

Texas A&M Employee Engagement Survey Action Plan

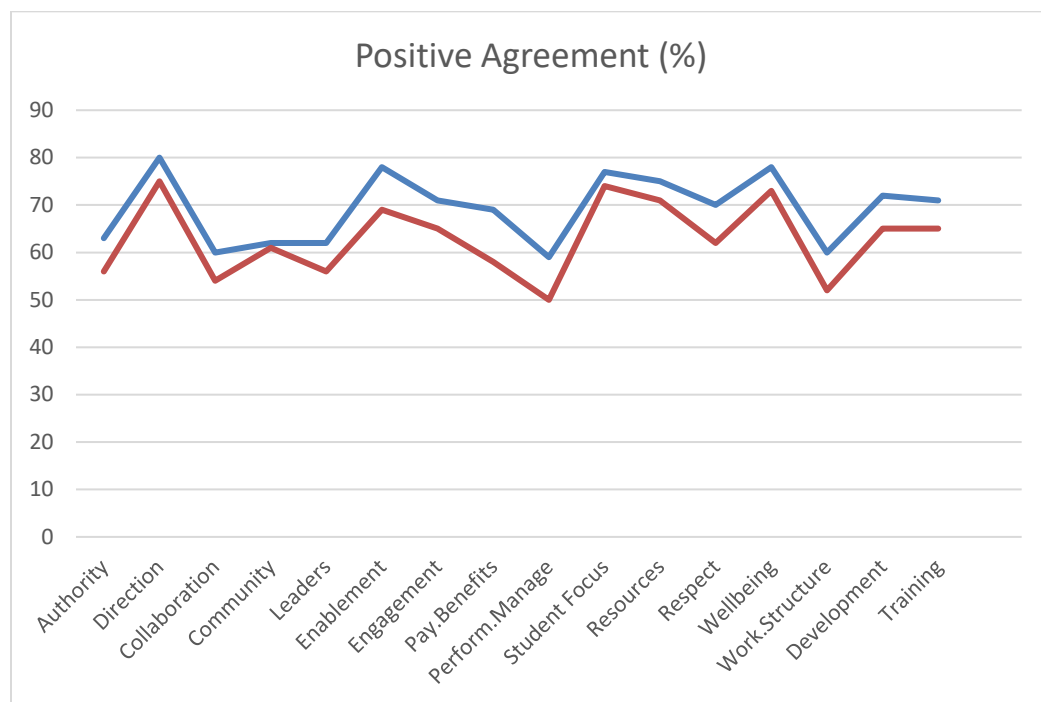
Division of Research

**Date Submitted:
July 31, 2025**

LEVERAGING AND SUSTAINING A STRENGTH

PREAMBLE: One hundred and sixty-one (161) of 543 individuals employed in the Division of Research (DOR) completed the survey. The response rate (30%) is similar to the overall University response rate (29%). Likewise, as shown below, the *pattern* of positive agreements across response categories is also highly similar in the two groups (DOR, University), with DOR scores (blue line) consistently higher (i.e., more positive agreements) than the overall University scores (red line).

Figure 1. Positive agreements (%) in DOR (blue line) and overall University (red line)



- 1) **Based on the survey results, what area of strength does your unit need to leverage and sustain?** Examination of the survey results indicates a generalized strength of the DOR is the effectiveness of work teams. For example, DOR staff report that their work team is committed to delivering high quality services (94%), has a good understanding of goals and objectives (92%), shows cooperation and teamwork (92%) and supports each other in their work (92%). Further, DOR staff have trust and confidence in their immediate supervisor (86%), who they perceive as supportive of their learning and development (89%).
- 2) **Why do you think people responded favorably to this survey item?** Agreeing to the collection of items about effective teamwork and team management reflects the overall effectiveness of DOR staff in their support of a large research enterprise with very diverse needs.
- 3) **What is needed to sustain this strength?** Sustaining this strength requires continued

support of work teams. The two opportunities addressed below will meet this need.

- 4) **How does sustaining this strength help advance the university's strategic priorities and Core Values?** Sustaining this strength is essential for the continued success of our university research mission. In their effective work teams, DOR staff advance Core Values of Selfless Service, Respect, and Excellence.
- 5) **How will ongoing support of this initiative be communicated within your unit?** The DOR will utilize our DOR Staff Newsletter to communicate the findings and actions items associated with our response to the results of the Texas A&M Employee Engagement Survey.

ADDRESSING OPPORTUNITIES

PREAMBLE: Low positive agreement survey results are a logical starting point for identifying opportunities to increase staff engagement and enablement. The survey results for the “Key Drivers” indicate positive agreement in DOR staff is lower for indicators of Engagement than for Enablement. However, a consideration of the five items making up the “drivers of engagement” cluster indicates the subject or place of reference for these items is the “university”. Specifically, there is low positive agreement with statements that the university shows care and concern (68%), is open and honest in communication (62%), elicits trust and confidence in senior leadership (54%), and is effectively/well managed (48%). Further, across all 30 items of the questionnaire, the lowest favorable ratings of DOR staff are also largely related to perceptions of the university, including that university decisions are generally made in a timely fashion (40%) at the lowest level appropriate (16%), poor performance is addressed effectively (34%), the university motivates staff to do more than is required (39%) and effectively shares ideas and resources (33%). Importantly, the consistency of the lower DOR agreement scores with the lower overall University agreement scores (see Figure 1) indicates that these perceptions are not DOR specific.

