

Survey notes improved outlook

Employee engagement shows gains from 2012 | **By Mark Whalen**



Almost 4,000 JPL employees provided feedback to the 2015 employee engagement survey conducted in February. Favorable responses were seen in many areas, reflecting significant improvement since the 2012 survey.

Survey results are being reviewed and compared to employee input to the “JPL 2025” strategic-thrusts campaign. JPL leadership intends to use this information to determine short- and long-term actions to keep JPL positioned as a superior place to work.

The employee survey is conducted every few years to give all employees an opportunity to express what’s im-

portant to them and provide input into JPL’s future direction.

“I was encouraged by the overall participation rate for this year’s survey,” said Professional Development Section Manager Jaime Gonzales, who noted that about 600 more employees responded compared to 2012. “I was also pleased to see that we built on many of the favorable responses we received in 2012.”

Gonzales said nearly every item that was repeated from the 2012 survey had a higher favorable score this year, and some were significantly higher. Only two items decreased, and the de-

crease was between 1 and 3 percent.

Three indices are examined from the survey data: overall engagement, manager effectiveness and performance enablement. Both engagement and manager effectiveness had significant gains over the 2012 results, said Gonzales.

“In general, our employees feel they have the resources to do their jobs effectively and support from their managers,” he said. “The result points to a workforce that is, for the most part, committed, satisfied and proud to work for JPL.”

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The survey indicated that among the most important topics to employees are their ability to achieve their career goals at JPL, and understanding the future vision of the Lab. “If employees believe that the Lab has a positive future direction and is making the changes necessary to succeed in the future, and if they see opportunities to personally develop and pursue their career interests, then engagement will remain high at JPL,” said Gonzales.

Among the areas identified areas for improvement were workplace flexibility, performance management, communication of the Lab’s strategies, and increasing cross-organizational collaboration.

productive coaching and development conversations. These resources—ranging from new training opportunities, webinars and video tools—will be added to the Performance Coaching website as well as the new Human Resources website now in development

- Examining the feasibility of increasing JPL’s employee tuition reimbursement and childcare support. A team is working on recommendations, which are due by August

The telecommuting option has drawn attention because many employees said they want more flexibility due to lengthy commutes, childcare availability and other factors—a “work from anywhere” concept where you don’t

have to come to the office every day.

“Many JPLers are aware of our telecommuting policy and it see it as a significant contributor to work-life balance and overall satisfaction,” said Gonzales. “More than 60 percent of respondents said they would telecommute one or two days a week if they could, which is JPL’s current policy.” The majority of respondents, he added, were unsure of the impact telecommuting would have on their ability to stay connected with their colleagues and managers.

A full report on the survey results is available at http://hr/docs/2015_JPL_Employee_Engagement_Results_Presentation_All_Employees.pdf. ■

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Jaime Gonzales

To address the survey findings, a number of initiatives are underway, including:

- A focused summer telecommuting effort to explore the possibility of expanding this work option
- Creating a forward-looking communications kit for use in describing JPL’s vision for the future of the Lab, with members of the Executive Council communicating JPL’s strategy and future direction more frequently across all JPL organizations beyond their own
 - Providing additional resources to assist managers and employees in





Photo by Carolyn Stoize

Kenny Truong of IT Operations & End User Support (left) assists Lubna Zubair with a laptop on her first day at JPL.

Raring to go

Making intern arrivals easier
is a priority this summer

By Mark Whalen

JPL interns have great experiences at the Lab, but getting them badges and laptops in past years often took several days—slowing their initiation to summer assignments. This year, JPL set out to change that.

Close collaboration from across the Lab will allow the new JPLers to acquire a badge and a networked laptop or desktop computer on day 1.

Human Resources, the Education Office, the Engineering and Science Directorate, the Office of the CIO and the Protective Services Division have come together to provide an improved experience for the students.

“This has really demonstrated teamwork at its finest,” said Sue Fawcett of Engi-

neering and Science Directorate business administration.

