RESULTS
UAF STAFF
MORALE SURVEY

PRESENTED BY STAFF COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 21, 2018

INTRODUCTION- A PERFECT UAF

UAF IS A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE LOVE TO WORK. WHY? BECAUSE ALL EMPLOYEES ARE TREATED FAIRLY AND WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT LEAVING NO ROOM FOR DISCRIMINATION AND BULLYING. EMPLOYEES ARE TRAINED, HEARD, INCLUDED AND ENCOURAGED. SUPERVISOR-STAFF RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILT ON TRUST AND OPEN COMMUNICATION.

BACKGROUND

2015 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

**http://uaf.edu/uafhr/engagement/**

2018 STAFF COUNCIL SURVEY

METHODS
-creation
-administration
-evaluation

46% OVERALL RESPONSE RATE

| ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT	PERCENT OF STAFF IN UNIT	UNIT RESPONSE RATE
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR	4%	29.2%
PROVOST	37%	31.8%
VICE CHANCELLOR OF RESEARCH	23%	39.9%
VICE CHANCELLOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	15%	42.2%
VICE CHANCELLOR OF STUDENT AFFAIRS	9%	46.7%
VICE CHANCELLOR OF RURAL COMMUNITY AND NATIVE EDUCATION	10%	45.4%
OIT	2%	137.5%
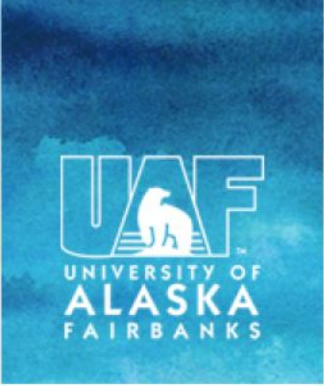
UAF STAFF TOTAL LONGEVITY
(552 responses)
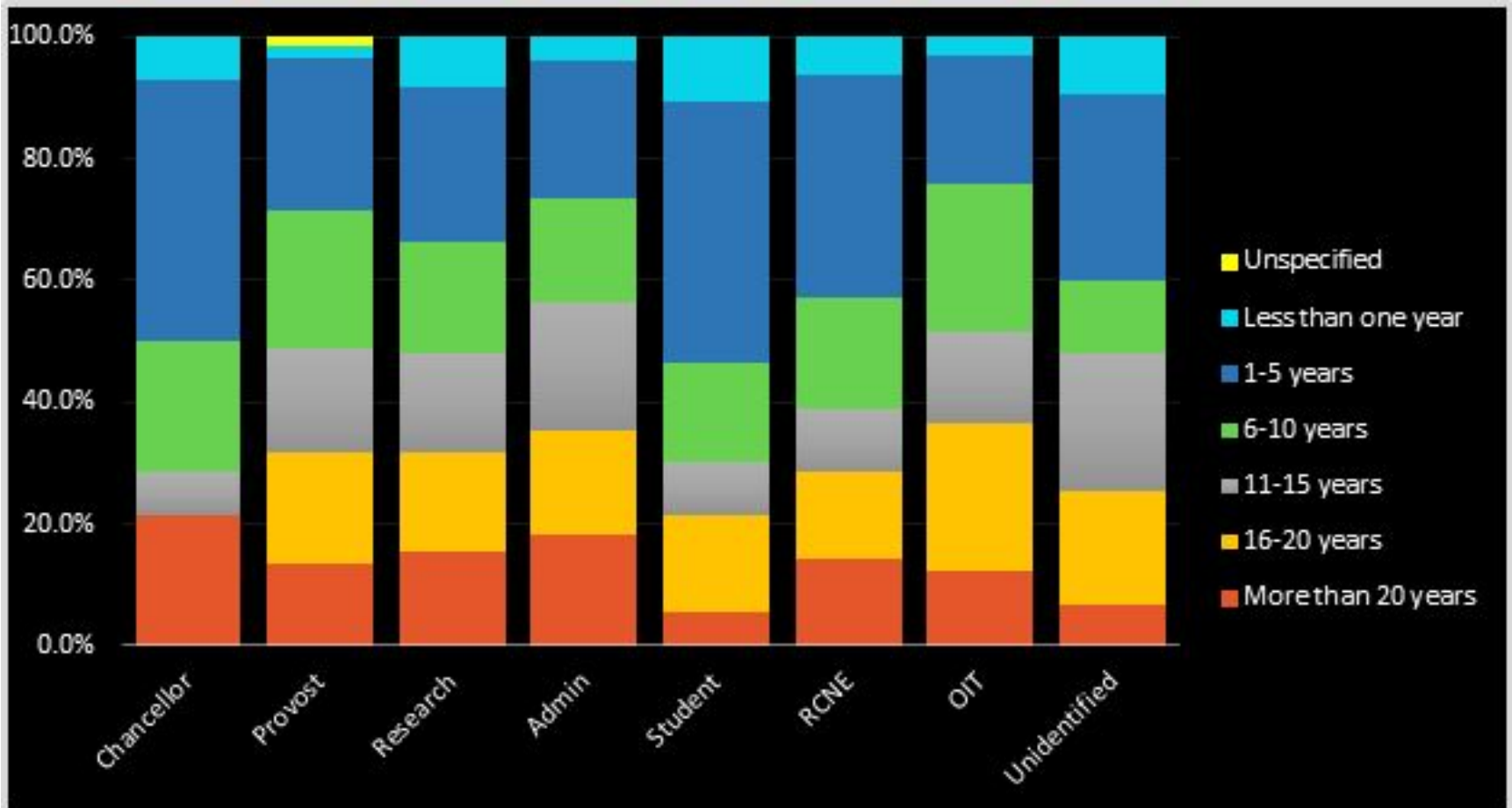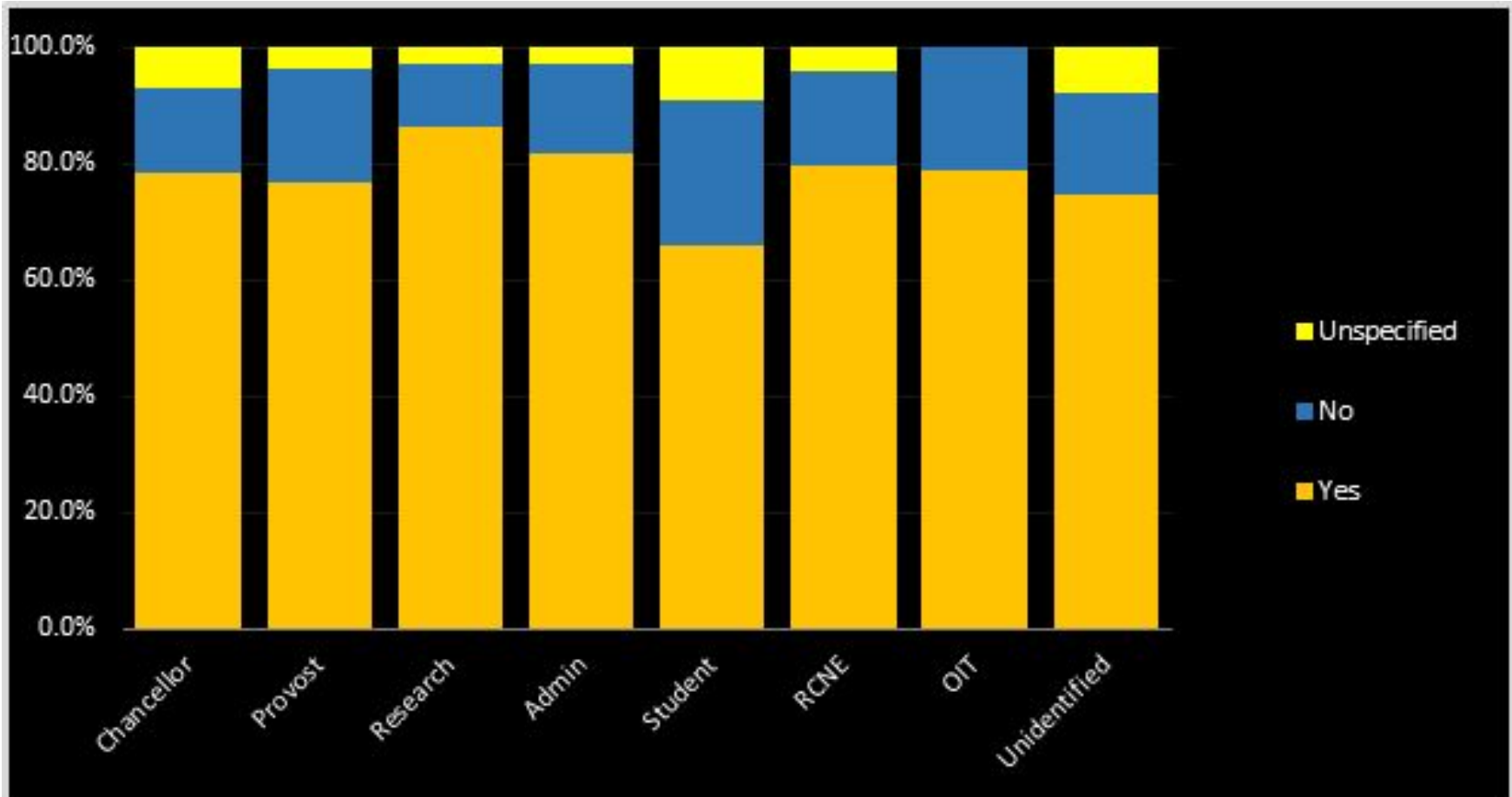
TIME IN CURRENT POSITION
(547 responses)
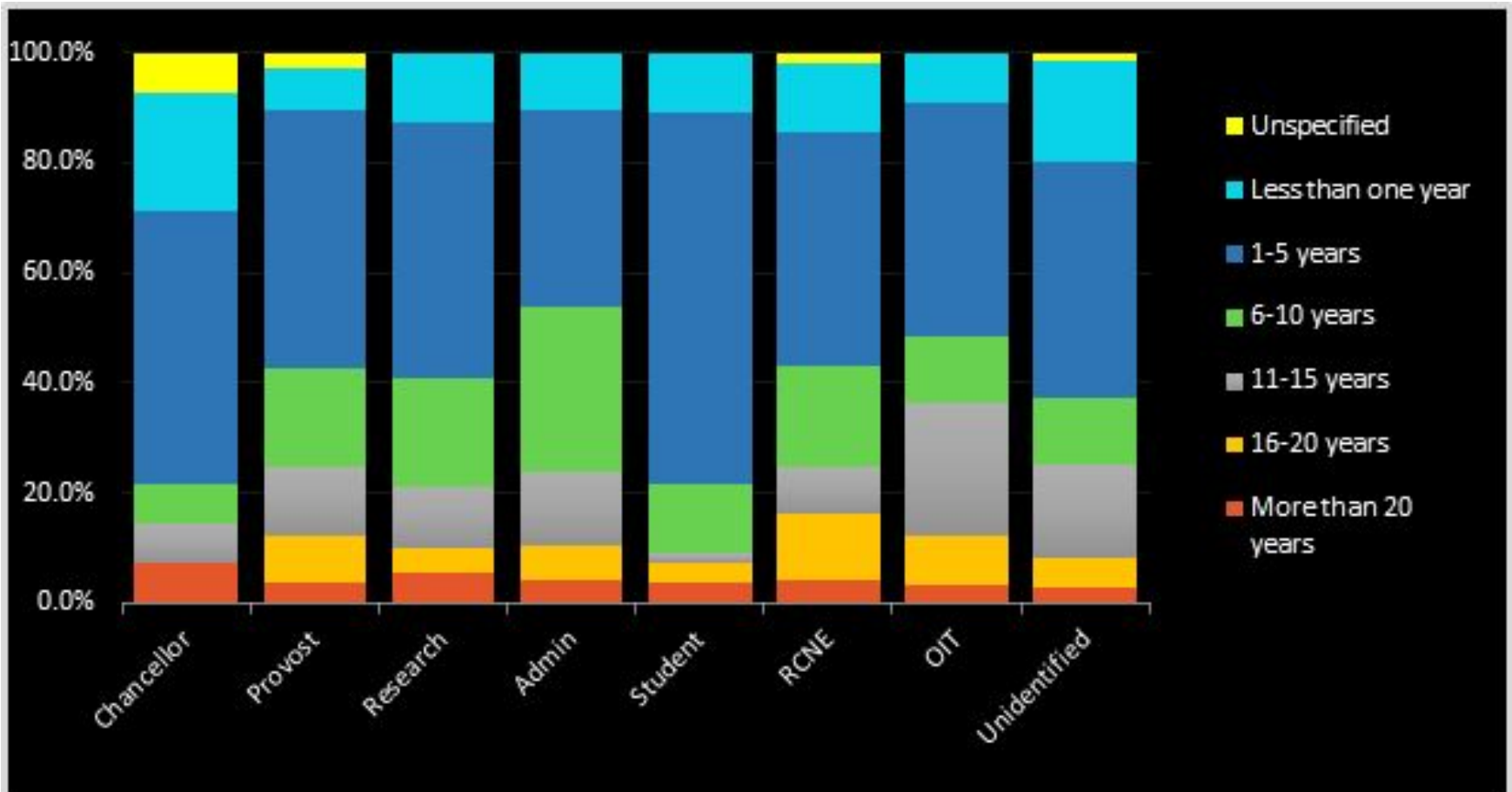
# TOOLS NECESSARY FOR JOB
(530 responses)

