



Background

The Workplace Community Survey (WCS) was conducted between May 4 and May 19 among SSEM employees. The WCS mirrored similar surveys from December 2017 and May 2019. A major outreach effort aimed to increase participation versus previous years (20% in 2019 and 28% in 2017), in part by leveraging a gift card incentive drawing. 427 responses were received, yielding a record participation rate of 36%. This initial frequency report summarizes overall responses to the survey.

WCS covers two main themes: 1) Work Environment; and 2) Inclusion and Diversity. The survey helps guide SSEM in identifying opportunities for meaningful, positive change in the quality of our workplace. For example, previous WCS surveys helped lead to the Diversity Task Force's (DTF) creation of the SSEM Diversity Calendar to help staff find diversity related professional development opportunities. Additionally, WCS helped elevate the following topics as major themes for SSEM strategic planning: Professional Development, Work Environment, Sense of Belonging, and Strengthening the SSEM Community.

WCS is a confidential survey. Participation was strictly voluntary, and participants were free to skip any questions to which they preferred not to respond. We did not track any information on which individuals completed the survey. Only the total number of participants from each department was used to determine eligibility for the gift card drawing. Every effort is made to maintain anonymity of survey responses during discussions and in making policy recommendations.

The 2021 survey was conducted under extraordinary circumstances: more than one year into the global COVID-19 pandemic, at a time when many staff members were working remotely, and amidst a nationwide vaccine push. The background also included notable political conflict and prominent reckoning with racial violence in America. These circumstances, among others, contributed to an extended period of ongoing, elevated personal and professional adversity among many employees.

The SSEM leadership team, in collaboration with the DTF and SSEM Research & Assessment (SSEM-RA) continues to explore WCS data in depth, seeking opportunities to improve the workplace experience. This includes comparing results across employee groups, departments, and demographic categories. As a reminder, we cannot address individual circumstances raised in the survey. Beyond opportunities for policy changes, we will compare 2021 results to trends from 2017 to 2019, and continue working toward improvements in future versions of the survey.

If you have any questions on survey reporting, please contact Shawn Sorenson (SSEM-RA) at ssoren@uoregon.edu.

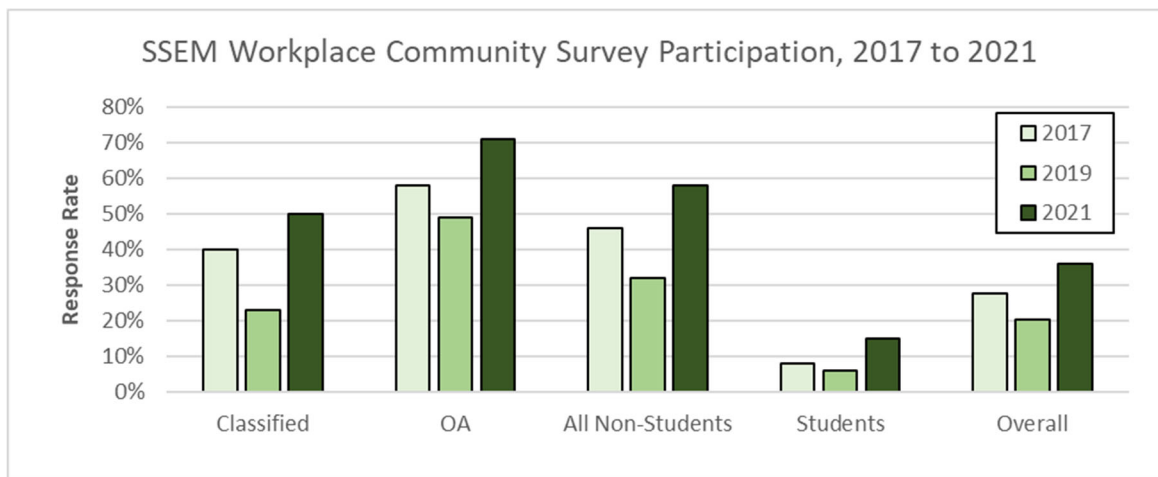


Participation

The overall response rate for 2021 was 36%, including 58% among non-student employees (50% classified, 71% officers of administration), and 15% among student employees (Figure 1). This reflects record participation in 9 of 11 departments, in every employee category, and overall (Table 1).

2021 was the first time a majority of non-student employees participated in the WCS. Student employee participation also doubled the previous record.

