

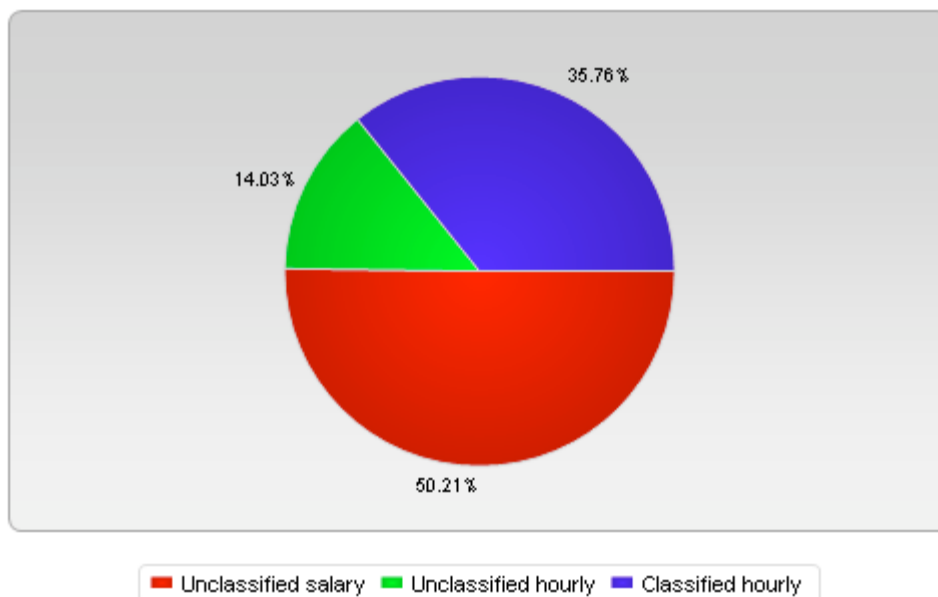
## USAC / CSAC 2008 Staff Survey

A staff survey was conducted from January 29<sup>th</sup> to February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008, by the Classified and Unclassified Staff Advisory Councils (CSAC/USAC) as a follow-up to surveys conducted in 2006 by USAC and CSAC. The results of the earlier surveys were uniformly positive, with the troubling exception that only thirty-four percent of respondents indicated they would be comfortable using Human Resources to discuss or resolve problems or issues with their jobs. We were compelled to more fully understand the myriad of possible reasons behind this sentiment. To achieve this, we asked a series of closed and open ended questions involving many aspects of the environment in which classified and unclassified staff perform their work.

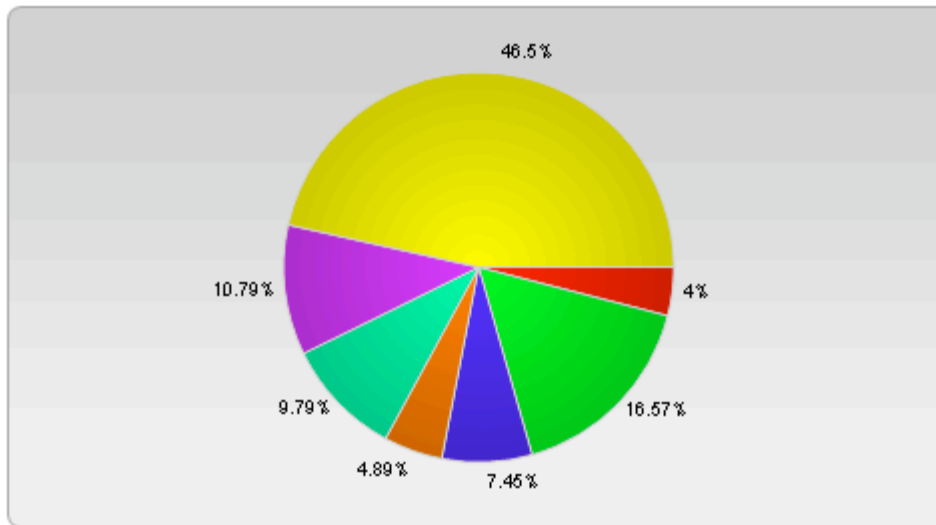
The results of this survey are well substantiated by the fact that more than half of staff members surveyed chose to respond.

|                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Survey Responses</b>             | <b>943</b>       |
| <b>Full Time</b>                    | <b>90%</b>       |
| <b>Female / Male Ratio</b>          | <b>69% / 31%</b> |
| <b>Supervise Unclassified Staff</b> | <b>25%</b>       |
| <b>Supervise Classified Staff</b>   | <b>20%</b>       |
| <b>Supervise Student Employees</b>  | <b>48%</b>       |

