

Summary of Staff Input Regarding WN21 Planning

October 28, 2020

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Staff Outreach

In an effort to collect input from staff who are the most directly engaged in student-facing work closely related to the academic experience, a brief “pulse” survey was distributed to 506 staff in the following groups:

- Student Affairs Network (SAN) (56)
- Vice President for Student Life (VPSL) (370, 3 overlap with SAN)
 - Student Life Leadership Assembly (managers and supervisors)
 - Up Close Group (front line/entry level staff)
 - Connect Group (mid-level, first level supervisors)
- Chief Human Resources Officers of each Academic Affairs unit (HR) (28; 1 duplicate with BAG)
- Budget Administrators Group (BAG) (56)

The survey was distributed mid-day on Monday, October 19 and closed at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 22. 85% of respondents completed the survey prior to President Schlissel’s 10/20/20 email announcing the Stay in Place order.

SAN/VPSL staff received a version of the survey focused on their own experiences, while HR/BAG received a version that focused on their role as reporters of what they are hearing from staff in their units.

- 423 SAN/VPSL staff received the survey, and 324 responded, for a response rate of 76%.
- 83 HR/BAG staff received the survey, and 33 responded, for a response rate of almost 40%.
- The overall response rate (357 out of 506) was 70%.

The survey instruments are attached as Appendices A and B; Appendix C summarizes the survey responses.

Findings from SAN/VPSL

Appendix C summarizes the survey results from SAN/VPSL staff. Some key notes:

- About half of respondents are splitting their time between onsite and remote work (another small percentage are back full-time, or remained onsite throughout).
- About 38% are working entirely remotely, despite having worked on campus pre-COVID
- 90% of respondents somewhat or strongly agree that (1) their unit has adapted well to changes in work conditions, and (2) their work is valued within their unit.
- 77% of respondents somewhat or strongly agree that (1) their work experience has been positive and (2) feel confident in the strategic direction of their unit.

- However, only 63% of respondents somewhat or strongly agree that they feel confident in the strategic direction of the university and 61% strongly or somewhat agree that they feel included in decisions that impact their work.
- A very high percentage of respondents have sometimes, often, or very often been concerned about the well-being of the student body (97%), their UM colleagues (96%), their friends and family (95%) and their own health and well-being (89%)

When asked about plans for the WN21 semester:

- 55% of respondents somewhat (33.8%) or strongly (21.6%) agree that the approach to WN21 should stay the same as the public health informed approach to FA20.
- When asked about areas of greatest concern if WN21 follows the same approach as FA20, the top 5 answers were:
 - Student health and well-being (82.4%)
 - Colleagues' health and well-being (66.4%)
 - Employee morale (60.5%)
 - Employee's own health and well-being (54.9%)
 - University financial impacts (49.4%)
- This contrasts with the areas of greatest concern if WN21 is fully remote:
 - University financial impacts (64.5%)
 - Student co-curricular experience (49.7%)
 - Student academic experience (47.5%)
 - Student success (46.3%)
 - Employee morale (44.4%)

Notably, employee morale and university financial impacts are among the top concerns under both scenarios. However, the focus on health and wellness concerns are markedly higher if WN21 follows a path similar to FA20 than if it is a fully remote semester.

Findings from BAG/HR

Appendix C also summarizes the survey results from BAG/HR staff. Some key notes:

- All respondents somewhat or strongly agree that their unit has adapted well to changes in work conditions, and 97% somewhat or strongly agree that their work is valued within their unit.
- 82% of respondents somewhat or strongly agree that their work experience has been positive.
- 85% feel confident in the strategic direction of their unit, while 72% feel confident in the strategic direction of the University.
- 85% somewhat or strongly agree that they feel included in decisions that impact their work (compared to only 61% of the SAN/VPLS group)

When asked about plans for the WN21 semester, 91% of BAG/HR respondents somewhat (48.5%) or strongly (42.4%) agree that the approach to WN21 should stay the same as the public-health informed approach to FA20.

BAG/HR respondents were asked to identify the 2-3 key questions they are hearing from staff in their units regarding the WN21 semester. The most frequent answers are summarized below (in order):

- How long will we have to work remotely/will staff be required to work in-person?
- Will WN21 be fully remote for students?
- What impact will the ongoing pandemic have on jobs/job security?
- How long will the budget constraints/hiring freeze remain in effect?
- Will UM provide additional paid time off to help parents manage impacts of K-12 education disruptions?
- How can we address the (lack of) work-life balance and employee burnout due to increased workloads?
- Will the flexibility for remote work continue post-pandemic?
- Can we find ways to acknowledge/reward staff, to demonstrate equity with faculty?

Thoughts About the Winter 2021 Semester

All respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statement: “The U-M approach to Winter 2021 should stay the same as the public health-informed approach to Fall 2020.”