Working through the Office of the CIO, Lockheed Martin contributed about 650 refurbished computers, enough so that every summer student would have one.

On their first day, interns will proceed to a centralized pickup area to get a standard, preconfigured laptop with network access. For those ordering desktops and monitors, there’s simplified and enhanced access to order equipment through LaunchIT and IT Catalog. Students will have complete network access, including e-mail, when they log on during their second day.

The enhanced check-in is one of several new amenities for students this sum-

mer. Other new features include a meal card to take his/her mentor to lunch.

An invitation-only Facebook site highlighting housing, carpooling and outside activities now combines both Human Resources and JPL Education Office interns. More than 400 summer students are Facebook members so far, noted Higher Education Group Supervisor Adrian Ponce.

Also new will be a Career Poster Day for graduating seniors, which could maximize their chance of becoming visible to hiring managers. “These students represent a piece of the pipeline of the next generation of JPL employees,” said Ponce.

A new end-of-summer social will complete the experience for the students.

Ponce noted that the summer program benefits not only students, but also their JPL mentors—who are learning as well. And in the last few years, he said, the number of mentors has doubled. “That shows there’s much more of an academic feel in the technical community through student programs.”

Common feedback from students, Ponce added, shows that the experience of an internship at JPL is transformative in their motivation to finish their STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) degree and ultimately enter a STEM career, including at JPL.

The new onboarding effort for students is also serving as a road test for possible wider implementation for all new hires, said Fawcett. Human Resources’ plan includes a new, interactive onboarding center in 167-151, due to open this fall.

“All the lessons we’re learning now can be implemented in the bigger overall onboarding effort,” added Sonny Koliwad, manager of the IT Business Management Office. “It’s going to be a big benefit.”



UCLA's Joe Rudnick (left) and JPL's Dan McCleese sign collaborative agreement.

JPL, UCLA sign agreement

Researchers from JPL and UCLA on May 27 signed a memorandum of understanding to promote cooperation between planetary scientists at both institutions.

JPL Chief Scientist Dan McCleese and UCLA Dean of Physical Sciences Joe Rudnick signed the agreement at a joint JPL-UCLA planetary science workshop. Attended by more 90 scientists and others from both institutions, the workshop featured nine invited science talks and 35 posters in two poster sessions.

"The workshop was a great success and undoubtedly marks the beginning of many productive collaborations," said JPL's Bob Pappalardo, Europa mission pre-project scientist.

Advanced technology studies awarded

Four JPL researchers will lead studies recently awarded through NASA's Earth Science Technology Office Advanced Information Systems Technology Program.

Hook Hua is principal investigator for "Agile Big Data Analytics of High-Volume Geodetic Data Products for Improving Science and Hazard Response," to perform massive-scale big data analytics of geodetic data products to improve the quality of InSAR and GPS data products for disaster monitoring and response.

Thomas Huang will lead "OceanXtremes: Oceanographic Data-Intensive Anomaly Detection and Analysis Portal," developing an anomaly- and feature-detection system across the entire archive of ocean data sets supporting scientific investigations of ocean phenomena.

Seungwon Lee is principal investigator for "Climate Model Diagnostic Analyzer," which will develop a novel methodology to diagnose model biases in climate models to significantly increase the model predictability of climate change by

enhancing confidence in seasonal, decadal and long-term climate projections.

Chris Mattman will lead "SciSpark: Highly Interactive and Scalable Model Evaluation and Climate Metrics for Scientific Data and Analysis" to enable a scalable and interactive model evaluation system for rapid development of climate metrics and analysis.

In addition, five JPL co-investigators—Edward Armstrong, Thomas Huang, Konstantinos Andreadis, Susan Owen and Carlos Villalpando—will partner with George Mason University, Florida State University, the University of Colorado and USC on awards led by those institutions.

Women in Engineering honor for Drain

In recognition of her outreach activities with students, JPL systems engineer Tracy Drain has been named a recipient of the Women in Engineering Champion Award by the Women in Engineering ProActive Network.

