



Columbia Employee Climate & Engagement Survey

Fall 2025 Summary of Key Findings

Office of Planning & Institutional Research (OPIR)

(Based on Rankin Climate's Key Findings Report)

Why This Survey



Provide institution-wide insights into faculty and staff experiences



Identify strengths to scale and challenges to address



Build shared understanding across leadership



Support accreditation requirements

Overview



Invited Participants:
All active employees



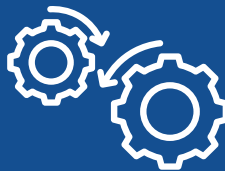
Dates:
September 9-26, 2025



Sponsors:
Office of the Provost and
Columbia University Human
Resources

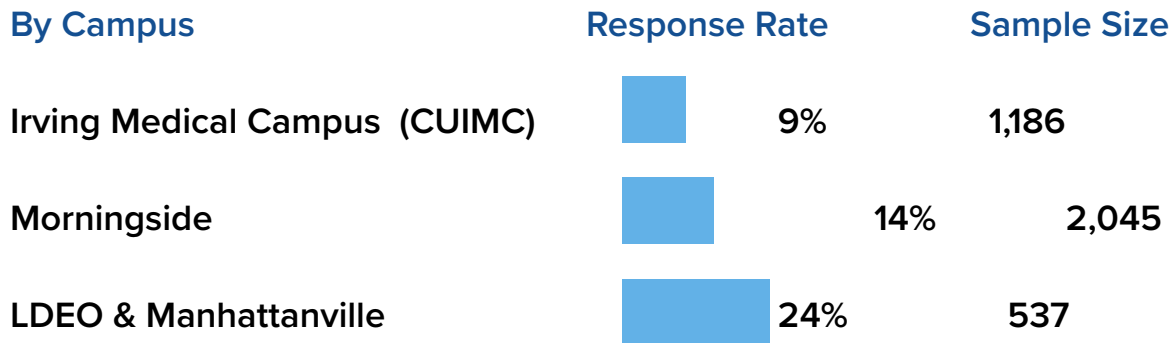
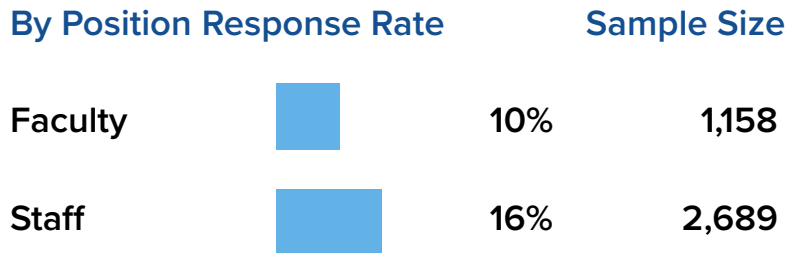


Method:
confidential, online survey



Facilitator:
Developed, administered, and analyzed by
Rankin Climate; instrument adapted for Columbia
by the Climate Study Working Group (CSWG)

Participants



3,847
respondents

~8,000
narrative responses

Note: Affiliations are based on survey responses.

- Faculty included Officers of Instruction and Officers of Research; staff referred to everyone else, including research support staff. Respondents were asked to self-identify by answering a question at the beginning of the survey.
- Robust for statistical analysis with some caveats regarding representativeness
- Over-represented: Staff, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Manhattanville, White identified, Tenured faculty, select schools and units
- Under-represented: Support staff and CUIMC

Key Findings

Individual Experience

- Intensity overshadows empathy
- Stronger sense of comfort locally than institution-wide
- Expression is guarded
- Inconsistent belonging

Connection Drivers

- Expectations, benefits, and supportive workspace
- Mission driven work sustains commitment even amid stress
- Systemic retention challenges while local relationships encourage people to stay