55% of VPSL/SAN respondents and 91% of BAG/HR respondents somewhat or strongly agreed with this statement. Respondents were offered the opportunity to explain why they chose the response they did. Not surprisingly, the reasons varied widely, and often represented two sides of the same coin. Many respondents acknowledged the complexity of the decision-making, and the often-competing demands between and among constituent groups. Examples of these tensions included the following:

Student wellness and mental health are best served by a residential, public-health informed semester similar to FA20.	The limitations on in-person engagement makes the residential experience isolating, which negatively impacts student wellness and mental health.
Clear enforcement mechanisms are needed to ensure that students follow public health guidance, and will change student behavior.	Many 18-22 year old students will choose not to follow the public health guidance in favor of social interactions, an assumption that must underlie our planning.
Additional opportunities for in-person connections/engagement are necessary to address students’ feelings of isolation.	Winter semester offers many fewer opportunities for in-person interactions given the colder weather and resulting loss of outdoor activities/spaces.
We need a residential semester to preserve jobs of many student life employees and to ensure the university’s financial stability.	The increases in COVID cases, the upcoming flu season, and the move to more indoor activities mean we should de-densify campus and move to all or nearly-all remote instruction.
Our hybrid approach is the best solution to a complex set of circumstances.	The additional workload created by the hybrid approach is leading to staff burnout and is not sustainable.
We do not yet have enough information to make decisions about WN21.	Decisions are reactive, and made too late.

Many respondents noted variations on the following themes:

- We need a more robust testing protocol and increased access to testing; some respondents recommend mandatory testing for students who live in residence halls;
- Staff, like students, are exhausted, anxious, and feeling isolated;
- Several respondents also highlighted disparities between employee groups (e.g., faculty versus staff; staff who are required to work in-person for “optics” versus those allowed to continue to work remotely).



All Employees

This U-M Office of the Provost survey is intended to help in planning and decision making for Winter 2021.

We've reached the midpoint of our public health-informed Fall 2020 semester. We are asking for your feedback to help us better understand what has gone well and what hasn't, which will help us determine how we can best deliver the educational mission of the University of Michigan in Winter 2021. Participation by staff and administrators from all of the U-M's schools and colleges will help us to develop plans that are responsive to the needs of our staff, students, and the many different academic programs and co-curricular activities across campus.

This short survey should take you no more than 5 minutes to complete. Your responses are confidential, anonymous

and will not be reported in any way that can connect them with you.

The survey will be open until 5:00 P.M. Eastern time on Thursday, October 22. We appreciate your open and honest feedback, which will inform decision-making at the University.

Please tell us a little more about you.

To which group do you belong?

- Budget Administrators Group
- Vice President for Student Life
- Human Resources Communications Group
- Student Affairs Network
- Other (please specify)

With which U-M School/College are you primarily associated (if applicable)?

On the ground

At this moment, which do you best identify with?

- The majority of my work was done remotely pre-COVID-19, and I'm continuing to work remotely
- Pre-COVID-19, I normally split my time between home and campus, but now I'm only working remotely
- Pre-COVID-19, I normally worked on-campus but I'm now working remotely
- I have returned to working on-campus every day, after working remotely this past spring/summer
- I have returned to working on-campus some days, and am still working remotely on other days
- Other (please specify)

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements **for Fall 2020**:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
My unit has adapted well to changes in work conditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel that my work is valued within my unit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that my work is valued by the U-M	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident in the strategic direction of my unit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident in the strategic direction of the U-M	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel included in decisions that impact my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, my work experience has been positive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Throughout **Fall 2020**, how often have you been concerned about the following?

	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Doing your job effectively despite changes (e.g., changes to what your work is, changes to how you do your work)	<input type="radio"/>				

	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Feeling pressure to work on-campus	<input type="radio"/>				
Losing connections with your U-M colleagues	<input type="radio"/>				
The health and well-being of the U-M student body	<input type="radio"/>				
The health and well-being of your U-M colleagues	<input type="radio"/>				
The health and well-being of your friends and family	<input type="radio"/>				
Your health and well-being	<input type="radio"/>				
What the future holds for the U-M financially	<input type="radio"/>				

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement:

The U-M approach to Winter 2021 *should stay the same* as the public health-informed approach to Fall 2020.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

Briefly, why?

If Winter 2021 is structured in a manner similar to Fall 2020, I am especially concerned about (select as many as apply):

- Student health and well-being
- Student academic experience
- Student co-curricular experience
- Student access to campus resources
- Student success
- My health and well-being
- The health and well-being of my family and friends
- My colleagues' health and well-being
- Employee morale
- Connections with colleagues
- Ability to perform collaborative work
- Ability to perform individual work
- University financial impacts
- Other (please specify)

If Winter 2021 is fully remote, I am especially concerned about (select as many as apply):

- Student health and well-being
- Student academic experience
- Student co-curricular experience
- Student access to campus resources
- Student success
- My health and well-being
- The health and well-being of my family and friends
- My colleagues' health and well-being
- Employee morale
- Connections with colleagues
- Ability to perform collaborative work
- Ability to perform individual work
- University financial impacts
- Other (please specify)



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The survey will be open until 5:00 P.M. Eastern time on Thursday, October 22. We appreciate your open and honest feedback, which will inform decision-making at the University.

Please tell us a little more about you.

To which group do you belong?

- Budget Administrators Group
- Vice President for Student Life
- Human Resources Communications Group
- Student Affairs Network
- Other (please specify)

With which U-M School/College are you primarily associated (if applicable)?

Administration

Please tell us about what you're hearing from staff in your unit.