TOOLS NECESSARY FOR JOB COMMENTS

- Received negligible training for new or changed duties, this is **making us more inefficient.**
- It could be easily fixed if staff or users of software were consulted before software is purchased. I have **to have 10 programs open** to answer student questions and none of them seem to work exactly right.
- I currently have the proper tools but am **not encouraged to seek training to keep up.**
- So much **training is by trial and error** instead of real training.
- The tool that is needed is **communication and fiscal transparency**.
- Tools are present but **clear direction** about how to use those tools often lacks.

ABILITY TO USE LEAVE
(536 responses)
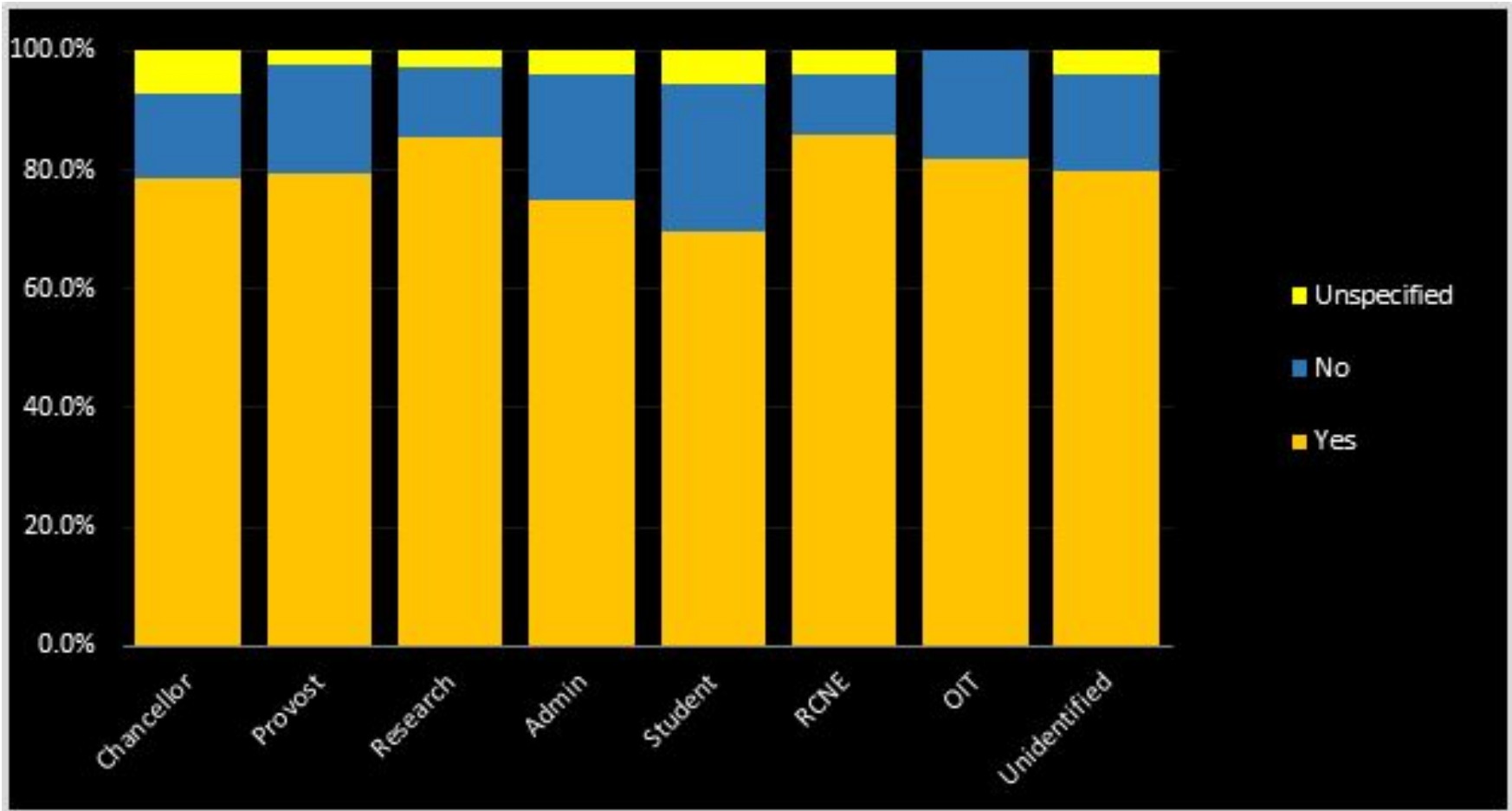
ABILITY TO USE LEAVE COMMENTS

- **I feel very supported** when I need to use annual and sick leave. It is one reason I really like working for the University supervisors I have had.
- **I was denied leave for a family event**. I was tempted to quit, but where would I go?
- I planned a week off to burn up excess annual leave that I would have lost. I ended up **working 28 hours from home**, but when I asked to continue working this type of schedule my supervisor was not able to give me any more than one week.I have also been sick a lot in the past year, but for every day I take off, there are 3-4 that I should have taken.
- My supervisor is **great at recognizing work life balance** and allowing staff to take leave when needed.
- **Very frustrated with the inability to cash out sick leave.** I have no children and am fairly healthy, so I don't use much sick leave. I am retiring soon and will leave with over half a year of sick leave when I do. I worked for that leave and I feel I've been penalized because I am healthy.

