering Discovery Environment

**2019 XSEDE STAFF CLIMATE STUDY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

February 2020

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The eXtreme Science and Engineering Discovery Environment 2019 XSEDE STAFF CLIMATE STUDY

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 2013–2019 survey data and provides recommendations for improving organizational climate.

Key Findings

- Five of the eight study dimensions achieved their highest ratings to date. These include Communication Tools, Decision Making, Leadership & Management, Support & Belonging, and Value & Satisfaction. The highest gains from 2018 to 2019 were made in Communication Tools and Support & Belonging.
- Significantly higher ratings were given to the Decision Making dimension compared to 2017. In particular, communication of decision making outcomes has improved considerably across XSEDE.
- Wiki & Website index ratings decreased in 2019 compared to 2018 though this was not statistically significant. Ratings regarding the website increased while wiki items decreased. Comments suggest lower wiki ratings may be due to lack of Confluence knowledge and its integration in project reporting.
- While overall communication and tools in XSEDE were rated highly, respondents requested additional training resources for internal XSEDE communications and management tools (e.g., Jira, Confluence Wiki, and performance evaluations) to optimize utilization and performance.
- All groups rated Equity positively, though some gender and L2 differences exist. Racial and ethnic underrepresented minorities, however, rated the index similarly to majority groups.
- Staff were more satisfied this year with program area progress toward goals, and increasingly believe some of their best work has been done on XSEDE.
- Similar to 2018, management training was requested by staff at all levels.
- Some staff noted feelings of isolation and may benefit both personally and professionally from in-person engagement with XSEDE colleagues more often.

Recommendations

- **Training & Human Resources:** Improve awareness regarding optional staff evaluations and training on project management tools. Consider coupling implementation of any new processes with training available to all XSEDE staff. Identify and advertise high quality management training resources for interested staff.
- **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 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.
- **Unity:** Reduce staff isolation by offering more opportunities to engage with XSEDE colleagues. Consider piloting optional programs like “Catch Up with a Colleague,” where staff can informally engage with co-workers with whom they may not normally get to interact with. Promote and reward cross-area collaborations with project-wide recognition and support for dissemination activities (i.e. conference presentations, seminars, training workshops, etc.).