Figure 1 – WCS Participation, 2017 to 2021



WCS Incentive Drawing

In departments with at least 70% (non-student employees) or 50% (student employees) participation, all non-student or student employees, respectively, were eligible to win one of thirty Amazon gift cards from a random drawing. Five departments (Student Financial Aid & Scholarships, Registrar, Strategic Communications & Marketing, University Counseling, and University Testing) had 70% participation for non-student employees, and five departments (University Counseling, Continuing & Professional Education, Student Financial Aid & Scholarships, Registrar, and Vice President’s Office) reached the 50% threshold for student employees.



Participation History

Table 1 – WCS Participation by Department, 2017 to 2021

SSEM Department	Number of Responses (2021)	Response Rate (2021)	Response Rate (2019)	Response Rate (2017)
Continuing and Professional Education	28	65% *	23%	30%
Office of Admissions	27	56% *	47%	47%
Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships	38	64% *	42%	53%
Office of the Registrar	31	79% *	47%	56%
Strategic Communications and Marketing	15	75% *	24%	11%
Student Orientation Programs	2 @	3%	4%	10%
University Counseling Services	22	76% *	34%	57% #
University Health Services	66	49%	46%	62%
University Housing	166	23% *	8%	13%
Dining Services	87			
Residential Life	24			
Facilities	37			
Other	18			
University Testing Center	4 @	100% *	83%	57% #
Vice President's Office	6 @	50% *	19%	19%
Other	5			
Declined to respond	17			
Grand Total	427	36% *	20%	28%

Notes:

* Denotes record participation.

@ Departments with fewer than 10 responses will not receive a department report due to the potential to identify individuals.

2017 figures are for the University Counseling Center and University Testing Center combined (UCTC).

¹ Of respondents who provided their employment classification, 41% were classified staff, 36% were Officers of Administration, 20% were undergraduate students, 2% were graduate students, and 1% were faculty (versus 39%, 40%, 20%, 1%, and <1%, respectively, in 2019).

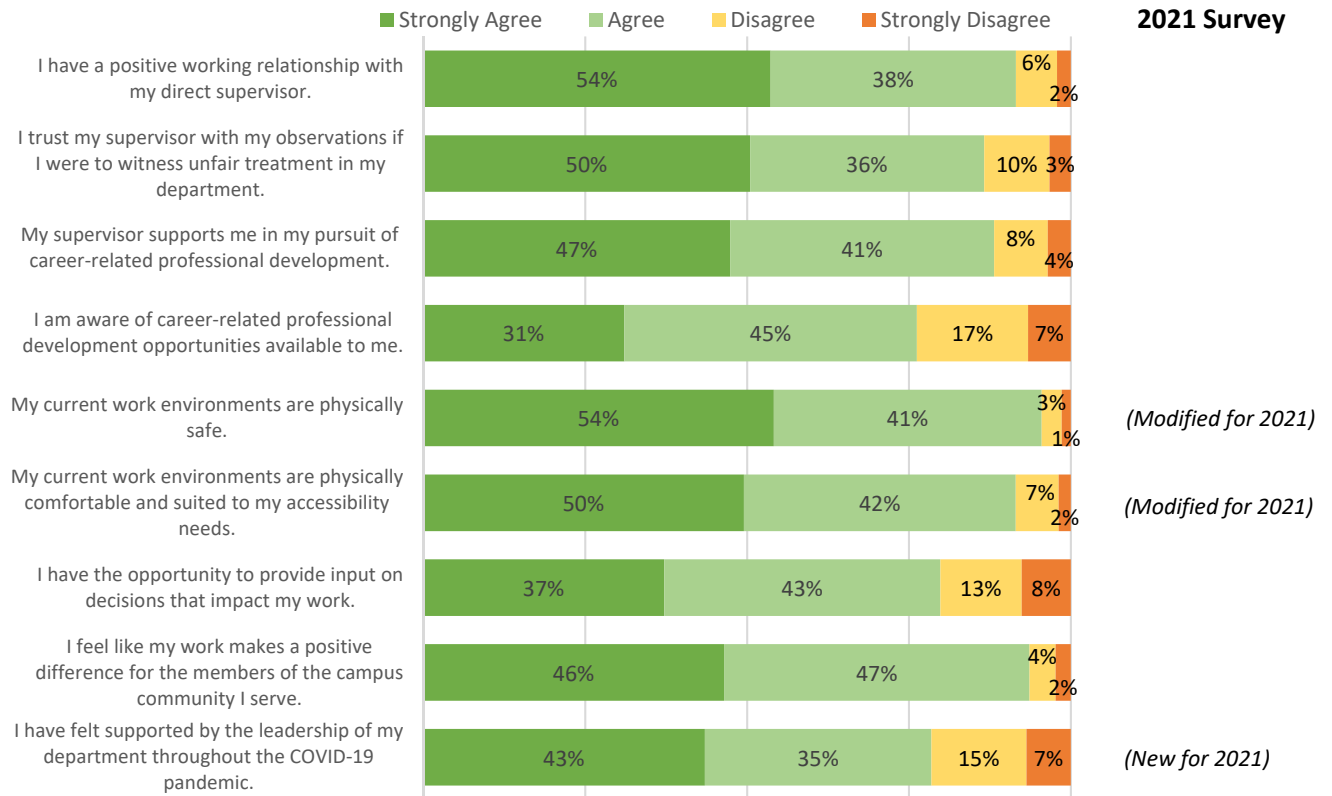
² Response rates were 50% for classified staff, 71% for OAs, and 15% for student employees (versus 23%, 49% and 6%, respectively, in 2019).