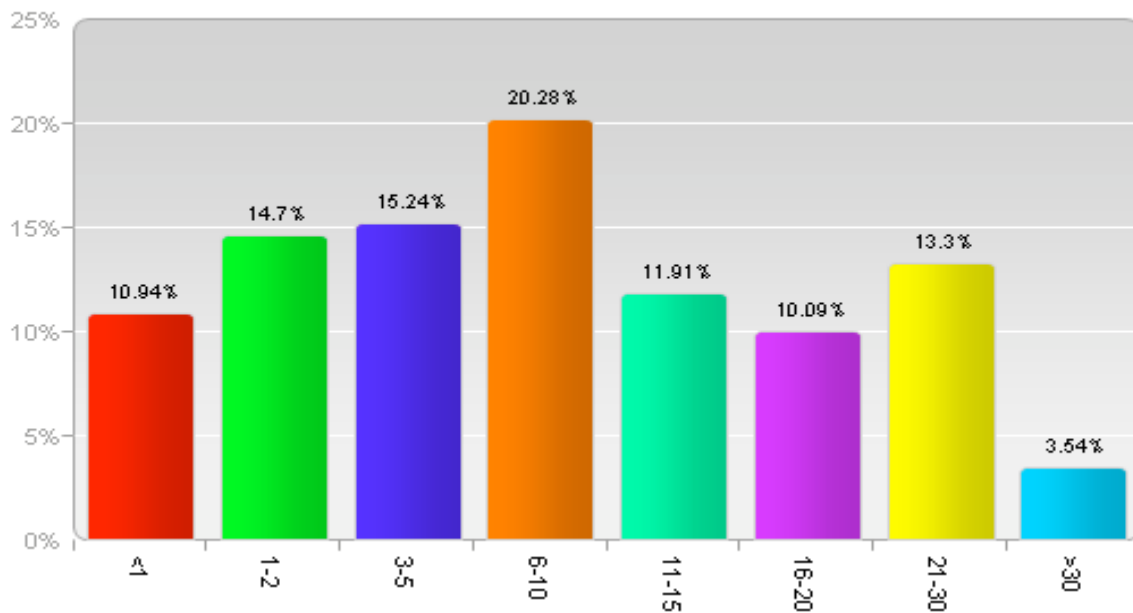
Q2. What is your pay status?



Q11. Where do you work? (Click here to view the organizational chart.)



Q3. How many years have you been employed at WSU?



## **Executive Summary of Comments**

Several themes emerged throughout the survey highlighting both positive and negative aspects of work life for the staff of Wright State University. It is clearly apparent the administration of the University needs to devote resources to producing and completing an action item list to address these concerns. It is also clear staff feel a strong sense of commitment to the organization, and wish to be a part of bringing these issues to resolution.

### **Points of Pride**

Staff generally feel there are fabulous aspects to a career at WSU. This institution of higher learning and its community are rich with opportunity for professionals in a variety of areas. It is widely agreed that Dr. David Hopkins, President, provides outstanding leadership and is perceived as being consistently open and honest. Along with strong leadership, respondents felt the following were key strengths of Wright State University:

- Emphasis on enrichment of individuals as professionals through tuition remission, Staff Development Day, continuing education opportunities, professional development programs and Presidential Lecture Series.
- The presence of a collegial workforce consisting of good people, dedicated staff, collaboration between units, good overall customer service, a consistent student focus and a strong sense of community.
- The organizational commitment to wellness, health and fellowship through initiatives like the staff / retirees picnic, University Challenge, lunches with the president, and the university fitness center and other wellness and recreation resources.
- A drive towards excellence and innovation in our First Year Experience, University response to CORE, STEM, Foundations of Excellence, Quest for Community.

### **Genuine Citizenship in the Workplace Community**

The presence and quality of communications both inside a department and between departments is in direct correlation with the respondent's comfort level in their individual work environments. Open and truly honest communication, even if it is to convey something viewed as negative, provides an excellent cornerstone on which to constructively build teams. Openness in communications can lead to an overall improvement in productivity, approachability and collaboration. It is evident from the responses that a lack of communication fosters the perception of cronyism, isolation from colleagues and an absence of ownership in the tasks being completed.

### **Staff Identity**

Classified and Unclassified staff feel very positively about the employee benefits package, staff enrichment / development and commitment to wellness. These things are integral in promoting the sense that the organization is invested in them as individuals and professional components of the University mission. Employees did not tend to possess a sense of being valued when they felt under-compensated, improperly classified in their job role or absence of job security. In certain areas concern was expressed about a lack of advancement opportunities.

### **Trust / Workplace Integrity**

Of utmost importance to staff are the issues of trust and confidentiality. Numerous breaches of confidentiality were noted. Obviously, the impact on respondents affected by the improper handling of confidential information is profound. Fear of retribution is widespread as employees relate accounts of departmental situations worsened by confiding their concerns in members of management or Human Resources. Several examples included respondents being treated in what appears to be a less than honest, and respectful manner. Survey results further indicated decisions being made in the interest of an unclear agenda of the administration, with no recourse for staff.