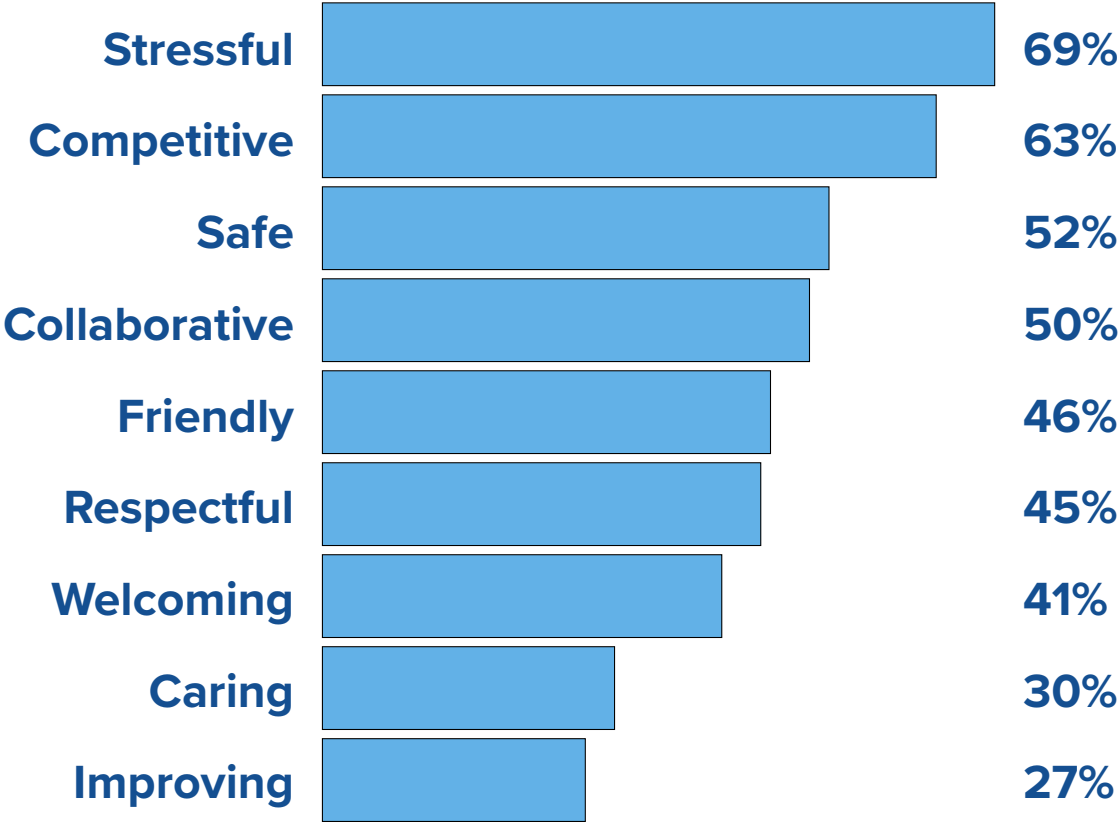
Institutional Direction

- Negative perception of institutional direction
- Perceived limited transparency in decision-making
- Communication clarity and visible participation

