



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Staff Council

2024-25 UASC  
WORKPLACE  
CLIMATE SURVEY  
RESULTS

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to our University of Arizona Staff Council (UASC) officers, UASC Workplace Climate Committee members, and the UASC Workplace Climate Survey Task Force, comprised of staff representatives across campus communities within the University of Arizona who shared their thoughts, talents, experiences, and valuable feedback. Their efforts were influential in creating a comprehensive and practical survey to gain insight into the staff experience at the university, especially considering the effects of increased workloads due to FY24 workforce reductions. We also thank all survey participants who provide critical feedback toward our goals to develop actions to improve the workplace climate for staff each academic year.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This executive summary presents the 2024-25 UASC Workplace Climate Survey findings to identify and develop actions to address issues affecting University of Arizona staff. Data collection was administered via Qualtrics at the beginning of the Fall 2024 academic year (August 28 – September 30, 2024). Questions were generated to answer the research areas:

- Identify challenges, areas of improvement, and positive aspects of core climate issues (morale, workplace experience, belonging, DEI, professional development, work/life balance, etc.) for staff
- Understand the impacts of staff layoffs and terminations due to the financial situation
- Assist staff with climate issues that negatively impact the respective work organizations (Optional)
- Frame immediate and strategic actions needed to bolster support for university staff

UASC plans to conduct pulse surveys of staff climate data in the future, likely during the beginning of Fall 2025. Selecting a limited approach for collecting comprehensive demographics to protect respondent anonymity adversely affects assessing specific climate inequities for protected groups.

The overall survey response rate was 21% (2,653 out of 12,658 invited respondents).

## KEY FINDINGS

The 2024-25 Workplace Climate Survey highlighted six themes impacting staff morale, burnout, and job satisfaction amidst ongoing financial challenges. These six themes represent institution-wide areas of improvement for staff. Analysis of respondent data identified various areas for improvement, challenges, and positive aspects of the workplace climate for staff this year. The impact quotes provided are representative examples of common themes espoused by survey respondents. Based on survey findings, the following recommendations were proposed for UASC leadership to develop action items:

### 1. Compensation and Pay Equity

**Insight:** A theme across responses is the desire for fair and equitable compensation. Staff have expressed concerns about the rising cost of living, lack of cost-of-living adjustments (COLA), and pay disparities within the University.

**Action:** As the budget situation improves, UASC should advocate priorities to develop actions to address and improve pay equity issues for staff.

#### Quotes from Survey Participants:

- “I think talking about pay is a big one. We have not gotten any raises or promotions while the Economy continues to trend worse. I make the same salary I did 2 years ago and I currently struggle to live after going to college here, getting a degree with a high GPA, and I still cannot afford to live.”
- “Examining pay equity in detail is essential; disparities in compensation based on experience and education can significantly impact morale and may lead to the departure of high-quality employees.”
- “Get us our promised annual pay increases. When UCAP was brought in, we were promised pay increases annually. This should have been a promise kept in the financial crisis recovery.”

### 2. Leadership Transparency, Communication, and Accountability

**Insight:** 60% of respondents conveyed being either “very dissatisfied” or “dissatisfied” with senior administrators and ABOR’s efforts to be more transparent in their communication and decision-making, especially regarding financial decisions and budget management (Figures 9 & 10). Many responses (n=29) call for leaders to offer more formats to communicate issues that impact staff. Also, there is a call for greater accountability for past financial mismanagement and more open communication.

**Action:** UASC will continue to build relations with the Chief Financial Officer to liaise new opportunities for informing staff of any emerging budget issues.

**Quotes from Survey Participants:**

- “Transparency from the leadership down. The financial crisis has been handled so poorly and secretively that it has left most of us lacking trust in leadership. We understand financial stressors, but when we see the size of the endowment, the inflated salaries of administrators, the funds put into athletics, and the funds put into cosmetic fixes (e.g., sculptures), while we are expected to reduce salaries, budgets, and staff, it is impossible to believe that the university is managing funds responsibly or with equity. We continue to lack appropriate infrastructure and staffing and have not been brought up to market-level salaries, and these failings do not inspire faith in the institution.”
- “There is a loss of transparency in how the financial status is "artificially" being made to look better. You are stifling work by distributing the cost-cutting to fiscally conscientious units while sparing units... to get scot-free with phenomenal red-ink.”
- “More transparency. People high up in the University make decisions directly impacting the individuals on the ground and our ability to do our jobs.”

### 3. Workload and Staffing Concerns

**Insight:** 74% of respondents responded “sometimes,” “often,” or “always” experiencing stress due to increased workloads and short deadlines (64%) and anxieties from job security concerns (56%) often because of workforce reductions (Figure 7). Several comments (n=82) from staff highlight reported experiences of lowered morale due to increased workloads due to layoffs, hiring freezes, and limited resources, contributing to staff burnout.

**Action:** Shared Governance will work with the university administration to identify solutions to the workload issues that staff and units face.

**Quotes from Survey Participants:**

- “My department is full of great people, but low pay and changing management have made some awesome coworkers leave, which increases our workload and decreases morale.”

- “The use of centralization has not helped employee satisfaction/morale. The cost-benefit does not make up for the delay in workflow. Examining spending and use of carry forward funds may yield better cost savings than trying to centralize job functions.”
- “Several people in my unit have left to take higher paying (mostly remote) jobs at other universities. I'm aware of plenty of job postings for positions like mine where I could be paid 30%+ more, and the only reason I am still here is because I like my coworkers, supervisor, and the culture of my unit so much. However, my salary, coupled with the inaccessibility of raises or promotions, is causing me to be very dissatisfied. Employees should not have to apply like new applicants as the only way to get a title bump and raise. We are also now understaffed, and the increased workload is not good for morale. I even dreamed last night that I was giving my notice and taking a higher-paying job elsewhere.”
- “Morale and an utter lack of faith and confidence in senior leadership is widespread in my conversations with colleagues across campus. All the changes being made across campus over the past 9 months have had a detrimental effect on staff. What's worse is that no one I've spoken with thinks the changes being made are in the university's best interest or are being made by people qualified to do so. This issue is further compounded by the fact that the people being asked to sacrifice to fix the problem are not the ones who caused it. Combined with stagnant wages, this is an incredibly perilous situation for the institution, which threatens to undermine our capacity and ability to succeed and risks a downward spiral as folks are overworked, underpaid, and seek opportunities elsewhere.”