ABILITY TO USE LEAVE COMMENTS

- There is **not adequate staff for coverage in my absence** without creating a hardship for others in my department.
- For the most part yes, however, I pay for it when I return to work I'm so far behind, **makes me wish I had never been out.**
- My supervisor micromanages my leave, as an exempt employee with no history of abusing leave, I am required to record my **time down to the 10 minute increment.I find this both disrespectful and controlling.**
- **I feel guilty** using leave because it means more work is being put on my co-workers, who are also stretched thin, but **my supervisor does encourage us to take time** when needed.
- Yes and no, yes that I have leave, no because my supervisor makes **me feel uncomfortable and guilty** for using it.
- I use leave when I need, however, I always spend the day anxious and worried so I check my email throughout the day. On vacation I have to do this as well, otherwise I come back to too much work as **there is no backup for me when I am out.**
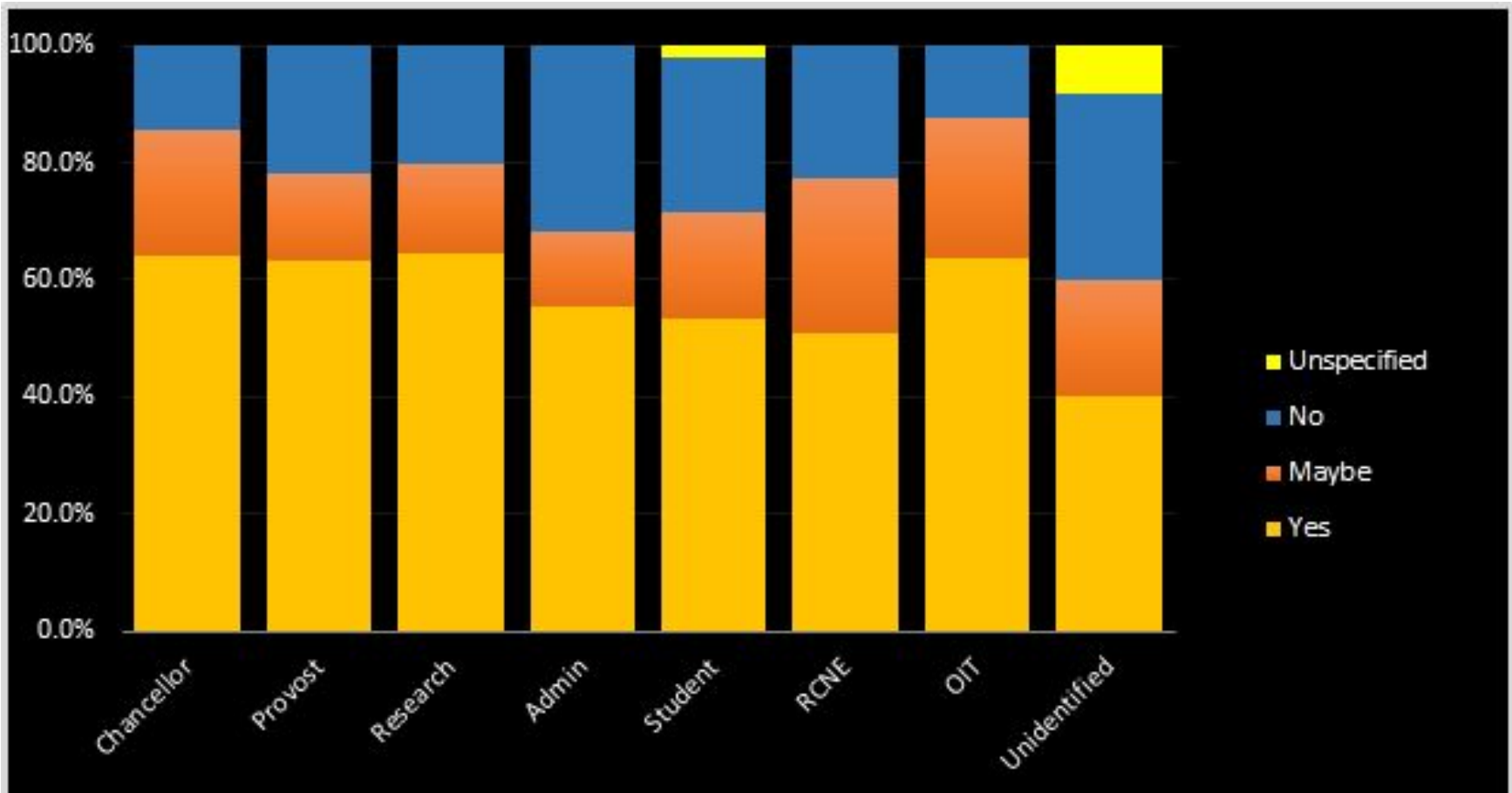
SENSE OF APPRECIATION
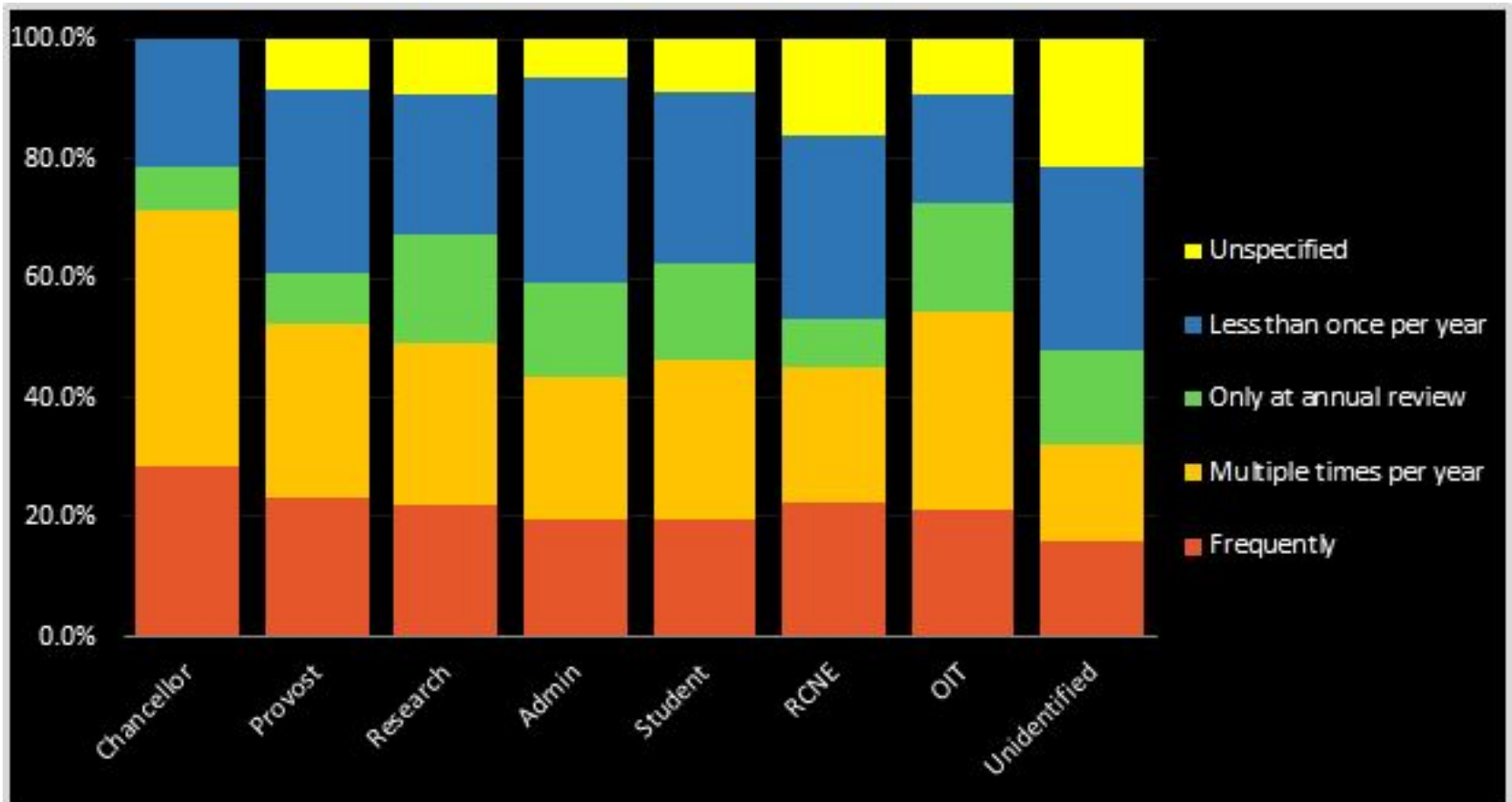## (546 responses)
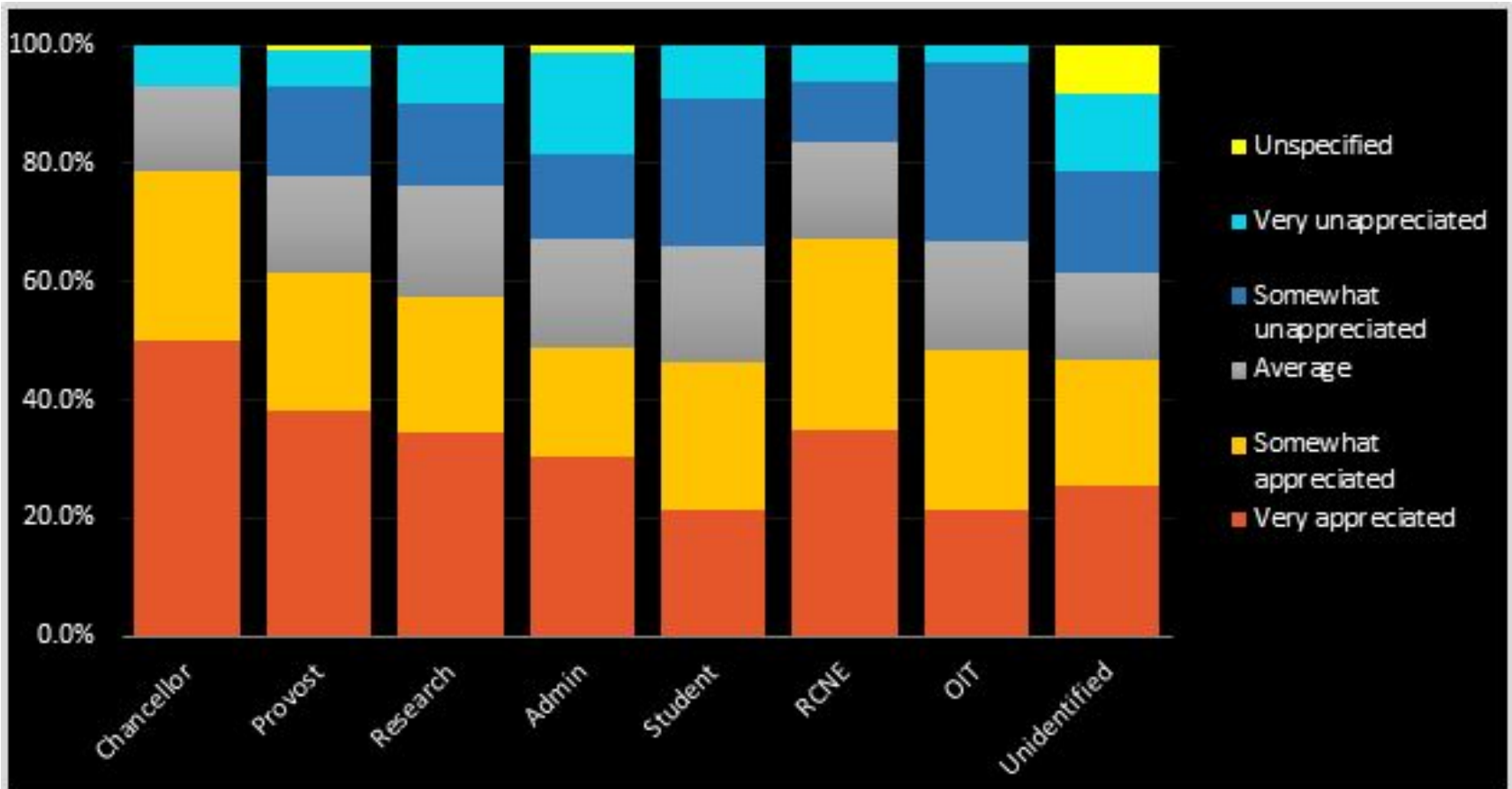
ADEQUATE RECOGNITION
By Supervisor (547 responses)

