Gallaudet University Campus Climate Survey — Spring 2010

Office of Institutional Research (OIR)
Gallaudet University

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Gallaudet University Campus Climate Survey (GUCCS) — Summary

Background

- Survey consists of 40 items, each describing a climate characteristic. Likert item responses are on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with an NA (Not Applicable) option.
- Response rate was 37% of GU employees. Faculty and professional staff responses rates were the highest (50% each of possible pool); while staff and administrator response rate was lower (20% and 27% respectively).

Subscales

- Six subscales were constructed based on themes from 2003 consultant report. 2010 subscale scores in all areas were higher than in 2009.

Item Analysis

- Respondents feel **most positive** about official and formal actions taken to convey respect & trust and to share information (e.g., programs, timing and variety of communication; access to meetings, policies and statements). They also responded most positively to five statements about academic culture, including items related using consistent and reasonable academic standards.

- Respondents feel **most negative** about individual and specific decisions, consistency, reciprocity, and transparency in decision-making (especially budget decisions), and the efficiency of the organization.

- There is **inconsistency** among overall respondents in perception of a climate on about one-third of the items including several related to manager responsiveness, consistency, equality of opportunity in promotion and hiring, and proactive problem-solving. There were also inconsistent responses regarding English and ASL evaluation and support.

Questions for Action Planning:

- ❖ How can we increase the likelihood that formal and official statements and policies be better translated into daily actions?
- ❖ How can we increase the transparency, reciprocity, and effectiveness of communication and decision making? How can we increase transparency of resource allocation?
- ❖ How can we increase the sense of proactive and efficient problem solving at Gallaudet and make the related decision making transparent in efficient and timely ways?
- ❖ What strategies can be used to clarify and utilize consistent assessments of ASL and English proficiencies?
- ❖ How should the 2011 GU Campus Climate Survey be better aligned with current GU initiatives, including the revised Strategic Plan?
- ❖ How does the data from the GUCCS compare with data from National Survey of Student Engagement, Intergroup Dialogue Evaluations, and ODE's Student Climate Survey? How can the university use the data from these various surveys to create a comprehensive view of the university's climate?

Survey Background

The Gallaudet University Campus Climate Survey was developed in 2007 in order to better understand, respond to, and monitor concerns of GU employees regarding climate and campus strategies designed to improve climate. After piloting in 2007, the Survey was first used in 2008, and was administered again in 2009 and 2010. The GUCCC is used in conjunction with other indicators of campus climate; include the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Office of Diversity and Equity's Student Climate Survey, and evaluations of Intergroup Campus Dialogues.

Survey Methodology

Survey Instrument

The pilot GUCCS was based on a content analysis of consultant reports which had identified a series of themes including:

- Respect, trust, and fairness
- Institutional communication and information sharing
- Language, specifically access to both ASL and English
- Management style
- Academic culture
- Freedom of Expression

For each of the six thematic areas, four to nine statements were written describing campus climate characteristics for a total of 40 items[a]. All but one of these statements was written as a positive statement (see Appendix 1). These statements were formatted into Likert items on a scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). An additional option for NA (Not Applicable) was also available.

Survey Participation

In Spring 2010 the Survey was advertised to 890 faculty, staff (professional and non-professional), and administrators through a BlackBoard poll, BlackBoard announcements, emails, and four DailyDigest postings. GSC also helped with marketing the survey. Pre-marketing of the survey happened with having a poll on BlackBoard asking respondents their likelihood of responding through ASL, English, or Spanish versions of the survey. Paper versions of the survey were available in four locations on campus in both English and Spanish. Respondents submitted their surveys in the following ways:

- 309 individuals completed the English version online (94%);
- 16 individuals completed the English paper version (drop box) (5%)
- two individuals completed the ASL version online (1%);
- two individuals completed the Spanish version online (1%); and
- one individual completed the Spanish paper version (drop box) (<1%)

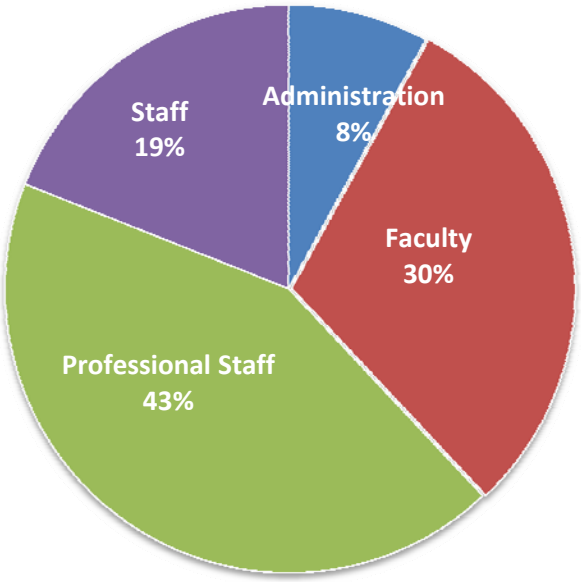
[a] Some statements were used for more than one scale.