Addressing university-wide perceptions requires university-wide collaboration. As this plan is intended to describe DOR actions to enhance DOR staff engagement and enablement, the DOR focused on survey results indicating opportunities in two areas of their oversight and control, namely performance management and workload.

Opportunity #1: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- 1) **Based on your survey results, what area of improvement needs to be addressed?**

Four survey findings suggest Opportunity #1:

- a. The percentages of DOR staff responding favorably to the item “Poor performance is addressed effectively in the university” is low (34%) and is lower in staff employed more than five years (29%) than in those employed less than five years (41%).

- b. The percentage of DOR staff acknowledging regular performance feedback is also less than optimal (65% favorable responses, 13% unfavorable response).
- c. However, responding to the statement that the feedback received helps them develop and improve, 77% of DOR staff are favorable whereas only 6% are unfavorable.
- d. Finally, DOR staff perceive their immediate supervisors as supportive of their learning and development (89%)

Together, these findings suggest that there is meaningful agreement that the DOR provides performance feedback that advances staff development and immediate supervisors support learning and development of their reports. However, a notable portion of staff desire additional input from their supervisors and even more staff perceive a need to better address poor work performance. It is noteworthy that excluding Sponsored Research Services (SRS), the largest unit within the DOR contributing more than 1/3 of the survey responses, did not alter the finding of low favorable response to these performance management items. In sum, the survey data show concerns related to performance management are not unit specific nor are they specific to length of service within the DOR.

2) **What actions are needed to improve this area?**

A robust detailed plan for managing employee performance currently exists: [Progressive Discipline | Division of Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness](#). However, the process from coaching session, first disciplinary action, second disciplinary action, to termination is not consistently implemented across supervisors for reasons that include avoidance of conflict and underappreciation of the positive benefits of progressive discipline for both the unit and the underperforming individual (i.e., termination is not a goal). The DOR in collaboration with the Division of Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness (HROE) will implement a required 90-min workshop on performance management and progressive discipline for supervisors, focusing on the Performance Management and Progressive Discipline processes, including a review of supporting resources (e.g., forms, templates). The workshop will address how progressive discipline is a constructive process to address underperformance and so sustain the effectiveness of work teams (i.e., the generalized strength of the DOR). Appendix A provides a draft outline of the workshop agenda.

- 3) **How do these actions help your unit advance its strategic priorities and incorporate the Aggie Core Values?** As noted above, sustaining effective teamwork is essential to the research mission. Enhancing teamwork by supporting supervisors' implementation of Performance Management and Progressive Discipline processes will further increase the effectiveness of the diverse work of the DOR and further advance Core Values of Selfless Service, Respect, and Excellence. Additionally, by taking these actions, the DOR leadership advances the Core Values of Respect and Leadership
- 4) **What is the estimated start date?** September-October 2025
- 5) **What support and resources will you need?** The DOR will utilize the resources made available by HROE (Hub 1). The development and implementation of the action plan will benefit from the leadership of the content expert member of the DOR Senior

Administration Leadership Team, Stacy Cohen, Director, Research Enterprise Business Services, HROE.

- 6) **What outcomes do you want to achieve, and how will success be measured?** Table 1 below summarizes outcomes and measures of success.

Table 1. Action plan outcomes for Opportunity 1.

Outcome	Assessment Method	Measure of success
Increased understanding of performance management/progressive discipline	Post-workshop survey	More than 75% of supervisors self-report increased understanding of performance management/progressive discipline
Stronger agreement with statements of effective employee management on the Texas A&M Engagement Survey	Texas A&M Employee Engagement Survey #2	More staff agree “Poor performance is addressed effectively in the university” (75% vs. 34%) and agree they receive “regular performance feedback” (75% vs 65%).

- 7) **How will you communicate this initiative to your unit?** The DOR will utilize our DOR Staff Newsletter to communicate the findings and actions items associated with our response to the results of the Texas A&M Employee Engagement Survey.

Opportunity #2: WORKLOAD

- 1) **Based on your survey results, what area of improvement needs to be addressed?**

Two survey findings suggest Opportunity #2:

- Favorable responses to the statement that there are no significant barriers to “doing my job well” are low (60%).
 - Favorable responses to the statement that staff have enough people to do the work in work teams are low in both those employed less than 5 years (45%) and those employed more than five years (48%). Excluding responses from SRS, the largest unit within DOR, did not improve the agreement level with this statement (42%).
- 2) **What actions are needed to improve this area?** DOR will leverage AI to enhance work efficiency across units using a two-step intervention strategy.