FREQUENCY OF RECOGNITION
(495 responses)

RECOGNITION COMMENTS

- **I feel very appreciated by the students** I serve, and thank goodness because that keeps me coming to work.
- It depends on what level you are looking at, **I feel very appreciated by my immediate office** and by certain departments that I routinely work with. Upper management does not understand the processes in use, so instead of looking for effective solutions, they look for efficient solutions. **I want to add value to the process, not to feel like a rubber stamp.**
- I don't receive feedback from my supervisor, **it has been at least 5 months since I have seen/interacted with my supervisor.**
- The highest level of leadership of UA does not appreciate the busy workers who keep everything running, however, if we had **LEADERS instead of supervisors** we could change the dynamic in these toxic environments.

RECOGNITION COMMENTS

- **My supervisor has become my mentor in every way.**
- Overall I am operating under a culture of"don't make trouble by bringing up difficult issues." But **there are difficult issues** to face and these need to be addressed.
- I only get an annual review. I often wonder **how can I be evaluated when I don't see/hear from supervisor** for months at a time.
- I get a lot of "good jobs" but **haven't had an annual review for 3 years,** which means I haven't had an opportunity to ask for a raise in 3 years.
- My supervisors are great and often provide positive verbal recognition, however in the past I used to look forward to small bonuses or extra vacation days. **The more tangible recognitions seem to be disappearing.**

JOB SECURITY
(545 responses)
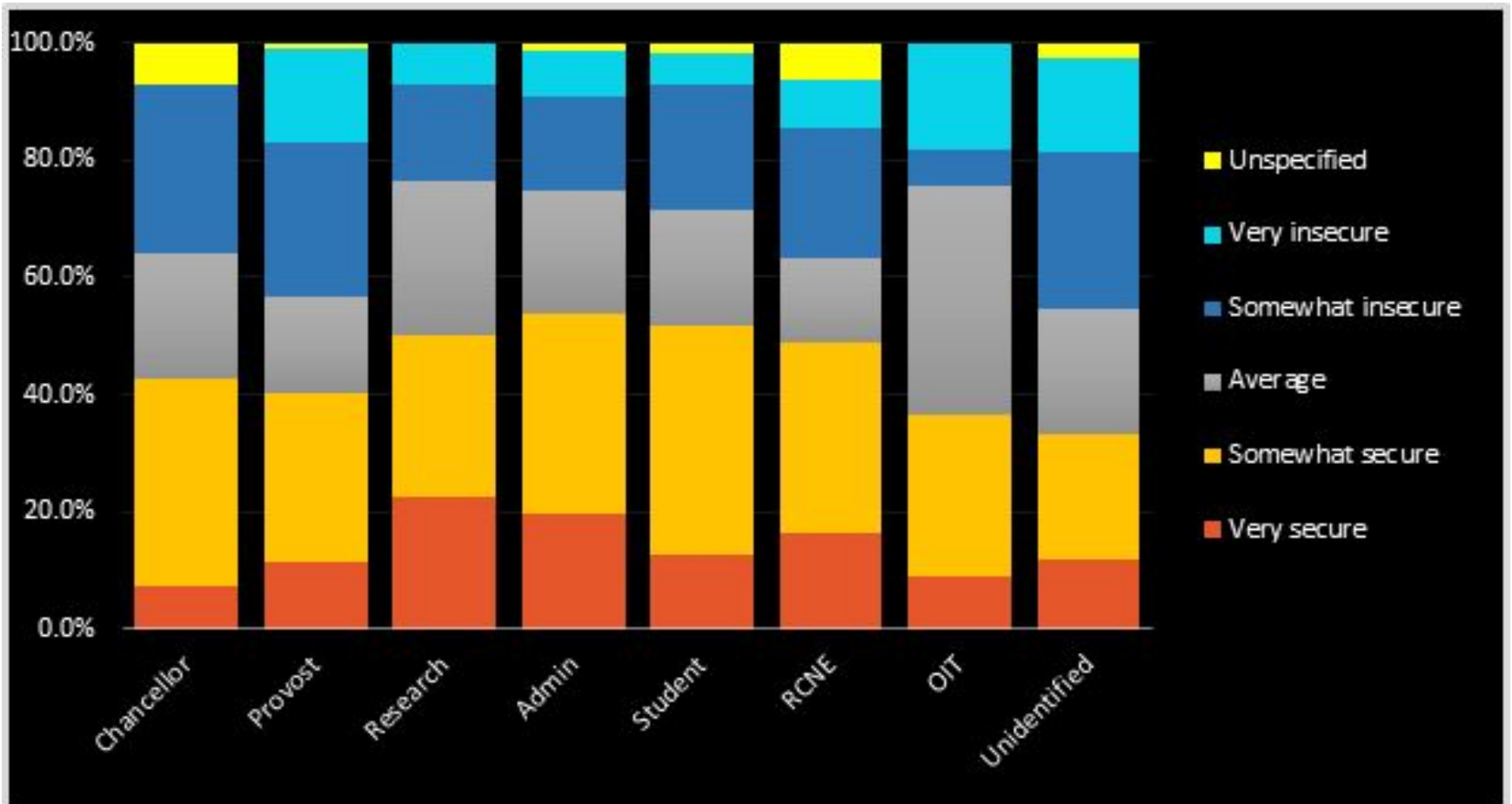
JOB SECURITY COMMENTS

- There has been a lot of attrition, we are now at a point that no remaining staff can be lost without the department losing all functionality. **So for that very awkward reason, I feel more secure in my position.**

- At this point, if my position were to disappear, **I think it would be a welcome reprieve.**

- This is a difficult town to live in without solid work and as a parent, I have a lot to consider in how I move my family forward based on career prospects. I can get work that pays double what I get paid here anywhere in the lower 48, with a lower standard of living. But **I have faith in this community and university,** which make me want to push hard to make this a place that we believe it can be.

