COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY SYSTEM STAFF

2023 State of Shared Governance Report

Survey of Staff Senate Members in the University System of Maryland (USM)

Attention:

Dr. Jay Perman, Chancellor

Compiled by the Council of University System Staff:

Kalia R. Patricio, Ph.D., Chair

Kathleen Hebbel, Vice-Chair

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State of Shared Governance Report (USM) - Survey of Staff Senate Members

2023 Executive Summary

For the 2023 cycle, the Council of University System Staff (CUSS) conducted the State of Shared Governance Survey with staff senate members at all twelve of the USM institutions. The survey was provided to all university Staff Senate Chairs and they were instructed to disseminate the survey to all staff members involved in shared governance at their institutions. The structure of staff senates varies across each institution; for example, UMBC has separate staff senates, one for Exempt Staff and the other for Non-Exempt Staff, while UMUC has one senate which represents staff from three worldwide divisions (Stateside, Asia, and Europe).

CUSS conducts this survey on an annual basis, with this report serving as the sixth iteration from the inaugural year in 2017-2018. The results will serve the USM, and each institution, in terms of monitoring and understanding the status of shared governance across the system. However, it cannot be emphasized enough that this survey is querying only those staff who are directly involved in shared governance at their institutions. In partnership with CUSF, CUSS plans to conduct a broader shared governance awareness survey in spring 2024.

Overall we received 136 responses, a 20% increase in the response rate from 2022. We show an overall response rate of 68%.

	Responses by Institution	Representatives by Institution	Response Rate
Bowie State University	9	20	45%
Coppin State University	5	12	42%
Frostburg State University	7	9	78%
Salisbury University	16	16	100%
Towson University	32	32	100%
University of Baltimore	4	11	36%
University of Maryland, Baltimore	25	28	89%
University of Maryland, Baltimore County	17	23	74%
University of Maryland Center for Env. Science	3	14	21%
University of Maryland, College Park	8	22	36%
University of Maryland Eastern Shore	1	1	1000%
University of Maryland Global Campus	9	11	82%
	Overall response rate: 68%		

The survey is unchanged from prior years. The survey contains open-ended questions and responses, the latter of which are captured in the individual reports for each campus rather than in this summary report.

The highest-rated questions (those with the highest occurrence of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses) include:

- Question 13 "My immediate supervisor is supportive of my involvement in shared governance when I need to attend a meeting" (82.9%, significantly lower from 91.8% in 2022)
- Question 19 "The Staff Senate and/or other institution-wide governance bodies meet on a regular basis" (93.3%, compared to 96.3% in 2022)

These responses are something to keep an eye on, since they have decreased over the prior year. It would seem, broadly, that those already engaged in shared governance feel supported to engage. It is worth noting again that only those staff already engaged in shared governance are respondents in this survey.

There were also a number of questions that showed a substantial number of "Neither Agree Nor Disagree" responses. This mid-rated questions include:

- Question 4 "Feedback [from administration] is presented in a timely manner, be it positive or negative" (28.1%, up from 27.5% in 2022 though still below the 35% of 2021)
- Question 7 "Other than on rare occasions, the president seldom overturns staff decisions and recommendations" (40.7%, down from 45% in 2022)
- Question 8 "The president seeks meaningful staff input on those issues (such as budgeting) in which the staff has an appropriate interest, but not primary responsibility" (25.9%, down from 27.5% in 2022 and 31% in 2021)
- Question 11 " There is open communication with staff senate." (27%, up from 16.5% in 2022 - a continuing trend upward)
- Question 16 "The administration recognizes staff involvement in academic affairs and program development" (31.9%, similar to 2022). This question consistently has the lowest agreement.
- Question 18 "Structures and processes that allow for shared governance are clearly defined in the governance documents (e.g. staff handbook)." (35.6%, up significantly from 19.3% in 2022)
- Question 21 "The administration provides adequate institutional support for shared governance to function (budget, liaisons, etc)." (26.7%, up significantly from 21.1% in 2022)

This category can be difficult to define, but still important to examine. These could potentially be seen as areas where improvement or clarification might move them in a different direction from this "middle" category response. Overall, however, this category expanded over previous years.

Lastly, there were several questions that showed a substantial number of "Strongly Disagree" or "Disagree" responses. We have historically only included those in this list that had a response rate above 15% for the two combined ratings, though this year I included one rating that had a significant change.

- Question 3 "Staff can openly communicate governance issues with cabinet/upper management." (11.9% - up from under 6% in 2022)
- Question 15 "The administration recognizes staff involvement in budgeting and fiscal resource planning." (20.7% - up from 14.7% in 2022)
- Question 16 "The administration recognizes staff involvement in academic affairs and program development." (20.7% - up from 16.6% in 2022)

These responses are distributed broadly, but generally seem to revolve around communication and seeking input from staff. This could mean that institutional leadership is involving their staff senates less in shared governance processes than in years past. We would like to still encourage an individual review of the campus reports to get a better understanding of the distribution of these overall numbers. The CUSS/CUSF Shared Governance Awareness Survey will perhaps shed some additional light on this area.
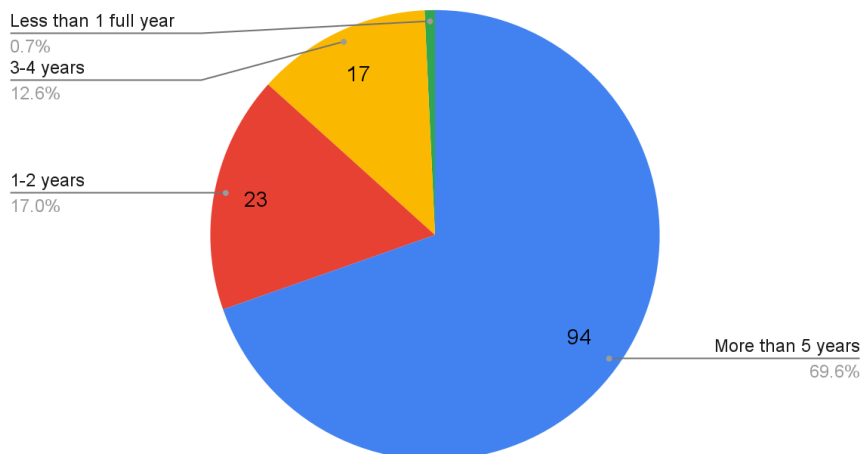
Following is the supporting data with an AI-generated summary of the open-ended responses (new this year!). Also included is an aggregate list of the open-ended responses to the survey , the procedural outline, and the list of survey questions.
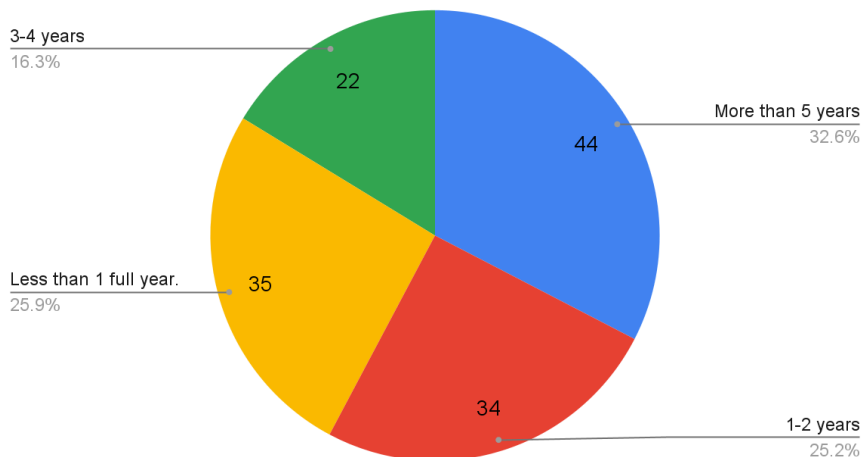
Shared Governance Survey: Overall Data

Participant Information:

Institution	Responses	Participation Rate
Bowie State University	9	6.6%
Coppin State University	5	3.7%
Frostburg State University	7	5.1%
Salisbury University	16	11.8%
Towson University	32	23.5%
University of Baltimore	4	2.9%
University of Maryland Baltimore	25	18.4%
University of Maryland Baltimore County	17	12.5%
UM Center for Environmental Science	3	2.2%
University of Maryland College Park	8	5.9%
University of Maryland Eastern Shore	1	0.7%
University of Maryland Global Campus	9	6.6%
Total	**136**	**100%**

How long have you been with your institution?

Less than 1 full year
0.7%
3-4 years
12.6%
17
1-2 years
17.0%
23
94
More than 5 years
69.6%

How long have you been involved in Staff Shared Governance?

3-4 years
16.3%
22
44
More than 5 years
32.6%
Less than 1 full year.
25.9%
35
34
1-2 years
25.2%

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Survey Questions:

Climate of Governance

1. Shared governance on our campus is alive and healthy.

Strongly Disagree
3.0%
Disagree
4.4%

Strongly Agree
22.2%

Agree
56.3%

Neither Agree Nor
14.1%
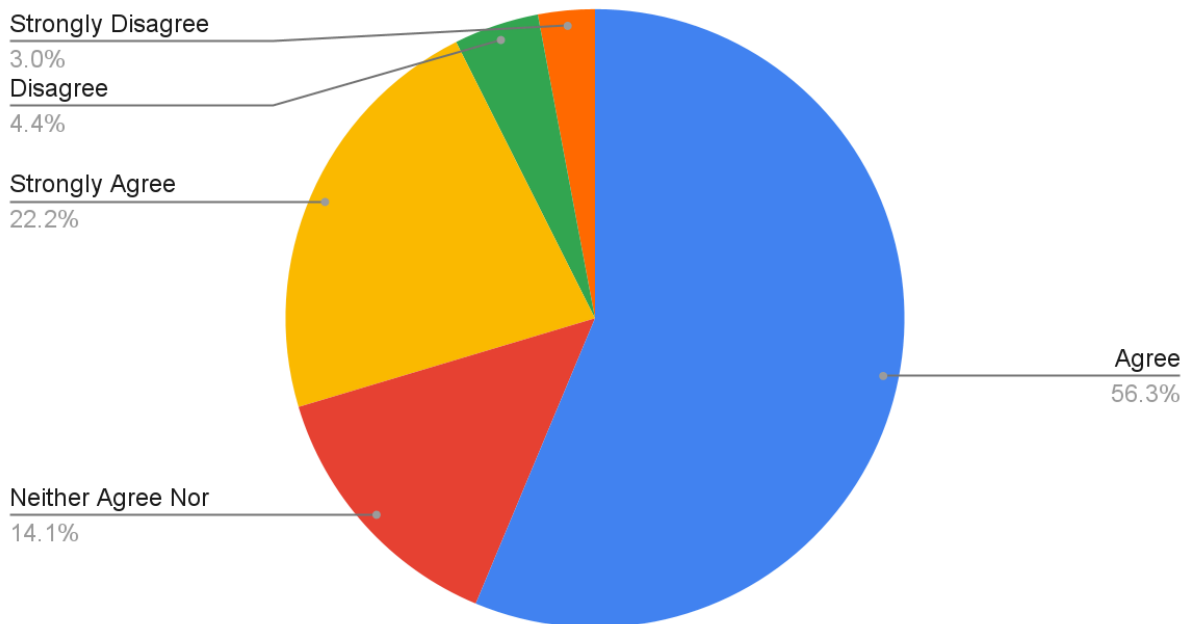
The open-ended responses indicate a varied perception of shared governance within the institution and can be summarized as follows:
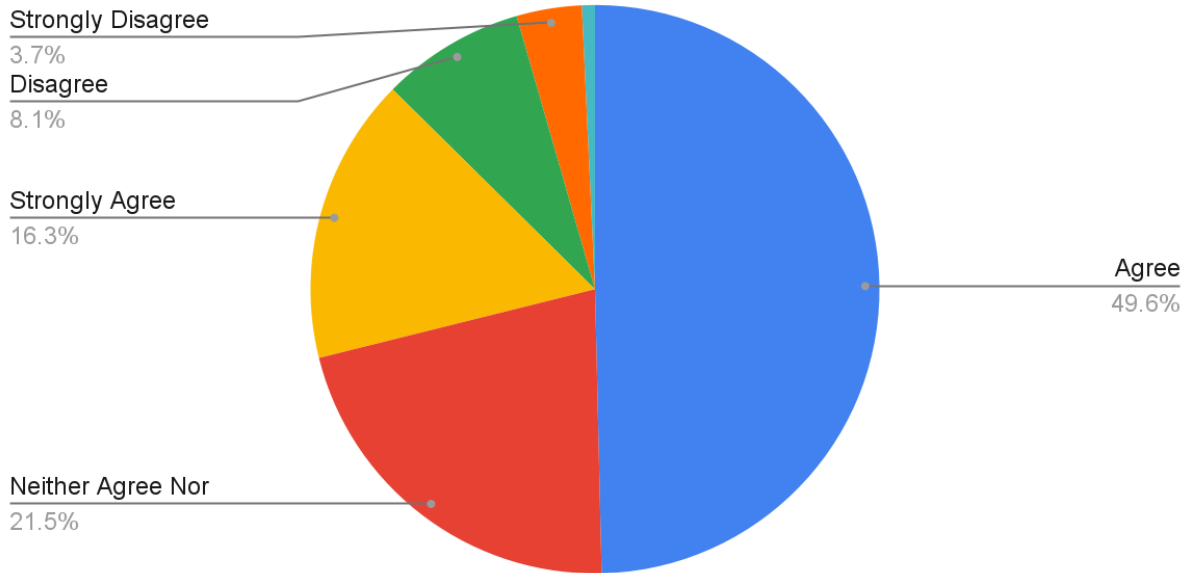
- **Positive Engagement**: There is a strong attitude toward shared governance, with some leadership actively engaging with governance groups to disseminate information and seek input.
- **Desire for More Involvement:** Many individuals express a desire for increased involvement of governance groups in decision-making processes, particularly in policy and planning.
- **Concerns about Participation**: Some note a lack of participation from department or division leaders in shared governance meetings and wish for greater involvement from staff, faculty, and students.
- **Challenges in Implementation:** Despite positive attitudes, there are concerns about the effectiveness of shared governance, with issues such as decision-making already being determined and low participation rates.