### **Supervision / Management**

Employees have a wide range of experiences with their supervisors and members of their reporting structure. These experiences range from extremely positive to purely negative. Those with positive experiences have supervisors who allow them to have ownership of their work, do not micromanage, are truly accessible, and completely honest. As a result, they feel they play a valuable role in the success of Wright State University.

Negative comments indicated inconsistency in how employees were treated, absence of supervisor oversight, lack of confidentiality in some offices, and inability to have constructive involvement in decision making. Many of the university policies, including hiring guidelines and Wright Way, are very arbitrarily applied or followed. Employees seem hesitant to discuss their working situation with either a higher level of administration or Human Resources due to fear of retribution. Others felt there is unequal opportunity due to favoritism, and their supervisors did not show proper respect for personal issues and were not looking out for the best interest of staff.

## **Accountability**

There were excellent examples of staff and/or departments being singled out for providing good customer service, being approachable, helpful, and knowledgeable. Many of the survey respondents mentioned the importance of treating students and other staff members fairly and with proper respect. The sense was that respondents felt part of their job was to be accountable to all those they interacted with and accountability was built into their workflow and performance assessment. However, there is a general sense that the upper level administration is not aware of what is occurring at lower levels, such as middle management, therefore major issues with staff accountability remain unresolved.

There were comments that indicated the Department of Human Resources is not being held accountable for a lack of customer service. Issues brought to Human Resources are resolved slowly, if at all, with a number of individuals indicating they received no response when trying to get answers to both basic and involved questions. There is a perception that Human Resources is dismissive of employees' problems, even if these problems negatively impact the employees' livelihood. Employee issues do not seem to be a high priority for Human Resources. Human Resources is perceived as being a part of the administration and thus makes decisions biased towards upper management and the administration. The Benefits Office was singled out as providing exceptional service, and some employees have developed good relationships with their Human Resources representatives. Employees felt there are Human Resources staff who are approachable, helpful and knowledgeable, while others felt they are disrespectful, condescending and incompetent. Respondents noted that they feel more comfortable going to Human Resources with routine fact-based issues, rather than problems that require a more in-depth solution.

## **Recommendations**

- Staff Council, or designees, to serve as an advisory board to the Department of Human Resources in a supportive role and help facilitate an improved relationship with staff.
- Increase staff of Human Resources to enable more effective service of campus community.
- Better campus wide emergency notification system.
- Greater campus wide communication of department roles and functions to foster better customer service along with examination of service efforts.
- Clear communication to staff regarding the annual budget and strategic plans including the ramifications on the University and impact on staff.

- Mandatory training for supervisors of staff or students and consistency in the application of policies.
- Administration should closely review departments that have been identified as having significant concerns and develop an action oriented plan to bring about resolution.
- Emphasis and training on team building / leadership skills.
- Bridging of the geographic gaps between main campus and our remote sites.
- Continuation and growth of enriching activities like Staff Development Day, fitness center, lunches with the president and staff / retiree picnic.
- Across the board organizational / management commitment to the involvement in enrichment activities.
- Consistent review of compensation mechanisms and employee / supervisor evaluations.
- Periodic supervisor evaluations by subordinates and peer reviews.
- Staff arbitration mechanism which is both empowered by the administration and free of bias, to facilitate resolution without employee fear of retribution. This could include the creation of a staff ombudsman or liaison.
- Development of an action item list by administration to address concerns of the staff and the devotion of appropriate resources to the process of completing the action items.

## **Conclusion**

It is apparent from this summary of the survey responses; Wright State University continues to be an outstanding place to work. Both classified and unclassified staff consistently touted the positive aspects of being a part of a diversified workforce.

Also evident from these responses, is the critical need for action to address some serious concerns that are widely held by staff members. The addressing of these concerns needs to be done in a timely and effective manner. These issues obviously detract from the overall spirit of innovation and sense of community within the organization.

The following appendices contain survey quotes and graphs in support of the aforementioned summary.

## **Appendix A**

### **Points of Pride**

"I think that WSU does a great job creating a community!!! It does this effectively by offering so many ways for employees to get involved outside of the office. (1) Tuition Remission is the BEST! (2) Fitness Center (3) E-mail Lists that keep us up-to-date on campus activities. (4) Professional Development Days for USAC & CSAC. (5) All the services offered at the library that employees have access to. (6) Retirees picnic. (7) Free tickets to Department of Music Events. (8) Hundreds of after-hours guest speakers, seminars, film series, etc. (9) Quest Conference (10) Reasonable parking fee. --I could honestly go on and on about how CONNECTED I feel at WSU."

"Staff development day, great benefits, educational programs, retirement parties, receptions, open houses, etc... all great ways to create sense of community."

"There are many good programs, both socially and as an enhancement to the job, that exist for employees. The WSU community is always encouraging employees to take advantage of them."