- Earlier this semester I was told I may lose my job. It took two months to formally be told I would not be losing my job. During this time the **amount of anxiety and stress caused was astronomical.**

- I don't feel like my job will disappear, because so many other jobs have already been cut. I do question **how much longer I can continue with a nearly impossible workload.**

CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT
(521 responses)
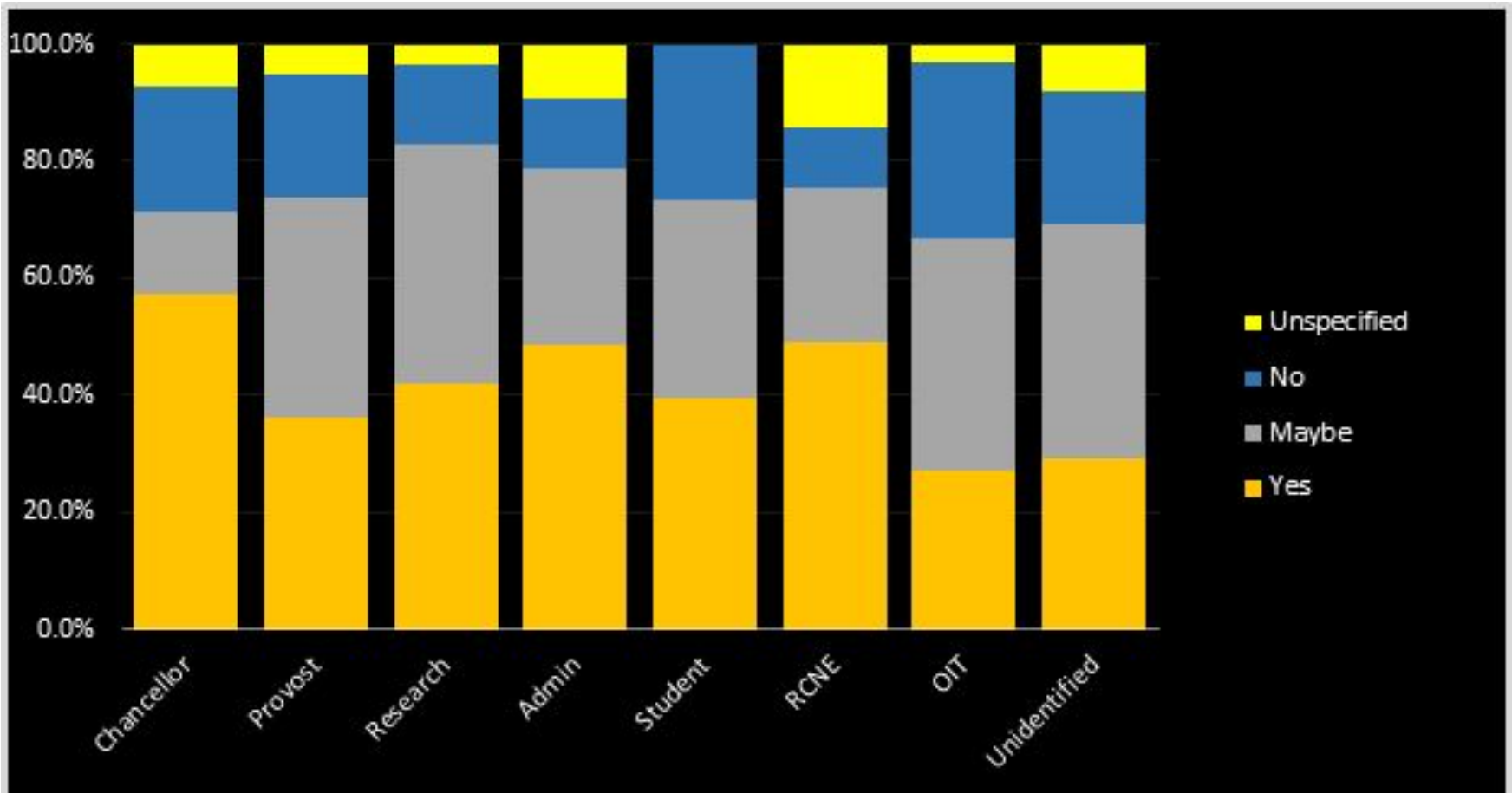
CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT COMMENTS

- There are **no chances to advance** with all of the direct appointments, I have started looking out of state.
- I love working in higher education and at my core I am passionate about UAF, but I'm also **unhappy in my position and with my career track.**
- I imagine I will be gone in 2 years if the past 10 years are any indication of where UAF is heading. **I have turned down job offers for more pay when I shouldn't have.** I am a loyal, hard working and optimistic individual, which is usually a good thing, but when it comes to UAF I can best liken to being in an abusive relationship, at some point you just have to stand your ground and end the relationship.
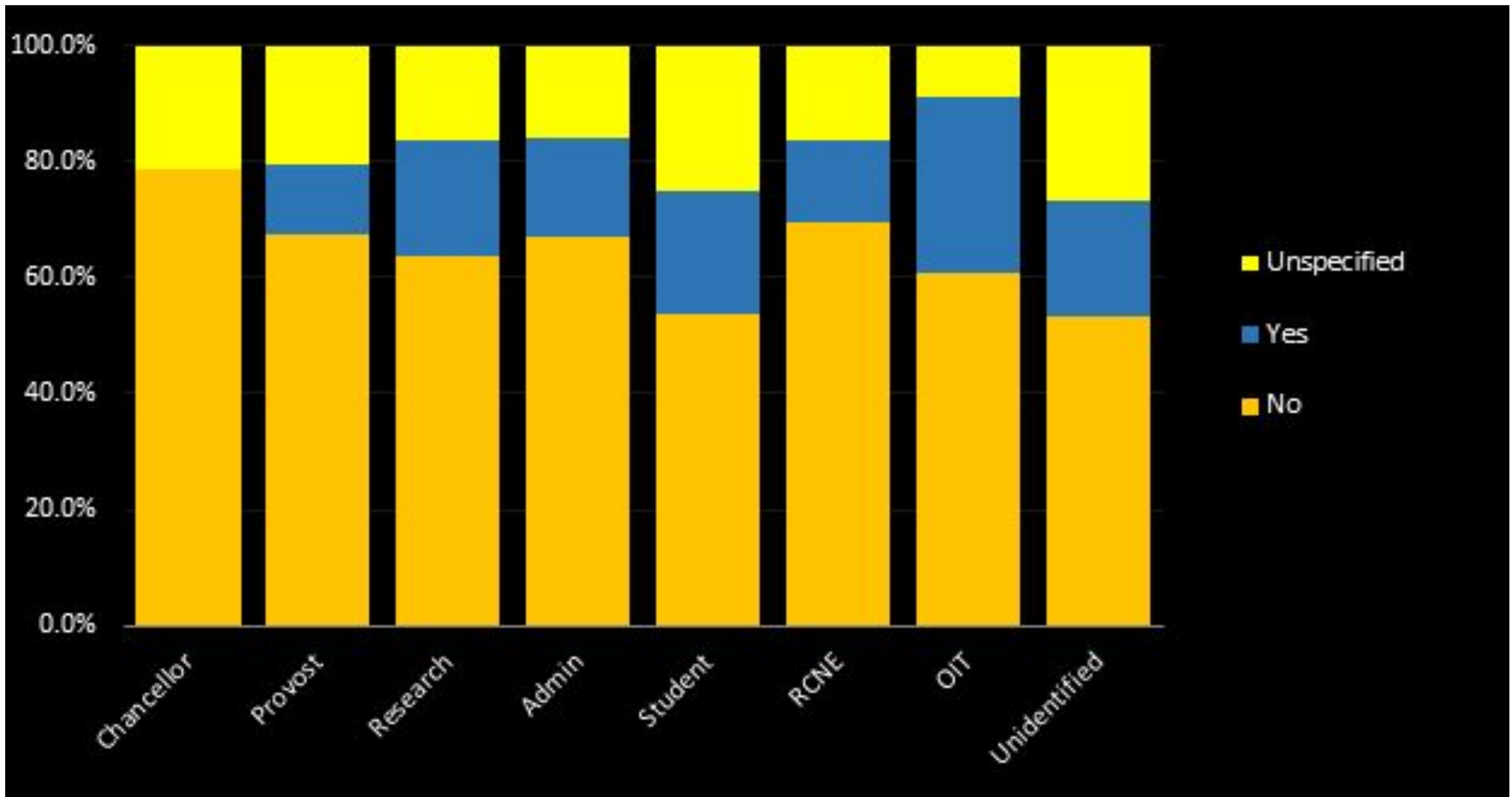
CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT COMMENTS

- **UAF used to be a great place to work,** not so much on wages, but good working conditions and benefits. The benefits have eroded slowly over the years and no longer make up for the lower wages. It is frustrating to feel like we are sliding backwards.