- **Communication and Transparency:** There are calls for improved communication, transparency, and inclusivity in shared governance processes, as well as a need for better understanding of the structures and workflows involved.
- **Differences in Perception and Experience**: Views on shared governance vary across different divisions of the institution, with some experiencing strong engagement while others perceive it as performative or lacking impact.
- **Staff Representation:** Concerns are raised about the lack of staff representation and voice within shared governance structures, with suggestions for improving communication channels and representation within colleges.
- **Leadership Influence**: The involvement and support of institutional leadership, such as the president, are highlighted as crucial factors in the effectiveness of shared governance.
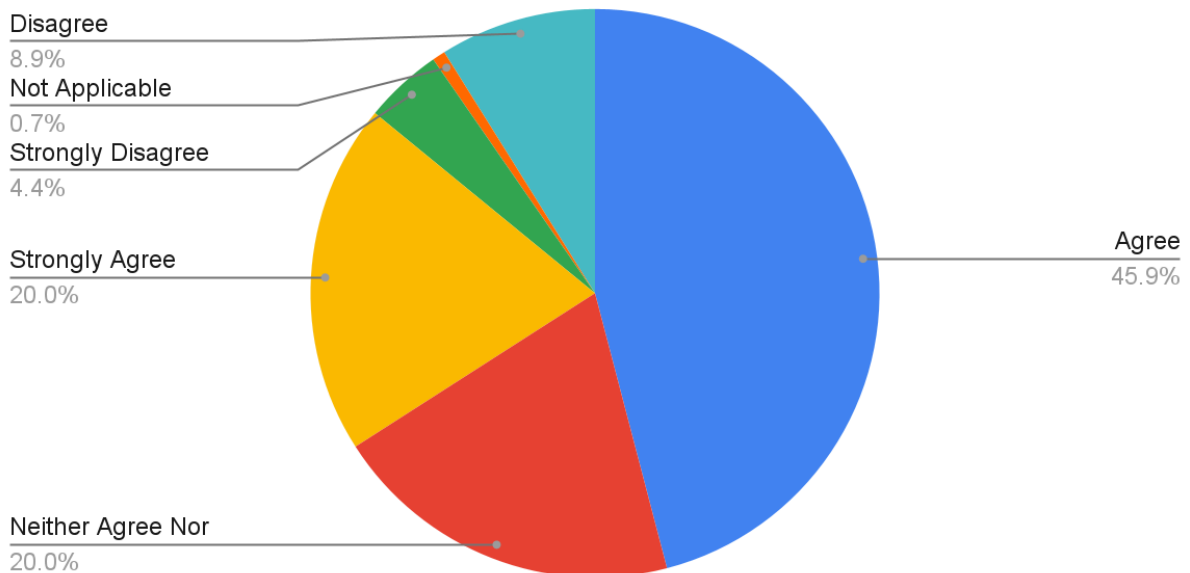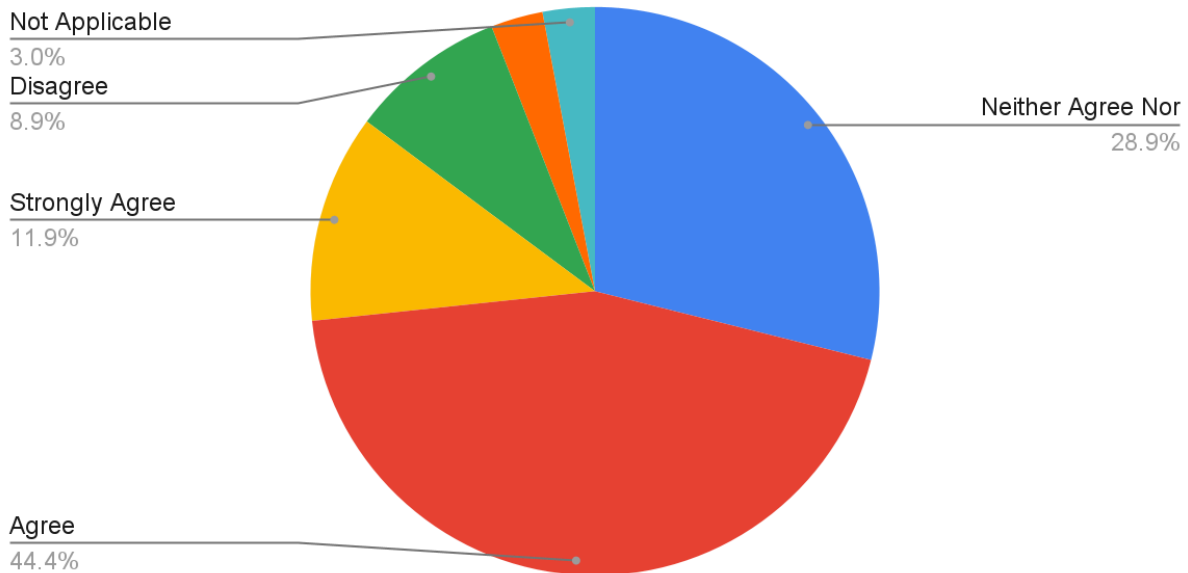
Institutional Communications

2. There is excellent communication and consultation between the administration and the staff and senate leaderships.

Strongly Disagree
3.7%

Disagree
8.1%

Strongly Agree
16.3%

Neither Agree Nor
21.5%

Agree
49.6%

3. Staff can openly communicate governance issues with cabinet/upper management.

Disagree
8.9%

Not Applicable
0.7%

Strongly Disagree
4.4%

Strongly Agree
20.0%

Neither Agree Nor
20.0%

Agree
45.9%

4. Feedback is presented in a timely manner, be it positive or negative.

Not Applicable
3.0%

Disagree
8.9%

Strongly Agree
11.9%

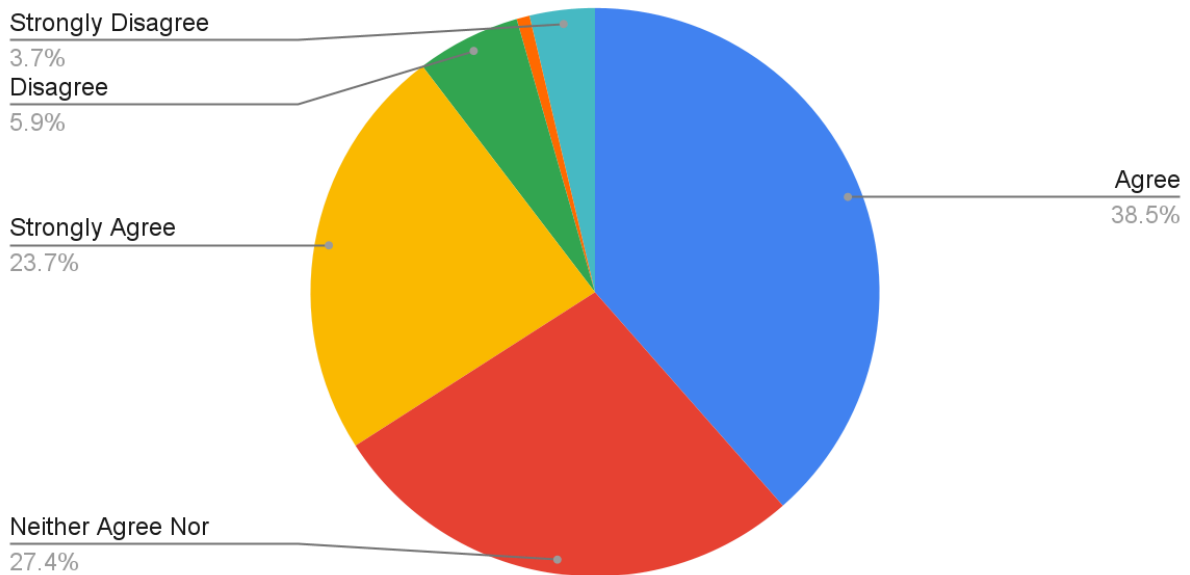Neither Agree Nor
28.9%

Agree
44.4%

The responses to the open-ended questions related to communication suggest various concerns related to communication, transparency, and decision-making processes within the institutions.

