



# Combating Workforce Disengagement



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**2024 Presidents Institute**

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# Presenters

Scott Cochran, President, Spartanburg Methodist College

Kyle Farmbry, President, Guilford College

Chair: Anne Ollen, Head of Programs and Operations, TIAA Institute



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# TIAA Institute Research: Higher education employee value proposition



Why do individuals choose jobs in higher education?

Why do they stay? Why do they leave?

Primary source of data

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## **TIAA Institute Higher Ed EVP Survey**

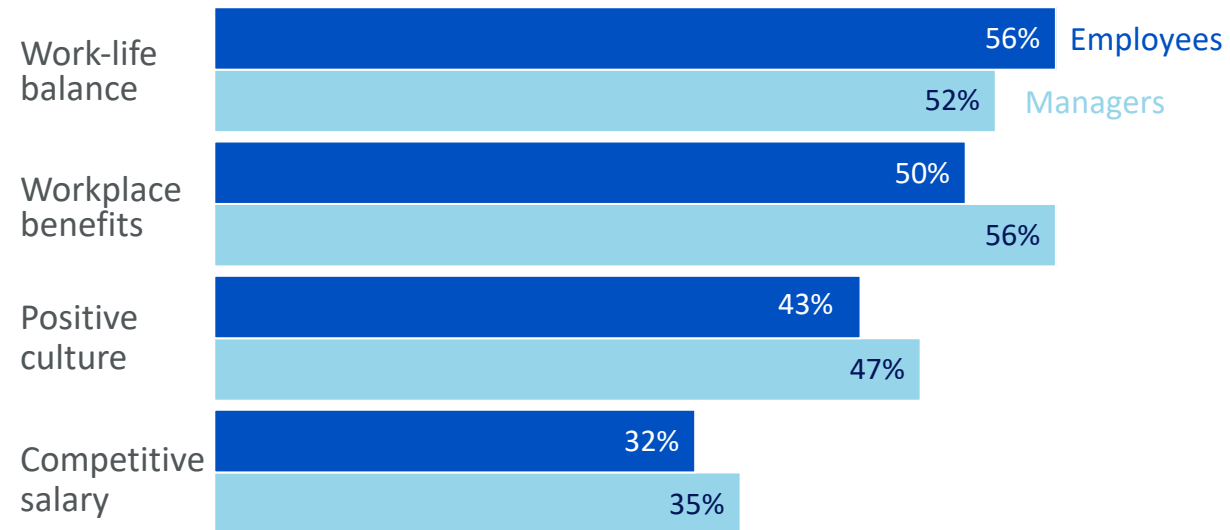
- 1,500 higher ed employees, 704 with employer responsibilities
- Conducted online July 19 – August 8, 2023

# Attracting employees in higher ed

## Employer perceptions generally align with employee reality

Top reasons why you chose to work at your current institution?

Top reasons employees choose to work at your institution?



Not quite the draw that managers think

Institutional mission

45%

MANAGERS

32%

EMPLOYEES

Institution brand

38%

MANAGERS

30%

EMPLOYEES

# Losing employees in higher ed

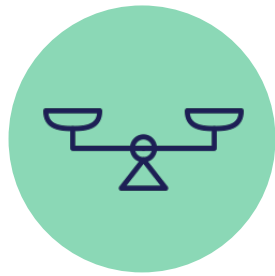
1/3 are likely to leave or consider leaving their institution in the next two years

Primary reasons cited by potential leavers:



**63%**

Salary/  
compensation



**35%**

Work-life  
balance



**34%**

Career  
paths/opportunities

**73%**

of potential leavers would consider  
jobs outside higher ed  
Work/life balance and remote work  
flexibility are key issues for them.



“

The biggest thing I am  
watching is the people are  
leaving because of money  
and work-life [balance].

—HR leader, Mid-sized public

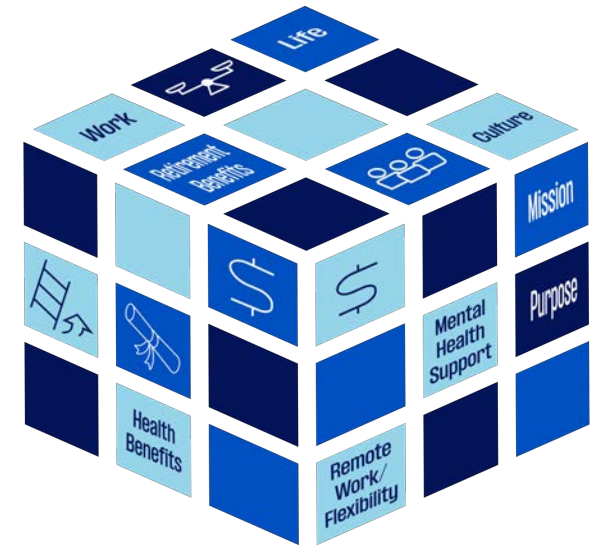
# What is an Employee Value Proposition (EVP)?