Individual Experience

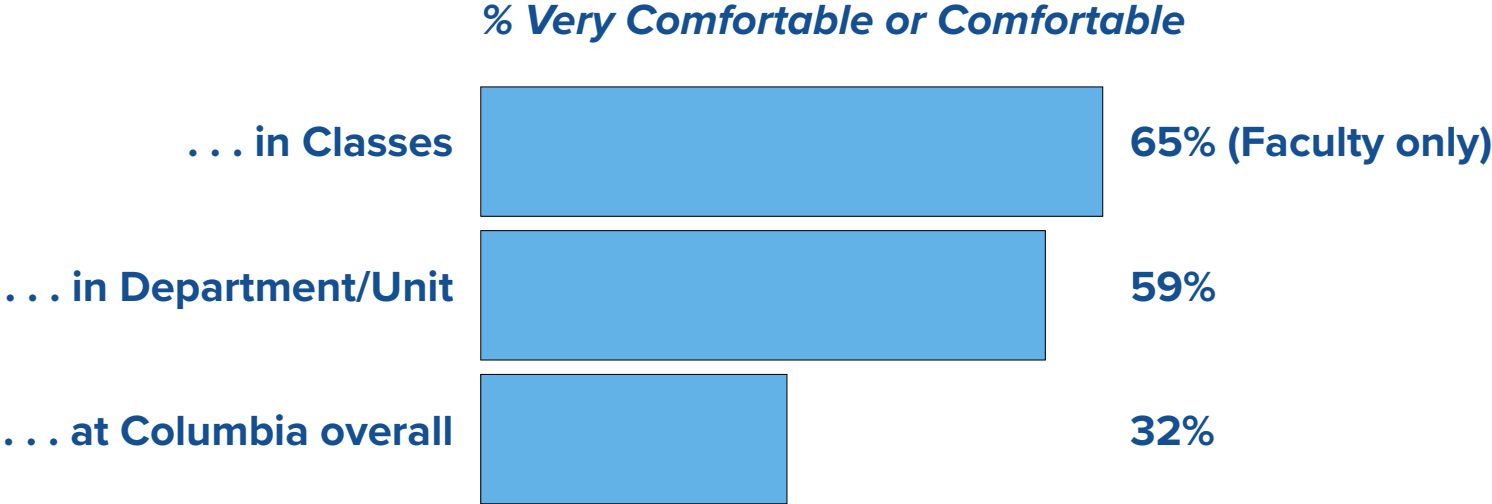
Intensity overshadows empathy

Please indicate the extent to which you agree that Columbia is. . .



Stronger sense of comfort locally than institution-wide

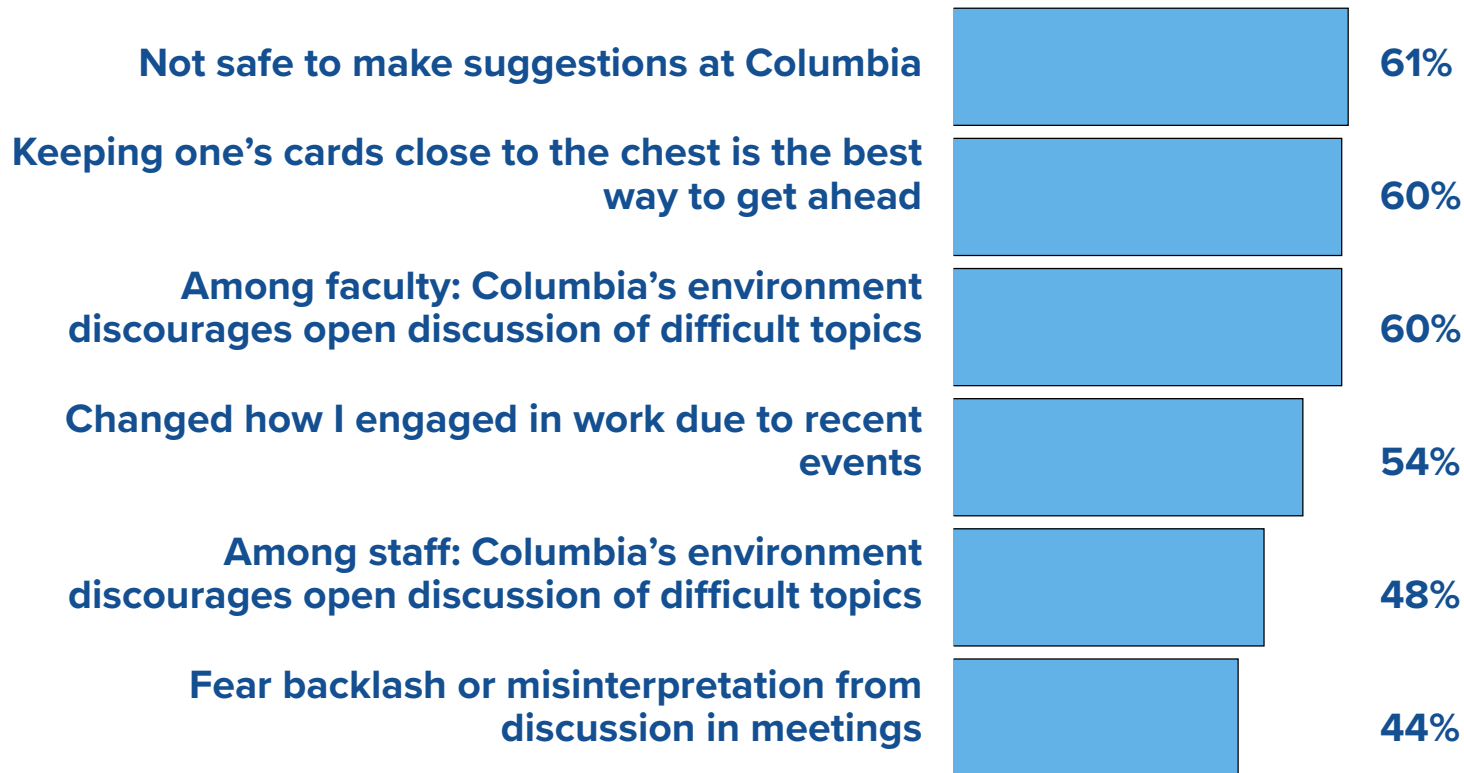
How comfortable are you with the climate at Columbia. . .