- **Lack of feedback loops:** Some respondents feel they cannot provide feedback as they perceive there is none given to them.
- **Covert decision-making:** Decisions are made without involving all relevant stakeholders, leading to potential issues with transparency and inclusivity.
- **Communication challenges:** Despite improvements, communication remains a problem, with difficulties in obtaining timely answers from management and a perceived lack of consultation with staff leadership.
- **Exclusion of expertise:** Some individuals with significant experience feel undervalued and excluded from important discussions, highlighting a lack of recognition of their expertise.
- **Desire for more information:** There is a call for greater awareness about the roles and functions of governing bodies like the University Senate, as well as a desire for more frequent updates from higher-level administrators.
- **Concerns about trust and transparency**: There is a sense of distrust towards certain departments or authorities, with fears of deflection, obfuscation, or retaliation when attempting to communicate openly.
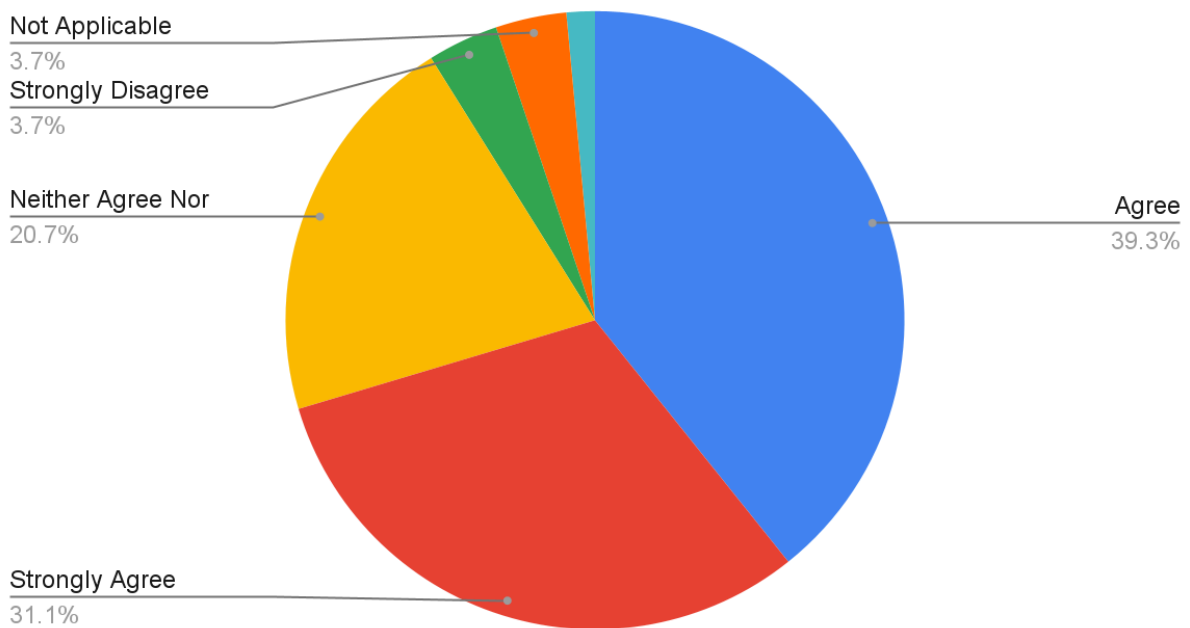
- **Empowerment of staff:** Some feel that staff members should have more opportunities to voice their concerns and contribute to decision-making processes.
- **Perceptions of power dynamics:** There are perceptions that certain bodies, such as the staff senate, lack real influence over decision-making processes, with leadership doing as they please regardless of input.
- **Hierarchy and process obstacles:** Issues must navigate through a hierarchical structure, potentially hindering efficient resolution, although there is optimism for improvement with new leadership.
- **Lack of transparency post-resolution**: After a resolution is passed, there is uncertainty about the subsequent process and transparency regarding its implementation.
- **Emphasis on growth through communication and transparency:** Despite challenges, there is a shared belief in the potential for improvement through continued communication and transparency efforts.

Senate's Role at Your Institution

5. The staff senate plays an important role in providing academic and administrative functions at the university.

Strongly Disagree 3.7%
Disagree 5.9%
Strongly Agree 23.7%
Agree 38.5%
Neither Agree Nor 27.4%

6. Your role with staff senate is valued.

Not Applicable 3.7%
Strongly Disagree 3.7%
Neither Agree Nor 20.7%
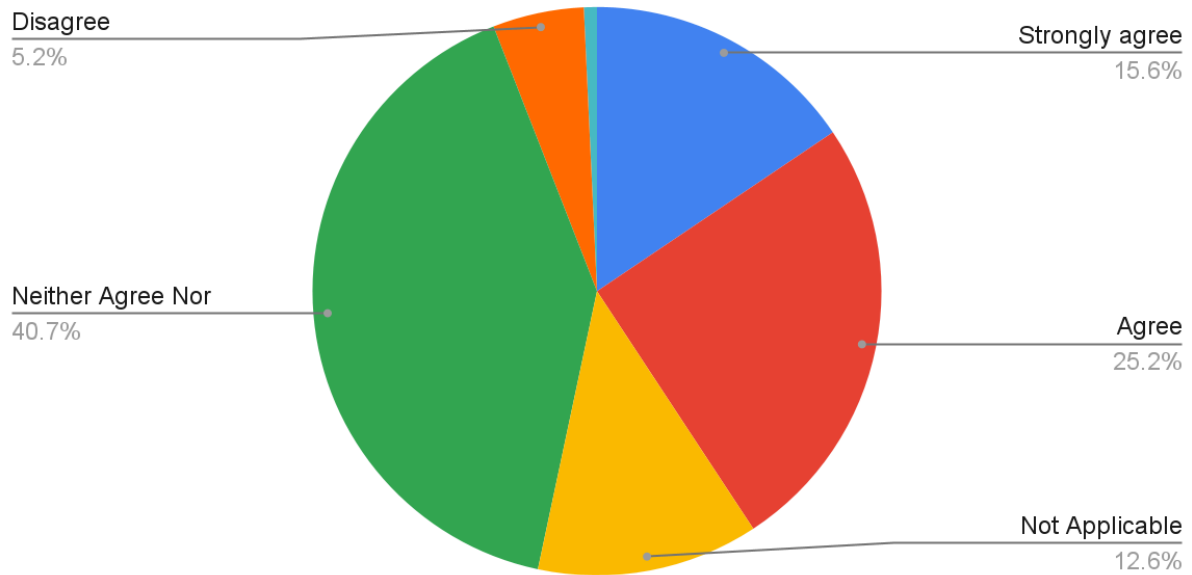Agree 39.3%
Strongly Agree 31.1%

The open-ended question responses related to the Senate's role highlight various perspectives on the role and effectiveness of the staff senate and shared governance structures within the universities:

- **Importance of Staff Senate**: Some recognize the staff senate as an essential part of the university's administrative functions.
- **Concerns about Representation and Communication:** There are concerns about the lack of productive channels for general staff members to share their concerns and the perceived disconnect between staff senate leaders and department/division leaders.
- **Transparency and Collaboration:** While there are positive steps towards transparency from the current administration, there are hopes that collaboration continues to improve.
- **Focus on Specific Issues:** Some express concerns about the focus of certain initiatives, particularly regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, feeling that they may lack balance or neglect other important areas.
- **Perceptions of Value and Influence**: There are mixed perceptions regarding the value and influence of the staff senate, with some feeling that their involvement is not valued or that the senate is not taken seriously by administration.
- **Role in Governance:** Views differ on the staff senate's role in governance, with some suggesting a more administrative focus and others feeling it is less influential compared to other governance bodies.
- **Challenges with Recruitment and Engagement:** There are concerns about the lack of recruitment efforts, opportunities for involvement, and support for new members within the staff senate.
- **Structural Issues:** Some respondents mention structural issues, such as differences between senates and councils and concerns about decision-making processes.
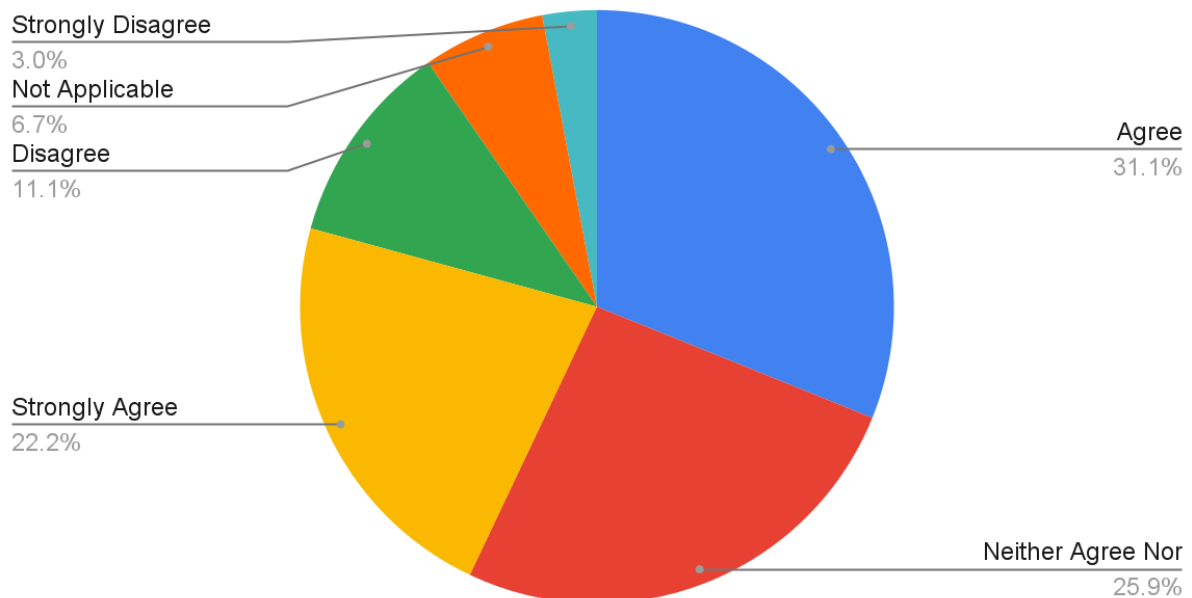
Overall, the responses reflect a mix of appreciation for the staff senate's efforts, frustrations with its perceived effectiveness and representation, and calls for improvement in communication, inclusion, and influence within the university's governance framework.
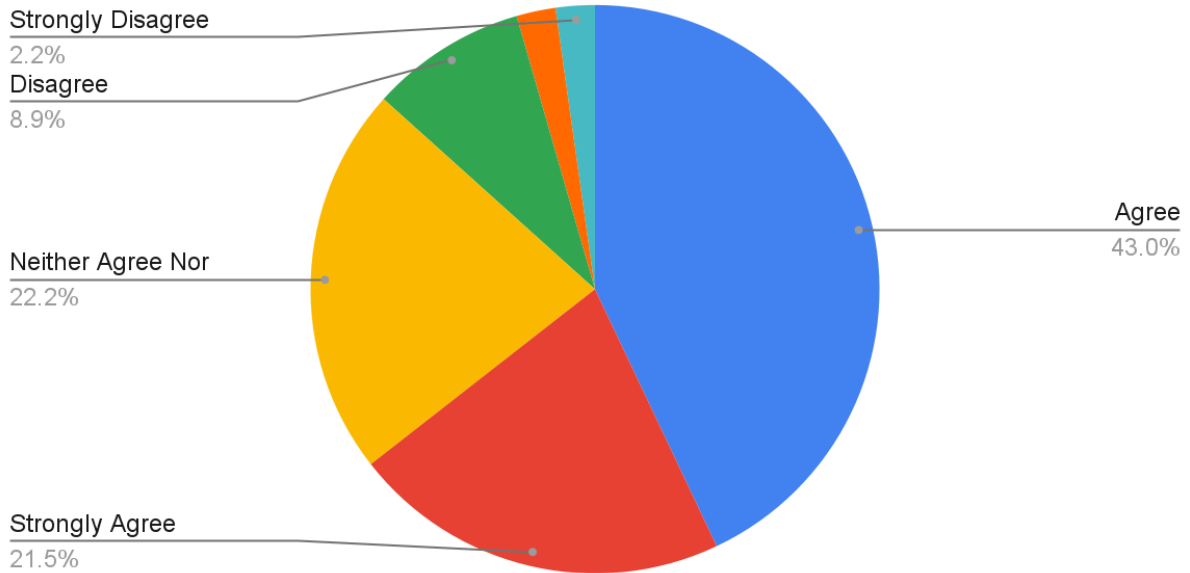
The President's Role