## Five levers in a higher education EVP

- 1 Total compensation
- 2 Work-life balance
- 3 Professional development and learning
- 4 Culture and community
- 5 Mission and purpose

### An EVP:

- Clearly conveys an organization's comparative advantages as an employer
- Serves as a differentiator in recruitment and retention
- Takes a holistic approach focused on employees' needs and expectations, extending well beyond salary
- Can be adjusted for targeted employees who matter most given institutional goals at a particular point in time



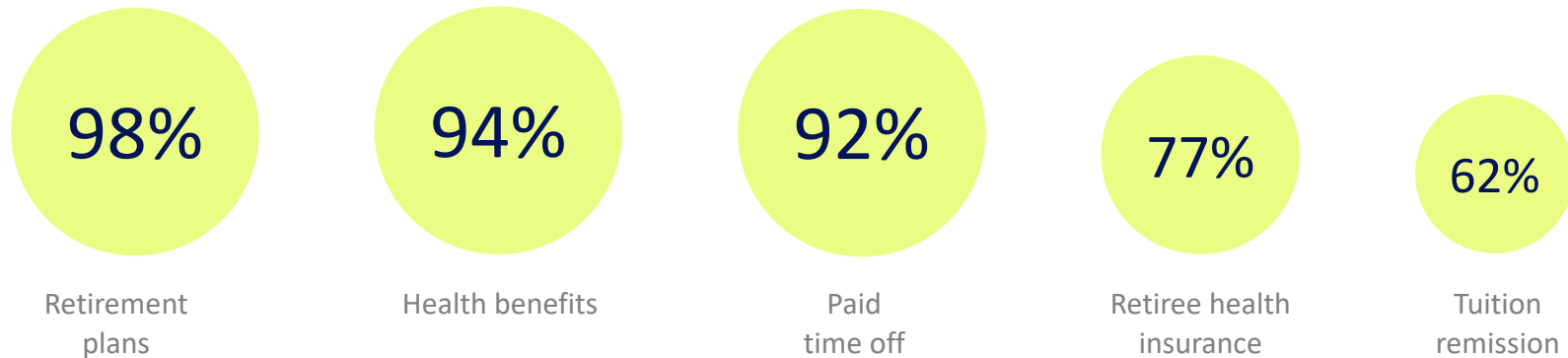
# Lever 1: Total compensation

1



Emphasize value of entire compensation package. Call out benefits that are a competitive advantage.

Percentage of employees rating benefit as important:



“ We worked...to develop a Total Rewards Statement. The idea is to monetize the benefits that employees are enrolled in...

—HR leader, large public

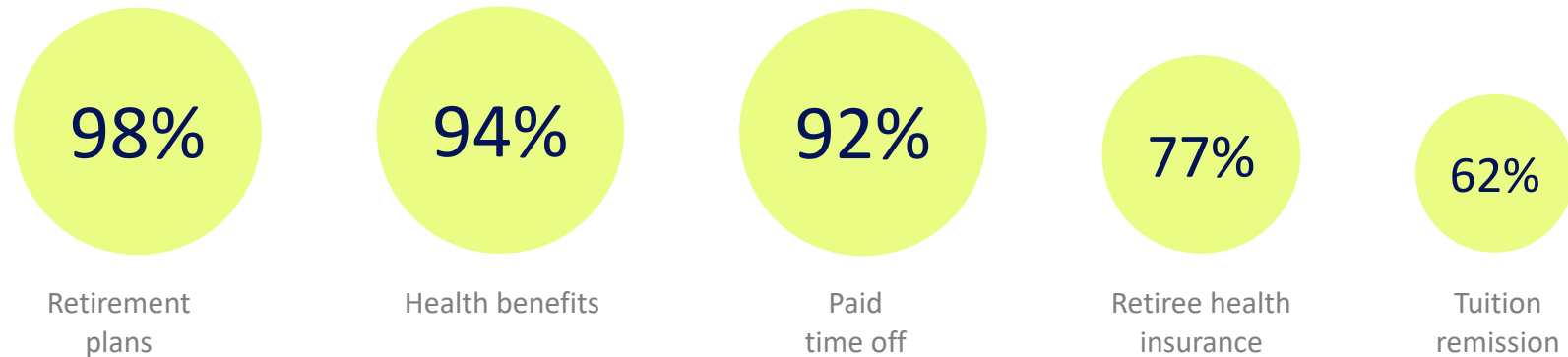
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# Lever 2: Work-life balance

