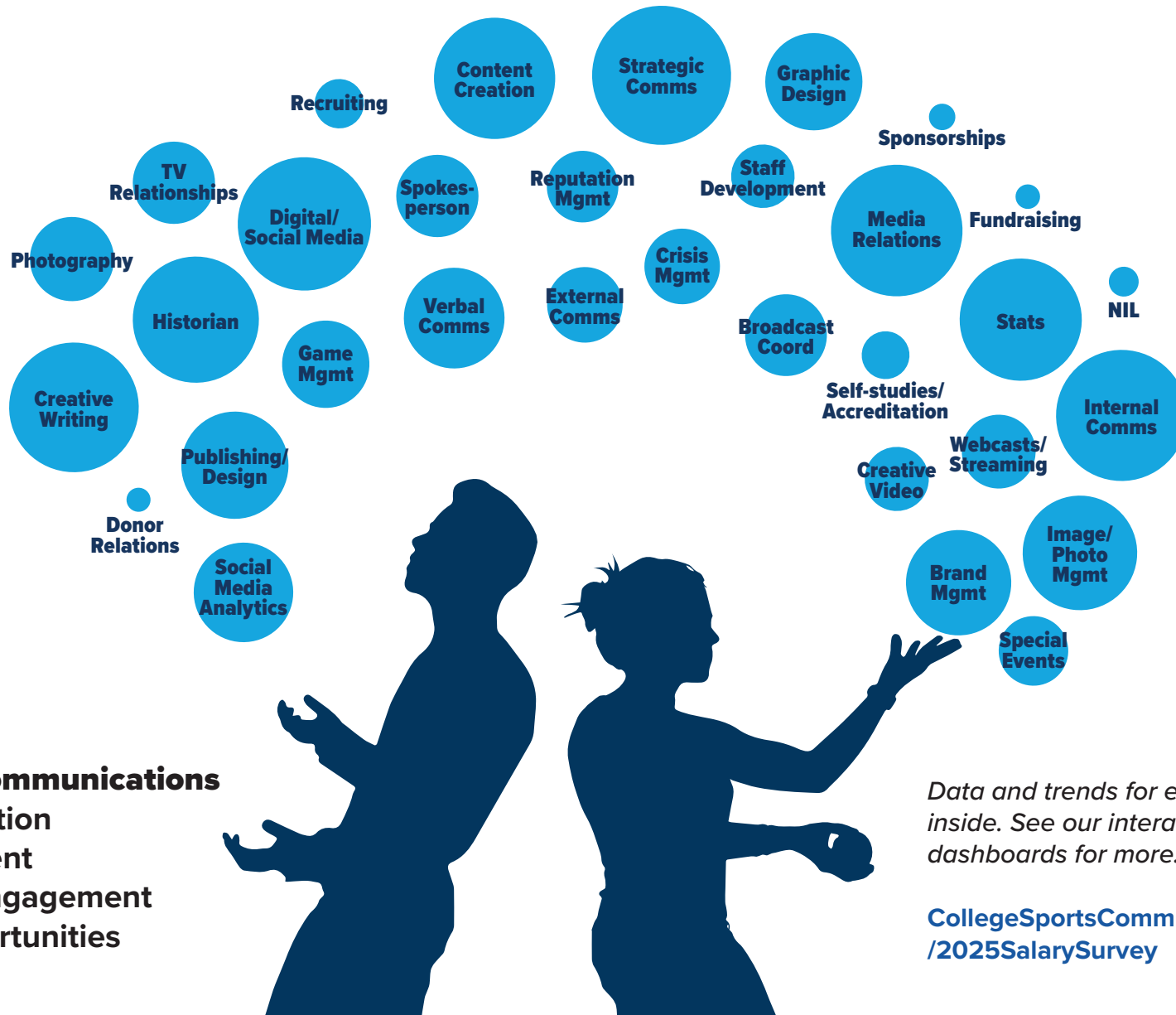




CSC Compensation & Career Satisfaction Survey

CSC Member Institution Communications Staffing Survey

Executive Summary – May 2025



About the 2025 CSC Salary & Staffing Surveys

College Sports Communicators conducted two major member surveys in February 2025 to assist members and member institutions with benchmark industry data to help make decisions and advocate for themselves and their departments.