Indicate the level of agreement with the following statements **for Fall 2020**:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Our unit has adapted well to changes in work conditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff feel their work is valued within the unit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff feel their work is valued by the U-M	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff feel confident in the strategic direction of the unit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff feel confident in the strategic direction of the U-M	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff feel included in decisions that impact their work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, staff work experience has been generally positive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

During **Fall 2020**, what have been the most commonly expressed concerns you have heard (select as many as apply)?

- Staff concerned about doing their jobs effectively despite changes (e.g., changes to the nature of their work, changes to how their work is performed)
- Staff feeling pressure to work on-campus
- Concern about losing connections with U-M colleagues
- Concern about the health and well-being of the U-M student body
- Concern about the health and well-being of U-M colleagues
- Concern about individual staff members' health and well-being
- Concern about the health and well-being of staff members' friends and family
- Concern about impacts to the U-M financially
- Other (please specify)

Please indicate the level of agreement with the following statement:

The U-M approach to Winter 2021 *should stay the same* as the public health-informed approach to Fall 2020.

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Briefly, why?

What are the 2-3 key questions you are hearing from staff in your unit regarding the Winter 2021 semester?

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APPENDIX C

Staff Input Survey
October 19-22, 2020
Summary of Results

Staff Survey, Monday 10/19 – Thursday 10/22

357 Respondents (5 excluded who did not respond to any questions):

- 33 – BAG & HRCG
- 268 – SAN & VP Student Life
- 56 – Other (Provost's Office/PBT, Student Life/Housing/Dining, Sports, etc.)

Units:

- 2 – Architecture (BAG, HRCG)
- 5 – Art & Design (BAG, HRCG, SAN, Other)
- 8 – Business (SAN, VP Student Life, Other)
- 1 – Dentistry (SAN)
- 3 – Education (BAG, SAN)
- 4 – Engineering (BAG, HRCG, SAN)
- 1 – SEAS (BAG)
- 3 – Information (BAG, HRCG, SAN)
- 5 – Kinesiology (BAG, HRCG, SAN, VP Student Life)
- 3 – Law (BAG, HRCG, Other)
- 9 – LSA (BAG, SAN, VP Student Life)
- 8 – Medicine (SAN, Other)
- 4 – SMTD (BAG, HRCG, SAN)
- 3 – Nursing (SAN)
- 5 – Public Health (HRCG, SAN, Other)

Units:

- 2 – Public Policy (BAG, SAN)
- 4 – Rackham (BAG, SAN, Other)
- 3 – Social Work (BAG, SAN)

Did Not Provide Unit:

- 11 – BAG, HRCG
- 227 – SAN, VP Student Life
- 46 – Other

Schlissel Announcement Re: Format Change, 10/20/20 2:46 P.M.

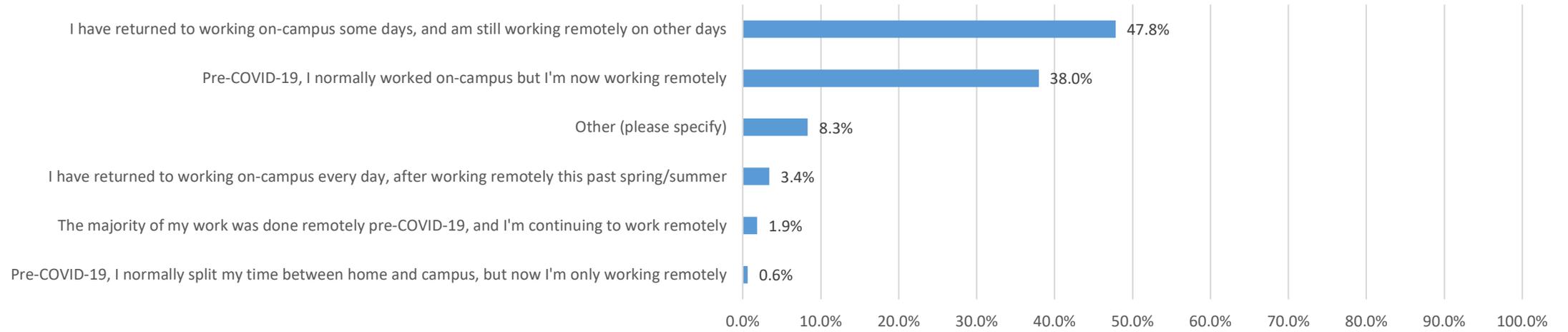
- 303 – Completed Survey Pre-Announcement
- 54 – Completed Survey Post-Announcement