Table 1: GU Climate Survey Responses: 2007-2010

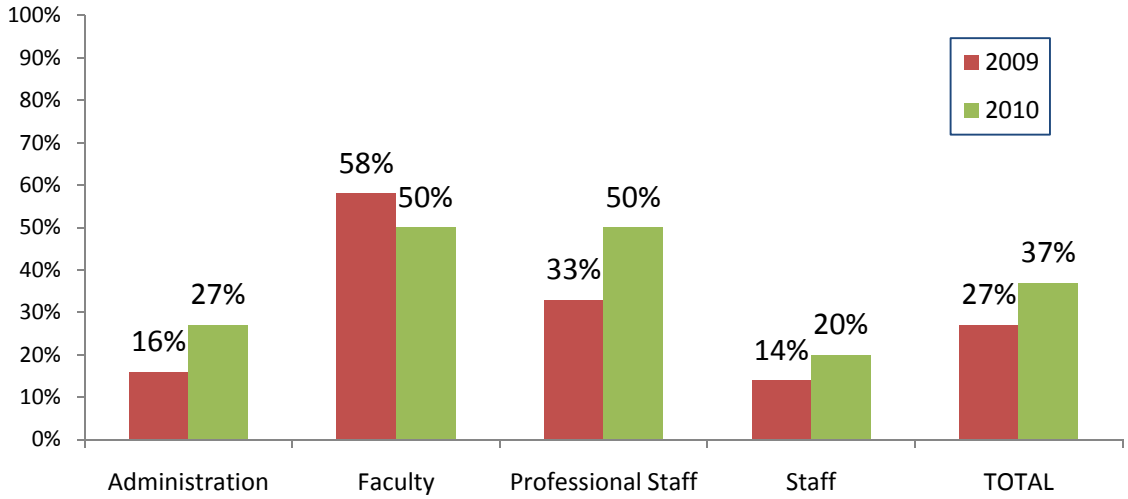
	Fall 2007	*Spring 2008*	*Spring 2009*	*Spring 2010*
Administrator	N/A	18	15	27
Faculty	84	158	91	100
Professional Staff	70	164	90	141
Staff	30	35	45	61
Total	**184**	**375**	**241**	**329**

The response rate for the 2010 survey was 37%, a 10% increase from 2009. Response rates were highest for faculty and professional staff (50% each of the total possible responses respectively). Non-professional staff and administrators had lower response rates at 20% and 27% respectively. A definition of the roles was included on the survey this year so that respondents had a better idea on how to categorize themselves.