#### 4. Flexible Work Arrangements

**Insight:** 69% of respondents reported having satisfactory access to flexible work agreements, but there are inaccessible opportunities across units. Comments (n=64) suggest staff want consistent, fair, flexible work arrangements, including flexible schedules, compressed work weeks, hybrid work weeks, summer remote periods, fully remote work, or core business hours, which would improve work-life balance, decrease stress related to increased workload burden, and enhance employee retention efforts.

**Action:** Increase visibility of [Flexible Work Guidance](#), promote the benefits of flexible work arrangements, and encourage supervisors to implement arrangements whenever possible.

#### Quotes from Survey Participants:

- “In our unit, one of the biggest challenges is the senior leaders not seeing eye to eye with the staff regarding flexible work arrangements. Microaggressions are

going on that keep people from feeling like they can even call out when they are truly sick. It is not a psychologically safe or supportive environment.”

- "I will say that the flexible work arrangements are incredibly helpful and contribute tremendously to my interest in staying at the U of A, even amid the whirlwind of financial instability and leadership changes.”
- "...The Flexible Work Agreements are getting less and less flexible in terms of the number of allowable remote hours per week and how each workday is structured. I am confident that university senior leaders respect and appreciate the staff members they hire. However, these broken promises, constant college/unit-level policy changes, and increasing flex-time restrictions create an environment of distrust and oppression.”
- "We need supportive messaging that our jobs are secure. We need support for more equitable and flexible schedules in an era with inadequate funding and resources. We don't have that. Everyone who is full-time has been forced back into the office 4 days a week, regardless of role. Given that female faculty and staff bear the brunt (statistically) of childcare and elder care, this is a gender inequity. We need to have flexibility to do our work with excellence that isn't one-size-fits-all.”
- "Promote Work-Life Balance: Encourage flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options and flexible hours. Support initiatives that help staff manage their personal and professional lives, like wellness programs, childcare options, or mental health resources.”

## 5. Recognition and Valuing of Staff Contributions

**Insight:** Many staff (n=63) reported feeling undervalued and underappreciated compared to faculty, expressing a desire for more formal staff recognition and appreciation programs. Although 61% of respondents state fair distribution of recognition, 39% claim rare or nonexistent occurrences of staff recognition in their respective units (Figure 7).

**Action:** Clarify the locus of responsibility for staff recognition at the central or local level. UASC will advocate for a holistic approach to recognition and respect.

### **Quotes from Survey Participants:**

- "Area of improvement - recognize the importance of staff more openly.”
- "Micromanaging and fearmongering have caused stress and depression amongst many, which have led to resignments, rehab, lack of care and pride in this business and industry. To feel valued is nonexistent, as employees are

replaceable, especially those who have been capped a decade yet have consistently produced the highest.”

- “I decided to retire because it was clear I would never be promoted no matter how well I did, how innovative and creative I was with my role, or how much others recognized my value to the team. The person in charge was determined not to realize it.”
- “Recognize and Reward Contributions: Implement a robust recognition program that acknowledges staff's hard work and achievements. This can include awards, shout-outs in meetings, or merit-based bonuses.”

## 6. State of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Programs and Initiatives

**Insight:** 79% of respondents recognize the positive value of DEI programs and initiatives and work in diverse and inclusive environments (Figure 13). However, some comments (n=22) suggest that DEI efforts sometimes feel insufficient or ineffective enough to impact their intended goals.

**Action:** Keeping true to the University’s pillar of inclusive excellence, UASC calls for administrative leadership within the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI) to develop standards to ensure effective and measurable actions that achieve DEI goals across all areas of the University.

### Quotes from Survey Participants:

- “Foster Inclusivity and Diversity: Create a welcoming environment for all staff by promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. This could involve DEI training, forming employee resource groups, or establishing committees to address inclusivity issues.”
- “I feel like no one at the top (i.e., directors and administrators) wants to work to make change happen. They do the bare minimum for DEI and pat themselves on the back. The truth is ugly, and no one wants to hear it. No one wants to face it head-on. However, for any real progress, you must accept how messed up everything is. You can't create change with the attitude, ‘We've always done things this way.’ That is not acceptable.”
- “DEI isn't followed. Retaliation is rampant. HR isn't there for staff; it does just what the leaders want, not what is best for everyone. I have worked for over a decade, happily, until this last year. Hiring is rigged for those who follow the anti-DEI undercurrent in the university. It is not a healthy environment. It has become cutthroat and is set up for the anti-DEI contingent to win. This was not



the case before. But then, leadership can now tell us how to vote, so it's everyone for themselves. And it shows.”

- “Get rid of DEI. It will make our institution more affordable, efficient, and accessible academically and professionally. Ironically, this is what DEI has been unsuccessfully trying to do. Empower ALL people by getting rid of DEI initiatives that unnecessarily segregate our campus and drive us into silos.”
- “DEI is on life support. Try to find resources online, and it's pitiful.”

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Workplace Climate Survey Committee provides the following recommendations for UASC leadership and representatives to develop actions for the upcoming academic year. University senior administrators are encouraged to use these recommendations for current and future strategic planning purposes:

- **Engage with Senior Leadership to Ensure Transparency and Accountability:** Rebuild trust and morale and improve transparency from senior leadership, especially regarding financial decisions and centralization efforts. Establish regular forums and communication updates, encouraging senior leadership to provide detailed updates on economic choices and other critical topics that affect staff. (i.e., working with senior leadership team (SLT) on reinstatement of salary increase program) Advocate for more robust accountability measures for leadership to ensure respectful and supportive behavior across departments and levels.
- **Advocate Implementation of Fair Compensation Practices:** Advocate for cost-of-living adjustments and equitable pay structures that reflect staff's economic realities. Advocate for salary adjustments that match inflation and create a fairer compensation structure across the University.
- **Develop Initiatives Expanding Job Security and Well-Being:** Work towards rehiring essential positions to balance workloads and prevent burnout among staff. Develop strategies to minimize layoffs and offer job security assurances where possible, along with clear explanations for the need for cuts. This includes **standardizing Flexible Work guidelines**, which promote fairness and develop clear and consistent guidelines for flexible work arrangements across departments.
- **Boost Recognition Programs:** Increase efforts to recognize and appreciate staff contributions through awards, salary increases, and other incentives.