³ There were 8 opt-outs (2%) among 435 total recorded surveys.

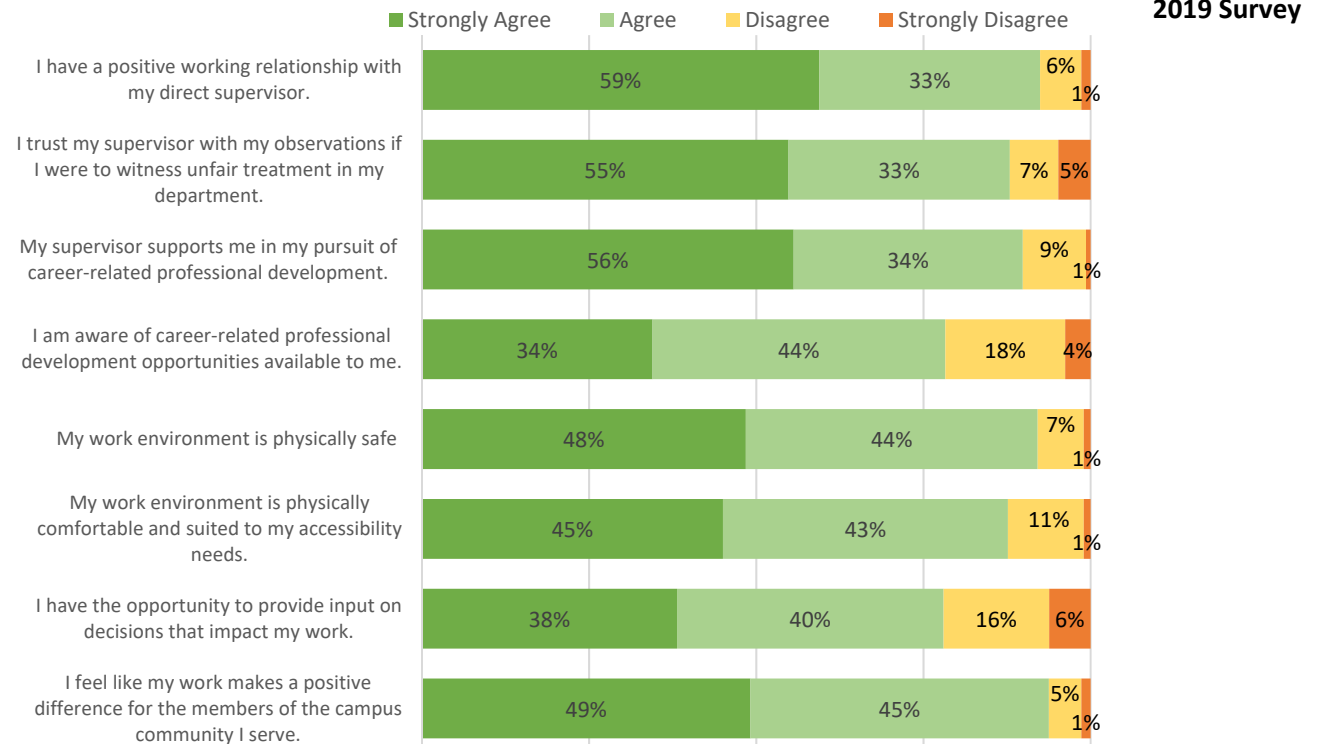


Summary Results, 2021 vs. 2019: Work Environment

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:



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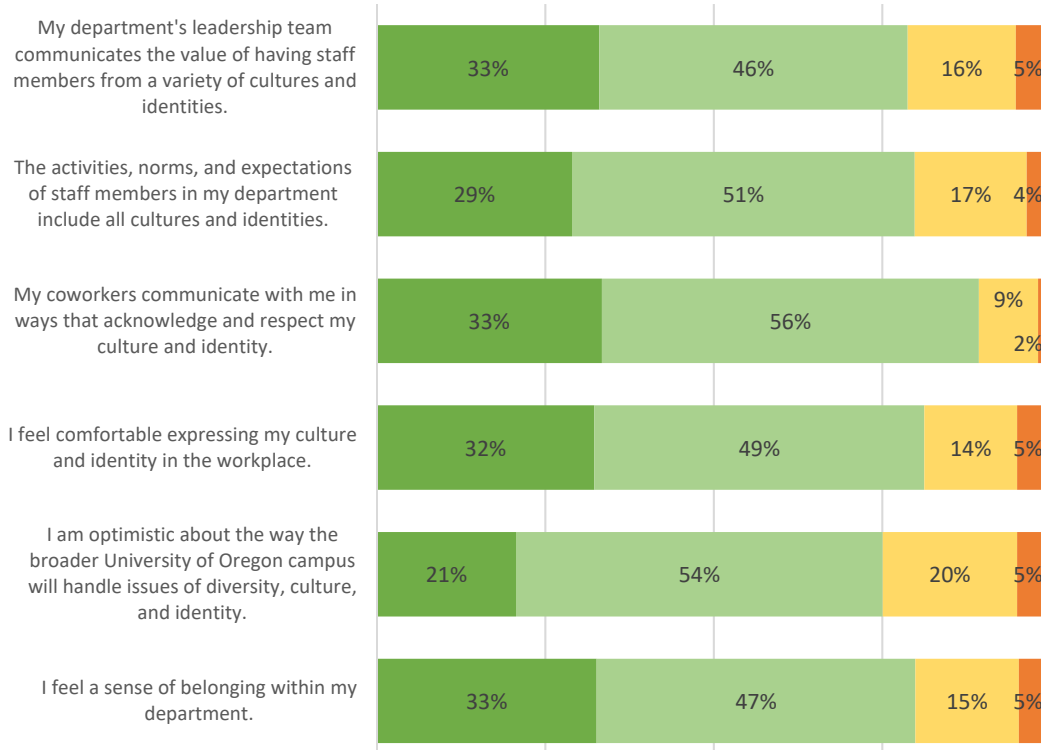