Overall participation by employment category



Percent of Participants within each Employment Category

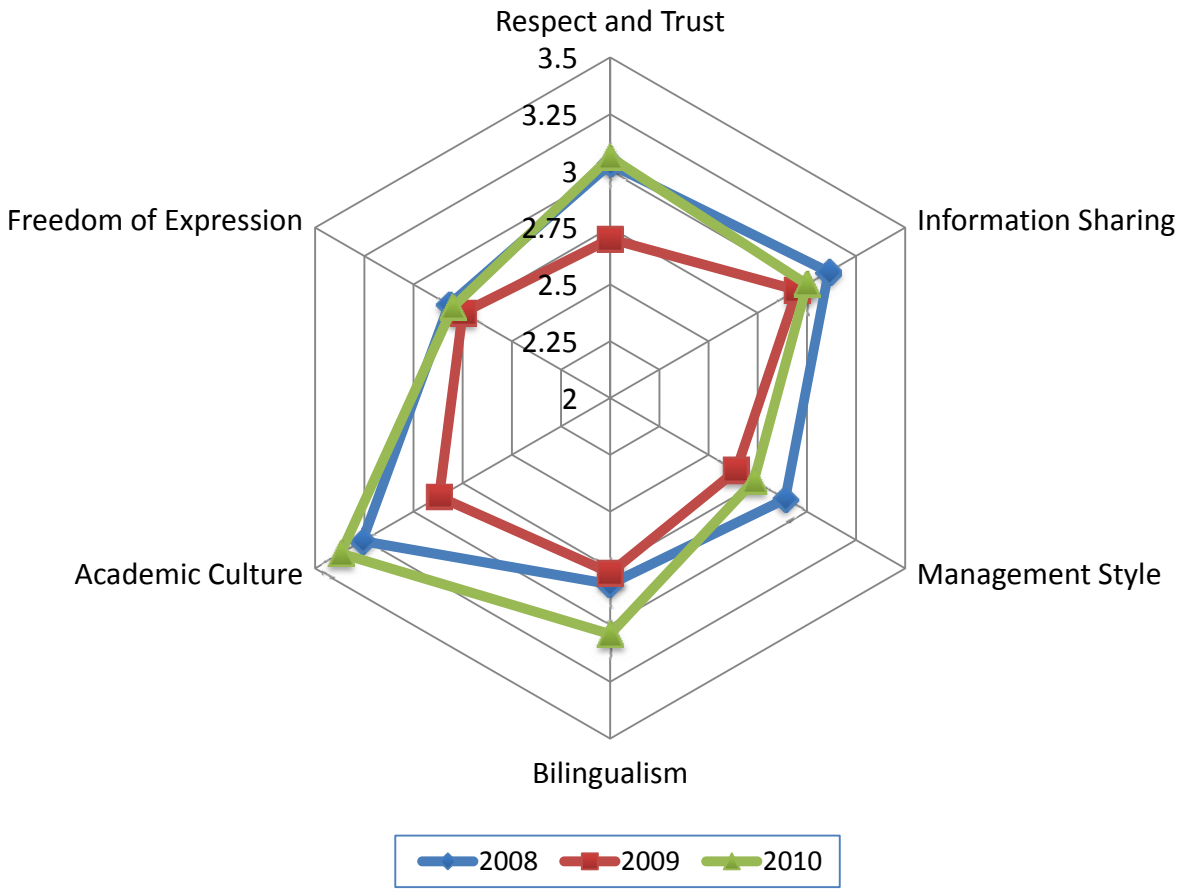


Survey Analysis

Subscale Scores

Based on the 2007 Pilot Survey, a series of simple additive subscales were computed. Each subscale is the average of the responses to questions in the scale. The specific contents of each subscale are provided in Appendix 1. The subscale score was computed as the sum of all responses divided by the number of possible responses in the subscale. This yielded a subscale average that reflects the original individual answers. In other words, a score of 4.5 to 5 on a subscale indicates strong agreement while a score of 0 to .5 would indicate strong disagreement.

Table 3: GU CCS Subscale Score Trend History



Overall the scores are higher in every area in 2010 in comparison to 2009. Scores of Respect and Trust, Bilingualism, and Academic Culture are higher in 2010 than in 2009 and 2008; scores in these three areas also increased the most from 2009 to 2010. Academic Culture saw the greatest increase in scores and also was the highest scoring subscale in 2010. Scores for Freedom of Expression, Communication and Information Sharing, and Management Style did increase from 2009, but to a lesser degree than the other three scores.

Subscale Scores: Respect and Trust

	Fall 2007	*Spring 2008*	*Spring 2009*	*Spring 2010*
Total Mean	**3.03**	**3.03**	**2.70**	**3.06**
Administrator	N/A	3.26	2.93	3.31
Faculty	3.10	3.05	2.69	3.00
Professional Staff	2.92	2.97	2.62	3.03
Staff	3.13	3.19	2.82	3.09

Subscale Scores: Institutional Communication and Information Sharing

	Fall 2007	*Spring 2008*	*Spring 2009*	*Spring 2010*
Total Mean	**3.11**	**3.11**	**2.95**	**3.00**
Administrator	N/A	3.27	3.24	2.30
Faculty	3.11	3.09	2.78	2.82
Professional Staff	3.07	3.07	2.96	3.01
Staff	3.23	3.26	3.18	3.11

Subscale Scores: Management Style

	Fall 2007	*Spring 2008*	*Spring 2009*	*Spring 2010*
Total Mean	**2.83**	**2.89**	**2.64**	**2.73**
Administrator	N/A	3.14	2.71	3.04
Faculty	2.83	2.83	2.50	2.53
Professional Staff	2.80	2.87	2.68	2.75
Staff	2.87	3.18	2.82	2.85

Subscale Scores: Bilingualism

	Fall 2007	*Spring 2008*	*Spring 2009*	*Spring 2010*
Total Mean	**2.86**	**2.82**	**2.77**	**3.04**
Administrator	N/A	3.11	2.64	2.79
Faculty	2.75	2.73	2.79	2.90
Professional Staff	2.88	2.85	2.66	3.05
Staff	3.15	2.96	3.00	3.41

