

# One Rural Community College's Attempt to Address High Employee Turnover



Labette Community College

# Introduction



We want employees to experience high levels of job satisfaction, why?

1. Care for our employees
2. Better able to satisfy our mission to provide quality learning opportunities in a supportive environment and support our local B&I
3. Satisfied employees tend to stay longer



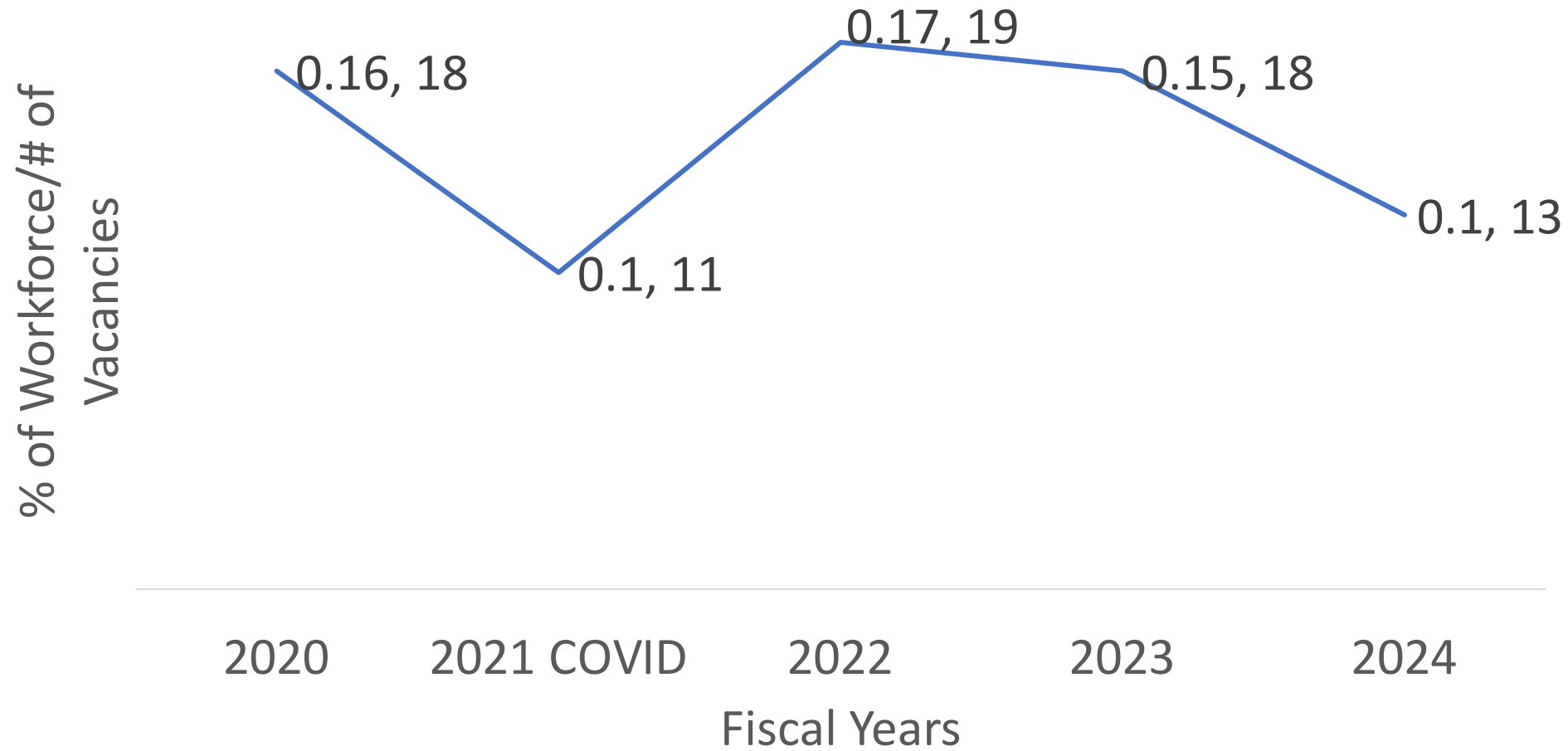
# Forces which impact employees' perspective of operations