- Since we can't decide who we are, we pretend to be all things to all people. Once strong programs have been whittled away through attrition and ATB cuts. The damage of these cuts is starting to show. Enrollment is way down. Stellar faculty are leaving and not being replaced. **Our messaging has been so negative** that students are hesitant to come here. We do not have real priorities and real decisions are never made. We just keep looking the other way in hopes that things will change.

SEEKING OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT
(447 responses)

SEEKING OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT COMMENTS

- It would be **stupid not to have a backup plan** or take a position that provides more security and doesn't require me to purchase my own paper or use my own vehicle for work.
- If you do not have feelers out, you are foolish.
- I am not currently seeking employment and every week **worry that I am making a mistake** by not being fully prepared to leave UAF.
- I would leave in a heartbeat if I could find another job in PERS.

Why are you seeking outside employment?

- Lack of **communication**, not being acknowledged, doing tasks not in my job description, the way the unit is managed, faculty thinking they are better than everyone, to earn a better salary, staying is not sustainable for my **personal mental health**, lack of **training**, no pay raise, a culture focused on status-quo rather than nimbleness and rapid cycle development, lack of spine in leadership and lack of **trust**.

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REFER OTHERS
(538 responses)
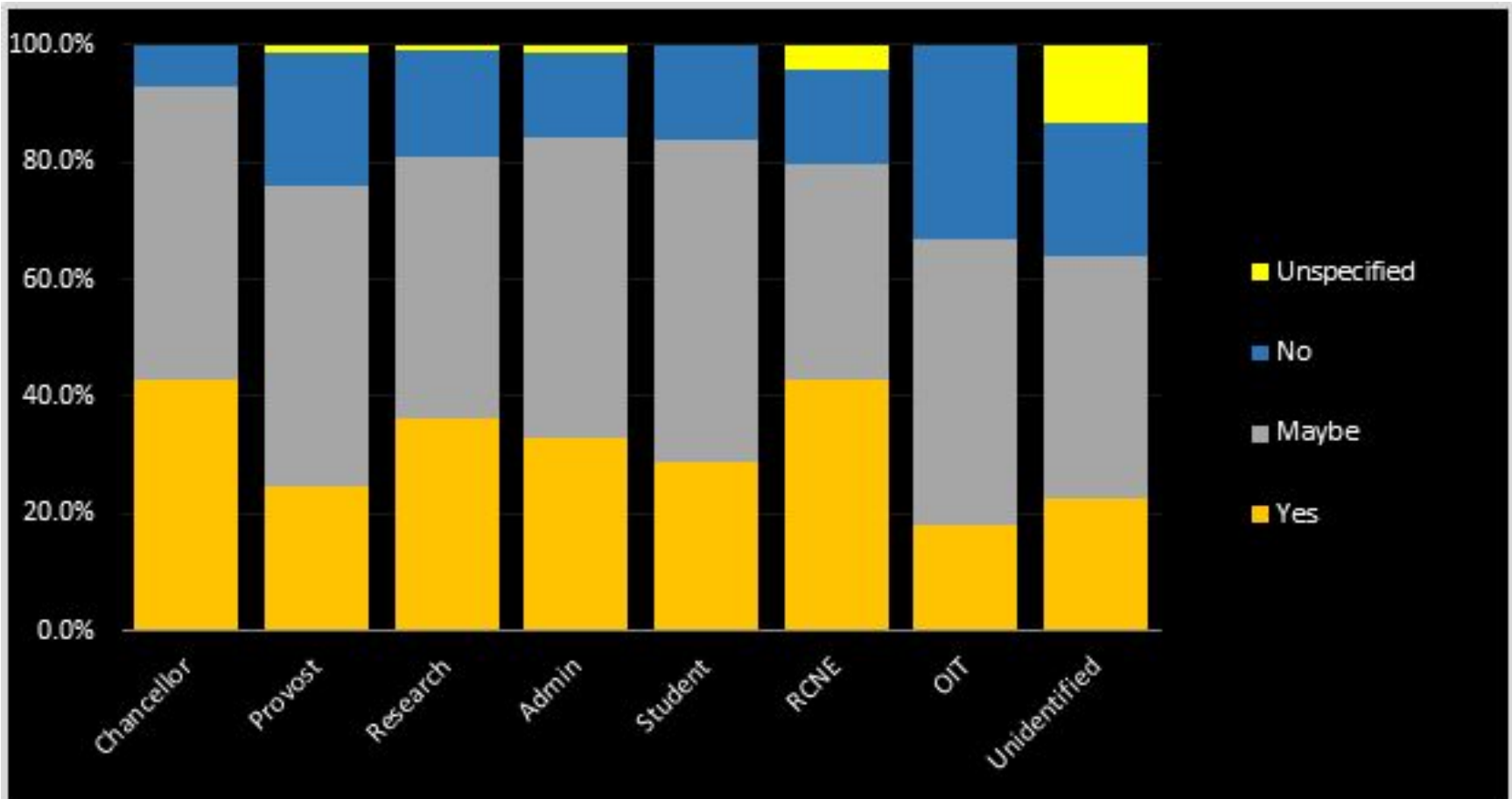
TRUST IN LEADERSHIP
(530 responses)

TRUST COMMENTS

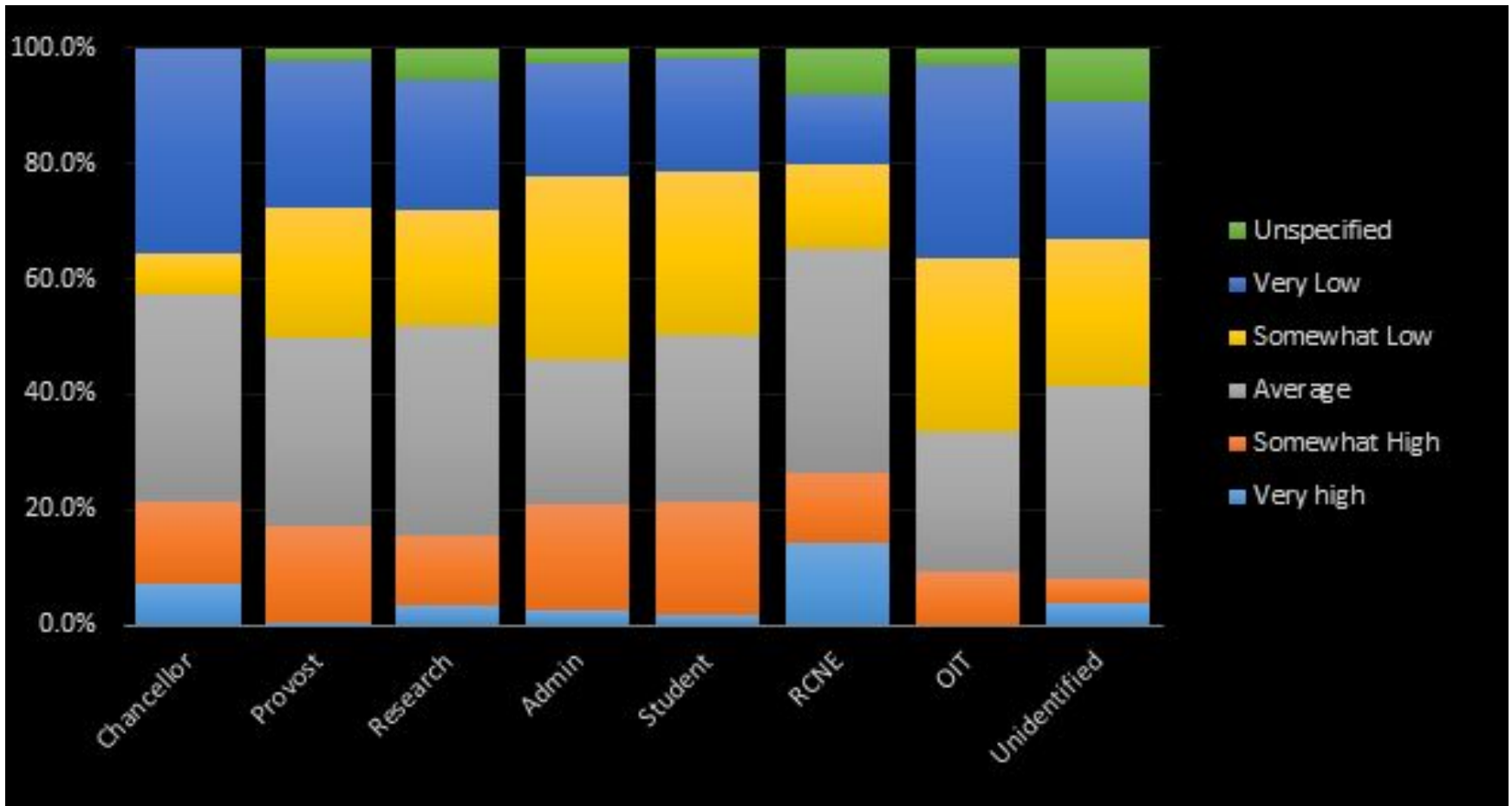- The mission isn't clearly communicated to staff so **we are not all heading in the same direction.** It feels like there is a competition between the campuses that creates extra confusion for students and staff. We have made great strides with safety and are working toward being a more accepting university with some of the great gender equality actions taken over the past few years. I am proud to work here.
- People make decisions for our department and they really have **no idea how our processes work.** People do not feel that there is anywhere to go about certain issues. If you say something about a concern you may lose you job or it will be made impossible for you to stay. There is a problem here.
- I do not trust the UAF leadership. **Unqualified individuals have been appointed to run departments.** It seems like there is a lack of competitive hires as you move up the UAF hierarchy which creates a feeling of a good 'ol boys club.