Data collected from the **2025 CSC Compensation & Career Satisfaction Survey** provides updated information to the 2020 Compensation & Career Satisfaction Survey. The **2025 CSC Member Institution Communications Staffing Survey** provides additional insights and context on how schools in each division approach staffing and resources.

Approximately 22 percent of members completed the individual survey with over 60 percent of schools completing the institutional survey.

Accesses the interactive survey dashboards at
Collegesportscommunicators.com/2025SalarySurvey

Each dashboard contains numerous filters by which you can sort the data to gain an understanding of demographic groups and their views. In order to engage this functionality and compare data most effectively, it is highly recommended to make use of filters relevant to your division and other selections.

In this document you'll find additional highlights and trends for each division.



A message from CSC Executive Director Jason Yaman

There has been so much positive momentum within CSC in recent years as we've opened up our doors to be a more inclusive organization for all types of strategic and creative communicators. We've become a much more diverse organization in so many ways.

As we continue our work, our next step is how do we get all these different groups to truly understand — and even beyond communicators — the opportunities that are available to bring value back to the athletic department when we all work together.

The content that your “traditional” communicator is producing with game notes and press releases and biographical data, etc. ... how do we marry that with the “creative” communicator doing infographics, videos and other content? Beyond that, how do we work with our multimedia and sponsorship reps to then ultimately monetize that? These are opportunities we have to provide value.

Our industry continues to face challenges.

There's always something new in terms of a new technology to be adopted, to learn, to understand. It used to be figuring out how to build a website and figure that piece out. Later on it was how do we do video and live streaming. Then it was social media, and now we're in this age of AI. It's kind of a nonstop changing dynamic technology wise in our profession, and we must equip our departments to continue to evolve and lead.

There's also concerns we all share with what will happen staffing-wise with the House Settlement, and how that may affect resources and jobs.

Not exclusive to communicators, but industry-wide across college sports, is the churn and the burnout. The job has turned into a 24-7-365. There's nights, there's weekends, there's travel. You're on the clock with cell phones and technology. It can be really hard to get away from things and unplug. We're seeing a lot of really talented, hard-working, good people leave the industry. How do we stem the tide in that direction?

These things and more remain priorities as we advocate for and on behalf of our 4,700 members.

Characteristics of championship level communications departments

• **Senior status** — communications and creative teams are represented on **61% of senior teams** in athletics departments. The voice and perspective of your lead communicators brings unique value to each discussion and strengthens the overall alignment of the department.

• **Embracing expectations** — the expectations specific to communications and content creators has grown exponentially in recent years and **22% of athletics departments are expecting to proactively increase full-time communications and creative staffs**. Consider reevaluating your current staff size in this time of transition to ensure that you are appropriately staffed to meet the rise in expectations.

• **The long game in creating a flexible working environment** — **83% of athletics departments have enacted policies** that have led to increased satisfaction in workplace flexibility. The time demands of working in college sports are heavy, and it's important to encourage all staff to effectively integrate, balance and manage the demands of their work and their outside lives. Commit to preserving as much of a work-life flexibility that is available with the demands of college sports, and have regular discussions on the importance of maintaining positive mental health.

• **Positive results of professional development and networking** — **91% of communications and creative teams say they are motivated or re-energized by professional development and networking opportunities** after they leave the CSC Unite convention. Invest intentional time and resources into staff and reinforce the emphasis on their personal and professional growth.

• **Competing for top talent** — numbers show that strategic and creative communicators are more frequently finding opportunities outside of college sports to be better compensated and to be part of well-resourced content teams in this era of communications. **It is more important than ever to offer salaries that are competitive not only within college sports but against other comparable industries.**

• **Benefits of AI and technology** — leveraging technology and innovation in communications can be incredibly helpful to make more efficient use of time and manage full-time staff workloads by enhancing efficiency, automating tasks, and facilitating quicker decision making. **61% of departments feel they have the necessary tools and resources** to stay informed and integrate helpful technology. Proactively have discussions with your communications and content teams on the use of AI, outsourcing responsibilities that can be completed without the expertise of full-time staff and how better equipment can further the department's brand while bringing a sense of pride and accomplishment to staff.