### **Genuine Citizenship in the Workplace Community**

"I am fortunate to have a supervisor and colleagues who enjoy working together. We work as a team, support each other, and communicate our ideas and concerns. This facilitates trust for us."

"Lack of communication about things that are going on which at times may be done as a way to prevent information overload but in reality only adds to alienation and distrust."

"When information is not shared it is often perceived that there are secrets and this feels very distrustful."

"Not enough communication. The higher ups seem to be looking out for themselves. I don't think they care about the others in the office."

"Distance is a problem for the Lake Campus. We may be unintentionally overlooked at times."

### **Staff Identity**

"Watching the employees to see what they are doing, undermine employee moral, create a disquieting environment"

"I really appreciated the day off on Monday, December 31. It was a big moral boost to know that our hard work is appreciated."

"I have a real problem with job descriptions and how the jobs are classified. Also how departments are limited in giving raises to classified employees. Where the incentives to work hard, the departments are are limited in giving raises to classified employees and if they want to raise the job level it is up to human resources to approve."

"Isn't there a better way to come up with a pay scale for employees who receive an increase in position level? Currently starting at a beginning pay in a new level in a new position seems to be a punishment."

## **Trust**

"Mainly in this department, distrust comes from the fear of retribution."

"Concerns are not handled in a fair manner, if at all and favoritism occurs daily."

"PLEASE, come up with some mechanism for staff to be heard (REALLY heard) when a boss becomes abusive. Don't make us have to decide we must leave the university because the abuse will never be addressed. Don't just take the supervisor's word for everything."

"I once went to HR with a problem with my supervisor and the supervisor became even more hostile because HR told them everything I had asked them to keep in confidence. It only made matters worse. I ended up transferring to another department."

"In my past position, I went to HR with concerns about my supervisor and was given no real help. I was told to ask for a Performance Appraisal, which I did. I was then transferred out of that office."

## **Supervisors**

"The head of our department cares a LOT about her employees and ensures we are happy at all times. If we are not, we know it's okay to confront her."

"I am able to contact my supervisor concerning any problems that I may have and have the understanding that it goes no further than him."

"My own supervisor is really wonderful and understanding. She is always available and willing to work with us--and she does. She communicates with us constantly, always letting us know what and why she is doing something. She always solicits our input in projects."

"I will never again share a confidence, work or personal with my supervisor. Not only is it shared with peers, but they share it with everyone else."

"Do not trust supervisor because he criticizes employees to others, he is dishonest, takes credit for work he has not done, he retaliates if we go to his supervisor, he makes threats and tries to intimidate, does not tell the truth when questioned by his supervisor regarding a situation with an employee, tries to discourage communication between coworkers in our office or with others on campus, has said not to go to his supervisor with questions."

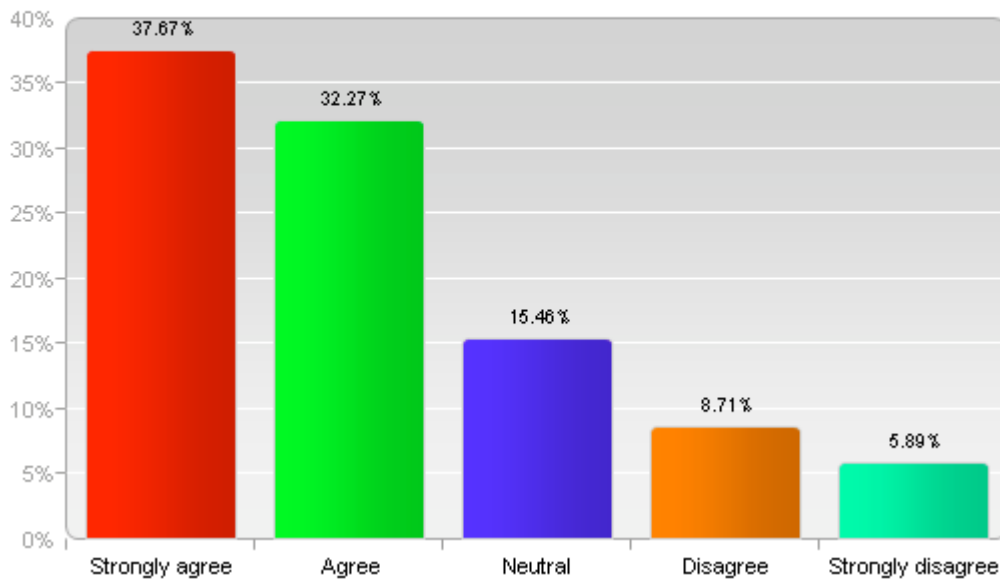
## **Accountability**

"The HR department at WSU is in the worst state I have seen. No matter how rosy they paint themselves, they are still ineffective and mismanaged. How this goes unchecked is beyond comprehension."