STEP 1 Enhancing AI literacy

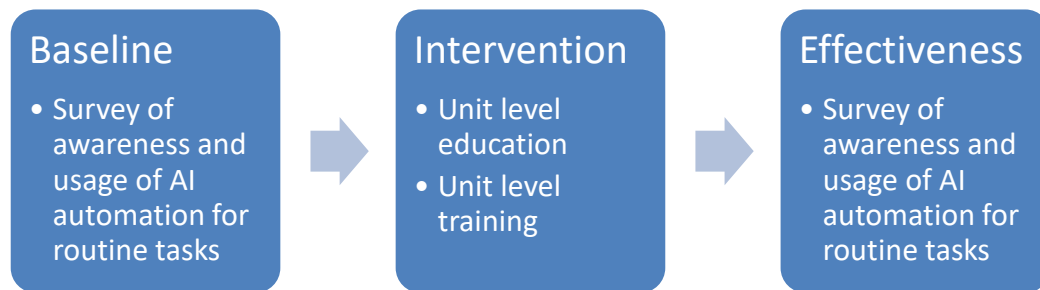
AI literacy includes understanding the concept of AI and learning to use AI technologies ethically and responsibly. By increasing AI literacy in Step 1, DOR will increase the number of staff across DOR units consistently and appropriately applying existing AI tools for routine common tasks (see examples in Table 2 below). Achieving Step 1 will be responsive to the identified workload challenges by creating more time for unit-specific work of greater

strategic importance¹.

Table 2. Examples of common tasks benefiting from AI-automation

General task	AI
Writing and Editing	Can streamline document drafting, editing, and proofreading by generating initial drafts accelerating the creation of high-quality written materials
Project Management	Can delegate tasks, track progress, perform risk assessment, and resource optimization.
Document summarization	Can summarize long documents, reports, or articles extracting key points and insights, saving time from having to manually review lengthy materials
Personalized email drafting and response	With an understanding of context, can draft emails, reducing time spent on email communication
Data presentation	Can propose layouts and design components

Step 1: Methodology



NOTES: Units reporting high awareness and appropriate usage of AI automation for routine tasks at baseline may be clustered for more advanced education/training on AI usage; Education includes overview of training resources made available to staff by Technology Services (e.g., LinkedIn Learning).

STEP 2: AI tools for unit-specific work

DOR will build on staff trust and experience using AI automation for routine common tasks acquired in STEP 1 to support usage of AI automation for unit-level specialized tasks. In Step 2, DOR will adopt an initiative developed by Sponsored Research Services (SRS) to leverage AI tools to increase the efficiency/productivity of their 244 employees. In this approach, staff within units identify appropriate AI tools and model the adoption of AI tools to advance work productivity. Predictors of the adoption of AI tools include perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEU)². The use of individuals embedded in a unit to serve as models for the adoption of AI-tools (i.e., “people like me”) will support the

¹ Rayhan, J. (2024). Exploring The Role and Impact of Generative AI in Enhancing Skilled Workforce Efficiency and Modern Workplace Dynamics for Maximum Organizational Output: A Textual Review and Conceptual Assessment. *Globsyn Management Journal*, 18(1/2), 30–49.

² Li, H., & Kim, S. (2024). Developing AI literacy in HRD: competencies, approaches, and implications. *Human Resource Development International*, 27(3), 345–366. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2024.2337962>

development of these critical perceptions.

Step 2: Methodology



NOTE: Technology Working Groups³ will be supported by members of the DOR Senior Administrative Leadership Team with assigned oversight of the unit.

- 3) **How do these actions help your unit advance its strategic priorities and incorporate the Aggie Core Values?** As noted above, sustaining effective teamwork is essential to the research mission. The actions above will further increase the efficiency of the diverse work of the DOR and further advance Core Values of Selfless Service, Respect, and Excellence. Additionally, by taking these actions, the DOR leadership advances the Core Values of Respect and Leadership.
- 4) **What is the estimated start date?** September-October 2025
- 5) **What support and resources will you need?** The DOR will utilize the resources made available by Texas A&M Technology Services. The development and implementation of the action plan will benefit from consultation with the content expert member of the DOR Senior Administration Leadership Team, Kris Guye, Assistant Vice President, Strategic Alliances & Partners Technology Services.
- 6) **What outcomes do you want to achieve, and how will success be measured?** Table 3 below summarizes outcomes and measures of success.

Table 3. Action plan outcomes for Opportunity 2.

Outcome	Assessment Method	Measure of success
STEP 1. Increased utilization of Texas A&M AI automation tools for routine tasks	Pre-post Step 1 survey	More than 70% of DOR staff self-report increased usage of AI tools and their perceived usefulness/ perceived ease of use and time benefits to work of strategic importance
STEP 2. Utilization of AI tools for unit specific tasks	Technology Working Group (TWG) report	Adoption of AI tool for unit-specific work.

³ *Technology Working Group: Individuals within a unit who are enthusiastic about evaluating the potential benefits and efficiencies of AI use.*

Stronger agreement with statements of	Texas A&M Employee Engagement Survey #2	More staff agree “There are no significant barriers to “doing my job well” (75% vs. 60%) and there are “enough people to do the work in work teams” (70% vs. < 50%)
---------------------------------------	---	---

- 6) **How will you communicate this initiative to your unit?** The DOR will utilize our DOR newsletter to communicate the findings and actions items associated with our response to the results of the Texas A&M Employee Engagement Survey.