One communicator cannot do it all. Top 3 essential benefits of having great communications.

It takes a **team** to meet the expectations of the modern athletics department. A well-resourced and supported **communications team** allows you to:

1. Be prepared when the cameras are on, and they are always on. Whether it's celebrating a major accomplishment or navigating a crisis, you need a pro that can help you navigate the media and the public perception.

2. Influence the way the public experiences your brand. The website, the photos, the video, the social graphics and content, the livestreams and broadcasts, the statistics and data — these are the daily expectations and they don't happen on their own. It's behind the scenes and time-intensive work.

3. Gain recognition for your student-athletes and coaches. Whether it's pitching or producing a big story or nominating for major awards like Academic All-America®, it's your communications team that makes this happen.

Top 5 qualities of elite communicators:

1. Support the mission of the institution

2. Enhance the student-athlete experience

3. Help create community for your stakeholders — student-athletes, coaches, staff members, partners, fans and donors

4. Contribute to revenue generating initiatives

5. Serve as brand ambassador and tell the story of the institution

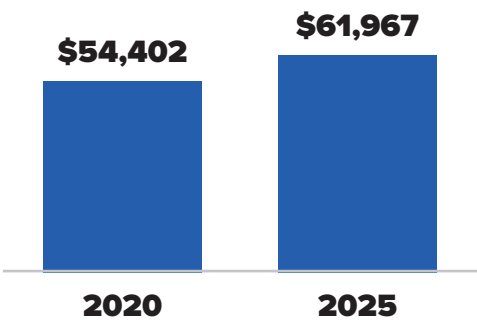
CSC member reported salary

- CSC members are making, on average, \$61,967 in annual salary which is \$7,565 more (13.9% increase) than in 2020. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics the 2024 median pay for Media and Communications Workers was \$71,770; Public Relations Specialist was \$69,780; and Graphic Designer was \$61,300.
- Entry level positions saw the highest salary improvement at over a 27% increase from 2020. The second highest increase was for members with 10-14 years of experience. Members with over 25 years of experience were the only group to report a slight decrease in salary.
- The pay gap reported between men and women has slightly increased. Compared to 2020, reported salaries for males is 14.44% higher compared to 13.38% for females. Across all other demographics, males report an average salary of \$63,562 compared to \$57,240 for females.
- Members with Master’s degrees saw a larger increase in average salary compared to those with bachelor’s degrees.
- NCAA Division I FBS and Canadian institutions report the highest average salaries, followed by two-year institutions. NAIA members report the lowest average salary range. (See chart on next page for divisional comparison)

Job responsibilities, title, and compensation

- 82.3% of respondents indicated their job responsibilities have increased in the past three years. However, just 34.4% indicate that came with a pay increase, and only 32.4% indicate the increased responsibilities came with a title promotion. NCAA Division III members report receiving the most professional development funds to invest in their in their continued growth. (See chart on next page for divisional comparison)

Average national salary



Average Salary by Years of Experience		
	2020	2025
Less than 1 year	\$37,083	\$47,267
1 - 3 years	\$39,966	\$47,833
4 - 6 years	\$44,875	\$55,828
7 - 9 years	\$50,000	\$61,399
10 - 14 years	\$54,322	\$68,811
15 - 19 years	\$59,593	\$70,674
20 - 24 years	\$63,926	\$75,186
25 years or more	\$78,899	\$77,470

Average Salary by Gender		
	2020	2025
Female	\$50,483	\$57,240
Male	\$55,544	\$63,562