Median Time to Complete Survey = 6.8 minutes

Staff Survey – 268 SAN & VP Student Life, 56 Other

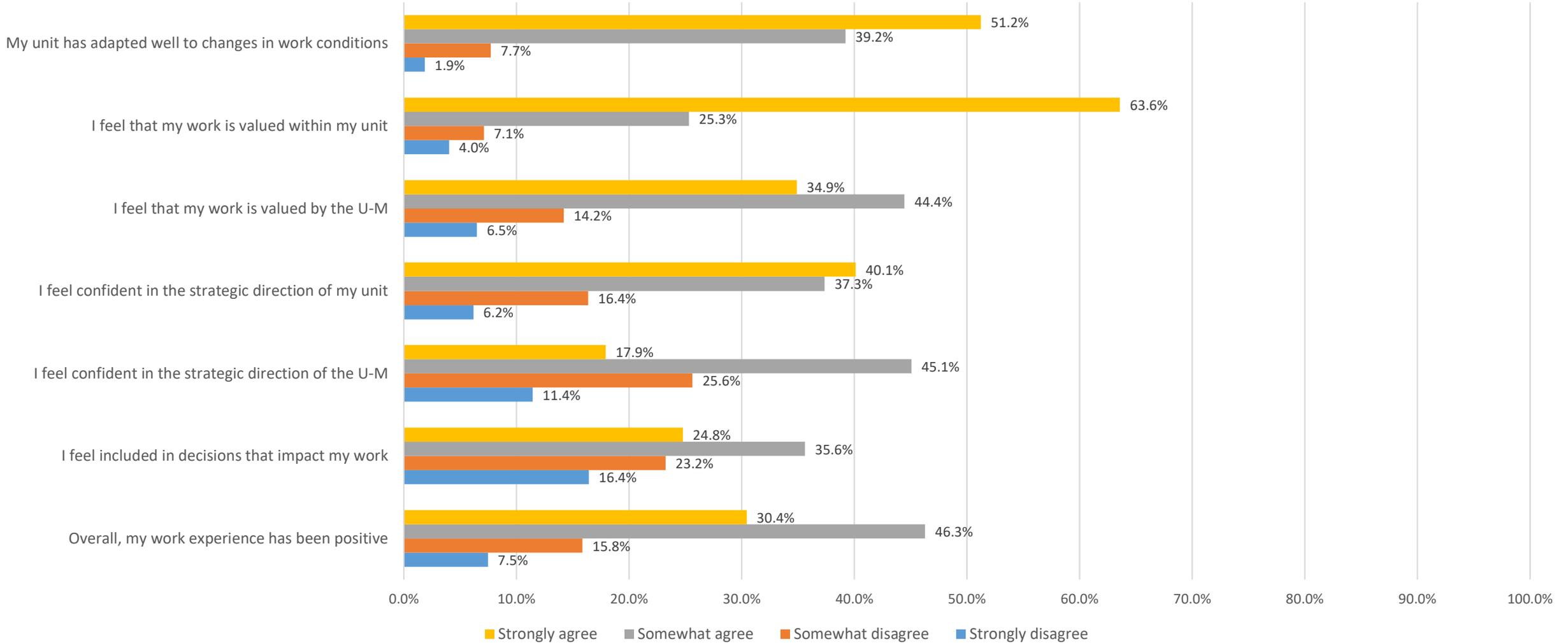
- At this moment, which do you best identify with?

Q5: At this moment, which do you best identify with?



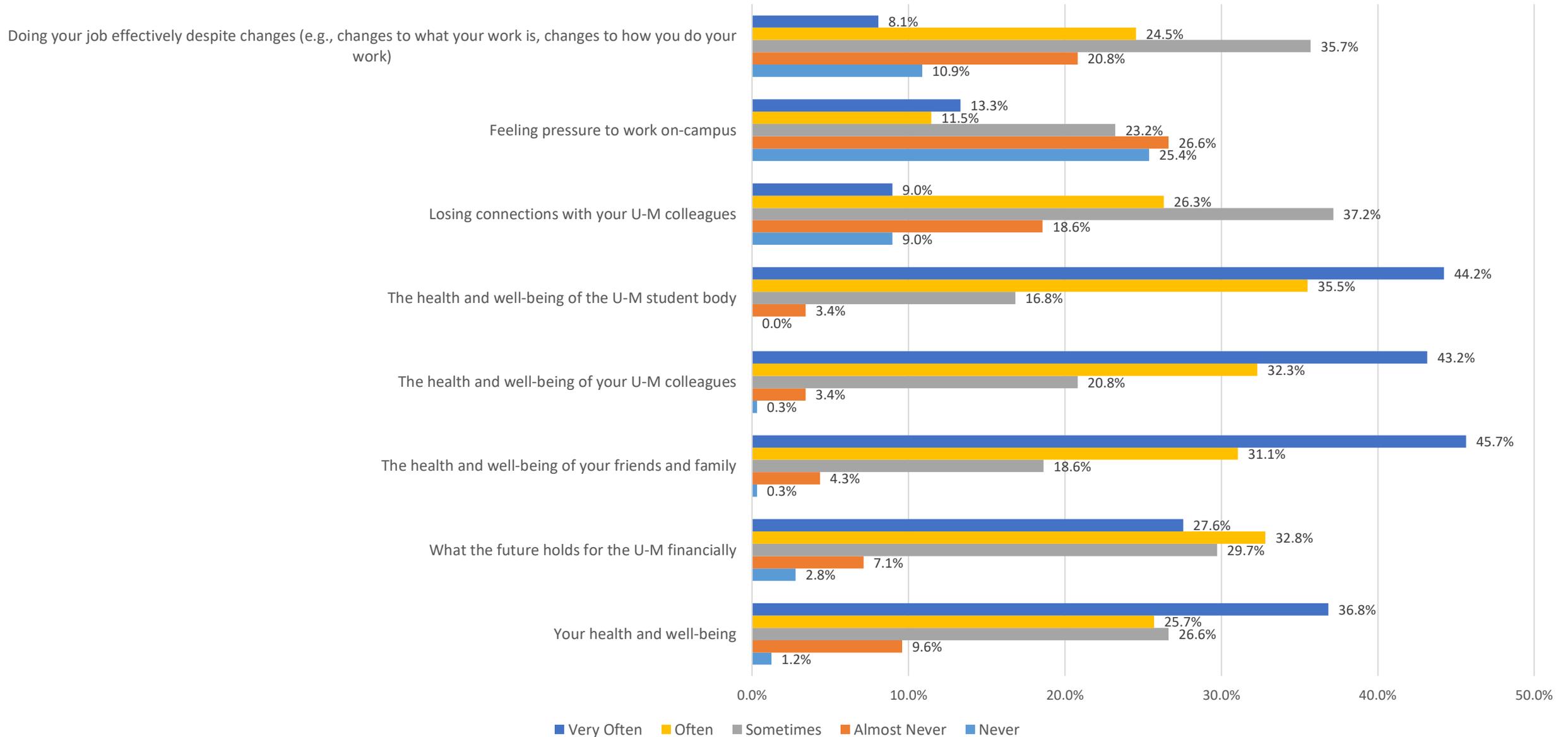
Staff Survey – 268 SAN & VP Student Life, 56 Other