“I feel safe and supported within my school, but not on campus overall.”

Expression is guarded

Agreed



“I have been here for many years and never before have I seen the level of censorship, lack of trust, and lack of freedom of expression.”

Inconsistent sense of belonging

Groups on left reported greater sense of belonging compared to groups in same row on the right

AMONG FACULTY	
Greater Belonging	Less Belonging
Officers of Instruction	> Professional Officers of Research
Senior or Academic Leadership	> Early Career or Mid-Career
Men	> Women or Gender Expansive
No disability	> At least one disability
Heterosexual	> Bi-sexual or Queer-spectrum
Employed for more than 15 years	> Employed 6-15 years

AMONG STAFF	
Greater Belonging	Less Belonging
Mid-Level Professional, Mgr/Dept Head or Senior Leadership/Executive	> Entry-Level
Sr. Leadership/Exec.	> Mid-level professional, Mgr/Dept Heads or Entry-level
White	> Multiracial
Heterosexual	> Queer-spectrum

Sense of Belonging: One's perceived social support on campus, feeling or sensation of connectedness, and experience of mattering or importance to the campus community or others on campus.

Connection Drivers

Mixed perceptions of workplace expectations and benefits

Faculty



Access to required technology (70%)
Access to adequate workspace (64%)

Health benefits are competitive (44%)
Retirement benefits are competitive (42%)
Recommend Columbia as a good place to work (38%)



Performance evaluation process is clear (34%)
Salaries are competitive
Tenure & Tenure Track (28%)
Non-Tenure Track (22%)