- **Enhanced Support for Professional Growth:** Increase training, professional development, and career advancement opportunities to improve retention and motivation.
- **Apply and Promote DEI Actions:** Expand and deepen diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts to create a supportive and inclusive environment for all staff. Review and standardize remote work and flexible scheduling guidelines to be equitable and supportive of diverse staff needs.

## INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2023, University of Arizona staff saw significant shifts in workload balance, morale, and job security following the unanticipated “financial situation.”<sup>1</sup> A structural budget deficit and incorrect forecasting models brought the university well below the cash reserve threshold required by Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) standards. Consequently, university staff, among the university population, saw various administrative directives, budget audits, layoffs, and program cuts used to stabilize the university’s financial standings, exacerbating low staff morale and burnout. Advocating staff support efforts, the University of Arizona Staff Council (UASC) took action to identify and develop strategies to mitigate workplace climate issues for staff as needed.

The 2024-25 UASC Workplace Climate Survey (UASC WCS) was designed by a UASC task force of staff representatives and UASC Workplace Climate Committee members, using best practices in research and assessment to address workplace climate for staff. The survey consisted of 20 mixed-method focused questions (Likert-scale, text-entry, open-ended) to address immediate and strategic actions to assess workplace climate, staff demographics, and future pulse survey development. The survey was offered only in English, but feedback suggests additional languages (Spanish preferably) should be accommodated in future surveys.

Further, demographics to assess equity among protected groups were not collected for this survey but will be determined in future surveys. UASC will work with the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI) to address DEI advocacy and assessment within the 2025 academic year.

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<sup>1</sup> *Financial Situation Background - University Financial Updates*. University of Arizona, Retrieved October 8, 2023, from <https://www.arizona.edu/financial-updates/financial-situation-background>

# SURVEY DETAILS

## Response Rate and Demographics

Staff of all employment categories were invited to participate in the 2024-25 UASC WCS through the official UASC Trellis communications channel. Survey respondents completed 2,653 out of 12,658 invitations to participate, yielding an overall survey response rate of 21%. The response rate was more than satisfactory, given the adequate volume of respondent data for analysis and reporting.

Regarding respondent demographics by job classification (Figure 1), 80% (n=1578) of respondents identified as University Staff, a group that participated at higher rates than other job classifications. Additionally, 5% (n=99) of respondents were Appointed Personnel, and 4% (n=79) were Classified Staff. 11% of respondents (n=650) preferred not to answer, opting for their job classification to remain anonymous. 25% of the overall population of respondents (n=675) skipped the demographics questions altogether and were excluded from the calculation.

Figure 1: Demographics – Respondent Job Roles

### Survey Demographics: Job Classifications

1978 Responses

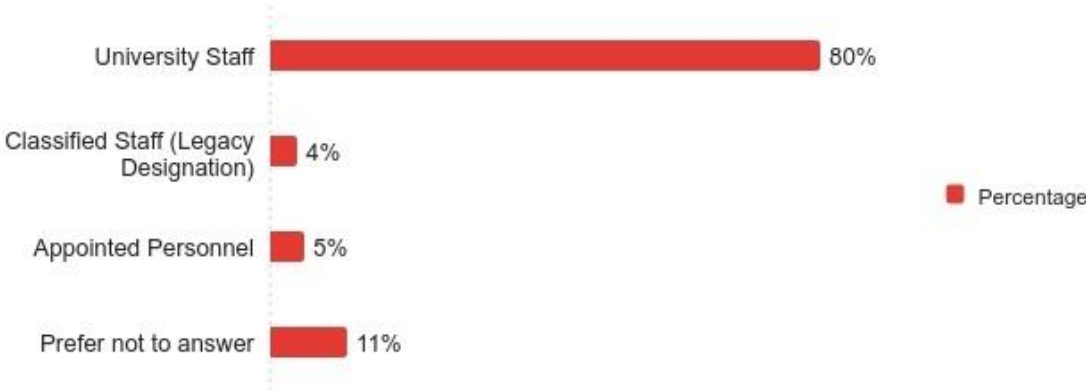


Figure 2: Demographics – Employment Categories

### Survey Demographics: Employment Categories - University Staff

1571 Responses



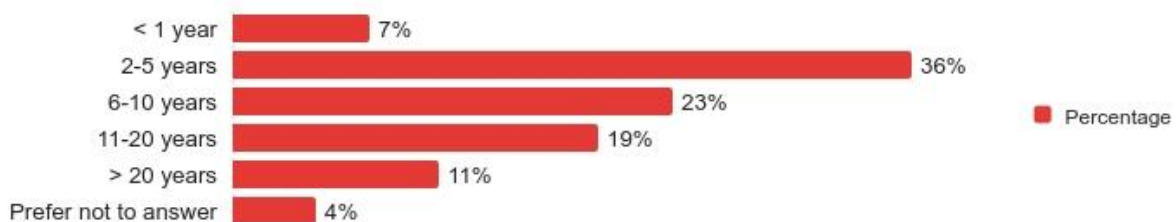
Most (96%; n=1507) staff participants reported serving as full-time employees, followed by those in part-time jobs (3%, n=52). Additionally, staff reported serving in extended temporary (0.3%; n=5), temporary (0.3%; n=4), and on-call positions (0.2%; n=3) at lower rates (Figure 2).

The survey included a wide range of U of A staff serving in various career milestones (Figure 3). Staff working for 2-5 years participated at higher rates than any other group, at 36% (n=707), followed by staff in roles serving for 6-10 years (n=458), 11-20 years (n=381), and more than 20 years (n=215). At the lowest were staff serving less than one year at 7% (n=142) and those who opted not to answer or were left blank for anonymity.

Figure 3: Demographics - Years of Employment

### Survey Demographics: Employment Duration

1992 Responses



## 1. Staff-Identified Areas for Improvement of Workplace Climate

### a. Workplace Culture and Climate

Workplace culture (the organization’s values, beliefs, and norms) and climate (the current mood or perceptions of the organization) impact morale, employee burnout, retention, and productivity. One method that the survey used to assess overall staff assessment of climate and culture was their intentions to remain or leave current areas of employment. More than half (52%) of staff reported not applying for other jobs outside of the University of Arizona this year. However, 29% had sought other employment opportunities due to dissatisfaction with their work experiences, and the difference (19%) chose not to answer (Figure 4).