Q6 - Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements for **Fall 2020**:



Staff Survey – 268 SAN & VP Student Life, 56 Other

Q7 - Throughout **Fall 2020**, how often have you been concerned about the following?

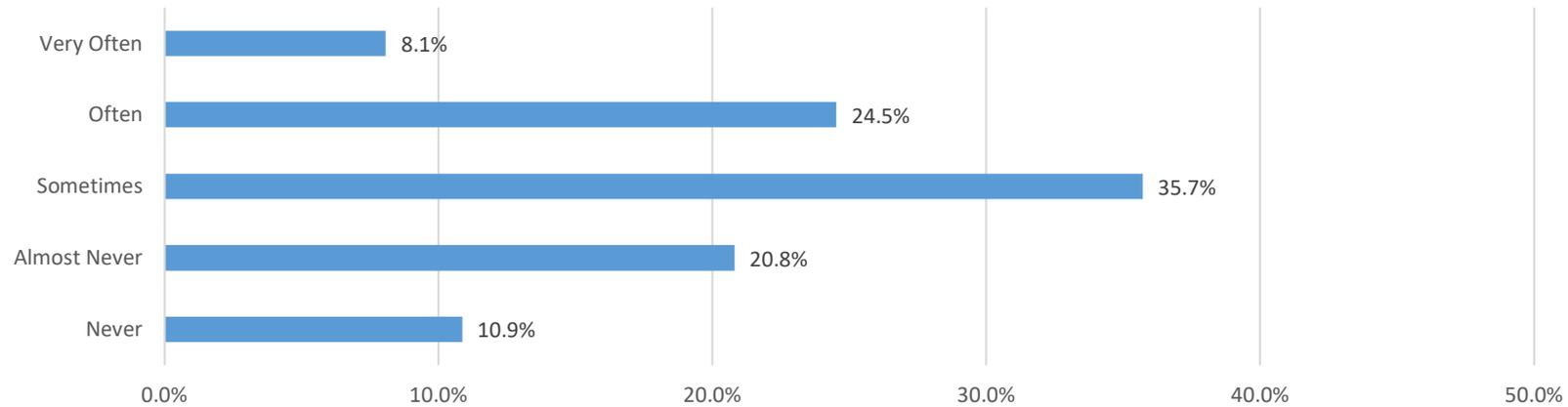


Staff Survey – 268 SAN & VP Student Life, 56 Other

Throughout Fall 2020, how often have you been concerned about the following?

- Doing your job effectively despite changes (e.g., changes to what your work is, changes to how you do your work)
 - 68% Sometimes, Often or Very Often (2 – non-responses excluded)

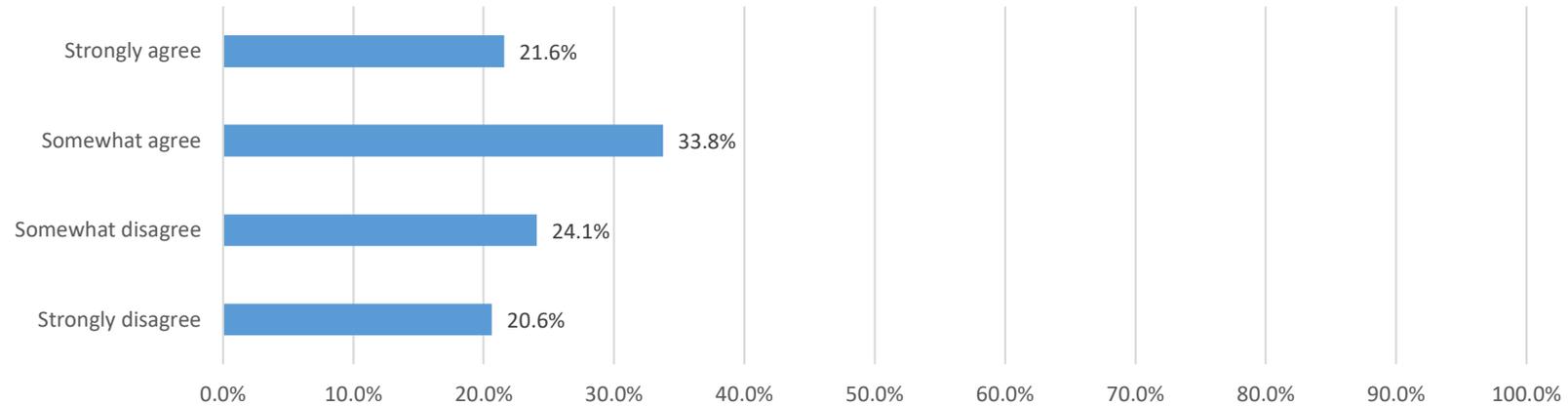
Q7_1: Doing your job effectively despite changes (e.g., changes to what your work is, changes to how you do your work)