Drain was cited "For leadership in advocating and implementing K-12 outreach programs that encourage girls' interest and pursuit of careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)."

She will receive the award in early June at the organization's Change Leader Forum in Broomfield, Colorado.

Drain joined JPL in 2000 after earning a master's in mechanical engineering from Georgia Tech. Previously, she attained a bachelor's in the same subject from the University of Kentucky. ■

Letters

I would like to thank all my friends, co-workers and managers at JPL for their cards, flowers and kind words after the sudden passing of my brother. I also received a beautiful live plant from JPL which was delivered to my home after I returned from Pennsylvania. Thank you all.

Tonja Cooper

To my friends and colleagues at JPL: Thank you so much for your condolences and support upon the passing of my father (as well as the beautiful plant). Your kind words and consideration are one of the things that makes JPL special.

David Skulsky

Passings

Donald Kindt, 81, a retired engineer, died April 1. Kindt, who joined JPL in 1955, served as integration manager for the Galileo and Cassini/Huygens missions. He was a television project engineer for Ranger and also contributed to Voyager and Mariner. He retired in 1998.

Kindt is survived by his wife, Dagmar; children Denise, Deborah and Robert; and grandchildren Christopher, Kevin and Matthew.

Memorial donations may be made to the Ameri-

can Cancer Society and the American Heart Association.

Robert Wingren, 69, a retired web developer and computer programmer, died May 23.

Wingren joined JPL in 1983 and retired in 2009. A native of Upland, he earned a history degree from the University of Redlands, a teaching credential from UCLA and a master's from Claremont College.

He is survived by his sister Sharon and nieces Kelly and Erin. A celebration of life/memorial is planned for June 28, noon to 4 p.m. at Sharon's home in Orange. For more information, please call 818-378-6950.

Retirees

The following employees retired in April:

Joyce Wolf, 41 years, Section 3263; **Jack Jones**, 35 years, Section 382; **Charles Eidem**, 29 years, Section 2632; **Susan Kurtik**, 27 years, Section 9020; **David Bame**, 24 years, Section 353K; **Brigid Lewis**, 24 years, Section 252E; **Sylvia Chang**, 17 years, Section 2131.

Classifieds

Ads submitted May 23–June 1. To submit an ad, e-mail universe@jpl.nasa.gov.

For Sale

AMPLIFIER, Ampeg G-212, late 1970s, solid state, 2-channel input, two 100-watt speakers in a solid wooden frame, black; see <http://losangeles.craigslist.org/sfv/msg/5046028032.html>; \$220. 818-523-4018, Aaron.

MIRROR, vintage, hand-carved moldings all around, colors: mix pale shades of green and tan, hand-painted decoration on the front, beveled glass; dimensions: 44.5" H x 30" W x 2" D; see <http://losangeles.craigslist.org/sfv/fuo/5046027710.html>; \$50. 818-523-4018, Aaron.

MISC.: Pedometer, mini steam iron, Rollerblades, head/neck/shoulder massager, walkie talkies, 120-pc tool set, Blackberry Curve (2), bike trainer, portable blender, umbrella stand, soft cooler, bloody Mary/decanter set, pool floats (2). 818-272-3262.

Vehicles / Accessories

'06 CHEVY Cobalt LS, great condition, very well taken care of, silver exterior, light gray interior, cloth seats, 4-cyl. 2.2L engine, MPG: 25 city, 34 hwy., LED/halogen headlights, a/c, AM/FM, CD player, tinted windows, manual windows/locks, periodic service, new brakes (front/back); 167K+ miles; \$2,700/obo. 818-523-4018, Aaron.

'00 HONDA Civic LX, a/c, power windows/door locks, radio with remote and aux cable, ~170K miles, \$2,200/obo. 321-460-4975, Luz Maria.

'05 TOYOTA Camry LE sedan, great condition, original owner, all maintenance completed according to Toyota specs; new front brakes, latest major service, new tires, 138,000 miles, no accidents; \$7,300/obo. candicast@yahoo.com.