Staff

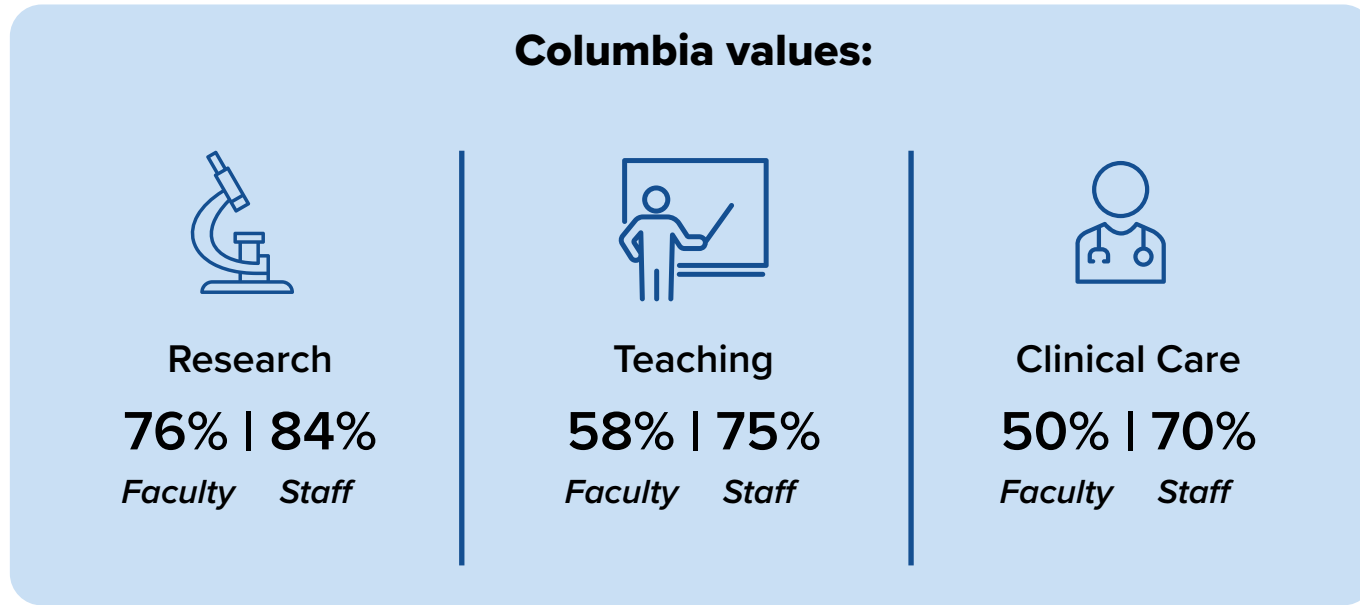


Reasonable timeframes to complete duties (74%)
Clear expectations of responsibilities (61%)
Health benefits are competitive (56%)
Retirement benefits are competitive (54%)

Able to complete duties during scheduled hours (48%)
Recommend Columbia as a good place to work (46%)
Performance evaluation process is clear (44%)
Workload has remained steady or decreased (27%)
Salaries are competitive (23%)

*“Although my work ethic has always been good,
I am working as if my life depends on it.”*

Mission driven work sustains commitment even amid stress



Wide agreement that Columbia values core tenets of its mission, with faculty notably less positive than staff

Fewer agreed that Columbia values service contributions, however (38% of Faculty; 49% of Staff)

Around a quarter of faculty who had considered leaving cited “opportunities to make a positive contribution” and “fulfilling, satisfying work” as reasons they had stayed.

Retention challenges are systemic, while local relationships encourage people to stay

Have you seriously considered leaving your position at Columbia?

71% | 66%
Faculty Staff

FACULTY

Reasons for wanting to leave

Lack of confidence in Columbia's direction	61%
Feel undervalued because of low salary/pay rate	41%
Climate not welcoming	33%
Recruited or offered a position at another institution/organization	33%
High cost of living	29%

Reasons for staying

Connection to colleagues	35%
Connection to students	33%
Fulfilling/Satisfying work	27%
Personal reasons	27%
Opportunities to make a positive contribution	23%

STAFF

Reasons for wanting to leave

Lack of confidence in Columbia's direction	57%
Limited advancement opportunities	53%
Feel undervalued because of low salary/pay rate	49%
Increased workload	41%
Financial difficulties because of low salary/pay rate	38%