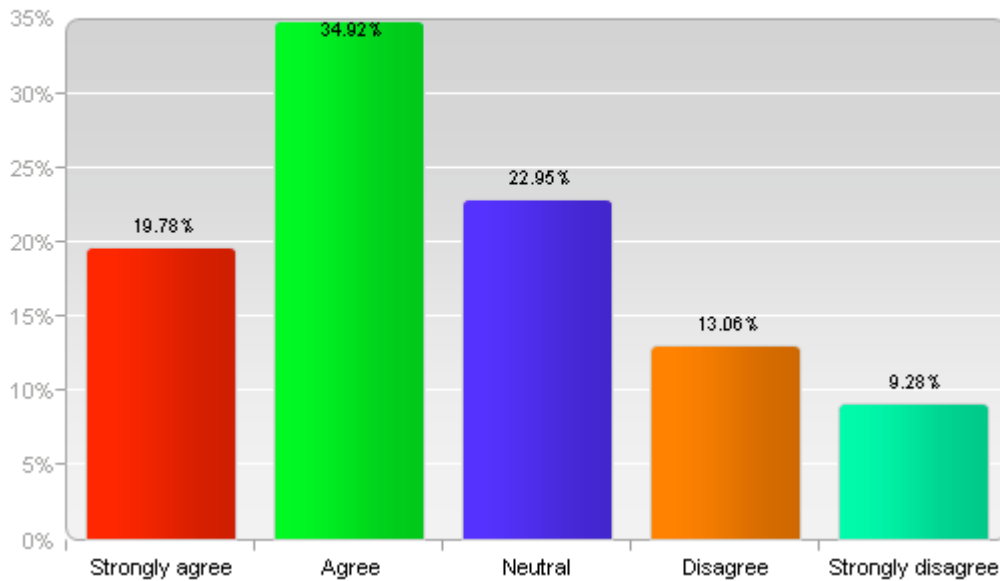
"What will it take to affect real change in the departments that are visibly suffering? Unfortunately, the perception becomes that the areas with union representation are the only ones who can affectively accomplish anything."

## Appendix B

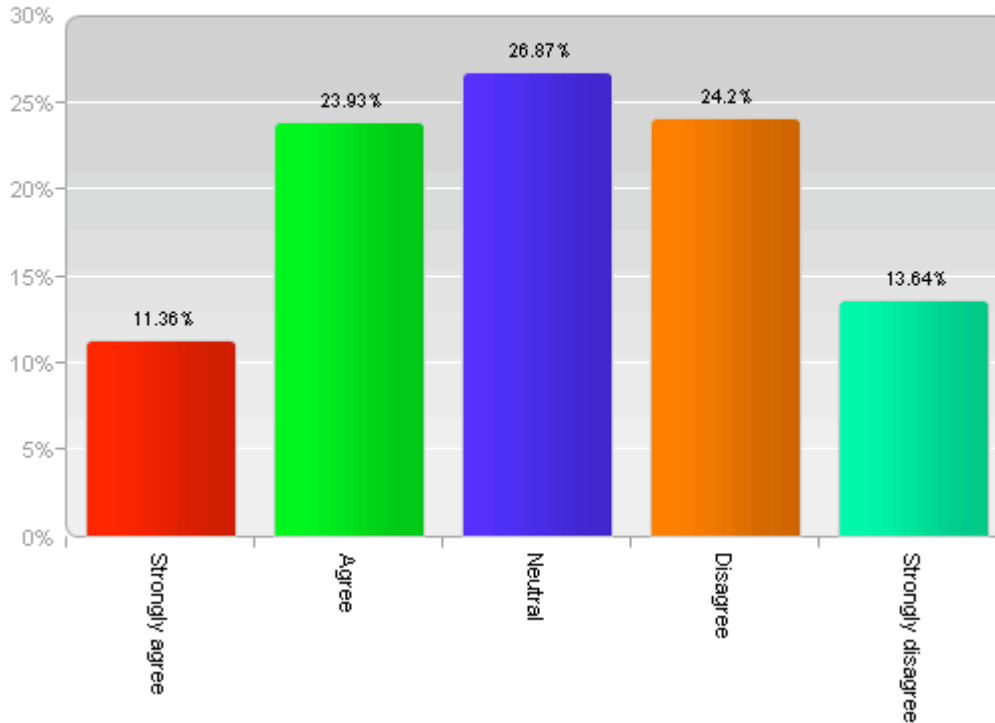
Q12. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - If I shared my problems with my supervisor, I know she/he would respond constructively and caringly.