Summary Results, 2021 vs. 2019: Inclusion and Diversity

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2021 Survey

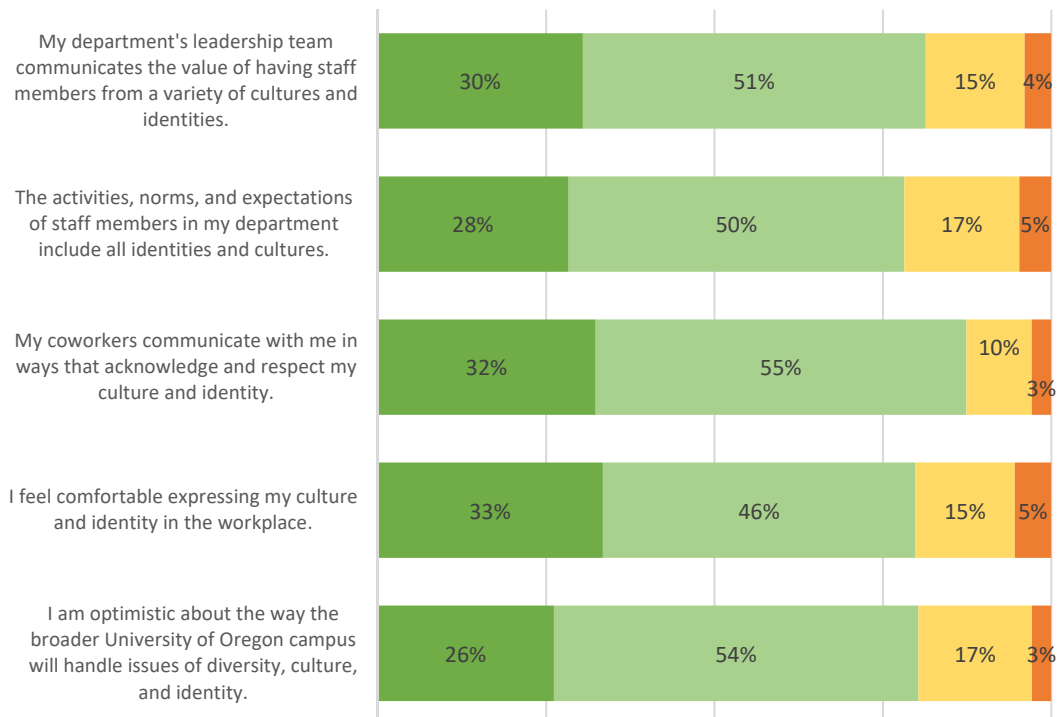


(New for 2021)

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2019 Survey





Summary Results, 2021 vs. 2019: Inclusion and Diversity, cont.

In the last year, I have participated in campus events or professional development opportunities that have allowed me to learn about or engage with individuals from a culture or background other than my own:

	Yes %	No %
2021 Survey	49%	51%
2019 Survey	65%	35%
2017 Survey	75%	25%

Summary Interpretations: Work Environment

Similar to 2019 and 2017, most employees (>75%) reported: 1) positive supervisor relationships; 2) awareness of professional development opportunities; 3) a safe, comfortable, and accessible work environment; 4) opportunity to provide input on decisions that impact their work; 5) a sentiment that their work makes a positive difference for the campus community; and 6) a feeling of support from department leaders throughout the COVID-19 pandemic (new question for 2021).

While overall agreement was similar between 2019 and 2021, the strength of agreement decreased significantly across all three supervisor relationship items, most notably supervisor support for career-related professional development (47% vs. 56% in strong agreement). In contrast, significantly larger percentages of employees reported strong agreement with the physical safety, comfort, and accessibility of their *current* work environments. The “current” work environments language was added for the 2021 survey in recognition of different (and potentially multiple) work environments for SSEM employees due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 61% of employees reported currently working mostly or completely on campus. 39% reported currently working mostly or completely remote. Employees working mostly or completely remote reported substantially stronger agreement across all categories. This agreement may also be related to department, employee, or other demographic categories, and is under further investigation.

Awareness of career-related professional development opportunities, opportunities to provide input on decisions impacting employees’ work, and COVID-19 support show the greatest potential for improvement. In each case more than 20% of employees reported disagreement with these goals. With the exception of the new COVID-19 item, this is unchanged from 2019.



Summary Interpretations: Inclusion and Diversity

Similar to 2019 and 2017, most employees (>75%) reported that: 1) department leaders communicate the value of having staff members from a variety of cultures and identities; 2) department activities, norms, and expectations include all identities and cultures; 3) coworkers communicate in ways that acknowledge and respect culture and identity; 4) they feel comfortable expressing their culture and identity in the workplace; 5) they are optimistic about the way the University will handle issues of diversity, culture, and identity; and 6) they feel a sense of belonging within their department (new question for 2021).

As in 2019, agreement on inclusion and diversity items was generally lower than those for the work environment. This suggests employees are comparatively more concerned about inclusion and diversity.

Compared to 2019, employees in 2021 reported significantly less optimism about the UO's handling of diversity, culture, and identity issues (21% vs. 26% strong agreement, 25% vs. 20% disagreement). A substantially lower percentage of employees reported engaging with diversity-related events or professional development in the last year, continuing the trend from the prior survey cycle (49% versus 65% in 2019 and 75% in 2017).

Next Steps

This frequency report provides all SSEM employees with an overall look at responses to the survey. Please consider this a first step in our ongoing efforts to promote meaningful, positive change in the quality of our work environment.

The SSEM leadership team, DTF, and SSEM-RA will continue to explore WCS data during Summer 2021. This includes evaluating department reports, employee categories (e.g. classified vs. OA vs. student employees), and thoughtful consideration of your open-ended responses. The Task Force will provide recommendations to Division and department leaders to improve the work environment for SSEM employees from every background, and continue to engage you in this process. Much more is yet to come.

Thank you for your participation!