7. Other than on rare occasions, the president seldom overturns staff decisions and recommendations.

Disagree
5.2%

Strongly agree
15.6%

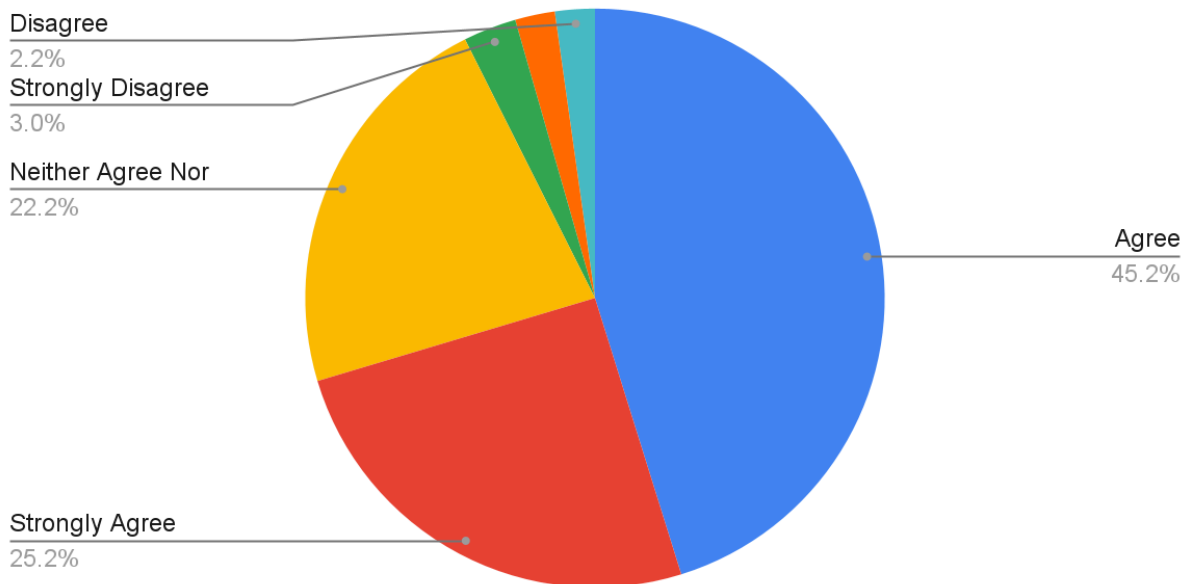Neither Agree Nor
40.7%

Agree
25.2%

Not Applicable
12.6%

8. The president seeks meaningful staff input on those issues (such as budgeting) in which the staff has an appropriate interest but not primary responsibility.
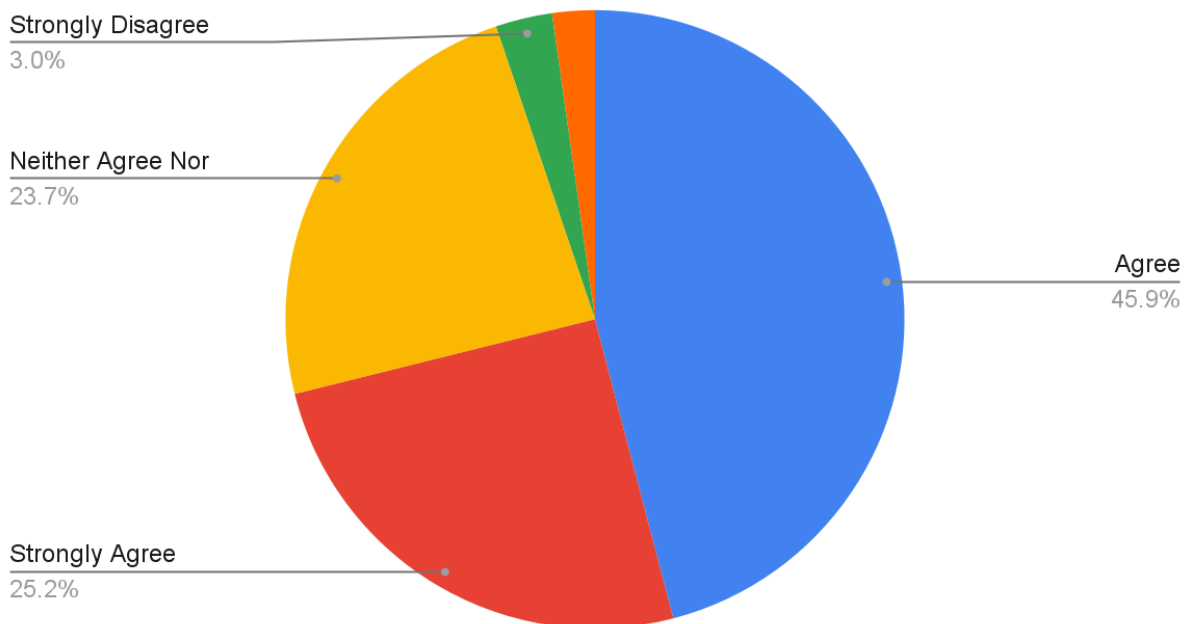
Strongly Disagree
3.0%

Not Applicable
6.7%

Disagree
11.1%

Agree
31.1%

Strongly Agree
22.2%

Neither Agree Nor
25.9%

9. The president is transparent in communicating decisions, changes and recommendations.

Strongly Disagree
2.2%

Disagree
8.9%

Neither Agree Nor
22.2%

Agree
43.0%

Strongly Agree
21.5%

10. The president supports and advocates the principles of shared governance within colleges, divisions, and departments.

Disagree
2.2%

Strongly Disagree
3.0%

Neither Agree Nor
22.2%

Agree
45.2%

Strongly Agree
25.2%

11. There is open communication with staff senate.

Strongly Disagree
3.0%

Neither Agree Nor
23.7%

Agree
45.9%

Strongly Agree
25.2%

The responses about the President's role in shared governance provide various perspectives on the university president's communication and decision-making processes:

- **Expectations for Staff Senate Involvement:** Some respondents express a desire for the staff senate to have more involvement in decision-making processes and to receive more charges over the years.
- **Communication Efforts of the President:** Views vary on the effectiveness of the president's communication efforts, with some acknowledging attempts at openness through surveys and listening sessions but expressing uncertainty about concrete outcomes.
- **Transparency Concerns:** There are concerns about the transparency of decision-making processes under the new president, with some feeling that decisions are made without sufficient input or transparency.
- **Role of Staff Council:** Some respondents feel that their staff council has limited or no role in decision-making or providing recommendations to the president, leading to a sense of disconnect or frustration.
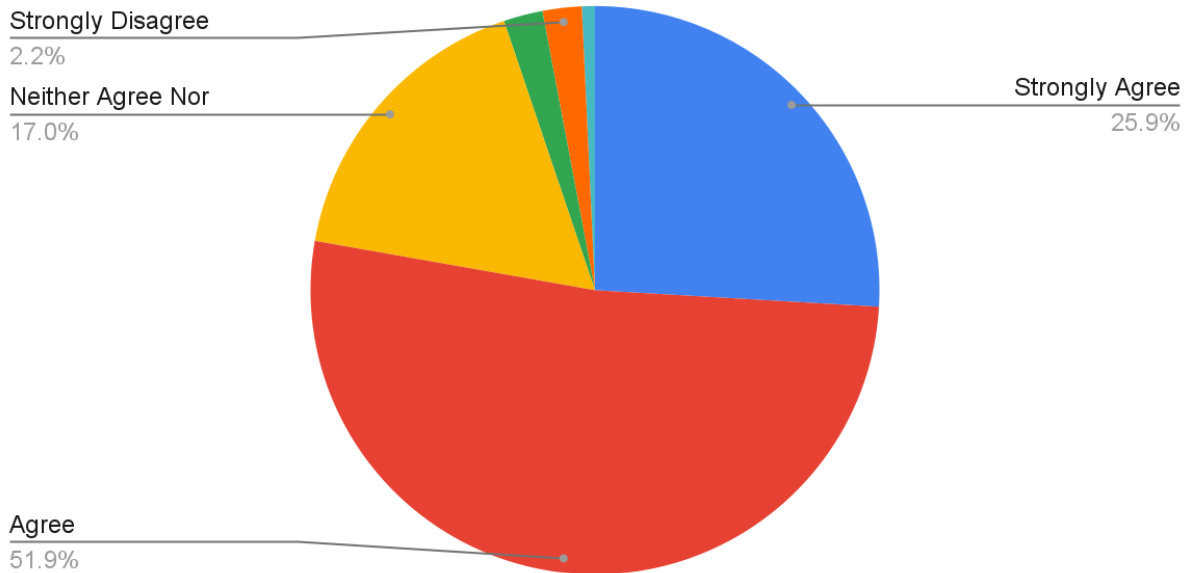
- **Need for More Communication:** There is a desire for more frequent communication from the president, especially regarding goals, planning, and campus strategy.
- **Challenges with Transitions:** Challenges related to staff transitions and short-staffing are acknowledged, impacting the pace of strategic planning and engagement efforts.

Overall, the responses reflect a mix of expectations, uncertainty, and optimism regarding the president's communication style, transparency, and engagement with staff and shared governance bodies.

The Staff's Role

12. The administration is supportive of staff involvement in shared governance.

Strongly Disagree
2.2%

Neither Agree Nor
17.0%

Strongly Agree
25.9%

Agree
51.9%

13. My immediate supervisor is supportive of my involvement in shared governance when I need to attend a related event or meeting during

Not Applicable
3.7%

Disagree
3.0%

Neither Agree Nor
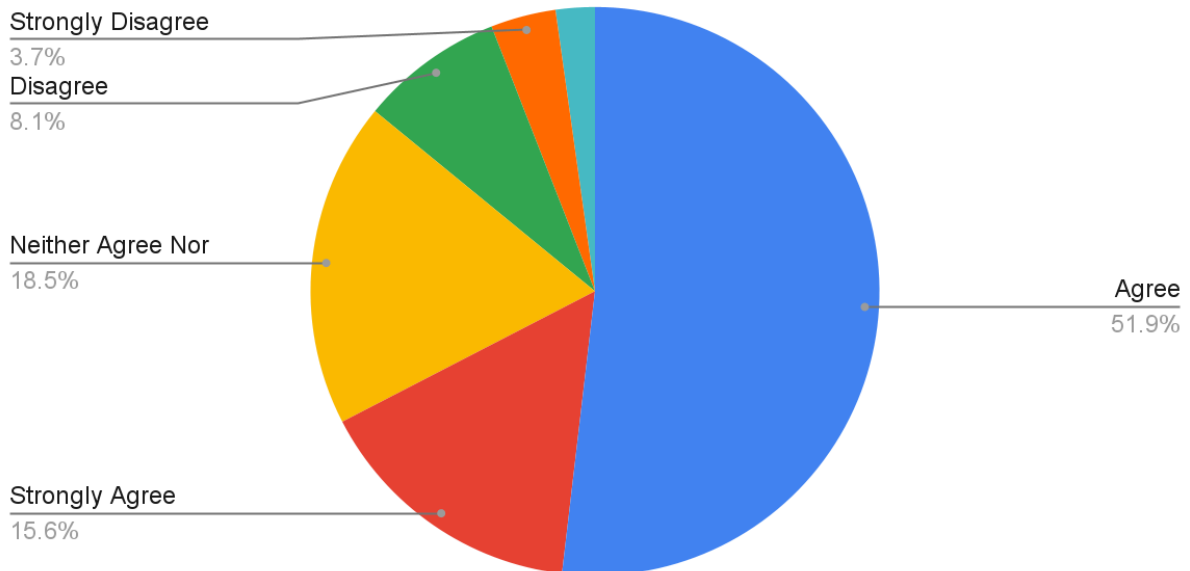8.1%

Agree
20.7%

Strongly Agree
62.2%
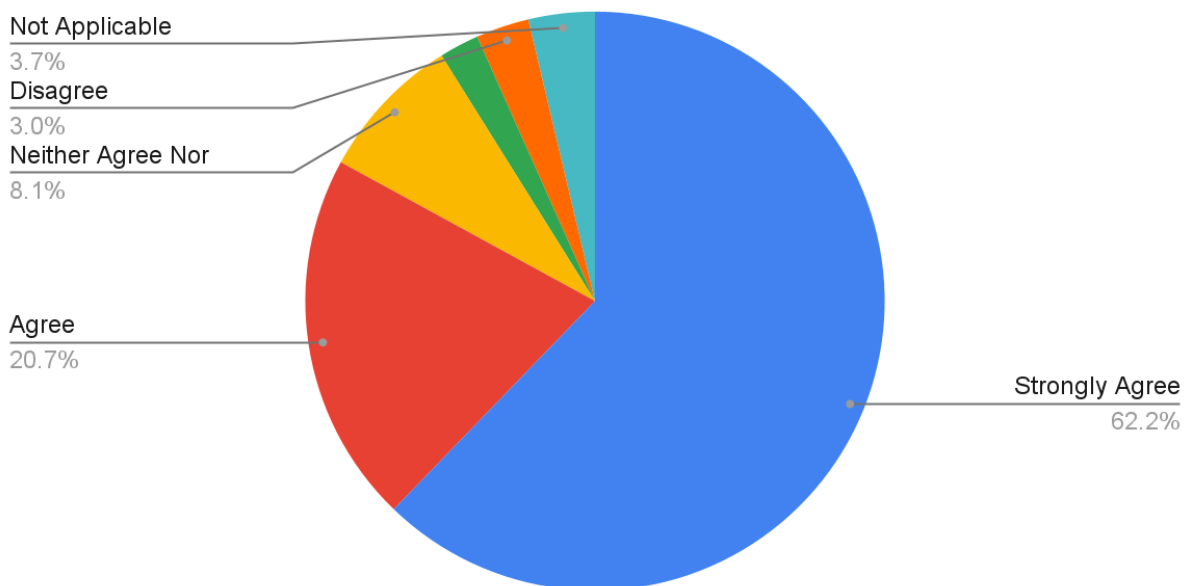
The open-ended responses about the Staff's role indicate varying levels of support and encouragement for staff participation in shared governance:

- **Department Leaders' Attitudes**: Some respondents feel that their department leaders are okay with their attendance at shared governance events but wish for more encouragement and modeling from upper management.
- **Supervisor Support:** While some express uncertainty about their supervisor's stance, others feel supported and informed about shared governance initiatives.
- **Administrative Encouragement:** There are instances where the administration is seen as encouraging staff participation in shared governance, though this varies across departments.
- **Importance of Staff Input:** Despite progress in including staff in decision-making bodies like College Councils, there's a perception that upper administration may not always value or prioritize staff input.
- **Engagement from Mid-level Management:** Positive attitudes toward shared governance are observed among mid-level management, indicating some level of support and encouragement.
- **Efforts to Improve Participation:** Initiatives such as informative sessions and efforts to increase diversity in staff representation are underway to enhance engagement with shared governance.
- **Mixed Engagement Levels:** While some areas of the campus are proactive in engaging with shared governance, others appear to view it more as a formality than a meaningful partnership.
- **Challenges Beyond Immediate Supervisors:** There are mentions of challenges in support and communication beyond immediate supervisors, with some feeling a lack of support from higher levels of administration.
- **Positive Collaboration Culture:** Despite challenges, there's recognition of a positive culture of collaboration and cross-departmental teamwork at the university.
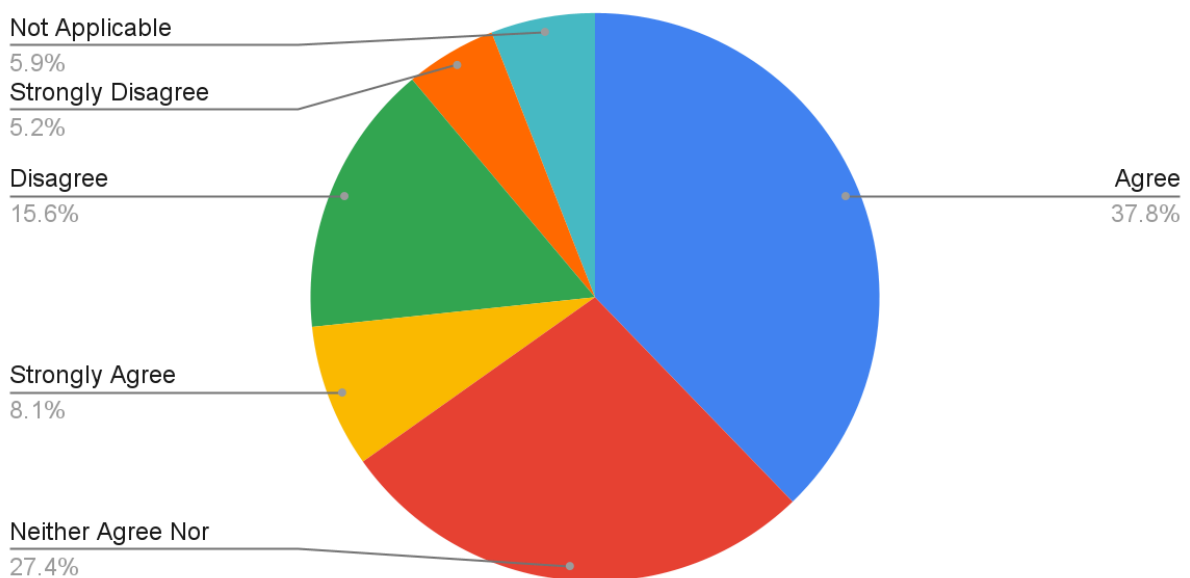
Overall, the responses highlight a mix of positive support, challenges, and efforts to improve staff engagement with shared governance across different levels and departments of the institution.

Joint Decision Making

14. The administration utilizes staff involvement in the area of planning and strategic planning.

Strongly Disagree
3.7%

Disagree
8.1%

Neither Agree Nor
18.5%

Agree
51.9%

Strongly Agree
15.6%

15. The administration recognizes staff involvement in budgeting and fiscal resource planning.

Not Applicable
5.9%

Strongly Disagree
5.2%

Disagree
15.6%

Agree
37.8%

Strongly Agree
8.1%

Neither Agree Nor
27.4%

16. The administration recognizes staff involvement in academic affairs and program development.

Strongly Disagree
7.4%

Disagree
13.3%

Strongly Agree
8.9%

Not Applicable
8.1%

Agree
30.4%

Neither Agree Nor
31.9%

17. The administration supports staff involvement in staff selection and hiring.

Not Applicable
3.7%

Strongly Disagree
3.7%

Neither Agree Nor
21.5%

Disagree
9.6%

Strongly Agree
15.6%

Agree
45.9%

18. Structures and processes that allow for shared governance are clearly defined in the governance documents (e.g. staff handbook).

Not Applicable
3.0%
Strongly Disagree
5.2%
Disagree
7.4%

Strongly Agree
17.0%

Neither Agree Nor
35.6%

Agree
31.9%
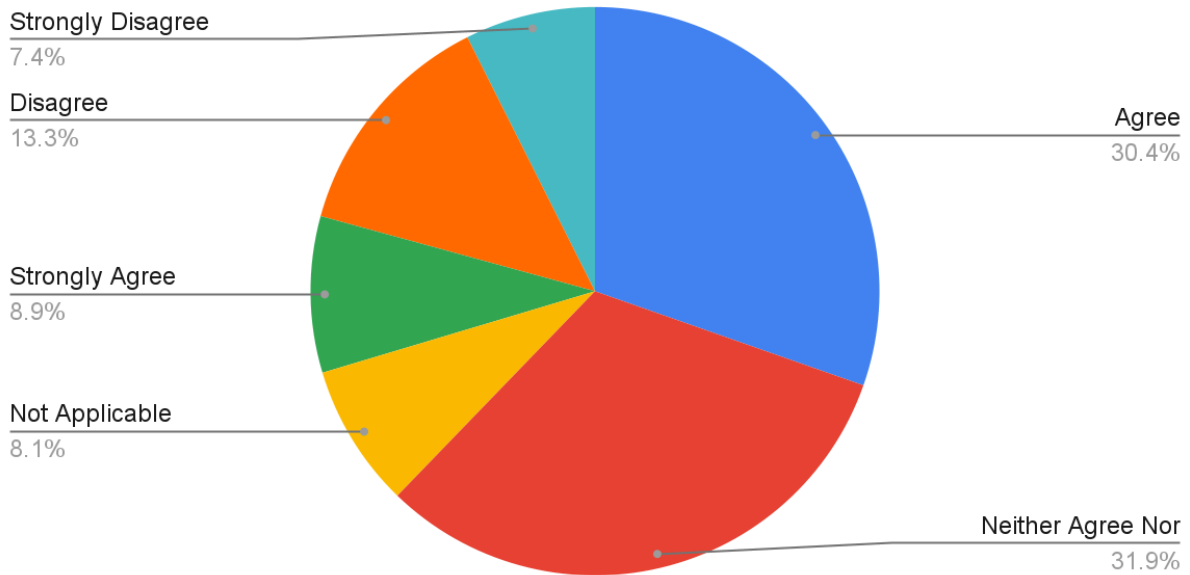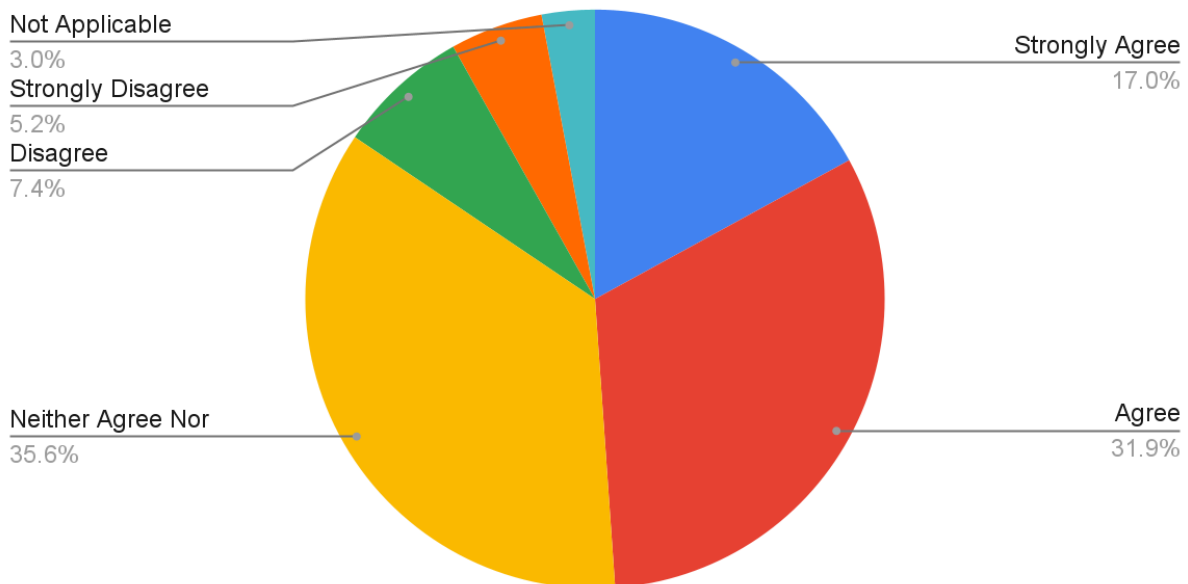
The responses highlight various concerns and frustrations regarding communication, transparency, and administrative processes within the institutions:
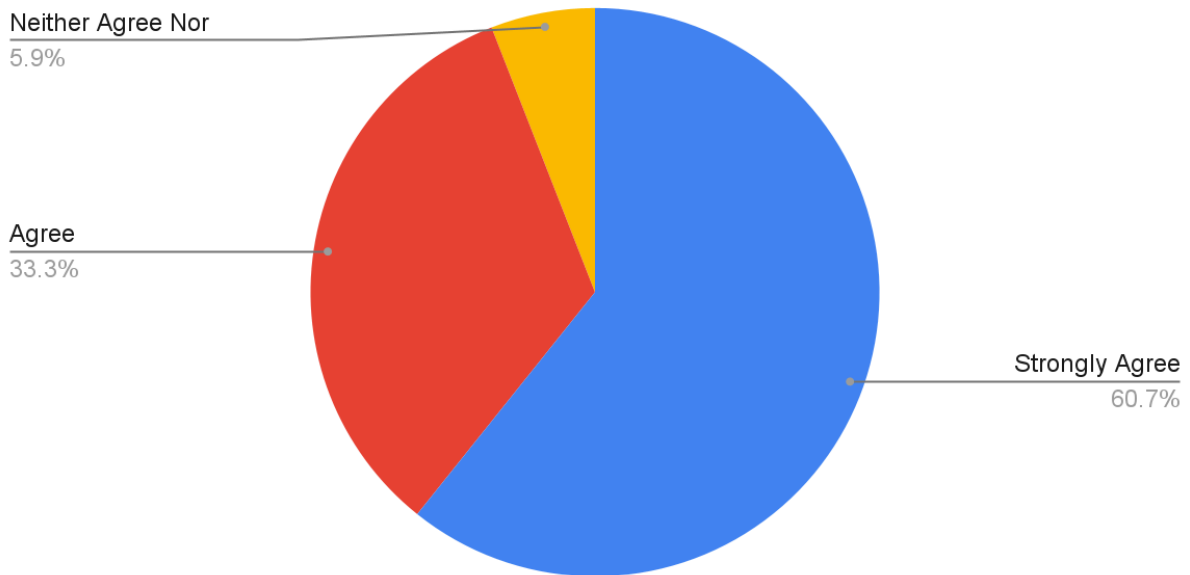
- **Inconsistent Hiring Guidelines:** There are complaints about the lack of clear and consistent guidelines for staff hiring and reclassification, with different divisions or departments having their own practices.
- **Limited Staff Involvement:** Concerns are raised about decisions being made by the administration without proper consultation or representation from staff, particularly in matters of hiring and selection.
- **Issues with Documentation:** Several respondents mention issues with the staff handbook, including outdated information, missing pages, and a lack of updates from HR.
- **Unclear Process for Shared Governance:** While there is acknowledgment of a process for shared governance, there are doubts about its effectiveness and consistency in implementation.
- **Lack of Communication:** Some express frustration with unclear messaging and a lack of consultation or support from middle management in implementing administrative decisions.