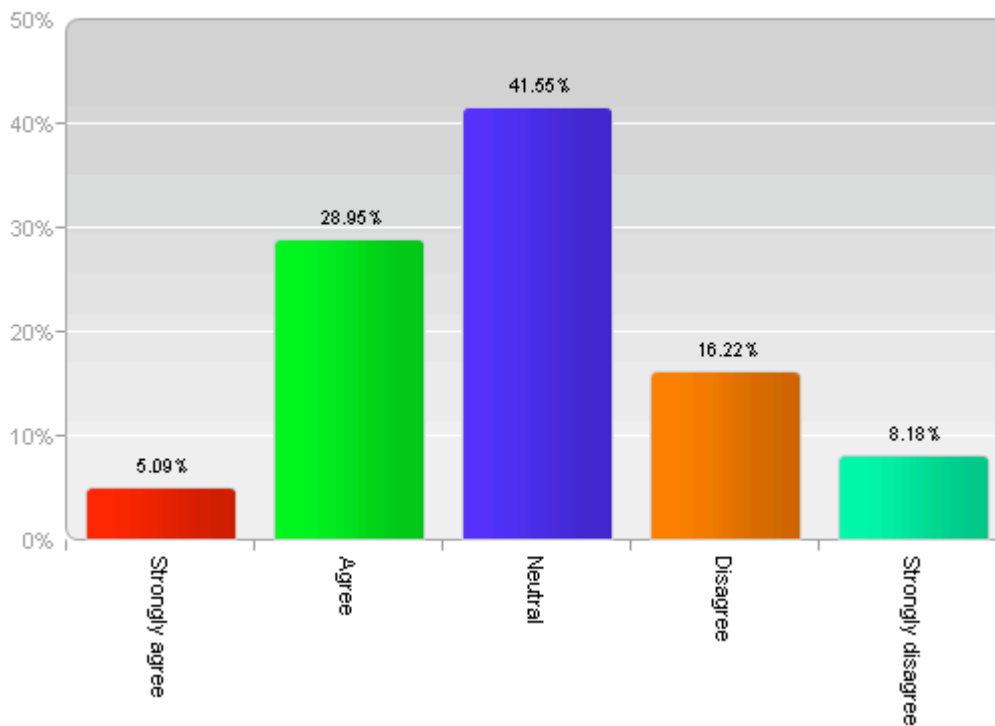
Q13. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - The level of trust which exists between the department unit managers and employees is satisfactory.



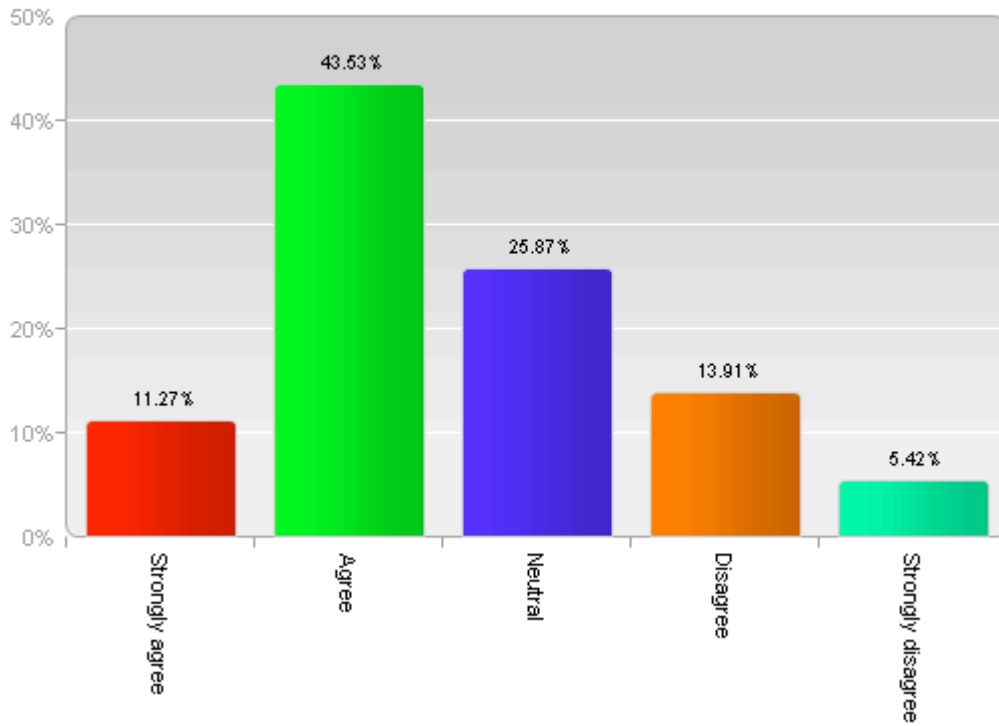
Q16. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - If my work-related concerns cannot be solved at my department level, I would feel comfortable going to my Dean, Vice President, or the Provost.