- External Forces: out of our control as a community college
  - COVID-19
  - Cost of living increases
  - Loss of regional population
  - Competition for resources and students
  - Personal stresses at home
- Internal Forces: generally within our control as a community college

In consideration of internal and external forces, we changed the language from “level of job satisfaction” to “level of happiness.”

# Labette Community College Total Annual Employee Vacancies FY2020-2024



# LCC Employee Departure Costs Per Year FY2020-2024



“...each employee departure costs about one-third of that worker’s annual earnings, including expenses such as recruiter fees, temporary replacement workers and lost productivity.” [Reducing Employee Turnover with Creative Workplace Solutions \(shrm.org\)](https://www.shrm.org)

# Labette Community College



- Small, rural community college located in Parsons, Kansas, pop. 10,000
- 90 full-time, non-faculty members, 35 faculty members
- 3200 students (duplicated), 1,800 FTE annually
- \$14M annual budget
- Socioeconomic status: 78% of the K-12 students in Parsons vs. 48% Kansas (Kansas State Dept of Education), about 75% receive Pell
- “Coordinated” by the Kansas Board of Regents

So, what can we do as a college to provide a more enjoyable work place?  
We decided to ask our employees.

# Survey Questions, Summer 2022

1. How happy are you at work here at LCC?
2. What could LCC do to increase your level of happiness?



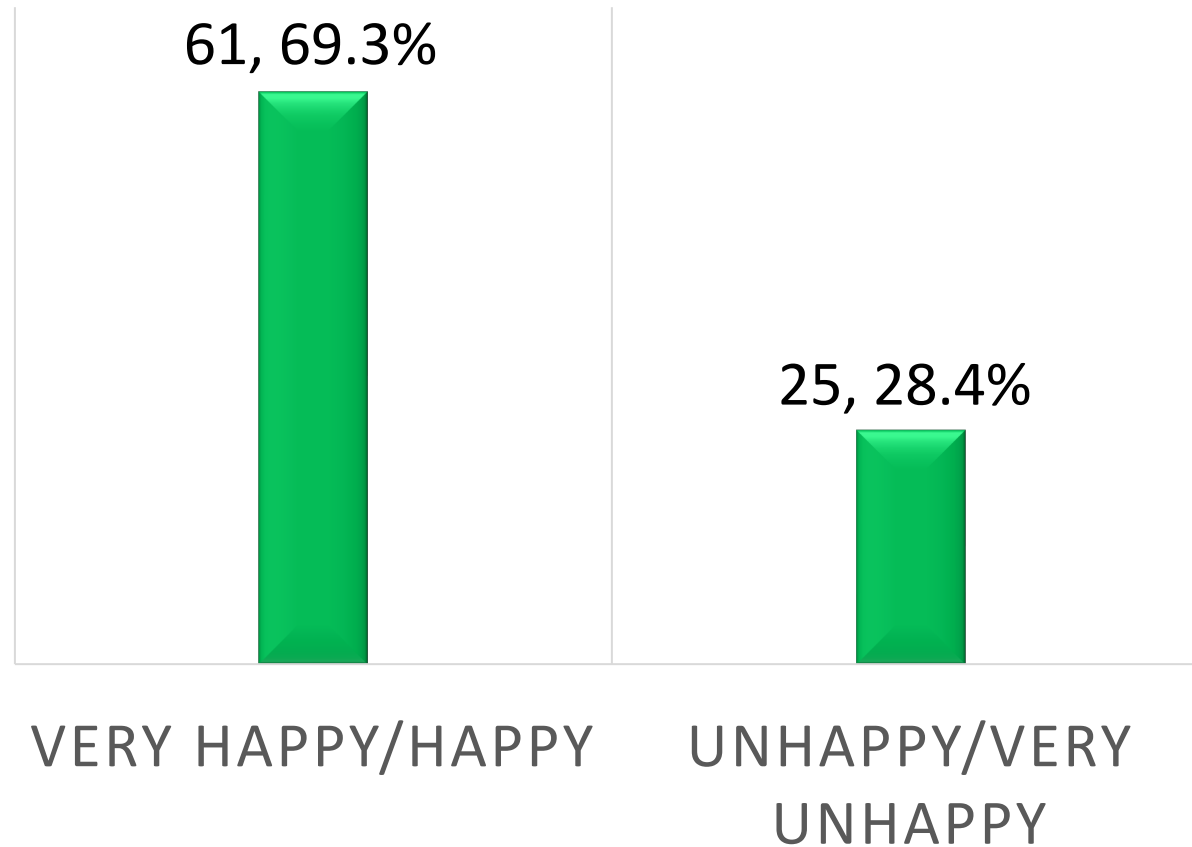
# Results



- Survey invitations were sent to 188 employees using SurveyMonkey
  - Adjunct Faculty
  - Full Time Faculty
  - Staff
- There were 88 employees who completed the surveys
- Response rate 46.8%, n=188



# Question #1: How happy are you at work here at LCC?



## Question #2: What could LCC do to increase your level of happiness?



- Of the 88 responses, 61 employees (69.3%) provided suggested changes
- Several employees provided multiple suggested changes
- 133 suggested changes and placed into 52 Categories
- 29 Themes emerged
- 95 suggested changes (71%) were placed within five themes

# Top 5 Themes by count, percentage

1. Pay more (38, 29%),
2. Flex time (18, 14%),
3. Better Communication (16, 12%),
4. Job Classifications (14, 11%), and
5. More Social Gatherings (9, 7%)