Staff Survey – 268 SAN & VP Student Life, 56 Other

- The U-M approach to Winter 2021 should stay the same as the public health-informed approach to Fall 2020
 - 55% Somewhat or strongly agree (4 – non-responses excluded)

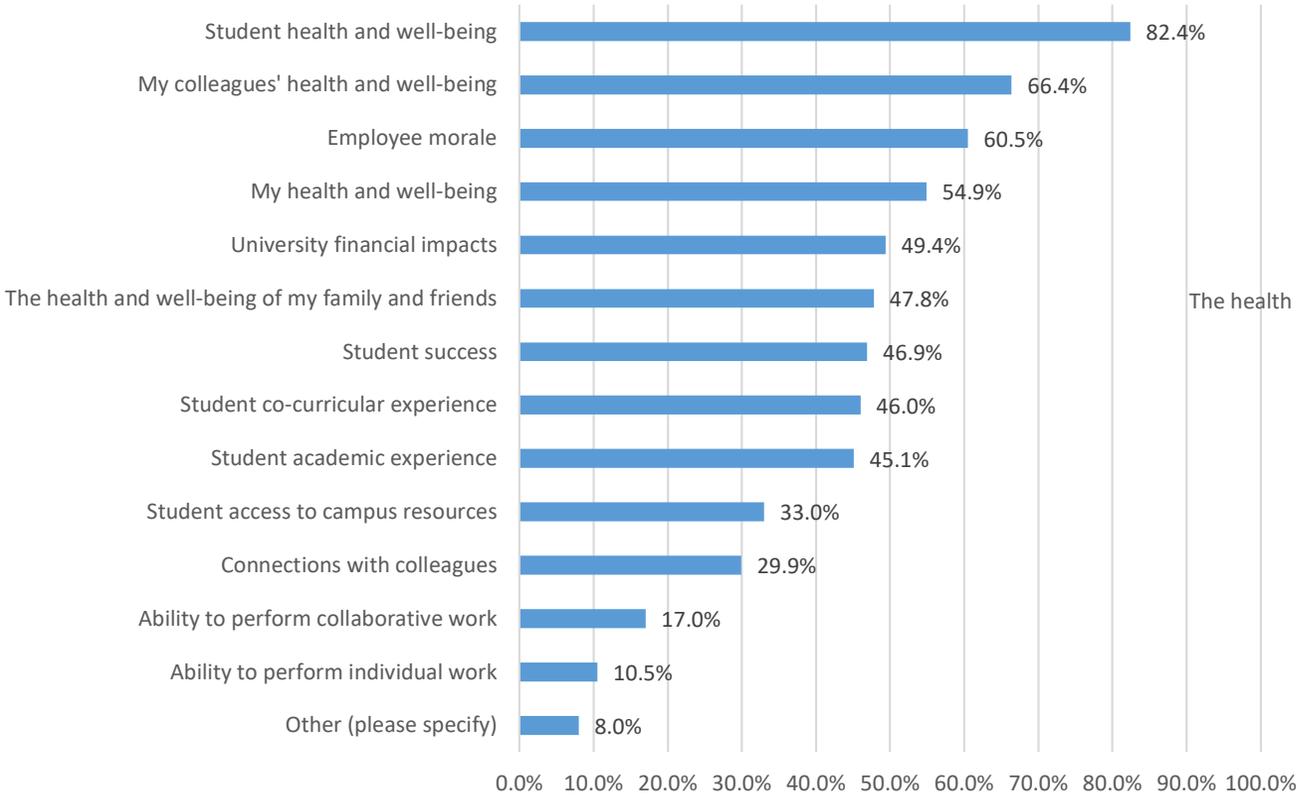
Q8: The U-M approach to Winter 2021 should stay the same as the public health-informed approach to Fall 2020.