2



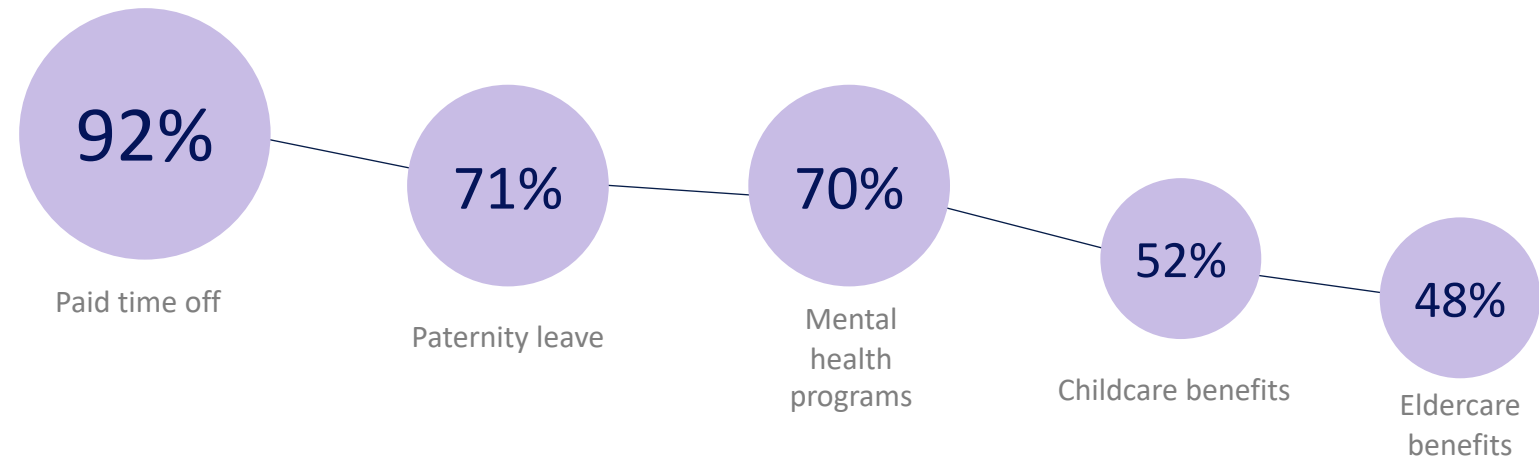
Emphasize benefits other than remote work flexibility that promote work-life balance. Recognize that different benefits matter more at different life stages.



I've always thought academia has had a better work-life balance than some of the for-profit institutions and that we try to be very flexible...

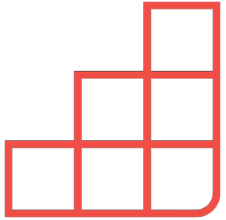
—HR leader, community college

Percentage of employees rating benefit as important:

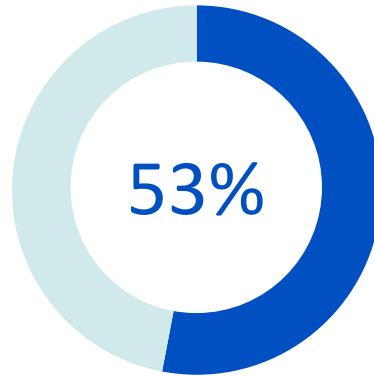


# Lever 3: Professional development and learning

3



Enhance efforts to provide professional development and career advancement opportunities.



Career trajectory and advancement is a top driver for increased job satisfaction.

But just over half of higher ed employees are satisfied with opportunities for advancement.



...it is not obvious to see your career path when you come into a university, and I think that is a hindrance for us

—HR leader, large public R1

# Lever 4: Culture and community

4



Culture and community are compelling intangibles of higher ed employment.

77%

are satisfied with the culture at their institution



People don't quit their jobs, they quit their supervisors.

—HR leader, large public

**53%** would sacrifice at least some pay to work for a great manager.

**20%** would give up \$10,000 or more.

# Lever 5: Mission and purpose

5



Helping advance higher ed's mission can be a compelling intangible—but should not be overestimated.

ALMOST  
**1/3**

of higher ed employees cited mission among top reasons for choosing their institution

But current environment creates headwinds.



I view myself as being in the hopes and dreams business...and I think it's just a beautiful thing to do.

—Professional staff

**36%**

of higher ed employees feel that higher education has changed for the worse in recent years

# Reactions and personal perspectives

## Reactions and personal perspectives

- Scott Cochran
- Kyle Farmbry
- Audience responses:
  - How do the research insights plus panelists' commentary align with your own experiences and perspectives?
  - What are your biggest challenges in the context of employee disengagement?

# Q&A Session



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Thank you for attending  
this session!