Subscale Scores: Academic Culture

	Fall 2007	*Spring 2008*	*Spring 2009*	*Spring 2010*
Total Mean	**3.29**	**3.26**	**2.87**	**3.37**
Administrator	N/A	3.25	2.53	3.40
Faculty	3.28	3.28	3.18	3.38
Professional Staff	3.29	3.24	2.63	3.32
Staff	3.34	3.26	2.73	3.47

Subscale Scores: Freedom of Expression

	Fall 2007	*Spring 2008*	*Spring 2009*	*Spring 2010*
Total Mean	**2.48**	**2.82**	**2.75**	**2.80**
Administrator	N/A	3.00	3.10	3.09
Faculty	2.53	2.80	2.60	2.64
Professional Staff	2.32	2.76	2.72	2.79
Staff	2.63	3.08	2.98	3.12

Item Analysis

While analysis of subscale scores can provide a sense of general areas of concern and well-being with respect to campus climate, responses to individual items provide a more detailed picture. The 40 individual items on the GU Campus Climate Survey consist of statements about campus climate. All but one of these was stated as a positive campus characteristic. Survey respondents could respond positively (**Agree or Strongly Agree**), negatively (**Disagree or Strongly Disagree**), Neutrally (**Neither Agree Nor Disagree**), or with NA (Not Applicable). In order to better determine what actions could be taken to improve campus climate, individual items were analyzed individually.

For the purpose of this analysis, responses were categorized as Positive if the respondent indicated **Agree or Strongly Agree** on a positive climate characteristics, and, **Negative** if they indicated **Disagree or Strongly Disagree** on a positive climate characteristic OR Agreed or Strongly Agreed on a negative statement (e.g., "Favoritism occurs in the operation of the university." Responses were categorized as Neutral if participants indicated Neither Agree nor Disagree.

In order to categorize survey respondents' attitudes about individual campus climate statements, OIR ranked items according to the percent of responses on that item that were **Positive**, and those that were **Negative**. A third set of items were identified that received a mixture of Positive and Negative responses. Those we categorized as **Varied or Distributed**.

Campus climate statements that received a response of 40% or more **Agree or Strongly Disagree** were categorized as "Positive" responses[b]. Similarly, items which received a response of **Disagree or Agree** from 40% or more of survey participants were categorized as "Negative." For items on which responses were divided somewhat evenly among the three categories (Agree/Strongly Agree, Neutral, and Disagree/Strongly Disagree), the responses were categorized as "**Varying/Distributed**." We looked for patterns of items that tended to have more positive responses, items that received more negative responses, and items that varied (a mix of positive, negative, and neutral).

Of the 40 items, fifteen items received **Positive** responses (**Agree or Strongly Agree**) from 40% or more respondents, fourteen items received "**Negative.**" responses (**Disagree or Strongly Disagree**) from 40% or more respondents, and thirteen items received "**Varying/Distributed**" (i.e., responses were distributed among the positive, negative, and neutral categories).

[b] Very few items (statements about campus climate) received more than 50% response in the Positive, Negative, or Neutral responses.

As a whole, respondents feel most **Positive** about official and formal actions taken to convey respect & trust and to share information. For example:

- means, frequency and timing of communication (esp., admin to university);
- ongoing programs to encourage diversity and respect;
- demonstration of multiculturalism and social justice throughout university;
- access to and accommodations for diverse language users and students with exceptionalities;
- clear statements, policies, and teaching defining academic integrity and ethical behavior;
- accountability of unit managers to supervisors

They also responded most **positively** to five statements about academic culture, including questions related to individual faculty and departments using consistent and reasonable academic standards, and a statement about mutual respect being encouraged among all constituents.

As a whole, respondents feel most **negative** about individual and specific decisions, consistency and transparency of decision-making, and the efficiency of the organization. For example, 78% of all respondents responded **Agree or Strongly Agree** to the statement, "Favoritism occurs in the operation of the university" (78% or 248 out of 329 responses). 62% **Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed** with the statement "The organizational structure of the university is efficient," and 61% **Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed** with the statement, "Decision making at all levels is inclusive and transparent." All of these sets of responses were categorized as Negative. Other themes about which respondents had **negative** responses included:

- Transparency and inclusivity of decision making and communication (2-way information flow)
- Efficiency of the organizational structure and coordination among units to resolve problems
- Security and freedom to express diverse perspectives

Respondents were also concerned about the articulation of the concept of bilingualism and the evaluation of ASL and English proficiency (see both **Negative** and **Varying/Distributed** item lists).

When we compare the **Positive** response themes to the **Negative** response themes, some subtle patterns emerge that help to shed light on concerns (as well as successes) of current climate.