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TRUST COMMENTS

- UAF is made up of good people, most of whom are doing the best they can under difficult circumstances. But there needs to be **more guidance from above about what our core mission and priorities** should be when there isn't enough staffing to do the work. What is UAF as a whole doing to pare back on that will cause the least damage in the long run?

- Trust is a huge issue within the organization as a whole. One way this manifests is as 'approval' workflows that are enforced disproportionately by problematic people, but also misguided good people. Superfluous oversight services to block initiative and create bottlenecks that reduce throughput of key overhead groups. 'Approvers' should be subject to metrics: how many requests are denied, lead time for approval, and a sampling of the **business value created by the workflow (denied requests that mitigated real risks).**
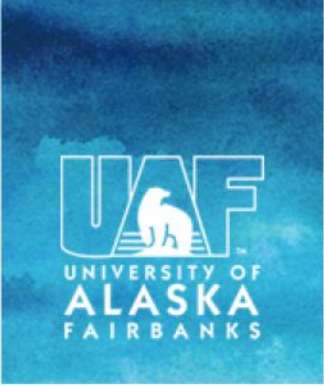
CHANGE IN PERSONAL MORALE
(544 responses)
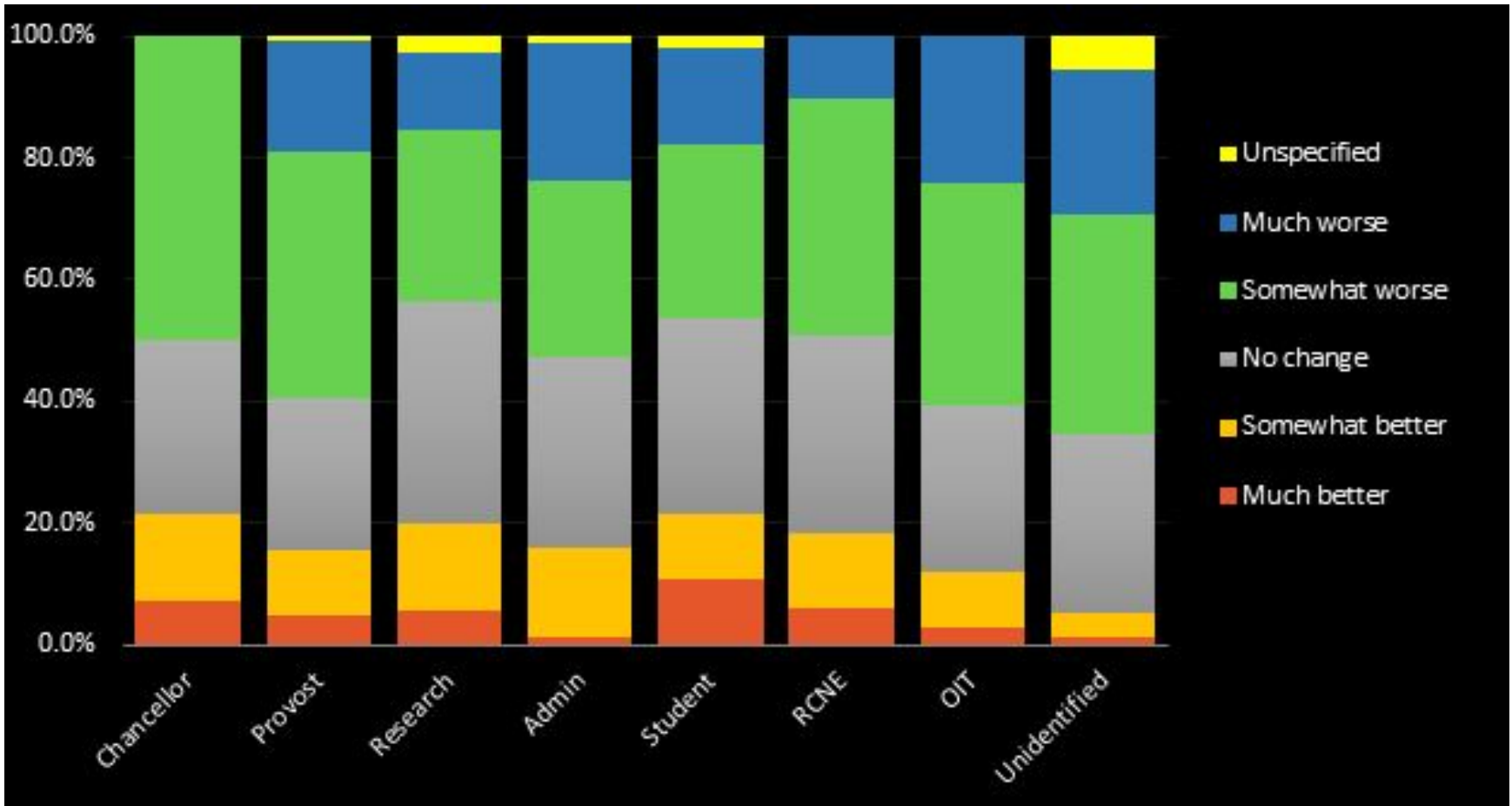
OVERALL MORALE
(540 responses)