Staff opting to retain employment at the U of A but seeking employment outside their current units was lower (29%) than those who chose to explore leaving the University altogether. A higher rating of staff (69%) reported remaining in their current positions and not applying for other University of Arizona positions outside of their current roles this year. (Figure 5).

Figure 4: Retention of Staff Employees – Seeking Other Job Opportunities Within the University

**Q2.13 - Have you applied for other jobs outside the University of Arizona in the past year because you were dissatisfied with your experience here?**

2041 Responses

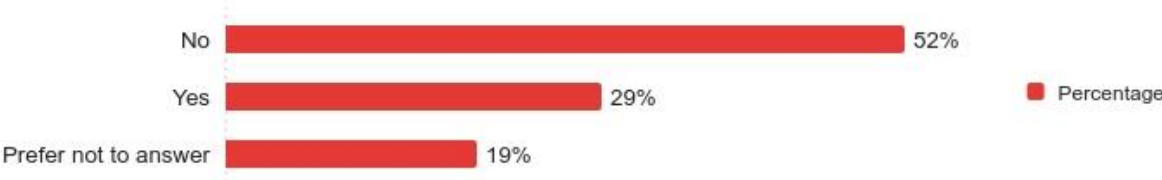


Figure 5: Retention of Staff Employees – Seeking Jobs Outside the University

**Q2.14 - Have you applied for positions outside your unit but within the University of Arizona?**

2028 Responses



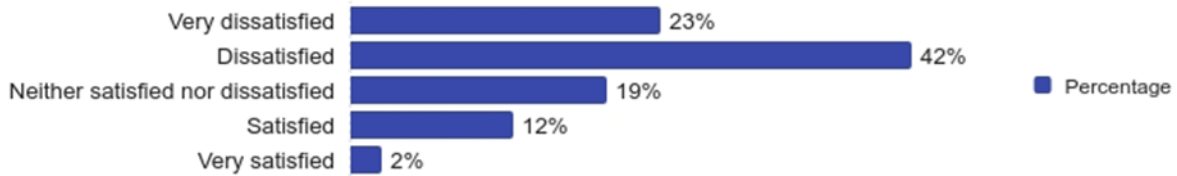
*b. Staff Morale and Burnout*

Morale and employee burnout were among the central themes identified by staff. Staff respondents gave their overall perceptions of morale based on how the university handled recent issues – communication, transparency of budget hardships, recurring leadership, increased layoffs, terminations, early retirements, unit budget assessments, etc. 65% of staff respondents expressed being either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with how leadership is handling the current state of the University (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Staff Experience on Handling of Recent University Issues

## Q2.1 - Given your experience over the last year, how satisfied are you with how the University has handled recent issues it has faced?

2435 Responses

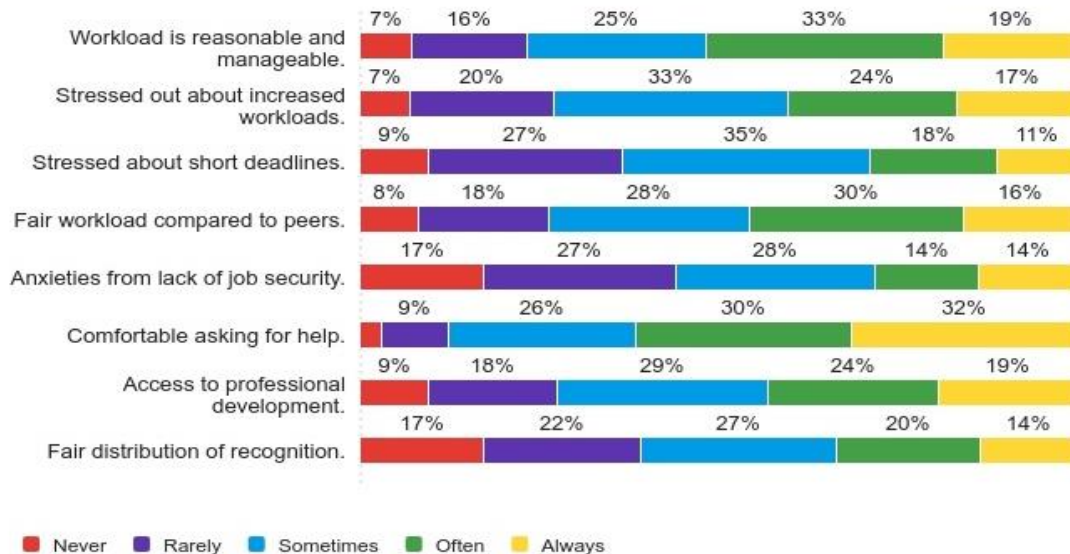


Despite lowered perceptions of workplace morale, 77% of respondents report being able to sometimes, often, or always manage their workloads effectively (Figure 7). However, 74% of staff add they are sometimes, often, or always stressed due to increased workloads. Similarly, 64% of staff are worried by shorter project deadlines, and 56% report anxieties surrounding job security concerns.

Figure 7: Reflections on Staff Work/Life Balance

### Q2.12 - Reflecting on your work/life balance within your current unit this past year, rate the following statements:

2026 Responses



### Other Factors Reported in Open-Ended Responses:

- Toxic work environments: Several staff report having workplace experiences with toxic leaders, which has set the tone for adverse workplace climates. Comments indicate that some units are dealing with ingroup/outgroup dynamics, including acts of favoritism, targeted discrimination, and nepotism. Some respondents

perceive a lack of accountability for toxic behavior among senior leaders and management.

- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Respondents expressed the need for more consistent and equitable policies on flexible work arrangements, including remote work options. Some departments are perceived as being unfairly restrictive or inconsistent in their approach. Discrepancies in remote work guidelines and inequitable treatment between departments are also mentioned as contributing to a hostile work environment.
- **Centralization of HR/IT administrative entities:** Comments indicated staff perception that efforts to centralize HR and IT have negatively impacted efficiency. Staff members express frustration over reduced autonomy and a perceived increase in bureaucracy that slows processes and decision-making.

### *c. Staff Recognition and Respect*

In Figure 7, 66% of staff report low distribution of recognition for their work. Several staff respondents call for more recognition programs, awards, and appreciation initiatives to boost morale and acknowledge their efforts.