Overall, the responses indicate a need for improved communication, transparency, and consistency in administrative processes, particularly regarding hiring, strategic planning, and documentation such as the staff handbook.

Structural Arrangements for Shared Governance

19. The staff senate and/or other institution-wide governance bodies meet on a regular basis.

Neither Agree Nor
5.9%

Agree
33.3%

Strongly Agree
60.7%

20. Staff determine how their own representatives are selected.

Not Applicable
1.5%

Disagree
5.9%

Neither Agree Nor
11.1%

Strongly Agree
42.2%
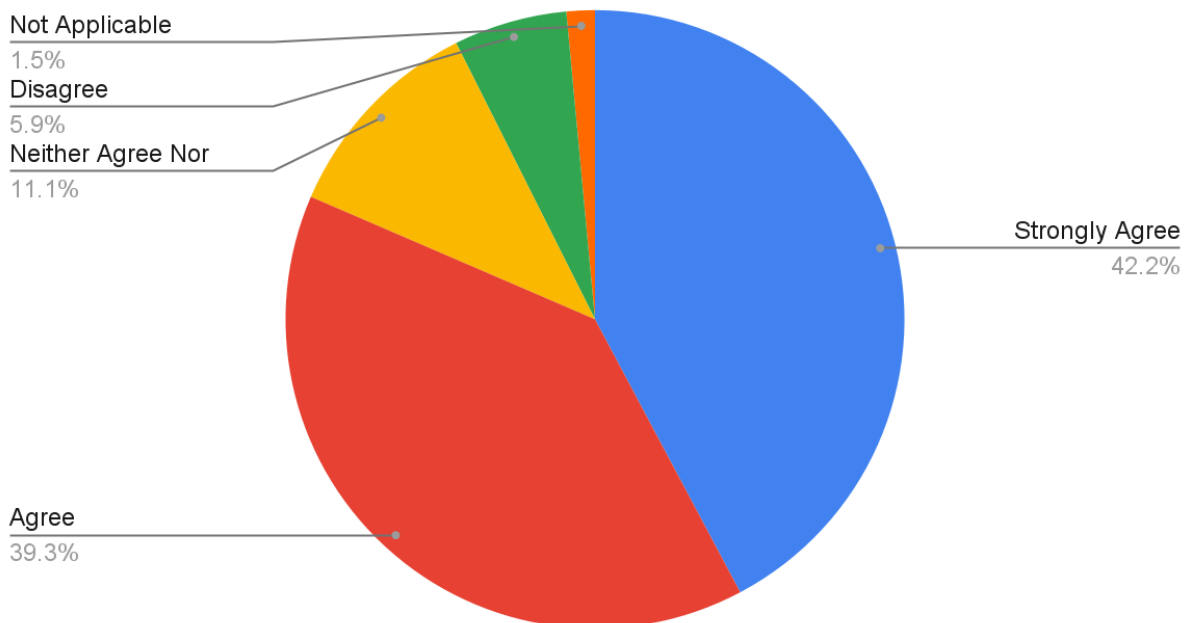
Agree
39.3%

❖ - Strongly Disagree (0.8%)

21. The administration provides adequate institutional support for shared governance to function (budget, liaison, etc).

Strongly Disagree 3.7%
Not Applicable 3.0%
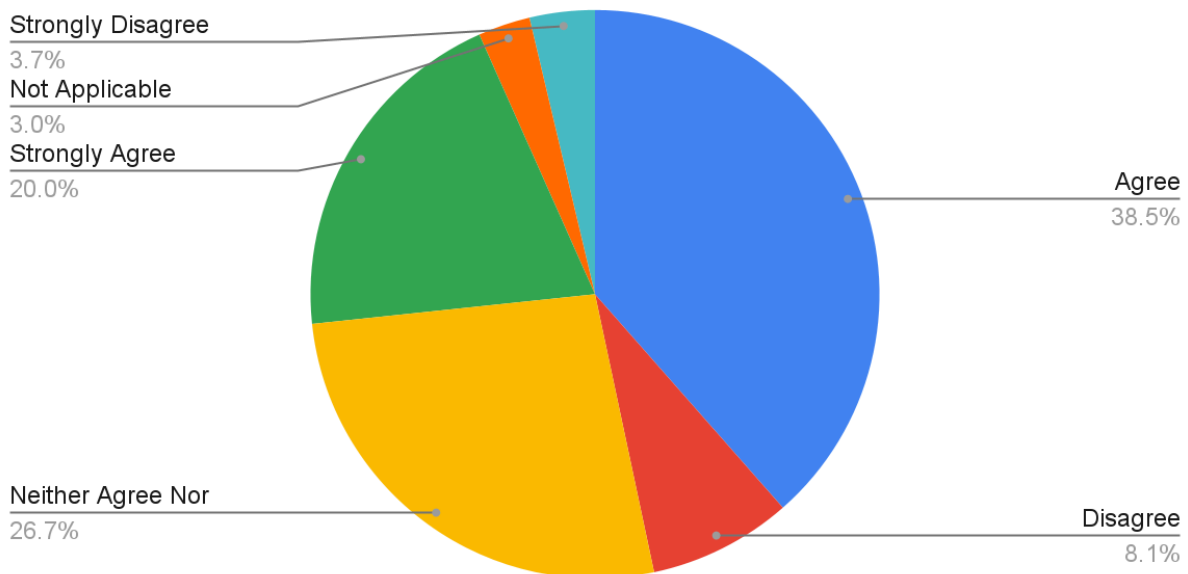Strongly Agree 20.0%
Agree 38.5%
Disagree 8.1%
Neither Agree Nor 26.7%

The responses highlight various aspects of resource allocation and funding related to shared governance:

- **Resource Needs:** There is a consensus among respondents that larger staffing and budget allocation for shared governance bodies would strengthen campus engagement and communication.
- **Appreciation for Support:** Some respondents express gratitude for the administration's support in facilitating their participation in shared governance, particularly in terms of reimbursement for expenses.
- **Budget Concerns:** While some resources are provided by the administration, there are concerns about budget limitations, especially regarding initiatives beyond basic functions like events and awards.
- **Desire for Equity:** There are calls for more equitable funding across different shared governance bodies **(especially between faculty and staff)**, with suggestions for better prioritization of funding by the administration.
- **Need for Defined Responsibilities:** There's a desire for clearer definitions of responsibilities and duties for shared governance groups, as well as improved campus-wide communication from these groups.
- **Collaborative Efforts**: Some examples of collaboration between different shared governance bodies are highlighted, indicating a willingness to work creatively with limited resources.

Overall, the responses underscore the importance of adequate resources and funding for shared governance to effectively fulfill its role in facilitating campus engagement and communication.

General Feedback

The open-ended responses that provided space to give feedback generally reflect diverse perspectives on shared governance within the university:

- **Positive Recognition:** Many respondents acknowledge the importance and value of shared governance, highlighting its role as a core pillar of the university community.
- **Room for Improvement**: Despite recognition, there's a consensus that there are opportunities to engage more meaningfully with certain portions of the campus and to improve staff involvement.
- **Communication and Transparency:** There are calls for more open communication and transparency, with some expressing concerns about decisions being made without sufficient input or consideration.
- **New Leadership:** With the introduction of new leadership, opinions vary on their effectiveness in promoting shared governance and addressing staff concerns.
- **Challenges and Support:** Respondents identify challenges such as the need for more resources, support, and education regarding shared governance, as well as concerns about inclusion and decision-making processes.
- **Desire for Change and Action:** There's a desire for shared governance bodies to have more influence and teeth to effect change and hold leaders accountable.
- **Mixed Perceptions:** While some express satisfaction with the current state of shared governance, others feel that there is room for improvement and that staff involvement is sometimes overlooked or undervalued.

Overall, the responses indicate both appreciation for shared governance as a concept and a recognition of areas where improvements can be made to enhance its effectiveness and inclusivity within the university.

Open-Ended Survey Responses
Aggregate & Verbatim

On Shared Governance Health:
- Attitude toward and prevalence of shared governance is strong throughout the institution. Some leadership does a better job of engaging with shared governance than others.
- FSU's president consistenly engages with the governance groups to disseminate information and request input.
- I believe the Staff Senate is very important and I would like to see them be more involved in Towson University decision making (policy, planning, etc...)
- I don't see a lot of participation from department or division leaders in shared governance meetings. I think those involved in the Staff Senate are very active and involved, but I don't think it encompasses most staff.
- I have been with the staff senate for 3 (ish) years now and in that time only one charge came our way outside of the annual BORSA review charge. I expected more charges per term.
- I just wish that more people would participate instead of just complaining.
- I wish the administration worked more in partnership with the shared governance groups, especially the committees.
- It appears at times that some decisions have already been determined regardless of input of other stakeholders. I wouldnt say it's NOT healthy, but I believe that it certainly could be strengthened.
- It is strong but I believe we can work on making it stronger. I wish the staff, faculty, and students could do more together on certain topics to show our strength to the University,
- It takes a lot of behind-the-scenes work to ensure that voices are heard, feedback is requested/given and considered. A few policies (current and forming) are in the works. Our Staff Senate has worked hard to not only make sure we are connecting with Campus Leadership (much of whom are new) and the broader staff body (whose needs and roles broadly vary). This thoughtful leadership exists at UMBC. My concern is that progress is communicated at a consistent pace that feels that we are forward-moving.
- More inclusive involvement for the staff
- More students, faculty, and staff should know about shared governance and be familiar with its structure and workflow.
- Participation on campus needs to increase.
- President Jenkins strongly supports shared governance on our campus. He meets with the shared governance group every other month and shares updates on our campus initiatives, the System, government, and community matters openly.

- Shared governance at UMBC is such a part of our campus life that when I interact with other Higher Ed professionals, I'm often surprised to hear how rarely they feel heard. Grateful for our Retriever community.
- Shared Governance is still new, in its current iteration, at UMGC. There is lots of enthusiasm for it, but it is too new to evaluate as being "alive and healthy".
- Shared governance seems to mean something different depending upon the UMGC division--Stateside, Europe or Asia. Very low participation and even knowledge of ASAC, GSAC etc. by the majority of staff.
- Sometimes it doesn't feel like shared governance, as most of the meetings don't ask us to make decisions that affect the institution.
- Staff Council at UMCES is performative box checking at best. Staff Council is not actively engaged in any development of institutional policies.
- Staff perspectives are rarely considered or taken seriously. I am disappointed in the fact that staff at USM do not have a union. I think a strong union could help give us a louder voice both on campus and in the larger system.
- The committee makes every effort to communicate info to the staff. However, sometimes the staff still feels out of the loop with the higher administration decisions that affect us all.
- The staff advisory council could benefit from either increased involvement in the council from current leadership or a restructuring under different leadership to maximize the talents and willingness of the current council members to volunteer their time and positively contribute to the goal.
- There is a current push for it coming from the top but likely just for inclusion points
- There is a very strong presence of shared governance, but it not always clear the level of impact the discussions have on policy, especially when it comes to staff. Oftentimes the focus is on students and faculty and staff are left out.
- There is excellent communication and consideration of others' views by personnel at all levels of the university.
- There is little guidance from Administration and they rarely utilize us. It seems we have to solicit participation on how we can be of assistance.
- There's a difference between saying shared governance is a priority and demonstrating (consistently in practice) that it is.
- There's not much interaction between the Staff, Faculty, and Student branches.
- They do a good job at asking and making everyone feel comfortable in sharing, but there isn't a step by step process how to submit new info or a person you can talk to about questions/concerns.
- We have have a new President, a new incoming Provost, and a new VP for Student Affairs who are not familiar with the history and culture of shared governance and things are happening/have happened which go against the grain of history and tradition.
- While faculty might have shared governance, staff do not.
- While I think shared governance is alive and healthy, for staff I think much of this is hidden or that many staff are unaware of the work going on.