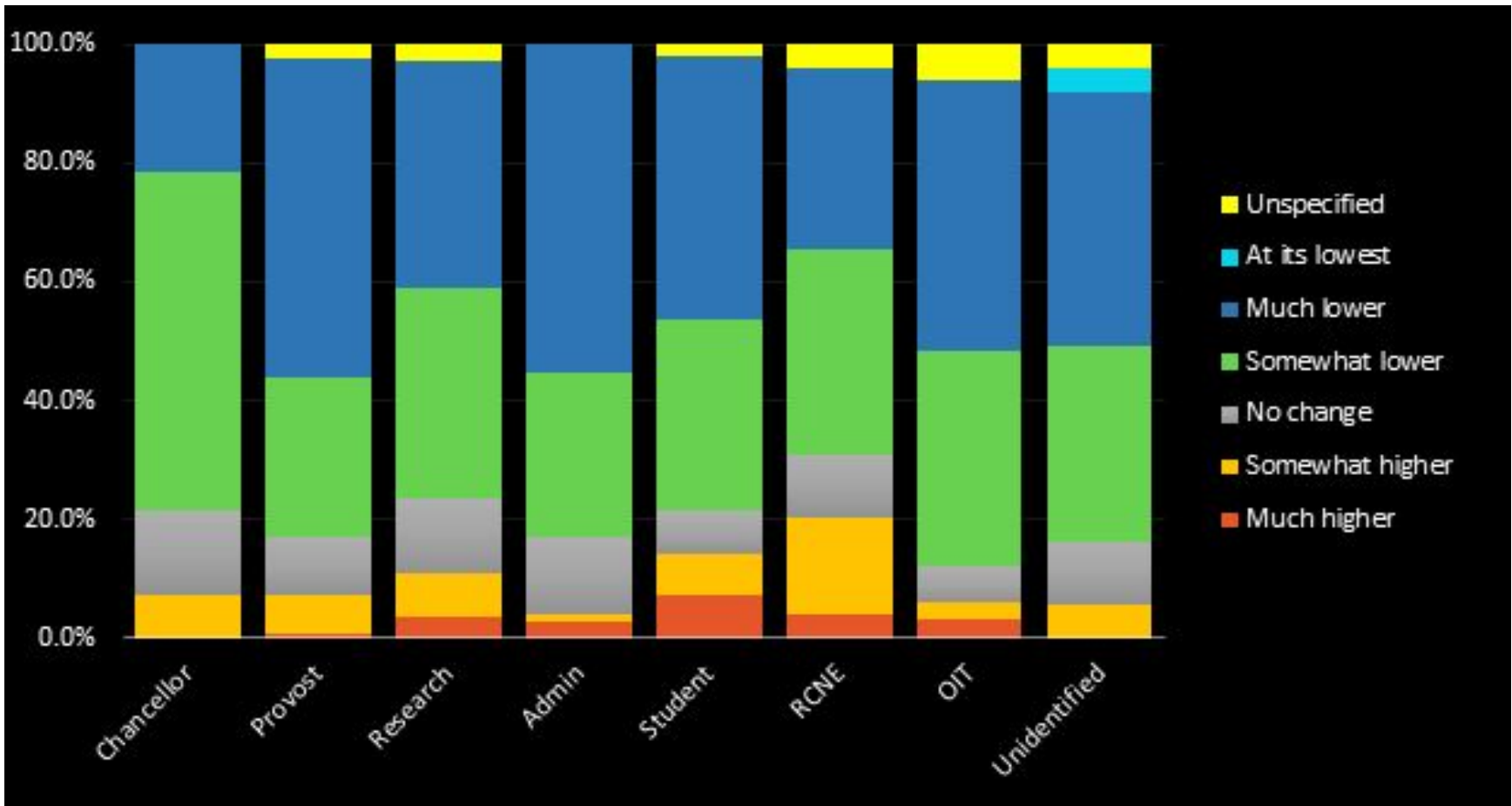# MORALE COMMENTS

- I don't look forward to coming to work nearly as much as I want to, I **sometimes feel like I am swimming uphill.** I prefer to go home feeling like I accomplished something.
- **I felt excited about coming to UAF at first,** then realized there is little to no leadership and/or open communication from our director.
- Too many **faculty bullying staff,** it should not be tolerated, but it is.
- The way UAF **employees treat each other** makes me want to work somewhere else.
- There is a lack of respect and **bullying culture** that is rampant at UAF.
- I would suggest getting involved. **Becoming more proactive has helped me feel like becoming a part of the solution.**
- Treat all staff as peers and **identify and reward effort and success**.
- Don't micromanage staff.
- Doubts about the trustworthiness of leadership at the director level and above. Bad staff are retained, good staff for forced to stagnate, **important decisions are put off** and then made without input of the people impacted most.

MORALE COMMENTS

- Lack of **transparency**, lack of **professional development**, stagnant wages. Dealing with rude comments, unchecked aggression between departments, snarky emails, and **blame games** because fear has caused many to become highly self preserving. Incompetence is widespread due to staff being stretched so thin. Remember, staff answer the phones when upset students call in, when alumni are upset about programs being canceled, but have little to zero impact on the decisions and then the administration treats us like we are just complaining.
- A **failure to address problem employees,** even when issues are brought to supervisor.
- There seems to have been very little strategy involved in how the university has absorbed the state funding cuts and continues to resort to cutting every department instead of identifying programs that do not support our key objectives. We build new buildings without funding while others crumble around us and we wonder why enrollment is at an all time low. **General morale is low enough that disgruntled employees project upon others,** which perpetuates the problem.

MORALE COMMENTS

- Direct Appointments.
- Promises that are not kept.
- I think the university desperately needs an influx of perspective from people who haven't internalized the philosophy of UAF for so many years. The internal hires, while are technically competent, they **tend to have no vision.** It is this vision and fresh outlook we could use.
- It used to feel like staff were represented by HR. Now **HR is so shorthanded** that all they can do is "prevent the university from being sued." It seems like they have no interest in actually representing us, especially since we have no union.
- I was in a position where **I was bullied by my supervisor.** I went to HR for help and they made it worse. I have since moved to a new position and am much happier.
- Even before the constant threat of budget cuts, **the increased bureaucracy** - like getting a person hired - just to get our jobs completed was weighing many staff members down, add on the reduced budgets and increased workloads, morale has dropped even further.

STAFF SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING MORALE

- Stop treating staff like the least important people on campus. We're told we are appreciated, but reality doesn't really mesh. Simply having **realistic expectations from management** would really help, and perhaps a touch of understanding could really improve morale.
- Consistent, clear, ongoing **communication to staff on department goals,** upcoming changes, activities, events and a clarity of job goals and chain of command.
- Introduce actual **performance-based retention.** Fire staff who are only around by virtue of not dying, who are also the highest paid staff due to sheer longevity. Use the money saved to reward staff who actually produce results.
- There's resentment and continued silos. I think campus is oblivious to it's community. If the university embraced the community college as much as research I believe **Fairbanks would be beaming with pride about our university.** But if you listen to people in the grocery check-out line, that is currently not the case.

STAFF SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING MORALE

- Performance based raises, additional personal holiday, some kind of acknowledgement for those who go **above and beyond their PD.** Cross training to show UAF is investing in it's employees.
- Reinforcement that **staff, faculty and administration are a team** and reinforcement of the idea that staff are valued rather than give the impression staff should feel thankful for our jobs.
- **Involve staff in decisions** to negate the unintended consequences of leadership making decisions without understanding the full picture.
- Let the people you hire **do the jobs and make decisions** they were hired to do.
- Train **supervisors to be leaders**, develop staff skills and hold employees accountable.
- Leaders should know **who works for them and acknowledge them.**
- More time spent connecting and understanding what is going on in departments and **building trust** with all team members.

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STAFF SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING MORALE

- **In person seminars or training sessions** that give staff the opportunity to leave their offices and mingle with other UAF staff.
- Have a **clear and consistent** way for staff to request pay increases .
- **Improve the efficiency of processes.** Improve the onboarding process for new employees.
- Stop with the nonsense touchy feely emails about how we empower and value our employees when that is absolutely not the case. Here is an example, to hire a student I need to have the VC approval. Really? **Delegate** that to the department to manage their own budget.
- Administrators, deans and directors need to be cognizant of the low morale and actually **be willing to do something about it** in order for anything to improve.
- If a department experiences high turnover in a very short time find out why they all left, there is **most likely an issue with management** of that department.

STAFF SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING TRUST

- Lead by example, **make difficult decisions** and implement/follow through, don't make examples of bad behaviour, but ensure the correct messaging is sent that **unacceptable behavior has been swiftly and respectfully addressed.**
- Showing real investment in department goals and functions and building/recognizing team member strengths.
- Be completely forthcoming about criteria that are being used to make difficult decisions. I have confidence in the people trying to do this for UAF, but sometimes we feel like a **ball in a political game** where the rules are not always clear.
- Offer **more leadership and process improvement training** and offer more professional development to staff to make them feel more engaged.
- **Actually visit with staff and listen to their priorities.** Often leadership tour my workplace, but have never asked what I need to do my job better.
- Get rid of poor leadership. If there is a department with high turnover, look for the problem. People don't quit jobs, they quit people, **follow the common denominator.**

STAFF SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING TRUST

- **Establish a vision for UAF.** Improve career opportunities: but as a public institution all positions should be advertised. Specific positions with an identified career track should be the only way to get direct appointed. Provide LEADERSHIP training to all levels of supervisors. If we continue to hire from within, we need to do a better job of developing leaders.
- I want to feel like **I am a part of the conversation.** Leadership needs to know how departments treat their employees and take the time to figure out what needs to be done to make things better.
- Open communication to all employees is a must. Expecting supervisors to share the information is not effective. This **perpetuates rumors, gossip** and alienation of staff.
- **I admire our leadership** for the reason that they take on a very difficult job and work very hard. A regular process of **delivering messaging that reinforces confidence and pride** in the university would offset some of the less encouraging ones that have been prevalent in the past few years.

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STAFF SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING TRUST

- **Frequent and meaningful conversations between leadership and staff** regarding the setting of priorities at UAF that will help us get through the hard times together. Please listen to me about my needs and concerns, communicate with me about the larger goals and let me know how I can best do my part to help.

- **Proper delegation:** defining key outcomes, mapping initiatives to those outcomes, tasking operational level leaders that are capable of delivering on the initiatives and **holding them accountable** and devising metric feedback that validates that goals are being accomplished.

- Create a system of **straightforward advancement paths** for positions and hire into those **positions competitively.** Currently the only way to get a promotion is to move positions. Good employees too often see a lack of opportunity and leave. Bad employees too often get pay raises by virtue of not dying.

THEMES DISCOVERED

Trust
Training
Communication

ACTIONABLE TASKS TO BUILD TRUST AND IMPROVE MORALE

- **Trust your people: Step one** - Allow refilling of critical positions without VC approval. **Step two** - Support units to facilitate retention based on performance. **Step three** - Provide training necessary for how to conduct these crucial conversations.
- **Training:** Allow HR to increase resources to build critical and desired training programs, including leadership, crucial conversations, and...
- **Communication:** Get to know your people and begin listening to concerns. **Step one** - Require each VC to walk their units (minimum 1 hour per week). **Step two** - Leadership to hold monthly public forums. Each forum should have a topic and allow time for public questions and comments. **Step three** - Communicate the importance of staff participation in UAF advocacy.

WHAT STAFF COUNCIL IS DOING

- **Strategy Map**
  - Mission Vision Values
  - Goals
    - improve morale through supportive culture
    - foster effective and timely communication
    - encourage collaboration across units
    - develop leadership, internal processes and knowledge sharing.

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

- **Leadership/Staff Council to co-host open forum to present results to all staff**
- **Invite all VCs to schedule time to review results with more specific targeted plan for area**
- **Continue to regularly evaluate recommendations**
- **Conduct the survey annually to monitor progress**