# Pay more



- “Increase wages. A position requiring a bachelor's degree pays similar to non-skilled positions at other local major employers.”
- “Continue to support faculty and increase salaries. With 8.6% inflation rate, the present salaries should increase by at least 8.6%.”
- “Pay upgrade- there needs to be money available to give those employees who do their job well - are dependable and most of all shown they are valued. To have the same pay scale for an employee who is late, misses work constantly so that others are picking up their slack receive the same or higher pay than you just because they are in a labeled "group" is unfair and Ludacris. When there is no consequence for poor work ethic, and no reward for good work ethic, there is no motivation. “

# Flexible Time



- “Create a policy for applicable positions to work hybrid/remote & report to campus two days a week and then work remote for the remaining. Doing this will help save on gas and other expenses.”
- “If a raise isn’t possible then how about employees be allowed to work from home on Fridays instead of driving to campus to sit on a day no students will be there?”
- “The 4 days and working off-campus could be a trial run. It can always be reversed.”

# Better Communication



- “Improve communication between departments and between decision makers with the rest of us. Listen to others...sometimes they have good ideas.”
- “The president needs to get out more and be involved with his employees. It is hard to take orders from a President and have confidence in him when he hides in his office all day!”
- “More open communication regarding up coming classes and the clinical needs of the students.”

# Job Classifications



- “Need to evaluate salary ranges for the value of the employee.”
- “Review people's positions and make sure they are in the right category for what they are doing.”
- “Be more willing to allow your people the chance to promote and better themselves instead of always hiring externally, encourage staff to better themselves with more education and give them credit when they do so.”

# More Social Gatherings



- “Implement a game, group activity or team bonding exercise at EVERY In-service, this was a fun experience at the in-service several years ago.”
- “Create more of an LCC family feel again like we used to have.”
- “Create a positive work environment and have the ability to create change without all the negativity.”