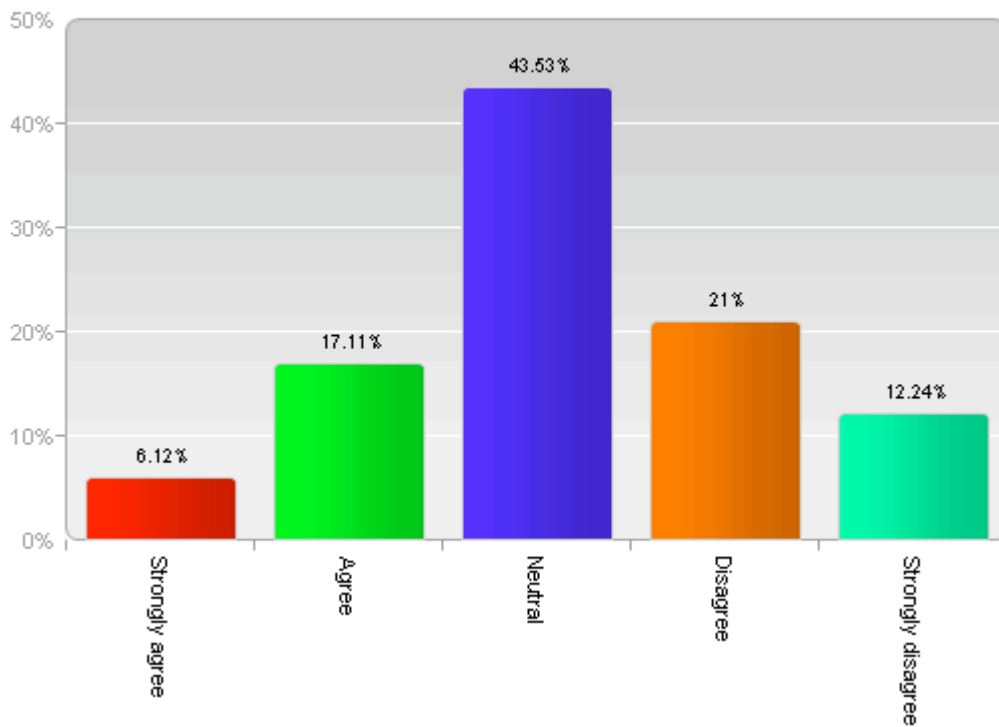
Q17. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - The level of trust that exists between the WSU administration and employees is satisfactory.



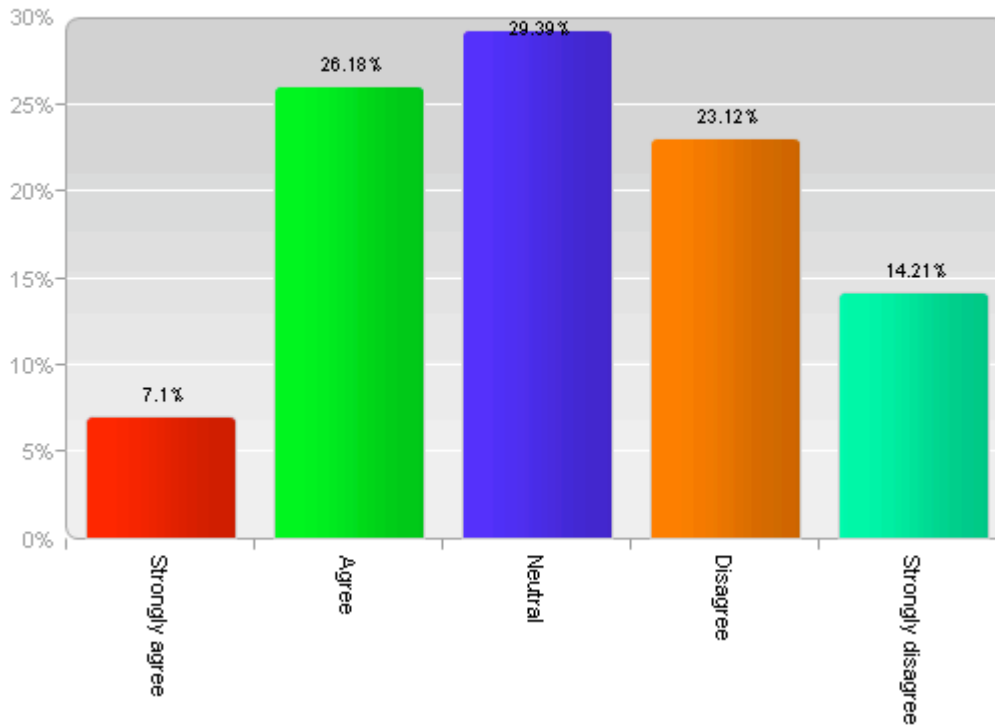
Q20. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - I believe the information provided to the Department of Human Resources is kept confidential.



