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Abstract

This paper examines perceptions by academics of their work in the Australian state of Victoria, and places such perceptions within the context of international and Australian debates on the academic profession. A 2010 survey conducted by the National Tertiary Education Union in Victoria was analysed in light of the literature on academic work satisfaction and on corporatised managerial practice (?managerialism?). The analysis is also placed in the context of neo-liberalism, defined as a more marketised provision combined with increased pro-market state regulation. Factor analysis was used to reduce 18 items we hypothesised as drivers of work satisfaction to four factors: managerial culture, workloads, work status and self-perceived productivity. Regression models show the relative effects of these factors on two items measuring work satisfaction. This analysis is complemented by discursive analysis of open-ended responses. We found that satisfaction among academics was low and decreasing compared to a previous survey, and that management culture was the most important driver. Concern with workloads also drove dissatisfaction, although academics seem happy to be

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more productive if they have control over their work and develop in their jobs. Work status had little effect. In the open-ended responses the more dissatisfied academics tended to contrast a marketised present to a collegial past. While respondents seem to conflate all recent managerial change with marketisation, we pose a crucial question: whether the need for more professional management needs to be congruent with marketising policy directions. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Fredman, Nick, E-Mail: nfredman@unimelb.edu.au