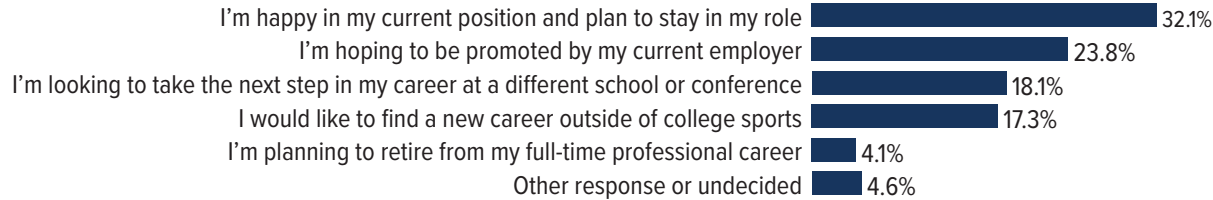
Average Salary by Degree Level		
	2020	2025
Bachelor’s	\$55,964	\$61,921
Master’s	\$53,388	\$62,820

2025 Divisional Comparison - INDIVIDUAL Member Breakdown									
	Overall	DI FBS	DI FCS	DI no Football	DII	DIII	NAIA	Two-Year	Canadian
Average Salary Range	\$59,286 - \$64,648	\$71,549 - \$75,414	\$61,490 - \$66,537	\$62,971 - \$66,249	\$54,682 - \$59,681	\$55,673 - \$60,672	\$48,033 - \$53,032	\$65,357 - \$70,356	\$71,500 - \$76,499
Average years of professional experience	12.6	13.0	14.4	12.3	12.6	11.5	9.7	11.5	9.3
Feel valued by employer *(favorable)	74.9%	69.7%	71.6%	60.0%	77.4%	82.8%	87.1%	70.0%	60.0%
Well compensated *(favorable)	40.6%	44.7%	25.6%	37.1%	44.1%	43.0%	30.6%	53.3%	30.0%
Compensation is sufficient for geographic area *(favorable)	49.9%	50.3%	41.6%	41.4%	50.0%	53.5%	46.8%	56.6%	70.0%
Satisfied with workplace flexibility *(favorable)	83.6%	81.7%	80.3%	75.7%	83.9%	90.2%	80.6%	86.7%	70.0%
Satisfied with healthcare-related benefits *(favorable)	85.9%	91.3%	86.1%	74.3%	86.0%	85.8%	74.5%	86.2%	88.8%
Satisfied with total benefits package *(favorable)	79.5%	84.2%	77.3%	75.7%	76.9%	77.7%	80.3%	80.0%	70.0%
NPS - Would you recommend a career in athletics communications/creative "Promoter"	10.3%	5.1%	7.9%	5.7%	11.3%	15.6%	7.9%	19.4%	10.0%
NPS - Would you recommend a career in college sports "Promoter"	14.2%	7.6%	9.6%	5.7%	17.9%	20.3%	14.3%	35.5%	10.0%
Have your responsibilities increased in the last three years? "Yes"	82.3%	84.3%	82.7%	78.6%	81.4%	81.9%	83.9%	80.0%	80.0%
Did increased responsibilities improve your title? "Yes"	32.4%	39.8%	37.4%	23.6%	28.7%	28.4%	30.8%	16.7%	25.0%
Did increase responsibilities increase your compensation? "Yes"	34.4%	40.3%	34.1%	32.7%	27.9%	34.6%	32.7%	20.8%	37.5%
Funds for professional development	\$520 - \$1,230	\$500 - \$1,135	\$400 - \$980	\$380 - \$950	\$565 - \$1,315	\$620 - \$1,490	\$500 - \$1,205	\$470 - \$1,210	\$450 - \$1,200

*(favorable) = Somewhat agree or Strongly agree. NPS = A common measure of satisfaction, Promoters are respondents who rated a 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale.

What are CSC members thinking about when it comes to their future?