# All 29 Themes

- Pay
- Communication
- Flex Time
- Classification
- Social gatherings
- Cooperation
- Employee input
- Staff in name only
- Support
- Realignment
- Open jobs internally
- Marketing
- HR
- Recruiting
- New Programs
- Training
- Retention
- Financial Aid
- Add landscaping employees
- Job security
- Adequate funding
- Strategic Planning
- New online platform
- Advising
- Preferential Treatment
- Environment
- Faculty rep on admin committees
- Program
- Facilities

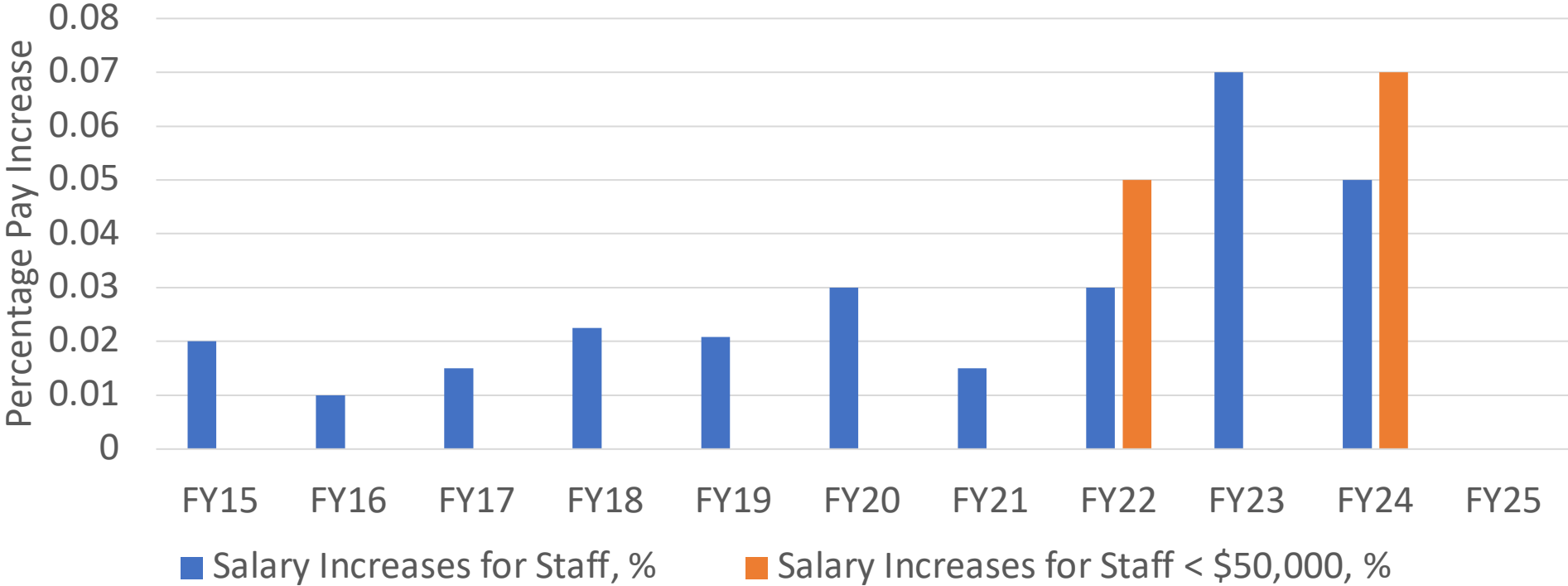




# Implementation of changes

## Pay More

Salary Increases for Staff, %



# Implementation of changes



## **Flexible Work Time**

Fall 2022: Developed a flexible work week

Spring 2023: Piloted flexible work week

- Each employee could choose a work schedule for the week
- Staff members were required to work on five “critical Fridays”
- Same amount of work time was required, 37 hours
- Staff members could opt out and continue to work five days a week, coaches took this option
- We closed the campus to the public on Fridays, however, staff could come in to work.