#### **Other Factors Reported in Open-Ended Responses:**

- **Unfair recognition of staff contributions.** This is a recurring theme in the data, with staff reporting low morale due to increased workloads, lack of recognition, and insufficient support from leadership.
- **Perceptions of Being Undervalued and Mistreated.** Many staff comment on the lack of recognition for staff contributions, with many feeling undervalued compared to faculty. Some staff comments indicated the perception that they are treated as "second class" employees, particularly in decision-making processes.
- **Lack of Support for Professional Development and Growth.** Staff express a need for more opportunities for career advancement, training, and professional development. Many are frustrated over the lack of pathways for promotion and fair compensation tied to professional growth, especially for long-term employees.

### *d. Transparency and Communication*

Staff respondents expressed the importance of transparency and communication concerning decisions that impact their abilities to be effective in their job roles. Two-thirds of respondents (64%) state that they always, often, or sometimes had a voice in decisions that affect them. However, nearly half (46%) say they have little or no say in decisions that affect their work unit, and 62% are rarely or never involved in how resources are distributed (Figure 8). Notably, respondent comments highlight a

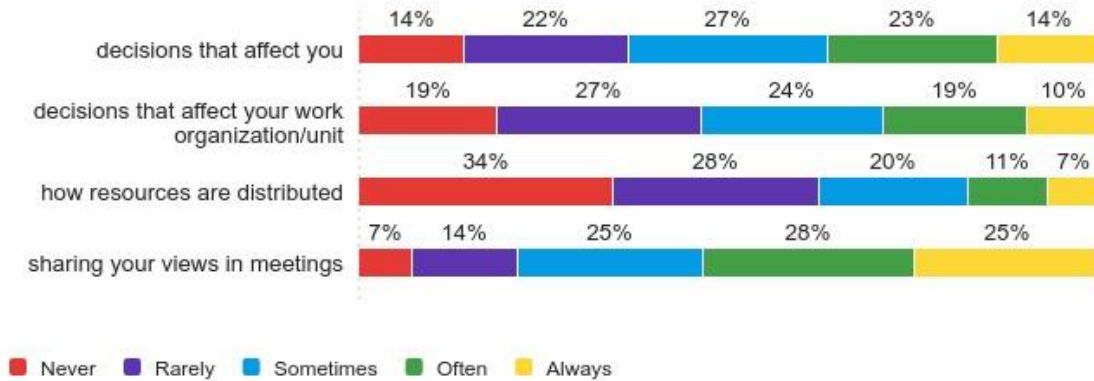


perception that there is insufficient, late, or poor communication of information from senior leadership to staff. Respondents call for more proactive and clear communication on issues that impact staff.

Figure 8: Staff Assessment on Handling of Recent University Issues

**Q2.7 - Reflecting on your unit's past year, how often have you had a voice/say in...**

2090 Responses



**Other Factors Reported in Open-Ended Responses:**

- More communication platforms. Some staff suggest that leadership should provide more opportunities for open forums, regular updates, staff engagement, and concern expression.
- Navigating negative feedback. Several staff members report concerns of ineffective or disrespectful communication, lack of empathy, and insufficient engagement during the financial crisis. Respondents frequently mention senior leadership's need for greater transparency, particularly around financial decisions and budget management.
- Lack of respect. Some respondents suggest training managers and leaders to improve their sensitivity and communication skills and foster a more respectful and collaborative work culture.

*e. Benefits and Pay*

University administrators took action to repair the budget shortfalls by introducing various measures, including reducing programs, halting salary increases, and instituting a hiring freeze until July 2024. Regarding salary increases, all programs are expected to



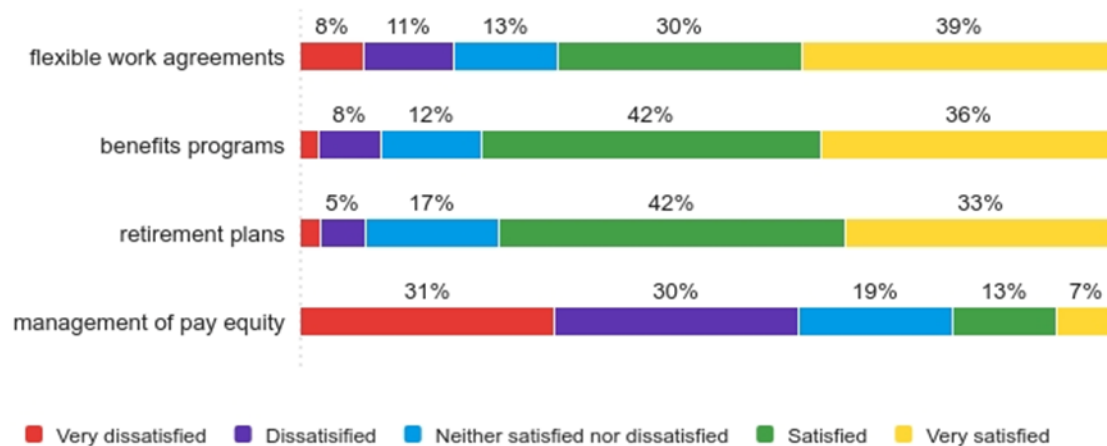
remain paused until the FY 2025 /26 fiscal year.<sup>2</sup> Until further notice, university staff will not receive merit-based or cost-of-living pay increases to help offset inflation. Consequently, many staff members have understandably expressed dissatisfaction with these payroll decisions.

Additionally, 61% of respondents report varied dissatisfaction regarding the management of staff pay equity. (Figure 9). Several complaints discuss income disparities, especially between senior administration and other staff members, explicitly addressing the lack of access to raises, bonuses, and promotions. For reference, commitments<sup>3</sup> addressing pay equity among university faculty could offer a comparison for assessing the unique dynamics of pay equity for staff personnel.

Figure 9: Staff Perceptions of University Benefits and Pay

Q2.9 - Reflecting on your experiences or interactions, how satisfied are you with the University's...

2076 Responses



f. Thematic Analysis: Areas for Improvement

- Leadership Accountability and Transparency:** Recurring themes include concerns about transparency in financial decisions, accountability for past mistakes, and more straightforward, consistent communication from senior leaders. There is a desire for leaders to engage directly with staff and students, demonstrating trust and openness.