Wanted

SPACE INFO/memorabilia from U.S. & other countries, past & present, for personal use (see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7PvjGp7mCU>). mrayman@alumni.princeton.edu, 818-790-8523, Marc Rayman.

Lost & Found

LOST: activity notes, April 2006–March 2007. SOSNotez@riseup.net.

Real Estate for Sale

LEBEC-area mountaintop retreat, spectacular views, 4 br./2 ba., 3,210 sq. ft. custom-built house

on 20 acres, surrounded by vast fields of wildflowers in spring, but stunning year-round; only about an hour from JPL north on I-5; includes spacious workshop or artist's studio; see <http://www.tourfactory.com/idrx1308594>; \$599,000. 805-358-1626 or Robert.A.Preston@icloud.com.

For Rent

ALTADENA, one room in a lovely 3-bd./2-bath house, big backyard, hardwood floor, big closet, furnished or unfurnished, shared bathroom, kitchen and laundry privileges; 5-minute drive to JPL, close to public transportation; short- or long-term lease available; must like dogs and be very clean; \$750 furnished, \$700 not furnished, including utilities + \$650 deposit. 626-712-3451.

LOS ANGELES, 5-10 minutes to downtown L.A., Eagle Rock, Highland Park and Pasadena, easy freeway access; furnished, contemporary, spacious 2 master bedrooms + bathroom, 1,200 square feet, available July 1; see <http://losangeles.craigslist.org/lac/roo/5052618422.html>

Vacation Rentals

BIG BEAR lakefront, luxury townhome, 2 decks, indoor pool/spa, beautiful master bdrm. suite, sleeps 6. 949-786-6548.

CABO SAN LUCAS, Christmas & New Year's weeks, spectacular Sheraton property, lg. 2-room ground floor unit, garden view, sleeps 6, full kitchen, 2 baths, daily maid service, use of all Sheraton facilities; pictures: <http://haciendadelmar.com.mx/sites/en/suites/master-suite/>; \$1,400/wk. tujungadude@gmail.com or 818-605-0415.

JACKSON HOLE, WY: Luxurious bed and breakfast nestled on 3 acres of solitude on the Snake River and down the road from the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort and the south entrance to Grand Teton National Park; see <http://www.bentwoodinn.com/>; mention JPL for employee discount. info@bentwoodinn.com, 307-739-1411.

MAMMOTH, Snowcreek, 2 bd., 2 ba. + loft, sleeps 6-8, fully equip'd kitchen incl. microwave, D/W, cable TV, VCR, phone, balcony w/mtn. vw., Jacz., sauna, streams, fishponds, close to Mammoth Creek, JPL discount, no pets. 626-798-9222, 626-794-0455 or valeriee@caltech.edu.

MAMMOTH, Snowcreek, beautiful updated condo, 2 bd., 2 ba. + loft (sleeps 6-8), great location by pond and meadow, new appliances, TVs, DVD players, free wireless Internet access and washer/dryer, no pets. 818-952-2696 or BigMtnPrettySky@gmail.com.

OCEANSIDE condo, on the sand, watch the beautiful sunsets, charming, 1 bedroom, panoramic view, walk to pier or harbor, pool/spa, game room, sleeps 4 max, all amenities. 949-786-6548.

OCEANSIDE whitewater view beach condo; new virtual tour: <http://www.previewfirst.com/mls/33034>; 2 bd., 2 ba., sleeps 6; well decorated and equipped: boogie boards, wet suits, full kitchen, all linens, beach towels; Wi-Fi ready, new flat-screen TVs, daily paper, grocery stores nearby; 2-min. walk to the sand, no roads; JPL and Caltech rates: winter \$1,195/week, summer \$2,150/week; monthly and nightly rates available; see <http://www.warmfocus.com/video/k/1402-999npacific-stc213/video.php>; reserve with \$500 deposit. 760-433-4459, Grace; 831-425-5114, Ginger. ■



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