- ❖ Respondents were **positive** about the *means, frequency, and timing* of communication from University Administration to the community BUT **negative** about the *transparency* and *reciprocity* of the communication and decision making (especially regarding resource allocation).

- ❖ Mutual, multiculturalism and social justice are seen by the respondents as encouraged. However, respondents don't feel there is freedom to express diverse perspectives.

- ❖ While respondents **Agreed** with statements about policies defining ethical behavior for the campus community, they **Disagreed** that there are programs to inform and support ethical behavior at all levels of the university.

- ❖ Respondents indicated they **Agreed** that academic departments are working together to establish consistent standards for academic performance, they **Disagreed** that there is coordination across units to solve problems.

There is inconsistency among respondents in perception of a climate on about one-fourth of the items including items in the following areas:

- Units use institutional criteria and existing policies to decide (units, student grades, hiring, promotion) (3 items)
- Managers accessible and receptive to subordinates' input (2 items)
- Managers communicate and demonstrate ethical behavior and attitudes; rules of civil behavior modeled and enforced (2 items)
- Availability of processes for conflict resolution
- University is proactive in solving problems with community input

Survey Limitations

As with all surveys, response bias can influence survey data. That is, those people who chose to respond to the survey (37% of the potential pool) may be those who have strongest opinions (either positive or negative) and may not be representative of the campus as a whole.

Strategic initiatives to strengthen Gallaudet University in a variety of ways have created a different context than was the case in 2007 when the GU CCS was first developed. Focused efforts to improve student engagement, academic rigor, and effective use of resources may mean that the themes (along with the items) on which the Survey was based, are not longer **the most appropriate** ones for a GU Campus Climate Survey. Reexamination of the content of the GUCCS will be an important part of realigning data use for the Gallaudet Strategic Plan.

Questions for Action Planning

- How can we increase the likelihood that formal and official statements and policies be better translated into daily actions?
- How can we increase the transparency, reciprocity, and effectiveness of communication and decision making? How can we increase transparency of resource allocation?
- How can we increase the sense of proactive and efficient problem solving at Gallaudet and make the related decision making transparent in efficient and timely ways?
- What strategies can be used to clarify and utilize consistent assessments of ASL and English proficiencies?
- How should the 2011 GU Campus Climate Survey be better aligned with current GU initiatives, including the revised Strategic Plan?
- How does the data from the GUCCS compare with data from National Survey of Student Engagement, Intergroup Dialogue Evaluations, and ODE's Student Climate Survey? How can the university use the data from these various surveys to create a comprehensive view of the university's climate?

Appendix 1: Content of the Subscales by Items

The survey items are presented below by subscale category.

Respect & Trust (8)

- The university actively demonstrates multiculturalism and social justice in its day-to-day operations and interpersonal interactions among all community members throughout the university community.
- There are ongoing programs focusing on diversity and respect for multiple perspectives.
- Evaluation practices reward individual effort.
- There is a sense of security and freedom to express diverse perspectives.
- Mutual respect is encouraged and practiced among my peers (students, staff, faculty, administration).
- Mutual respect is encouraged and practiced between and among groups (students, staff, f faculty, administration).
- Transparent and informed communication is practiced consistently throughout the university community.
- There is equality of opportunity in promotion and hiring.

Institutional Communication & Information Sharing (9)

- The University Administration communicates with the campus community on frequent basis and in timely manner.
- The University Administration uses a variety of means to communicate with the campus community.
- It is clear that unit managers are accountable to their supervisors.
- The reasons for institutional changes such as unit closings or budget decisions are communicated to all concerned on frequent basis and in timely manner.
- The University is proactive in creating and applying solutions to problems/barriers with input from the community.
- There is coordination across units in the resolution of problems.
- Information flows upward and is recognized at higher levels of the administration.
- There are specific processes for resolving conflicts between units and individuals.
- University administrators are accessible and receptive to input.

Management Style (10)

- There are clear and available statements and policies defining ethical behavior for all members of the campus community.
- There is regular communication and demonstration of expected ethical behavior and attitudes by influential University leaders.
- There are regular programs to inform and support ethical behavior at all levels of the university.
- Unit managers, whether academic units on non-academic units, are responsive to their subordinates' input.
- Unit success is defined on the basis of institutional criteria rather than the personalities of those involved.
- The organizational structure of the university is efficient.
- Decision making at all levels is inclusive and transparent.
- Policies used in budget making for the University are transparent.

- There is a "customer friendly" attitude in services for students.
- Favoritism occurs in the operation of the University.