<sup>2</sup> University of Arizona, "University Financial Updates – University Financial Health and Ongoing Success," <https://www.arizona.edu/financial-updates#plan>

<sup>3</sup> University of Arizona, "Report on 2020 Salary Equity Review for Tenure / Tenure Eligible Faculty," <https://provost.arizona.edu/content/report-2020-salary-equity-review-tenure-tenure-eligible-faculty>

- **Financial Management and Fair Compensation:** Many responses reflect frustration over financial disparities and exceptionally high salaries at the upper levels, while lower-level staff face layoffs, stagnant wages, and insufficient raises to match inflation. Additionally, there's a call for prudent financial decisions and accountability regarding large contracts and budget allocations.
- **Workplace Culture and Morale:** Staff express concerns about feeling undervalued and overburdened, leading to low morale and burnout. There is a strong desire for a positive, inclusive workplace where contributions are recognized and a call for leaders to foster a supportive environment.
- **Communication and Feedback Mechanisms:** There is an evident need for improved communication and feedback processes across departments, with better pathways to voice concerns and understanding decisions, particularly around policy changes, budget issues, and role expectations.
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** While DEI initiatives are highlighted, opinions vary, with some advocating for enhanced inclusivity and others questioning the structure or perceived focus of existing DEI efforts. Calls for diversity in leadership roles and fair, unbiased treatment across all demographics are strong.
- **Professional Development and Career Advancement:** Many responses indicate a lack of clear pathways for career growth and development, with suggestions for structured training programs, opportunities for internal promotions, and mentoring initiatives.
- **Work-Life Balance and Flexibility:** Employees cite issues around rigid policies, such as onsite presence requirements and inflexible scheduling, which impact work-life balance. There is a push for remote work options and policies that respect individual needs, especially for parents and those with health considerations.
- **Operational Efficiency and Resource Allocation:** Themes include streamlining administrative processes, avoiding redundant roles, and addressing system inefficiencies that create unnecessary workload. The centralization of services and their impact on productivity are questioned.
- **Safety and Well-being:** Staff highlights the importance of physical safety (with better security measures on campus) and mental well-being, including access to mental health resources and wellness programs that the administration genuinely supports.

- **Inclusive Decision-Making:** Leaders who practice shared governance, engage with diverse perspectives, and consider feedback from all levels in decision-making processes are needed.

## 2. Challenges to Improving Workplace Climate Identified by Staff

### a. Leadership Handling of the Financial Situation

Respondents were asked questions regarding their perceptions of how administrative and executive leaders handled issues surrounding the financial situation. Many staff reported dissatisfaction with how the ABOR leaders (65%) and University leaders (74%) manage the current financial situation. Conversely, staff respondents had less dissatisfaction with UASC leaders (16%) and college leaders (35%) (Figure 10).

Staff reported being equally disappointed with ABOR and university leadership’s efforts to communicate matters related to this year’s financial situation (Figure 11).

Respondents were more dissatisfied with the communications from university leaders (60%) and ABOR leaders (60%) than with unit leaders (28%) and UASC leaders (17%). The university initiates most information and updates concerning budget issues through its executive leaders; therefore, there is expected to be more negative feedback from the university population if there are perceptions of ineffective communications issues at that level.

Figure 10: Staff Feedback on Leadership's Overall Handling of the Financial Situation

Q2.2 - Rate your satisfaction with the following groups' actions to address the current financial situation.

2247 Responses

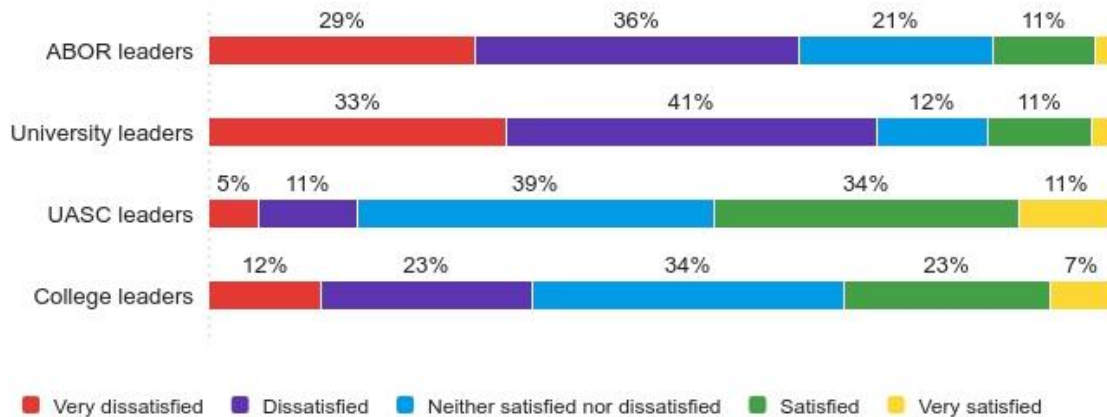
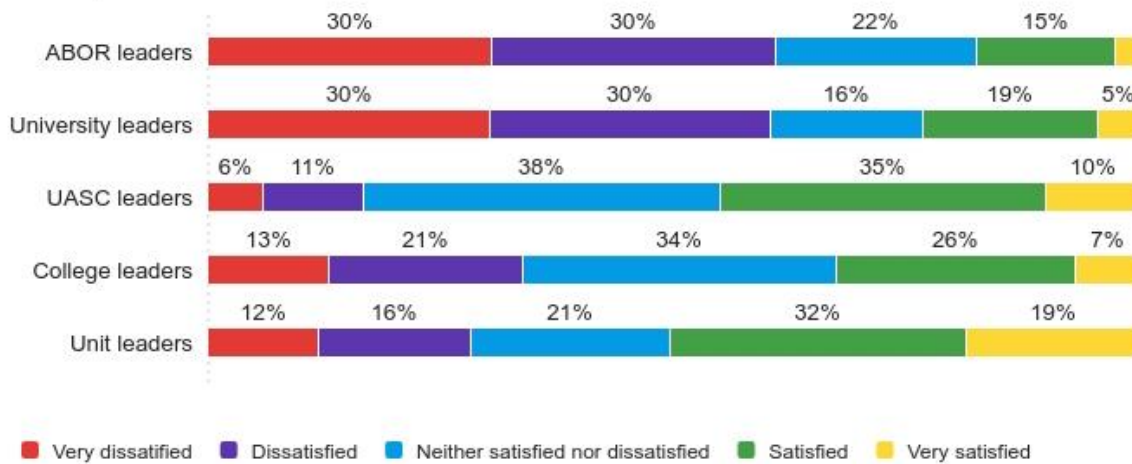


Figure 11: Staff Feedback on Effective Leadership Communication of the Financial Situation

**Q2.3 - Rate your satisfaction with how the following groups have communicated actions to address the current financial situation.**

2193 Responses



*b. Staff Reduction in Force, Layoffs, and Terminations*

This year, challenges for staff include the messaging and reporting of layoffs and hiring freezes, which have led to insecurity and low morale. Staff members feel overworked as responsibilities increase without additional compensation or support. Respondent comments (n=37) highlight a perception that layoffs are often handled poorly, with positions cut without a proper understanding of their importance. In this survey, respondents were asked to inform of any indications that staff were no longer employed at the university due to layoffs, early or voluntary retirements, or FTE reductions due to the financial situation. Over 500 respondents reported seeing each prescribed job termination category (Figure 12). It should be noted that it is challenging to qualify each reason for termination or if staff specifically left their job because of budget shortfalls in the data. However, the news of layoffs has added to a decline in morale and an increase in anxieties surrounding job security.