# Implementation of changes

## **Flexible Work Time**

Follow up survey to employees (Full time faculty and staff)

1. How happy are you at work here at LCC?
2. How happy are you with the flexible work schedule?
3. If we continue the flexible work schedule, what suggestions would you recommend?

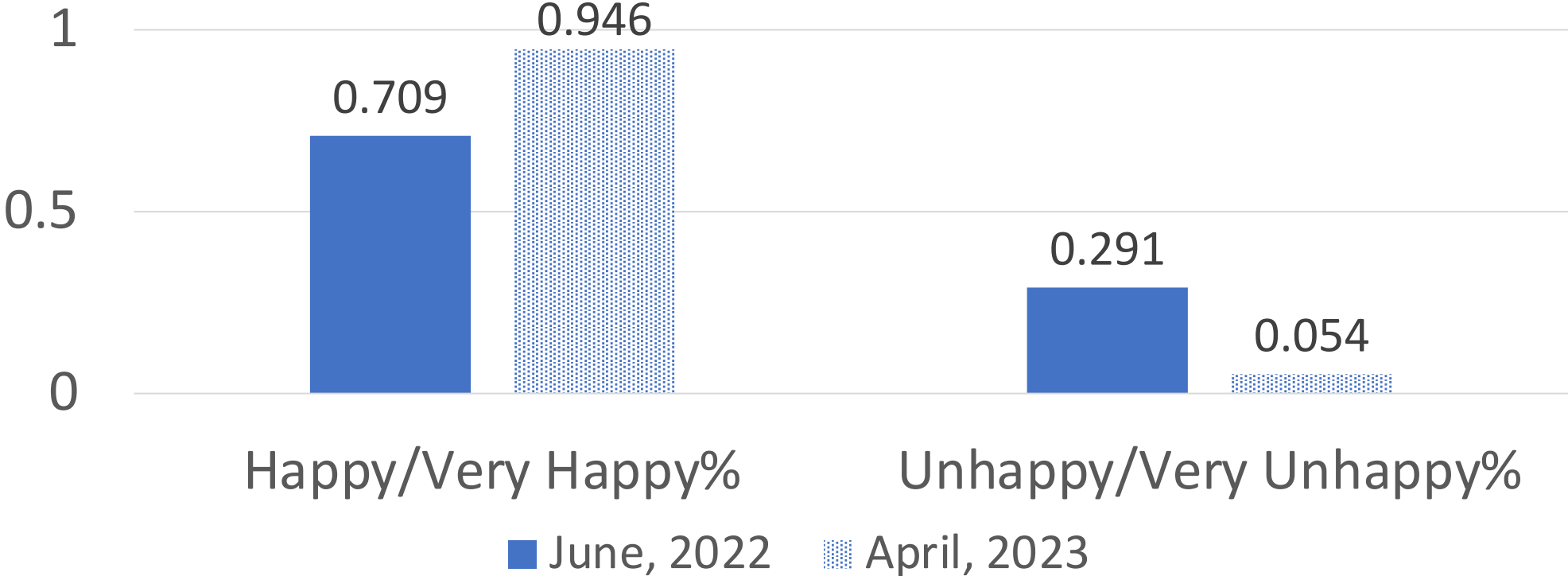




# Implementation of changes

## Flexible Work Time

How happy are you at work here at LCC? June22 vs April23,  
Response rate 64.4%, n=115