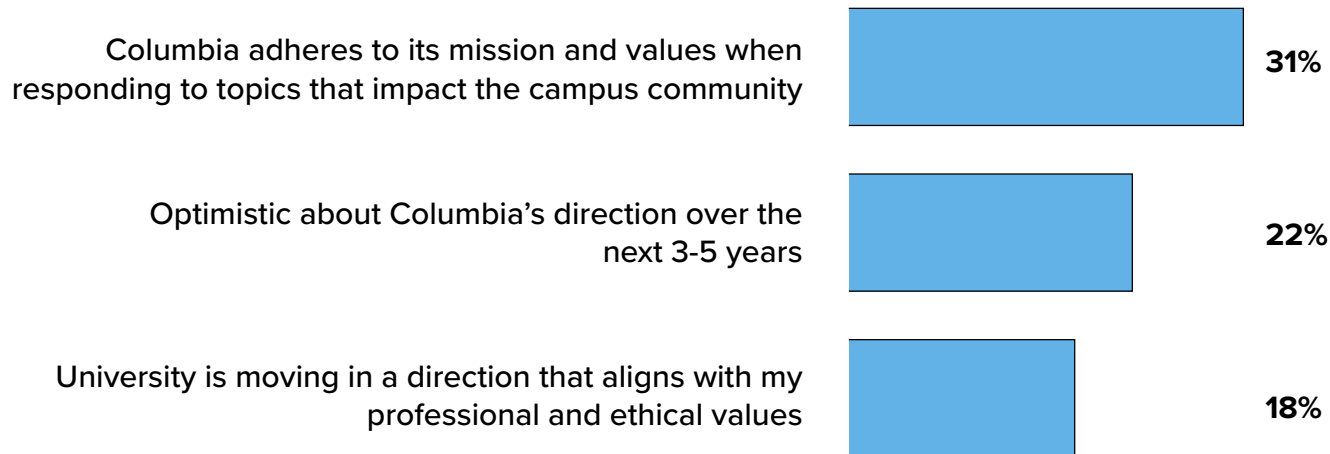
Reasons for staying

Connection to colleagues	36%
Benefits	32%
Connection to supervisor/manager	30%
Flexibility of work schedule	28%
Remote work options	28%

Institutional Direction

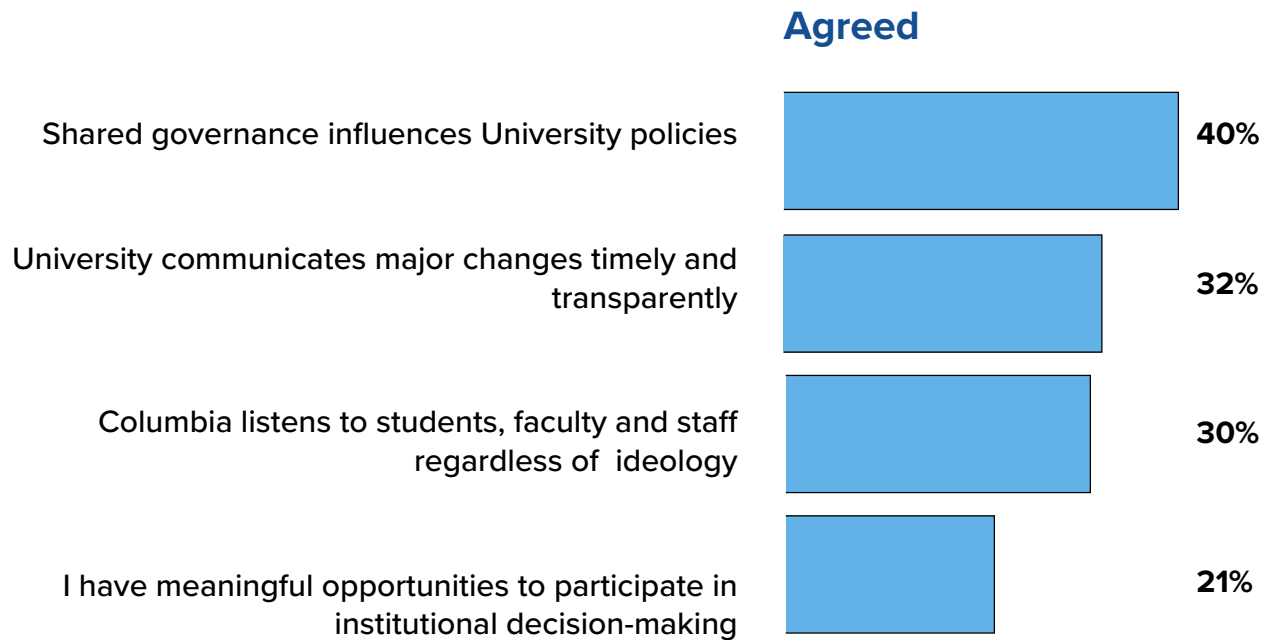
Negative perceptions of institutional direction

