

DATA BRIEF

# The Employee Value Proposition in Higher Education

## Addressing recruitment, retention and talent development challenges in higher education

The TIAA Institute's Employee Value Proposition (EVP) initiative aims to help the higher education sector compete for talent by deepening understanding of employees' job choices and what they expect to gain in return for the work they do.

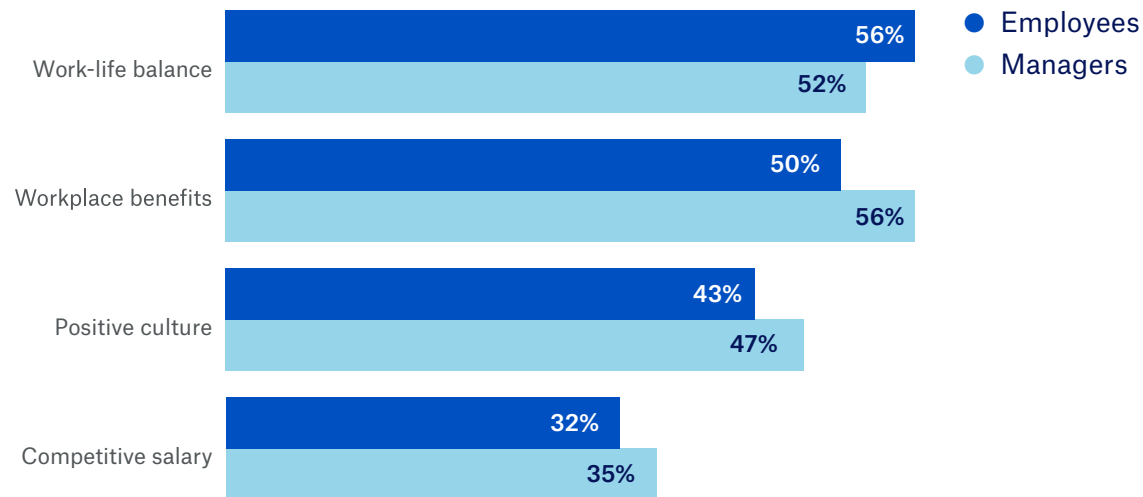
Armed with that knowledge, institutions can create an Employee Value Proposition (EVP). An EVP is a strategic tool that conveys to prospective and current employees the rewards, benefits, and attributes that make working at an institution particularly attractive.



# Attracting employees to 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 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:



“The biggest thing I am watching is the people are leaving because of money and work-life [balance].”  
 –HR leader, Mid-sized public

**73%** of potential leavers would consider jobs outside higher ed

Work/life balance and remote work flexibility are key issues for them.



# 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



## 1 Lever 1: Total compensation



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

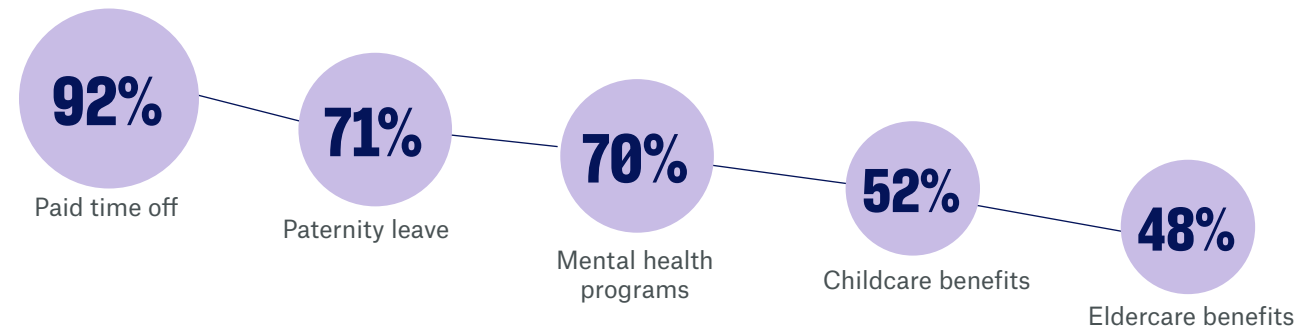
## 2 Lever 2: Work-life balance



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

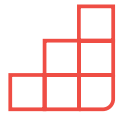
“ I've always thought academia has had a better work-life balance than some of the for-profit institutions and that we try to be very flexible...  
-HR leader, community college

Percentage of employees rating benefit as important:

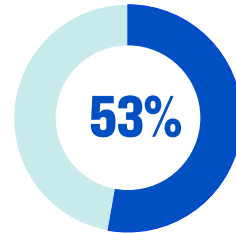


# What is an Employee Value Proposition (EVP)?

## 3 Lever 3: Professional development and learning



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.



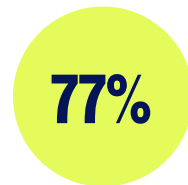
...it is not obvious to see your career path when you come into a university, and I think that is a hindrance for us.

—HR leader, large public R1

## 4 Lever 4: Culture and community



Culture and community are compelling intangibles of higher ed employment.



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.

## 5 Lever 5: Mission and purpose



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



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



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

—Professional staff

But current environment creates headwinds.



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

# Create an EVP that works for your institution

Balancing your EVP's elements is an art.

An EVP should be a living document, adjusted based on changing circumstances both internal and external to the institution.

An EVP can give your institution a distinct advantage for building and maintaining your workforce by conveying the compelling rewards, benefits, and attributes that position you as an employer of choice. Early movers in higher education stand to benefit from developing an EVP ahead of their peers.



**Consider a TIAA Institute Workshop to develop and articulate your institution's strategic EVP.**

**Email [tiaainstitute@tiaa.org](mailto:tiaainstitute@tiaa.org) for more information or to schedule a consultation on developing your institution's strategic EVP.**