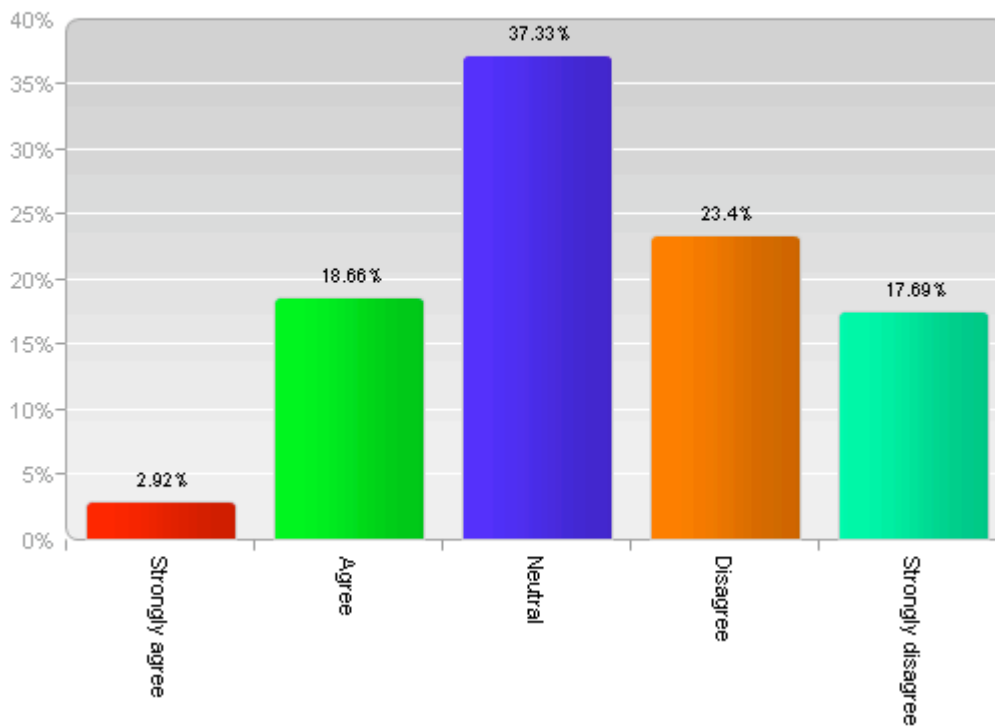
Q22. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - My supervisors encourage me to discuss my work-related concerns with the Department of Human Resources.



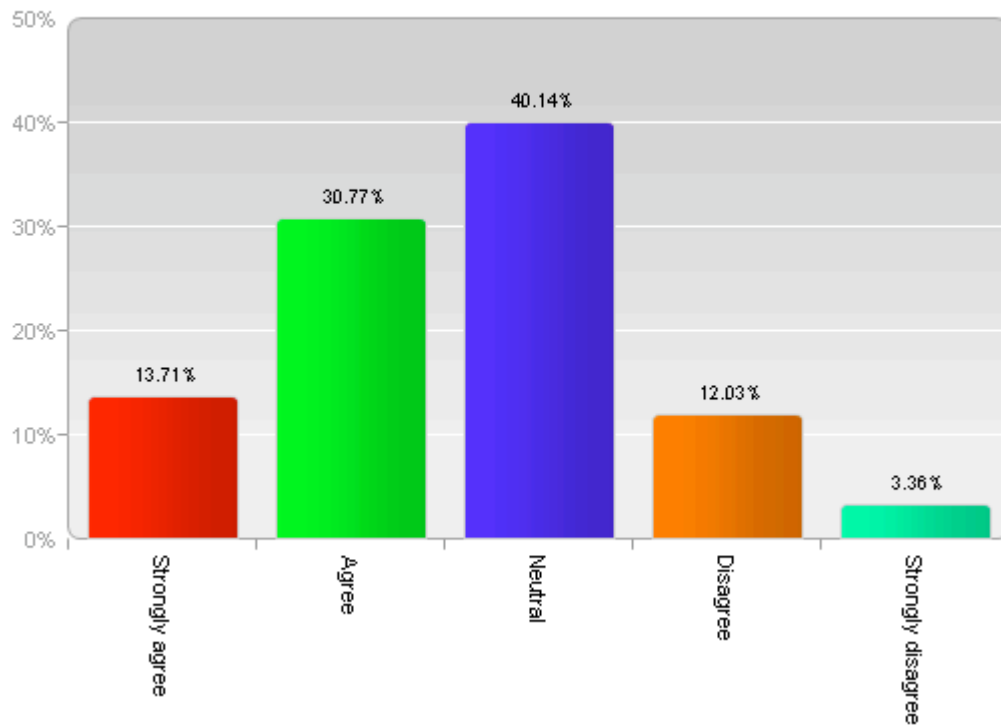
Q21. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - I believe the Department of Human Resources makes every effort to address my concerns.



Q24. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - The level of trust that exists between Human Resources and employees is satisfactory.



Q23. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - Information given to the Department of Human Resources can be used against me at a later point in time.



Q25. I feel comfortable going to the Department of Human Resources to discuss problems or issues with my job.