Agreed



“Rebuilding trust will require open dialogue, proactive engagement, and a shared commitment to aligning leadership decisions with the needs of both staff and the organization.”

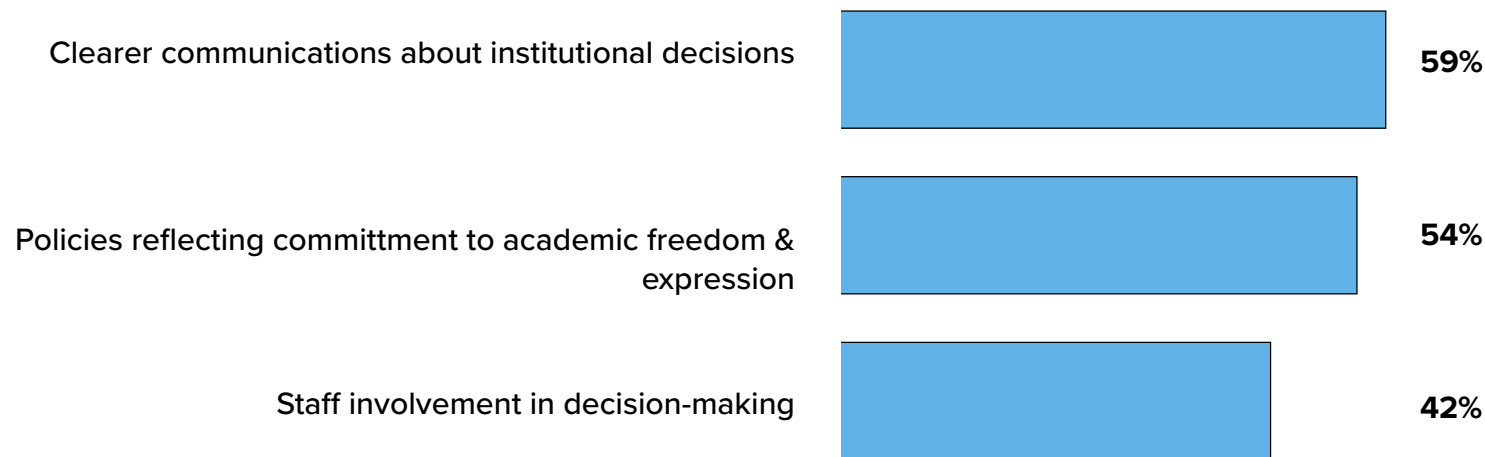
Perceived limited transparency in decision-making



“The lack of proactive communication surrounding events related to federal funding cuts and the agreement with the federal government [was] incredibly frustrating and demoralizing.”

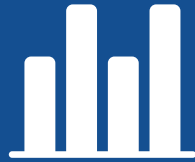
Communication clarity and visible participation needed

When asked to identify specific actions that would strengthen their trust in the University's leadership, top actions selected were:



“Transparency from senior leaders would show that shared governance isn’t just a slogan but a real commitment to collaboration.”

What's Next



Continuing analysis



Share findings with key stakeholders



Identify realistic action opportunities



Repeat survey

Questions/Follow Up

Contact

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