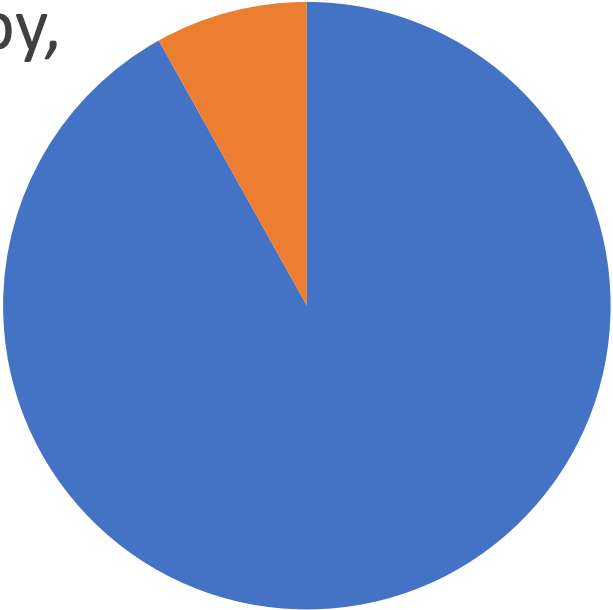


# Implementation of changes

## Flexible Work Time

How happy are you with the flexible work schedule? June22 vs April23,  
Response rate 64.4%, n=115

Unhappy/Very Unhappy,  
6, 8%



Very Happy/Happy,  
68, 92%

# Implementation of changes

## Flexible Work Time



If we continue the flexible work schedule, what suggestions would you recommend? Response rate 64.4%, n=115

- Fewer working hours (13, 35%),
- Open campus on Fridays (4, 11%),
- Have alternative full days off for holidays that fall on Fridays (3, 8%),
- Add voicemail to emails (2, 6%),
- Announce early required Fridays' work (2, 6%)

# Implementation of changes

## **Flexible Work Time**

As a result of the pilot project and survey results, LCC permanently implemented a four-day (open to the public) work schedule to begin Fall 2023, Mondays-Thursdays from 8:00am-4:30pm.

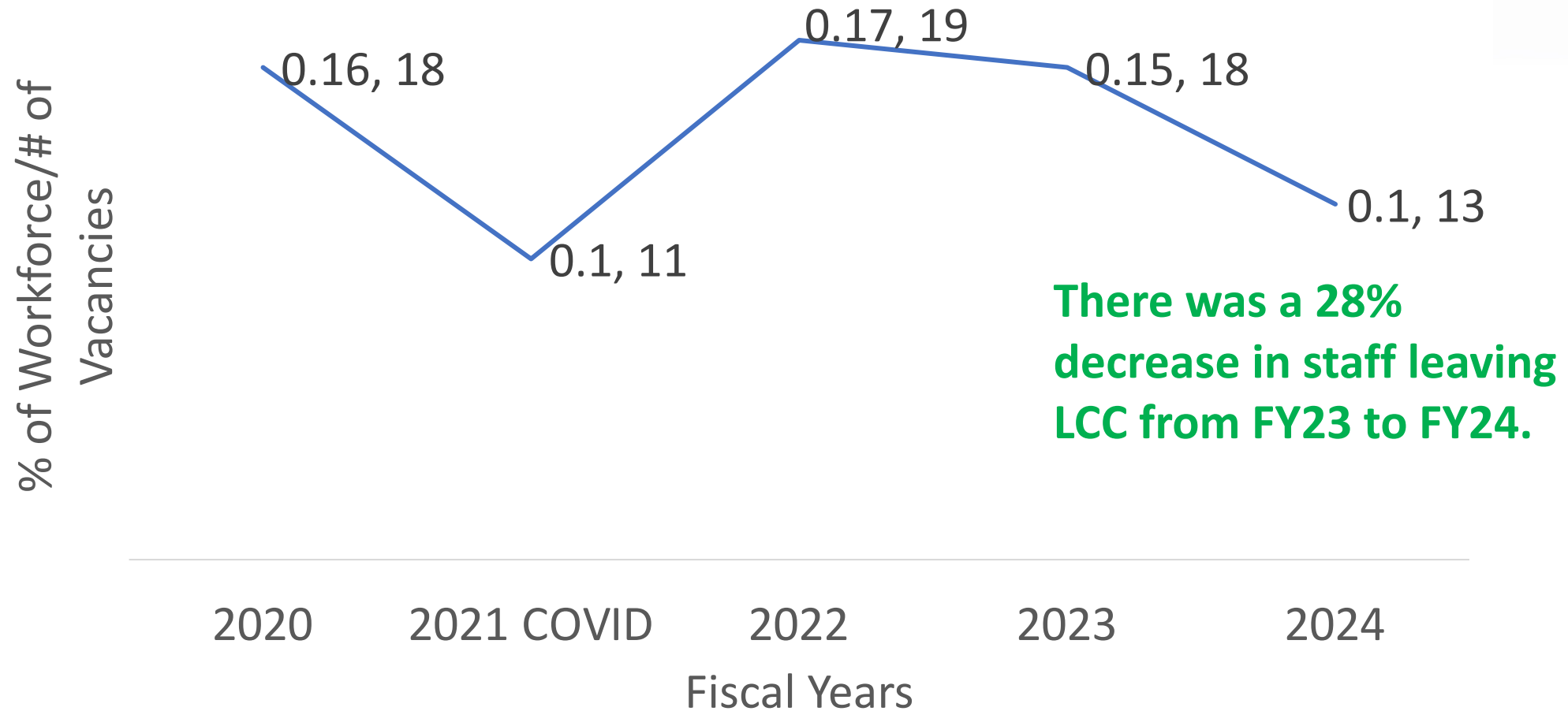
Staff members are to work 36 hours per week year round