- While we have an active University Staff senate (TUSS), the structure of the organization makes it very difficult for individual staff to feel they have a voice or are included. The main way that staff are able to interact with TUSS is by listening in to monthly meetings via Zoom. While this opportunity to attend the Zoom meetings is very beneficial and very appreciated, it is unclear how a general staff member might share issues or challenges that they identify. For example, even though I've been attending the monthly Zoom meetings, I am still not sure which of the representatives represents my college. So if I don't even know who my rep is, how is that rep accurately representing me and my concerns on the concil? It would be useful if representatives held monthly 'office hours' where general staff could share their thoughts and feedback. One of the main reasons for this disconnect is the lack of shared governance structures for staff within Colleges (I'm not sure how this works outside of Academic Affairs). While faculty have College Council Reps (and these Council reps are directly tied to the Academic Senate) there is no analagous organization for staff in any college. When staff tried to create such a structure in our college, we received little support from the Dean and eventually the Dean shut the group down (and has no plans to re-start such a group).
- With President Mark R. Ginsberg the atmosphere on campus has really improved.
- Our senators that are truly helping are so overtapped between their regular workloads and volunteer commitments. I recommended increasing the number of senators and really trying to leverage folks that will put in the time and effort to support. Unfortunately, it seems it's tough to get staff to want to be a senator. And the ones that do signup, often don't fully commit to what being a senator really means.
- Shared governance is definitely active, but I cannot attest to its 'health' (effectiveness).
- The effort to ensure shared governance at UMB is evident across the campus.
- There's not much interaction between the Staff, Faculty, and Student branches.
- Very active, but more people across campus need to become aware of the existence of the different shared governance organizations.

On Communication:
- Can't answer the feedback question since it doesn't seem like we get any.
- Certain decisions are made in covert manner within silos.
- Communication has always been a problem on this campus. The campus has improved over the years but more improvement needs to be made.
- Despite the fact that I am a subject expert with over 20 years of experience in higher education, my college and institution have never valued my perspective or expertise on matters pertaining to it. For instance, I have been excluded, seemingly intentionally, from administrative discussions about the program in which I currently work. I'm trying to explain how ridiculous this is without giving away who I am, but it would be similar if, say, there was some kind of environmental crisis on campus, and leadership sought the expertise of religion

professors and historians while excluding the only environmental scientists from the discussion and ignoring their advice because they happen to be in roles designated as "staff" and not "faculty."

- Difficult to get answers from Management in a timely manner even though they seem open to communication. The communication is top down only, there does not seem to be any consultation of staff leadership when making decisions.
- I don't have knowledge of this as a general member.
- I think it would be beneficial for the senate to have more informative workshops across campus about what is the University Senate, which policies and procedures they govern and how staff, faculty and students can propose changes and/or participate. Maybe one on one department events or at the college level.
- I would value more frequent (annual) state-of-the-university reports from VPs. This would enable us to more proactively formulate goals and projects for each year.
- I'm not sure what feedback is referring to -- and who is giving the feedback?
- It's the "openly" in "openly communicate that is an area of concern. There's a consistent distrust from staff senate that Human Resources is less than receptive to honest, respectful communication: fear of deflection, obfuscation, resentment, retaliation, or worse.
- More opportunity for the staff to communicate issues with the upper management.
- Nobody wants to take time to really improve our communication, collaboration, interactions. I want to see less administrators and more administrative assistansts on committees and task forces. If you can't help improve our workflow, let us do it.
- Ranking communication on the superlative of excellent is a big ask. We have ample communication and consultation.
- The many changes in upper management staffing has caused confusion as to who is handling certain issues, as well as the learning curve for any new staff coming on causing delays in getting responses/scheduling meetings.
- The staff senate doesn't seem to have any real sway or power. Leadership does what they want regardless or finds a loophole
- There is a hierarchy and in order to advance an issue, it must go through a series of stakeholders. I am hopeful this will shift with a new president at the helm.
- There's a lack of transparency and it's hard to know where in the process things are once the resolution is passed.
- We will grow together with continued communication and transparency.

On The Senate's Role:
- An important part of the university's staff and administrative functions is provided by the staff senate.

- As a general staff member at my university, I do not feel there are productive ways for general staff members to share their concerns. This is because there are no shared goverance staff structures at the level of colleges.
- Currently there have been steps in the right direction regarding transparency from the current administration; however, this has not always been the case. The hope is that the new found collaboration continues.
- DEI operates carelessly, particularly in reference to the antiracist and gender/sexuality resources. I don't know why we are spending so much time talking about sex. That is all we are talking about.
- I am unsure as to what the staff senate contributes to UMGC except for deciding state funding allocations.
- I appreciate the consistency and professionalism of the staff senate.
- I believe my involvement in TUSS is valued by other TUSS members, but not by department or division leaders.
- I do not feel staff senate represents me.
- I don't get the feeling that the work done by SS is understood very well which leads to it not being taken seriously.
- I really do not feel my role is valued as a senator.
- I think staff senate plays a role with administrative functions, but less so with academic functions of the university. That part falls more on faculty senate and the student government orgs.
- Staff Senate seems to be the least influential of the shared governance bodies at our university. Much more attention is given to faculty & student concerns.
- There is little recruitment into the staff senate, and it seems as if the people who are currently in charge do not want to lose their power and influence. When I have happened to learn when meetings take place (usually from someone else in my office and not because I receive invitations), I have found that there are few, if any, opportunities for new folks to get involved. After a failed campaign for staff senator, I received no mentoring or advice from current leadership, no attempt or interest in finding other ways for me to get involved. There is little sense of belonging or inclusion on TU's staff.
- This is my 3rd year; my first within the Executive Committee as a Co-secretary. My Staff Senate leaders care tremendously. We communicate quite as thought partners.
- We are not considered as Senate, Just Staff Council.
- We don't have senates, we have councils (Staff, Faculty, Admin, and Executive Councils). The Staff Council only has one representative that attends only the Admin Council and the admin council only has one representative that attends the Executive Council. The Executive Council is the only decision-making body out of the four councils, so the Staff Council is once removed from that body.
- Even as a staff senate alternate my opinions are requested and valued
- I don't get the feeling that the work done by SS is understood very well which leads to it not being taken seriously.

On The President's Role:
- Again, I would have expected the staff senate committee to receive more charges over the years.
- Assuming these questions are in regard to the President of the University, not the president of ASAC, I would say that the current president is working toward a more open communication with staff and has conducted staff surveys to receive input, but I have not seen concrete outcomes of this communication yet.
- Decision-making is less transparent with our new President
- I am not always sure if the president seeks out input on his own versus responding to requests from shared governance bodies to have him there to listen to our concerns and questions after we've been informed that a policy, decision, etc., impacting us is coming down the pike.
- I chose Not Applicable for most of these questions because our Staff Council has no role or ability to make decisions or recommendations, input, etc. to the President.
- I would be concerned if everything we suggested/requested was implemented, hence my first answer. I defintely feel like our opinion is considered.
- Issues such as budget are not brought to the staff affairs committee.
- More frequent communication (even emails) would be valued. It's clear the president knows about shared governance, but -- aside from saying so at large meetings -- I don't hear much from the president on goals, planning, needs, or campus strategy.
- Our President is new to the University so I really cannot answer the above questions. it seems that he is open to communicating with staff because he has held many speaking forums. He has sressed that he belives in shared governance. We will wait and see if actions speak louder thn words.
- Our President is now in her 2nd year. In her first year, she was ubiquitous in ALL of the listening sessions she attended, eager to learn about what was working well, opportunities ahead, and the blindspots/gaps in between. In 2023-24, my understanding is that we would dive deeper into UMBC's Strategic Planning. However, things often take longer than you hope, especially on a college campus. At UMBC, we've experienced significant staff transition to include many retirements, mine included. Many departments are still short-staffed.
- President Ginsberg is too new to rate. He just finished a listening session specific to staff so understand that Strongly Agree is rated on one event that happened February 8, 2024.
- Since our President is new, I have limited feedback, however, I believe President Ginsberg is making a great effort at engaging staff.
- As for transparency, the President is mostly transparent with decisions after the fact. "
- The President has only attended two Staff Senate meetings since her start at SU, both within the last two months. There have been multiple communications that

have gone out from the President's Office that would have benefited from Staff Senate's input before being sent to campus, but we were not consulted.
- The President is new, not sure responses would be fair as he has only been here less than 6months
- The president would decide on staff recommendations and decisions.
- For the first 2 questions, the Staff Senate at UMB does not have the authority to make big decisions like that so there isn't a situation where the president would overrule a decision made by Staff Senate.
- I don't have any direct knowledge about the questions to which I answered not applicable.
- I would be concerned if everything we suggested/requested was implemented, hence my first answer. I defintely feel like our opinion is considered.

On The Staff's Role:
- I agree that my department leaders are OK with me attending TUSS events/meetings, but I wish it were more encouraged and role-modeled by upper management.
- I can't really tell if my supervisor is supportive or not. I don't get any push back about it so I guess it's okay.
- In certain situations, the administration encourages staff participation in shared governance.
- In my college, staff were not included on the College Council for decades. However, due to the push of a single faculty member, the constitution was re-written to include staff (starting in Fall 2024). This is huge. However, I don't believe upper admin (Dean, chairs, etc.) see staff input as necessary or valuble.
- Midlevel management is positive toward shared governance.
- My supervisor is supportive, although I hear some others do not have that same luxury.
- My supervisor stays informed about shared governance, union work, opportunities for staff on campus etc. However, I think they are the exception. More direct contact between staff and senate through informative sessions i think would garner larger participation.
- One of our priorities for Staff Senate is to make sure there is consistency for engagement. We are actively seeking more diversity in Staff representation across departments. Currently, there's DEEP engagement from Division of Information Technology, The Shriver Center, and Division of Professional Studies. There are massive gaps in staff representation from our the 3 Colleges (CAHSS, COEIT, and CNMS)
- Some areas of the campus are better about engaging with shared governance proactively, though others seem to do it as a "checking the box" measure more than looking for meaningful partnership.
- Strong support one level up .. beyond that a black hole

- TU is very supportive of cross-departmental committees and meetings. There is a positive spirit of collaboration and working together across departments on campus, which not all organizations have.
- While my supervisor is agreeable, she does often remind me that taking on additional commitments will end up making me work longer days, evenings, and/or weekends. Not that she forces this on me, but I won't let things go unfinished.