Which best represents your mindset when considering your own career in the next three years? (All members)



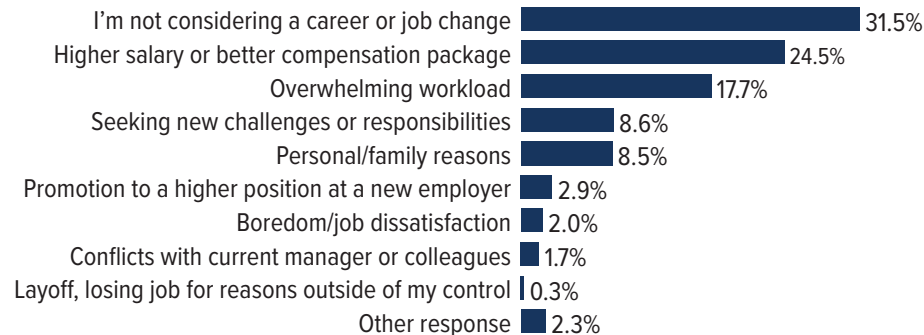
74%
of all members are either happy in their current position, looking to be promoted, or take the next step in their career working in college sports.

If you could improve ONE thing to increase your job satisfaction, what would you improve? (All members)



93%
of member institutions expect to at least maintain their current level of full-time staffing, with 22% expecting to increase the amount of full-time communications/creative staff, over the next three years.

If you are considering a career change, what is the primary reason? (All members)



2025 Divisional Comparison - INDIVIDUAL member responses to growing their careers

	Overall	DI FBS	DI FCS	DI no Football	DII	DIII	NAIA	Two-Year	Canadian
Which skills do you believe are most critical to your professional advancement?	1. Strategic Communications 2. Digital/social media 3. Brand management	1. Strategic Communications 2. Brand Management 3. Digital/social media	1. Strategic communications 2. Digital/social media 3. Media relations	1. Strategic communications 2. Digital/social media 3. Brand management	1. Strategic communications 2. Digital/social media 3. Statistical software use	1. Strategic communications 2. Digital/social media 3. Statistical software use	1. Strategic communications 2. Statistical software use 3. Digital/social media	1. Strategic communications 2. Digital/social media 3. Creative written content	1. Strategic communications 2. Brand management 3. Graphic design
If you could improve ONE thing to increase your job satisfaction, what would you improve?	Salary/pay	Salary/pay	Add more staff	Add more staff	Tie Salary/pay Add more staff	Salary/pay	Salary/pay	Salary/pay	Salary/pay

From the overall communications department perspective

Department heads were asked questions about the overall resourcing of their communications/creative departments. **Very few schools are exempt from it being time to check in on their communications operations.** Only six schools across all divisions reported that they “strongly agree” their institution is “well-resourced” in all three categories surveyed — number of full-time staff, quality facilities and workspace, and the technology and equipment to do their jobs at the level they are expected to perform.

Just 61% of all schools report that their lead communications director is part of their athletics department senior leadership team. CSC strongly believes that every athletics department should have communications and creative at the decision-making table.

2025 Divisional Comparison - SCHOOL responses									
	Overall	DI FBS	DI FCS	DI no Football	DII	DIII	NAIA	Two-Year	Canadian
Average number of FULL-TIME communications/creative staff	3.93	16.54	5.84	4.35	1.94	1.73	1.50	1.19	2.44
Our institution is well-resourced in terms of amount of FULL-TIME communications and creative staff. *(favorable)	24.9%	46.9%	30.9%	22.4%	21.0%	21.6%	17.7%	29.6%	11.1%
Our institution is well-resources in terms of facilities and work space. *(favorable)	40.5%	56.9%	54.5%	30.6%	37.4%	37.2%	35.4%	48.1%	22.2%
Our institution is well-resourced in terms of technology required to do our jobs at the level we are expected to perform. *(favorable)	61.1%	82.3%	63.6%	59.2%	55.3%	56.3%	62.1%	63.0%	87.5%
Average total non-salary annual operating budget for communications and creative departments	\$48,900	\$112,211	\$83,333	\$79,329	\$28,661	\$29,905	\$27,582	\$10,416	\$114,687
Is the head of athletics communications a member of the senior leadership team? “yes”	61.0%	69.6%	53.6%	59.2%	72.0%	59.7%	57.0%	29.6%	33.3%

*(favorable) = Somewhat agree or Strongly agree