Bilingualism (5)

- The concept of bilingualism is clearly articulated at Gallaudet.
- There are adequate programs in place that may be utilized as a means of strengthening my articulation of either English or ASL.
- There is access to meetings and events for all of the diverse language users at Gallaudet.
- There are appropriate and adequate means of evaluating English proficiency within my unit.
- There are appropriate and adequate means of evaluating ASL proficiency within my unit.

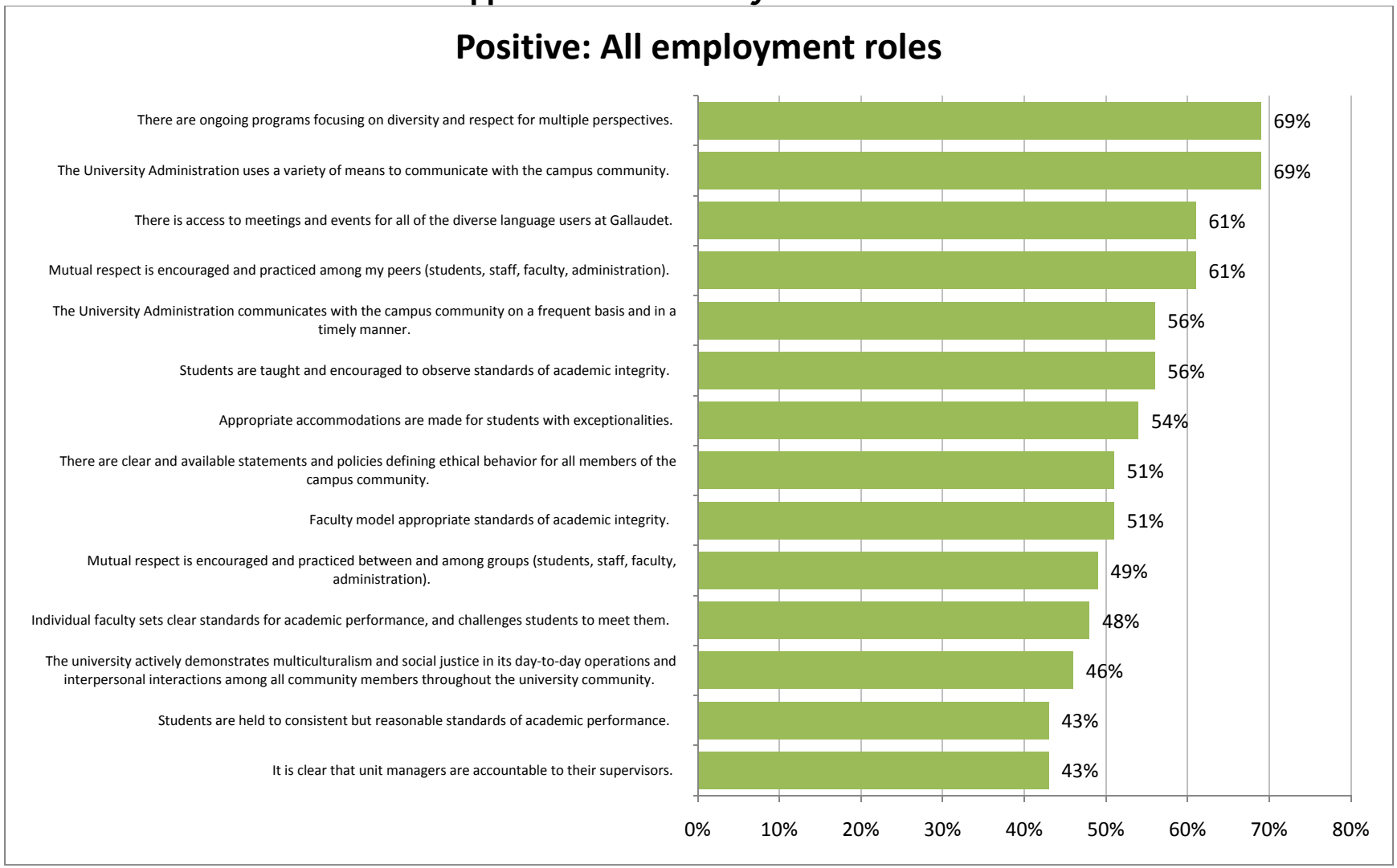
Academic Culture (8)

- Students are taught and encouraged to observe standards of academic integrity.
- Faculty model appropriate standards of academic integrity.
- Students are held to consistent but reasonable standards of academic performance.
- Rules of civil behavior are modeled and enforced in the dorms.
- Appropriate accommodations are made for students with exceptionalities.
- Academic departments are working together to establish consistent standards for academic performance.
- Individual faculty sets clear standards for academic performance, and challenges students to meet them.
- Existing policies regarding grades and participation in extracurricular activities are enforced.