Figure 12: Staff Feedback on Effective Leadership Communication of the Financial Situation

Q2.15 - Which of the following outcomes have you seen in your unit that you believe are due to the financial crisis?



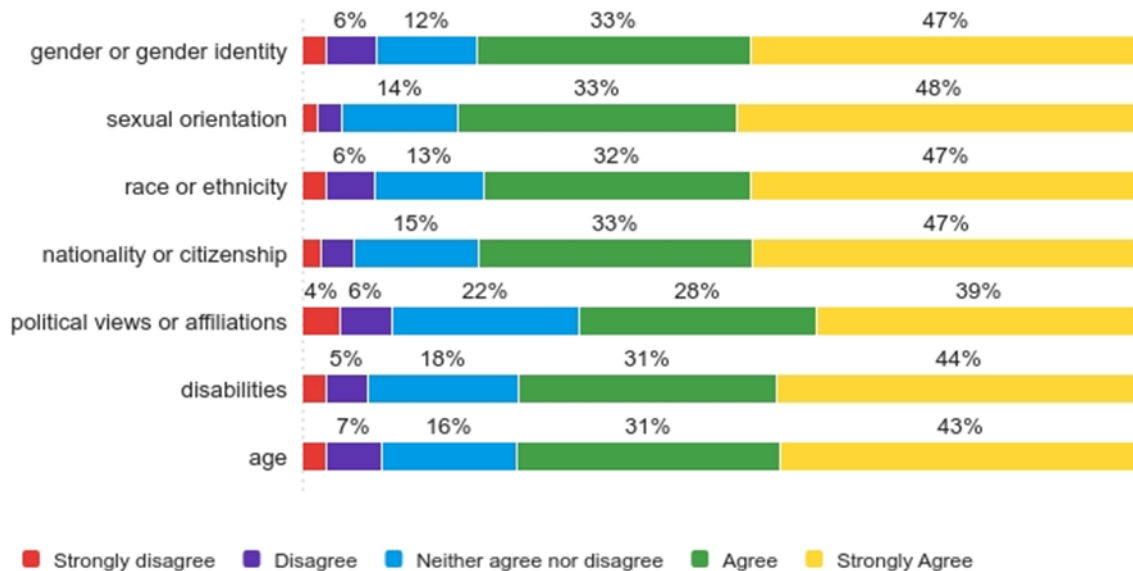
*c. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)*

Data collected in the survey around diverse and inclusive work environments have garnered mixed results. Regarding workplace climate, most respondents report that their units provide diverse and inclusive environments for individuals based on various demographic traits (Figure 13). However, survey comments on the effectiveness of unit DEI programs are mixed, with some staff members supporting these efforts and others criticizing them as ineffective or, at worst, divisive. Comments from staff also call for more diverse representation in leadership and a more inclusive approach to policy implementation, particularly for marginalized staff members and those with disabilities, to ensure they receive fair treatment and professional growth opportunities.

Figure 13: Staff Feedback on Effective Leadership Communication of the Financial Situation

Q2.10 - Based on your interactions over the last year, do you feel your department/unit provides a diverse and inclusive environment for employees regardless of their...

2007 Responses



*d. Thematic Analysis: Challenges*

- **Toxic Work Environment:** Repeated mentions of a toxic climate, mistreatment, and lack of respect in various departments and roles.
- **Lack of Transparency and Communication:** Concerns about insufficient or poor communication, top-down decisions without staff input, and leadership's general sense of secrecy.
- **Centralization Challenges:** Negative impacts of centralization on job security, department autonomy, and workplace culture.
- **Budget and Financial Crisis:** Widespread issues with budgeting constraints, hiring freezes, and impacts on compensation and staffing levels.
- **Inequitable Compensation and Promotions:** Frustrations, overpay disparities, frozen salaries, and limited opportunities for raises or promotions, which are felt unfairly across roles and units.
- **Job Insecurity and High Turnover:** Concerns about frequent layoffs, high staff turnover, and difficulties retaining talent due to pay and working conditions.

- **Work Overload and Burnout:** Repeated mentions of high workloads, understaffing, and increased responsibilities without additional compensation.
- **Remote and Flexible Work Policies:** Employees are frustrated by the inconsistent application of remote work policies, lack of flexibility, and unequal treatment across departments.
- **Workplace Inclusivity and Discrimination:** There have been reports of favoritism, discrimination based on gender, race, or religion, and a lack of diversity in leadership positions.
- **Mental Health and Well-being:** Impacts on mental health, feelings of isolation, and lack of support contribute to low morale and stress.

### 3. Staff-Identified Positive Aspects of Workplace Climate

Several positive aspects of the workplace climate are worthy of acknowledgment. Most respondents noted appreciation for working in supportive and collaborative areas where they feel valued (52%), respected (60%), welcomed (66%), included (52%), and shared a sense of belonging (54%) (Figure 14). Other data shows that three-quarters of staff respondents are satisfied with their internal reporting lines, showing a significant percentage satisfied with interactions with their direct reports (74%) and immediate supervisors (74%) (Figure 15).

Moreover, staff at higher rates are satisfied with interactions with their peers and colleagues (80%). This satisfaction with coworker interactions may lead to a sense of community when navigating various issues impacting staff climate this year. Respondents also divulged satisfaction with UASC staff advocacy and leadership (Figures 10 and 11), adding to some comments that UASC's efforts to support staff have assisted with increased morale.