We eliminated four holidays.





# Labette Community College Total Annual Employee Vacancies FY2020-2024



# Implementation of changes

## **Better Communication**



This was difficult to clarify from the Happy Survey results so we send out a third survey.

1. Employees believed decisions were made at the Executive Council level without any other input. So, a procedure was implemented which enabled employees to provide input prior to a final vote of approval by the Executive Council.
2. Executive Council also had an all-employee gathering on the fourth Tuesday of Sept, Oct, Nov, Feb, March, and April which included the three VPs and the President to provide updates and take questions.

# Implementation of changes

## Job Classifications



### Pay Compression factors

1. Full employment (low unemployment) for a few years, 4.2% current, was 3.8% last year has caused...(next point)
2. Lack of qualified applicant pool caused
  - a. Applicant rejected the offer because of low pay
  - b. Left vacancy unfilled, ramifications redistribution of tasks increased stress & reduced our ability to react quickly to changes in the market
  - c. Hired applicant but was a poor fit and did not stay
  - d. With qualified or near-qualified applicants, we have offered more money to fill vacancy which caused pay compression.

# Implementation of changes

## **Job Classifications**



We needed to update the pay for our staff, but how?

1. We found a contractor out of Wichita, The Arnold Group (TAG), who had a history of working with public schools and municipalities at what we believed was a reasonable cost, \$19,900.
2. TAG would help:
  - a. Mitigate pay inequities
  - b. Provided us with the software to manage future changes
  - c. Trained us how to use it

# Implementation of changes

## **Job Classifications**



### Staff pay scale implementation

- It became clear that we were underpaying our staff relative to the local wage market
- We needed to increase our wages by \$475,000 to move all staff to the local wages' target market
- The increase needed was too much for our budget so we “owned” 50% for 2024-2025. Next year, maybe more.

# Implementation of changes

## **Job Classifications**



### Implement staff pay scale

1. Previously, staff received same percentage increase as faculty which has the ability to negotiate
2. This year, faculty received a 5% increase, however, staff received a market increase.
3. Some staff received a large increase in wages, some received no increase in wages. We wanted all staff to receive some increase so all staff received a one and a half percent pay increase. Pay increases were approved by the BoT earlier this month.

# Ramifications of Implementing salary/wage scale for staff



- Offer selected applicant an insufficiently attractive pay which is rejected
- With a constrained pay scale, we may have to hire an applicant with limited knowledge or experience

Questions?