Free Expression (9)

- There is a sense of security and freedom to express diverse perspectives.
- The University actively demonstrates multiculturalism and social justice in its day-to-day operations and interpersonal interactions among all community members throughout the university community.
- There is regular communication and demonstration of expected ethical behavior and attitudes by influential University leaders.
- The reasons for institutional changes such as unit closings or budget decisions are communicated to all concerned on frequent basis and in timely manner.
- Mutual respect is encouraged and practiced between and among groups (students, staff, faculty, administration).
- Information flows upward and is recognized at higher levels of the administration.
- Decision making at all levels is inclusive and transparent.
- University administrators are accessible and receptive to input
- Transparent and informed communication is practiced consistently throughout the university community.

Appendix 2: Item Analysis — All Roles



** "Positive" is defined as "strongly agree" or "agree" responses totaling 40% or more and surpassing negative responses.*

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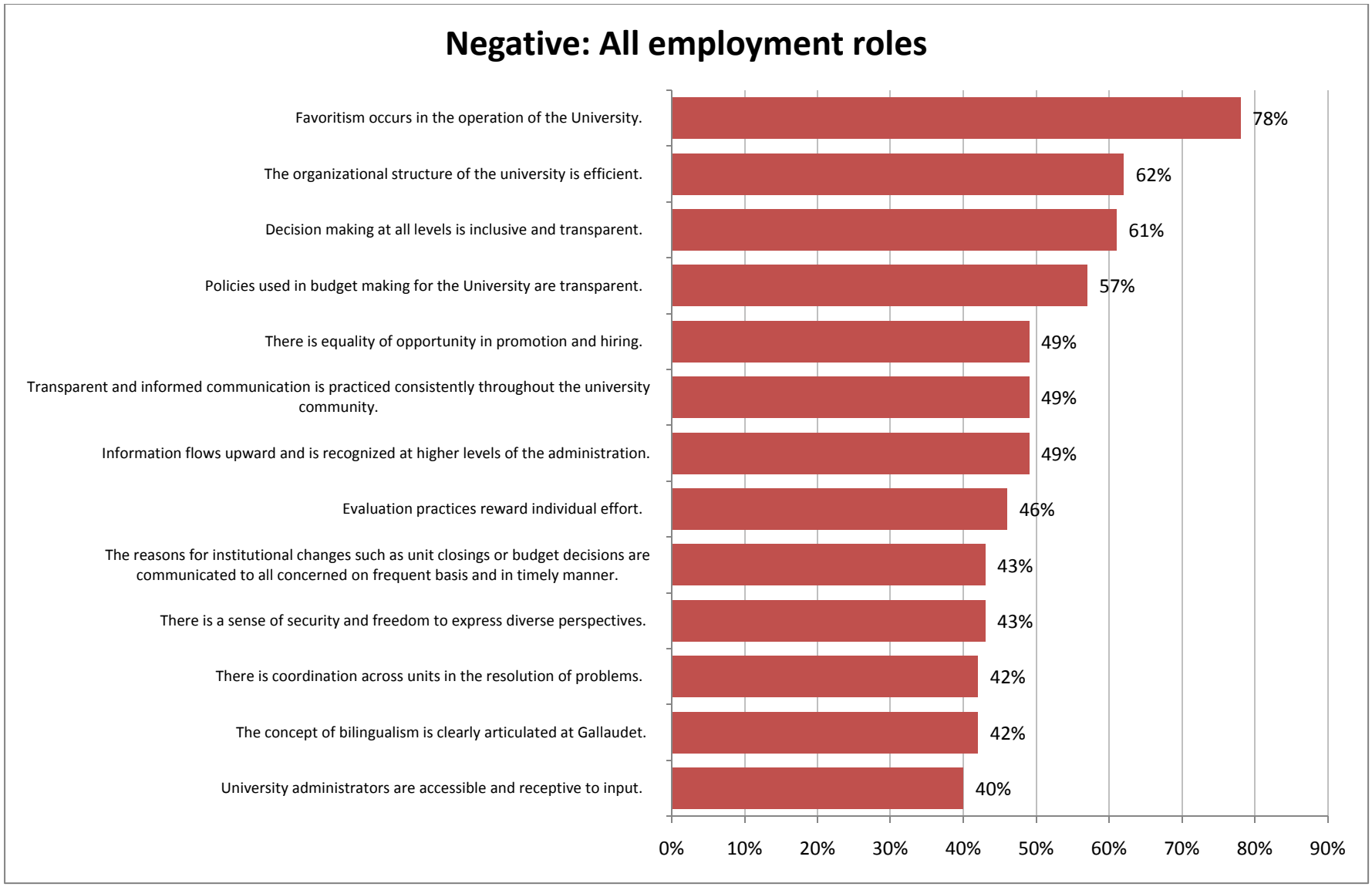
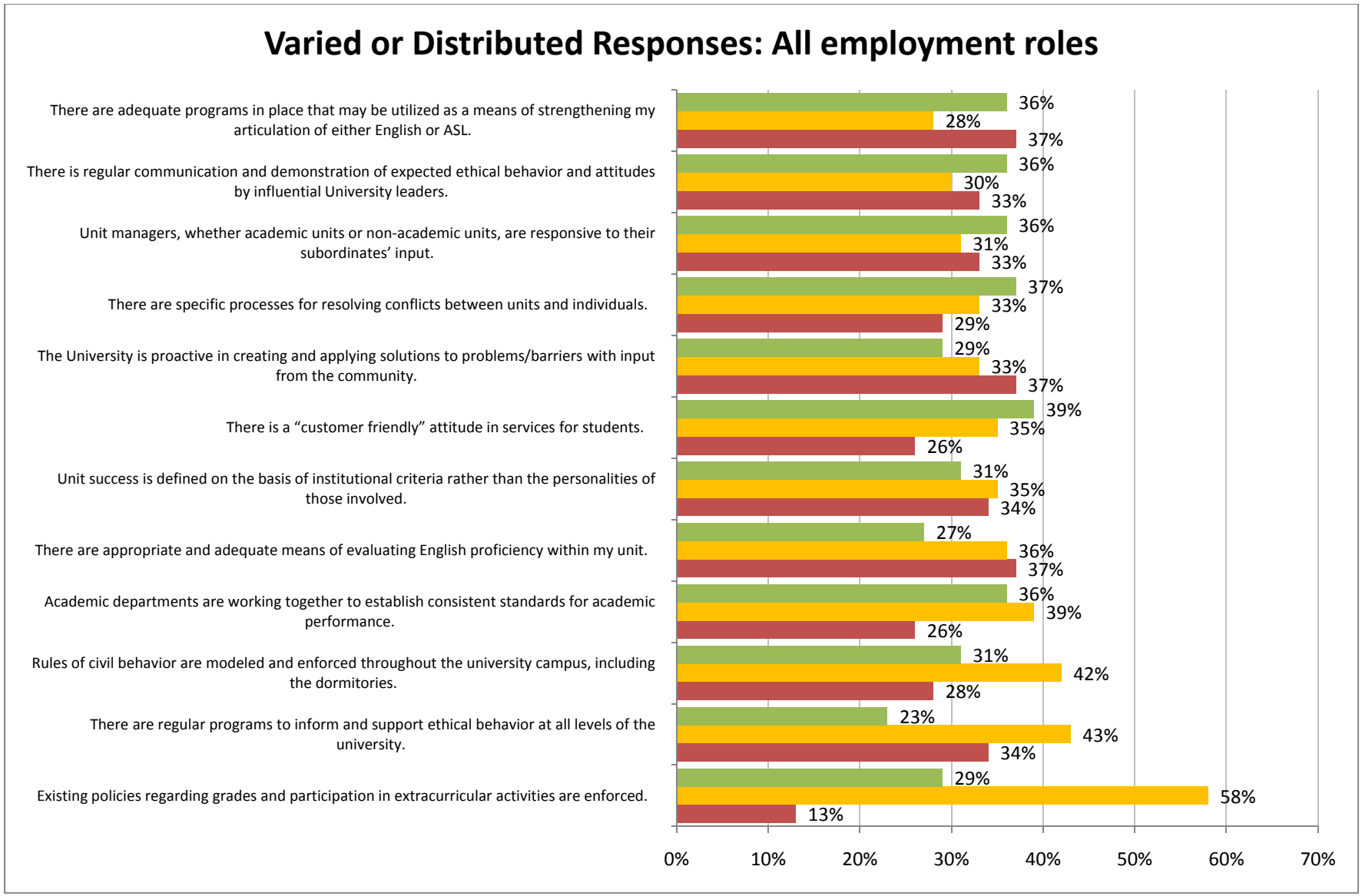


** "Negative" is defined as "strongly disagree" or "disagree" responses totaling 40% or more and surpassing positive responses.*



* *"Varying/Distributed" is defined as not having more than 40% in either positive or negative responses.*