Survey participants indicated approval of benefits packages (78%), retirement benefit options (75%), and unit flexible work agreements (69%) (Figure 9). Namely, staff commented (n=10) on programs such as ASRS/ORP state retirement programs, flex spending, and tuition reduction employee opportunities. Others praised having access to professional development resources like LinkedIn Learning, Abode Creative Cloud, and funding for unit professional development programs.

Figure 14: Staff Perceptions of Overall Work Experience

**Q2.6 - Based on your overall experience in your current position/department in the past year, how often have you felt...**

2126 Responses

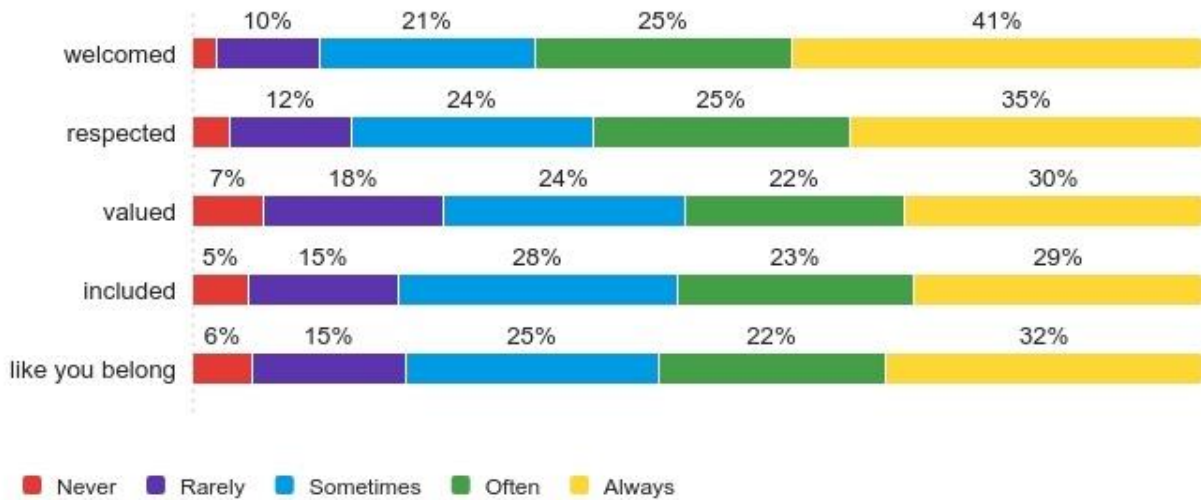
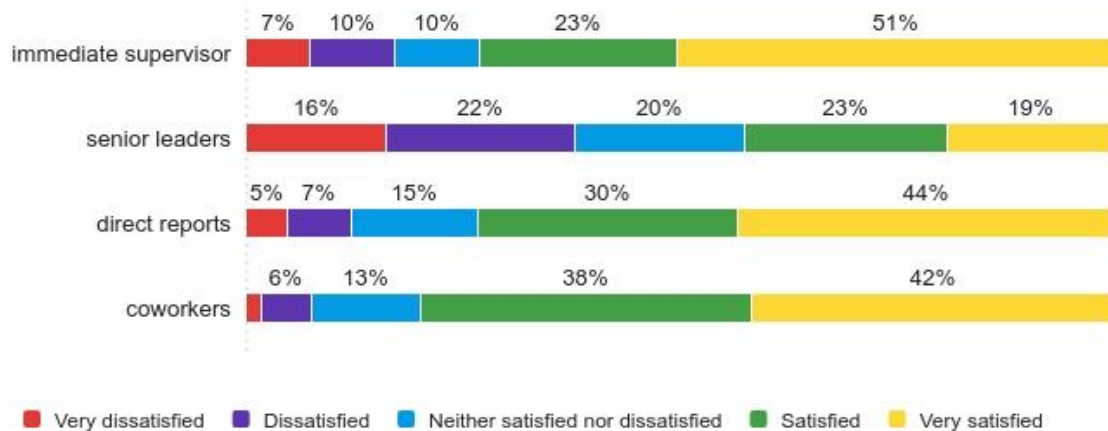


Figure 15: Staff Feedback on Effective Leadership Communication of the Financial Situation

**Q2.8 - Reflecting on the last year, how satisfied are you with interactions with your...**

2093 Responses





#### *a. Thematic Analysis: Positive Aspects*

- **Supportive Work Environment:** Descriptions of supportive and encouraging departments and teams, Mentions of transparent communication and advocacy from supervisors. Value is placed on collaboration, collegiality, and mutual respect among colleagues.
- **Leadership and Management:** Praise for supervisors who prioritize well-being and support team members. Positive feedback on transparent and communicative leadership, especially during times of crisis. Appreciation for specific leaders and the impact of their supportive and candid approach.
- **Flexibility and Work-Life Balance:** Flexibility in scheduling, remote work options, and work-life balance policies. Mention these options as factors in retaining staff and enhancing job satisfaction.
- **University Benefits and Programs:** There is a strong emphasis on the value of benefits like healthcare, retirement (ASRS program), tuition reduction, and professional development opportunities. Childcare benefits and other family-friendly policies are also highlighted as essential.
- **Sense of Community and Mission:** Expressions of pride in being part of the university community. Commitment to the university's educational and research missions, especially in space exploration, climate, and community engagement.
- **Positive Departmental Cultures:** Feedback on specific departments (such as RII, Libraries, Honors College) for fostering positive, transparent, and mission-driven environments. Many employees describe their units as welcoming and healthy spaces.
- **Staff Council and Advocacy:** Recognition of the Staff Council's efforts in advocating for employees and addressing workplace issues.
- **Professional Growth and Development:** Appreciation for opportunities to learn, develop new skills, and pursue leadership and professional development within the university setting.

#### 4. Assisting Staff with Immediate Climate Issues (Optional)

The survey provided options for staff to share climate impact issues unique to their work units. To protect anonymity, information will not be shared in this report but will, if necessary, be shared with UASC leadership to address specific issues.

## CONCLUSION

These survey results underscore a shared commitment among staff to uphold the University's mission despite financial hardships. Addressing these concerns will build trust, enhance morale, and foster a work culture where all staff feel valued and supported. UASC is dedicated to advocating for these changes, prioritizing fair compensation, transparency, and inclusivity to improve the work environment for all University employees. By working collaboratively with administrative and executive leadership, UASC aims to drive positive, meaningful change that reflects the commitment and resilience of the University of Arizona staff community.