On Joint Decision Making:
- Administration has a uphill climb when it comes to communicating how staff are hired or reclassed. Currently, there are no clear guidelines in place and it seems as if each division or department has a different set of guidelines when it comes to hiring. Administration has promised for over a year transparency on hiring practices and has yet to provide clear guidance.
- Again, in this 2nd year of our new president's leadership, we have been at a little pause with UMBC's Strategic Planning. The momentum has paused.
- Decisions about the strategic plan are made by the President's Cabinet and do not necessarily represent all divisions.
- I am one of the few/only subject area experts on my campus, and the administration has no respect for my expertise.
- I have never seen any proposed hires to Staff being brought up at Staff Council, and I had to fight to get a Staff representative on the UMCES Presidential Search Committee. This was due mainly to USM's view that Essala Lowe was a member of the Staff, and (while that may be true from USM's definition) she is not a member of the Staff Council.
- I think there is a process that is written for shared governance, but I don't think it is always referred to and followed to a letter. And most folks probably do not know it exists.
- In many cases, hiring and selection decisions are made by the administration without consulting the staff.
- not sure I have seen the staff handbook
- The staff handbook hasn't been updated in two years. The table of contents list pages that aren't present in the book.
- There is sometimes unclear messaging in the Plan of Organization (document at UMBC that defines the roles of SG) as far as committees, their purpose, and/or reporting structures for staff. Overall, staff enjoy a good relationship with the administration in meetings of the staff senate, but it's unclear whether those not participating in SG agree. I don't believe we are regularly consulted in the hiring/selection process -- perhaps I misunderstood the question.
- TU does not have a staff handbook. Administration's support in some of these areas don't always trickle down to middle management.
- We are still waiting for an updated staff handbook to be published by HR.
- What staff handbook???????

On the Structural Arrangements for Shared Governance:
- Administration resources for shared governance to operate, but they could raise funding to accommodate greater participation.
- I think larger staffing for the senate office will strengthen campus shared governance. More staff maybe better and more communication.
- Thank you for never creating an issue for reimbursement for our participation in shared governance!
- The institution provide SS with a campus liaison and provides a budget for a yearly event. However, budget is a concern for SS when it comes other initiatives. Looking at how Staff Senate is funded versus other shared governance should be a priority for the administration.
- The University Steering Cmte (of all SG group presidents/VPs) meets regularly. The attitude toward this group and what it feels it can do seems to change annually. I'd value better defined responsibilities/duties of this group and better campus-wide communication from this group.
- UMBC just recognized the shared governance of Adjunct Faculty. Our staff senate works closely with "Non-Exempt Staff Senate" to be creative about resources. We have a ways to go.
- We could do more and more engaging activities with a larger budget allocation.
- We have no budget of which I am aware. Administration pays for a picnic and an annual Staff Excellence award, but Staff Council itself has no operating budget.For staff senators that are not a part of schools, it should be clearly defined which departments other than their own, that they should represent. If you're in central administration and you don't have a staff senator in your department, you wouldn't know who represents you.
- The exclusion of non-exempt staff due to the MOU with the union prevents staff from truly deciding who they want to represent them.
- There is no stipend for serving on the staff senate and I hear that the budget is very minimal but I am not able to answer questions about items I don't really have any information on so have marked those as NA.

On the Opportunity to Provide Additional Comments/Feedback:
- Again, overall there is a healthy climate and support of shared governance but there are opportunities to engage more meaningfully with certain portions of the campus.
- Go Tigers!
- I am proud to be apart of a Staff Senate at SU that is transparent and often has members of the administration join us in sharing updates with the university and welcomes questions/suggestions/feedback.
- I appreciate the President and her staff's willingness to participate and listen to staff concerns as well as bringing updates to our group.
- I believe, based on what I have learned thus far, that shared governance and decision making processes were different and more valued before. Since I have

joined, all we seem to talk about is whether we have a purpose within the administration and if they will soon be including us in decision making

- I just wish staff had more of a voice, and I wish there was some kind of oversight in place to ensure that leadership brings in people who want to be more involved. It should not be an exclusive club.
- I think the president is moving in the right way.
- I think we are on the right track. As time goes on, I feel we can improve participation.
- I wish there was more staff involvement in TUSS and more encouragement from leaders to engage more deeply!
- I would say historically, shared governance at UMBC is very strong for those who are involved but could use a little work to get new staff and staff representatives from more depts/divisions involved. It would be good to make sure all staff understand the role of shared governance as well so they use the platform to advocate for any staff issues they want to address as well.
- I'm appreciative of the collaboration and hard work of my group, Exempt Staff Senate and CUSS. It's such a thoughtful, strategic group that really wants the best for the broad UMBC campus. It can be hard work, but it's so much bigger than each of us. We take the responsibility pretty seriously.
- It is recognized and followed.
- It would be great to have more resources available all year long to encourage more staff members to take part in shared governance.
- It's a core pillar of our university community.
- More open communication involving the staff and the decision making policies.
- Nope! UMBC has a strong SG culture, but that's based on a biased sample of those that participate in it. I am unsure how the rest of staff feel. Perhaps since the pandemic (since I wasn't involved before), it's been harder to get consensus from all staff.
- not at this time. we have a new president and I am withholding my opinion until I see whether his plans come to fruition.
- Our staff senate has come a long way since it has been reconstructed- for the better. I still think we need to define what we do to help our staff.
- President Jenkins does an excellent job communicating to our campus in a timely fashion.
- Regarding the student body in shared governance, TU tends to overlook and forget graduate students as a part of students in shared governance.
- Shared governance is alive and well on our campus. I would like to see more collaboration between the governance groups.
- Shared governance is recognized well on our campus, but there is always room for improvement.
- Staff senate is an afterthought for the administration compared to Faculty Senate and SGA

- Staff shared govenance on the Towson Campus is problematic, at least from the perspective of staff in Academic Affairs. There are no avenues for general staff members to convene in their colleges as a body to discuss issues.
- The Chair of TUSS has amazing communication with TU Administration. The new President is a breath of fresh air to TU Staff and the entire campus.
- The concept and idea is great of having CUSS. The problem that I have is that there isn't a person or office to connect with assistance or concern. I wanted to suggest something and when reaching out to inquire about the procedure, no one could answer.
- The continued education of shared goverance in orientation programs is nessary
- The only real actionable critique is that there needs to be support for employees who volunteer for these roles. Education/protection/support.
- The Staff Senate has good relationships with the administration and other governance bodies on campus.
- The staff senate needs actual teeth to make change and hold these leaders accountable
- The University generally values the system of shared governance and it is apparent throughout various operating and policy structures.
- There is a very strong presence of shared governance, but it not always clear the level of impact the discussions have on policy, especially when it comes to staff. Oftentimes the focus is on students and faculty and staff are left out. Also, staff involvement is not always considered when discussing academic policies, even though we are heavily involved and sometimes responsible for the implementation.
- This should not be a required question. It will stop some from submitting responses.
- We are losing far too many good employees because of delays in addressing the changing needs of the workforce. An increase in the administration's support and cooperation with Staff Senate, along with more transparency in the decision-making process, is vital in increasing retention of staff across campus.
- We are willing to help but do not have enough support or guidance or inclusion from leadership to the point where we feel like we are useful or needed.
- We have a new President so much of this is yet to be seen.
- We have come a decent way in the last few years, but do still think there are improvements that can be made.
- We have many new leaders who may or may not be used to shared governance. Many are working to become involved with shared governance and trying to engage us, but sometimes it feels like shared governance is intentionally excluded from conversations and filled in after the decisions have already been made. Funding for shared governance groups should come centrally, rather than from different groups on campus (Student Affairs, Provost, etc.).
- We haven't been utilized at all in the last 3 years, but we are having conversations about it.

- As I mentioned in the beginning, one of the biggest areas for growth is in improving how shared governance is promoted to staff, so that more staff members can get involved (rather than the same few staff members sitting on the senate and all committees and task forces. The other area of growth, which I imagine is common across most universities, is for senior leadership to do an even better job of making us feel like our opinions have weight, and can actually influence the outcome. Not saying they don't do it, just that they could do a better job. Thank you.
- Dr. Jarrell is very forthcoming and a pleasure to work under. He is incredibly motivated in achieving the best for our campus and extols the virtues of shared governance, core values, etc. He is a leader that you can look up to and count on.
- I am proud of our staff senate and our campus involvement.
- I have not had a long tenure with staff senate. In my time I have not seen the Senate involvement in strategic planning or financial planning, but that may just be my limited experience. I do feel that the Senate is recognized and valued by the administration as a whole.
- More open communication on hiring and promotions.
- No thank you!
- The only real actionable critique is that there needs to be support for employees who volunteer for these roles. Education/protection/support.
- There is a strong emphasis placed on open communication between the staff senators and university administration.
- UMB does an excellent job in creating space for the staff to be a part of the governing process on campus.

Staff Senate Survey
On the State of Shared Governance
At Their Institution

Procedures
The following document serves as an overview of procedures for the Staff Senate Chair Survey of the State of Shared Governance on Campus. The primary user of these procedures is the Staff Senate Chairs.

Purpose
The purpose of the survey is to strengthen shared governance in the USM. The survey will be used to determine the state of shared governance on each of the campuses within the System.
The primary use of the survey is by the Chancellor in his annual performance evaluation of the USM Presidents in April. It provides the Chancellor with substantive data and feedback on improving shared governance practices within the individual institutions.

Who Completes the Survey?
The survey is to be completed by all elected staff senate representatives, including primary and alternate members (if applicable), at each institution within the System.

Time Period
The primary period to be considered for the survey is the previous calendar year (Jan 2023 – Dec 2023).

Timelines
To be used by the Chancellor in his evaluation of the Presidents, the timeline for this process is as follows:
- February 1, 2024: Survey is delivered to staff senate chairs for dissemination.
- March 1, 2024: Deadline for staff senate members to participate in the survey.
- March 29, 2024: The CUSS Chair completes the final report(s).
- April 2024: The CUSS Chair provides the full report at the Chancellor's Council Meeting and individual reports for the Presidents.
- April 19, 2024: The CUSS Chair provides an executive summary of survey results at the April Board of Regents meeting.

CUSS Executive Committee Responsibilities
The responsibilities for conducting and completing the survey and reports are divided between the Chair and Vice-Chair of CUSS. The Vice-Chair of CUSS is responsible for collecting the data. The Vice Chair is responsible for working with the institutional Staff Senate Chairs.
The CUSS Chair is responsible for completing the report submitted to the Chancellor.

New Presidents
Often the university has a new president who, at the time of the survey, has not yet served a full year. The staff senate members should complete the survey as best as possible, understanding that there is incomplete information.

Final Product
There are three final products. The first is the full report. It is an internal document shared with the Chancellor. The second document is the summary for each institution's President. This document is also an internal document. The third document is the executive summary. The executive summary is a public document for public consumption housed on the USM website's April BOR Meeting Agenda.

CUSS Shared Governance Survey Questions

All questions will be answered using a Likert Scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree," also including "Not Applicable." Additionally, all questions will allo participants an opportunity to provide written feedback. The survey will be conducted utilizing an online survey instrument.

Climate for Governance
1. Shared governance on our campus is alive and healthy.

Institutional Communications
2. There is excellent communication and consultation between the administration and the staff and senate leaderships.
3. Staff can openly communicate governance issues with cabinet/upper management.
4. Feedback is presented in a timely manner, be it positive or negative.

Senate's Role
5. The staff senate plays an important role in providing academic and administrative functions at the university.
6. Your role with staff council is valued.

The President's Role
7. Other than on rare occasions, the president seldom overturns staff decisions and recommendations
8. The president seeks meaningful staff input on those issues (such as budgeting) in which the staff has an appropriate interest but not primary responsibility.
9. The president is transparent in communicating decisions, changes and recommendations.
10. The president supports and advocates the principles of shared governance within colleges, divisions, and departments.
11. There is open communication with staff senate.

The Staff's Role
12. The administration is supportive of staff involvement in shared governance.
13. My immediate supervisor is supportive of my involvement in shared governance when I need to attend a related event or meeting during work hours.

Joint Decision Making
14. The administration utilizes staff involvement in the area of planning and strategic planning.
15. The administration recognizes staff involvement in budgeting and fiscal resource planning.
16. The administration recognizes staff involvement in academic affairs and program development.
17. The administration supports staff involvement in staff selection and hiring.
18. Structures and processes that allow for shared governance are clearly defined in the governance documents (e.g. staff handbook).

Structural Arrangements for Shared Governance
19. The staff senate and/or other institution-wide governance bodies meet on a regular basis.
20. Staff determine how their own representatives are selected.
21. The administration provides adequate institutional support for shared governance to function.

Other
22. Is there anything else you wish to communicate regarding shared governance on your campus? (Open-ended question)