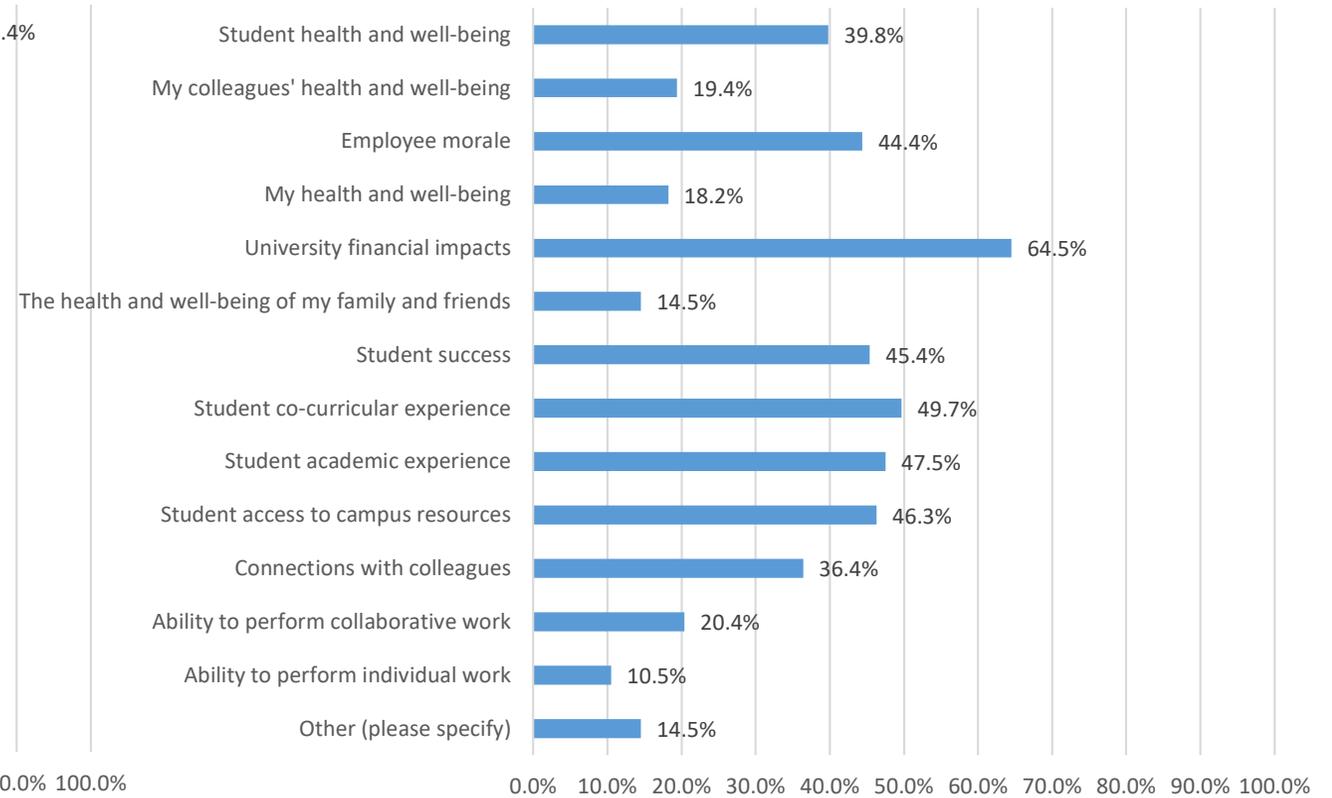
Staff Survey – 268 SAN & VP Student Life, 56 Other

Q10 & 11 View #1

Q10 - If Winter 2021 is structured in a manner similar to Fall 2020, I am especially concerned about:



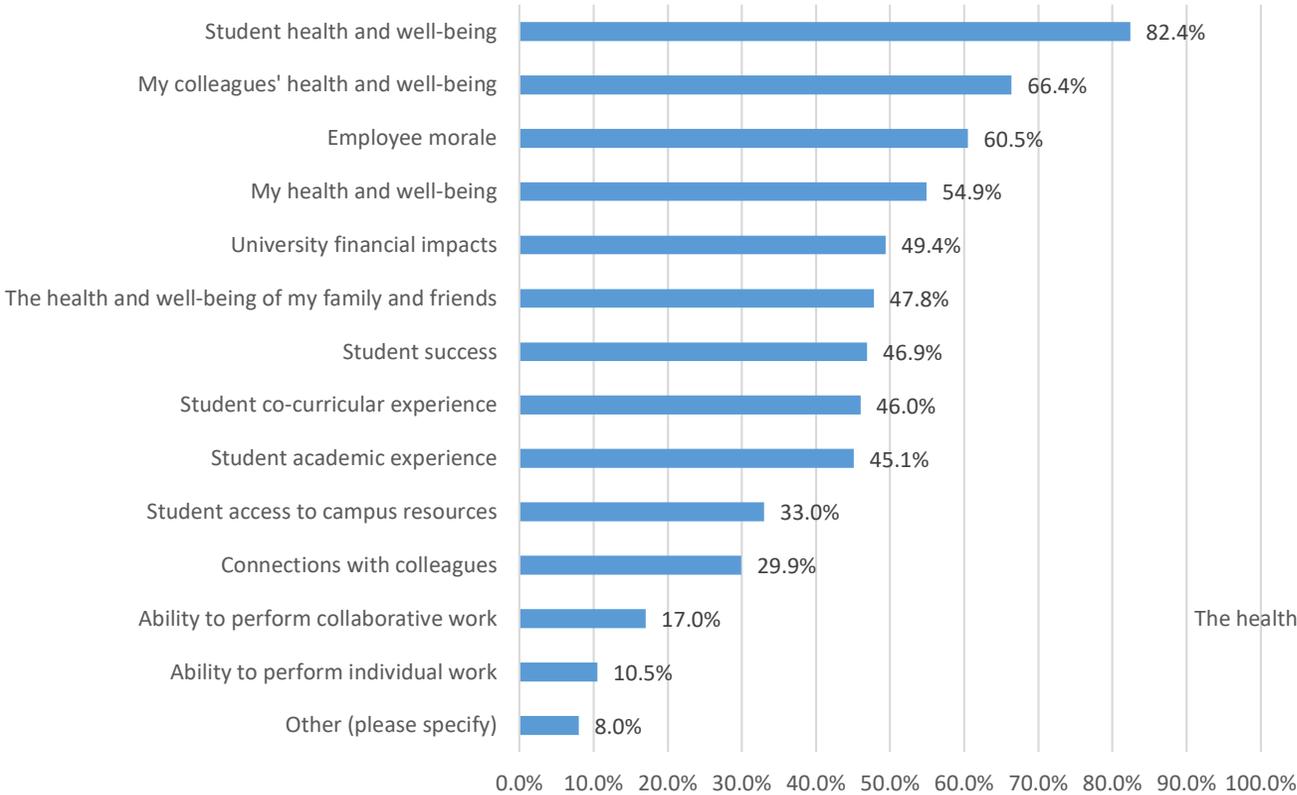
Q11 - If Winter 2021 is fully remote, I am especially concerned about:



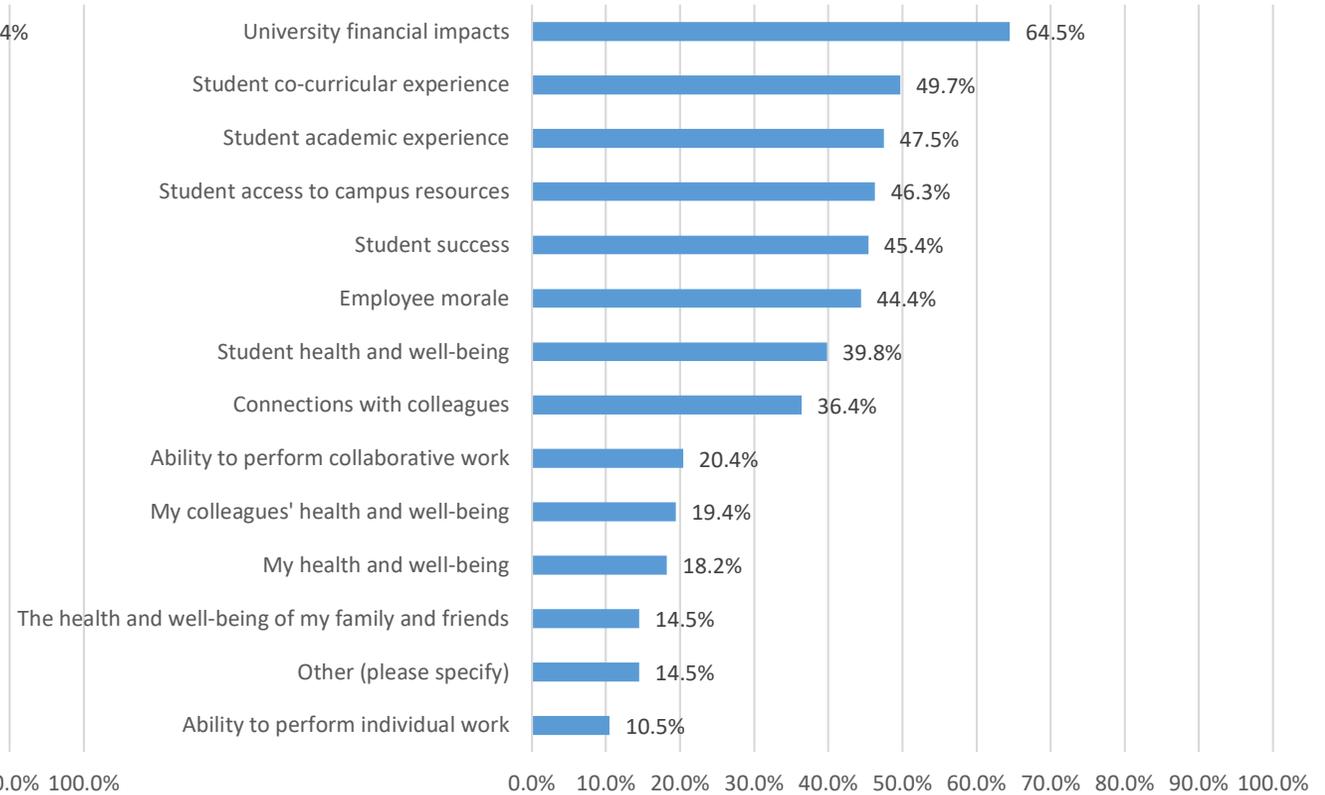
Staff Survey – 268 SAN & VP Student Life, 56 Other

Q10 & 11 View #2

Q10 - If Winter 2021 is structured in a manner similar to Fall 2020, I am especially concerned about:



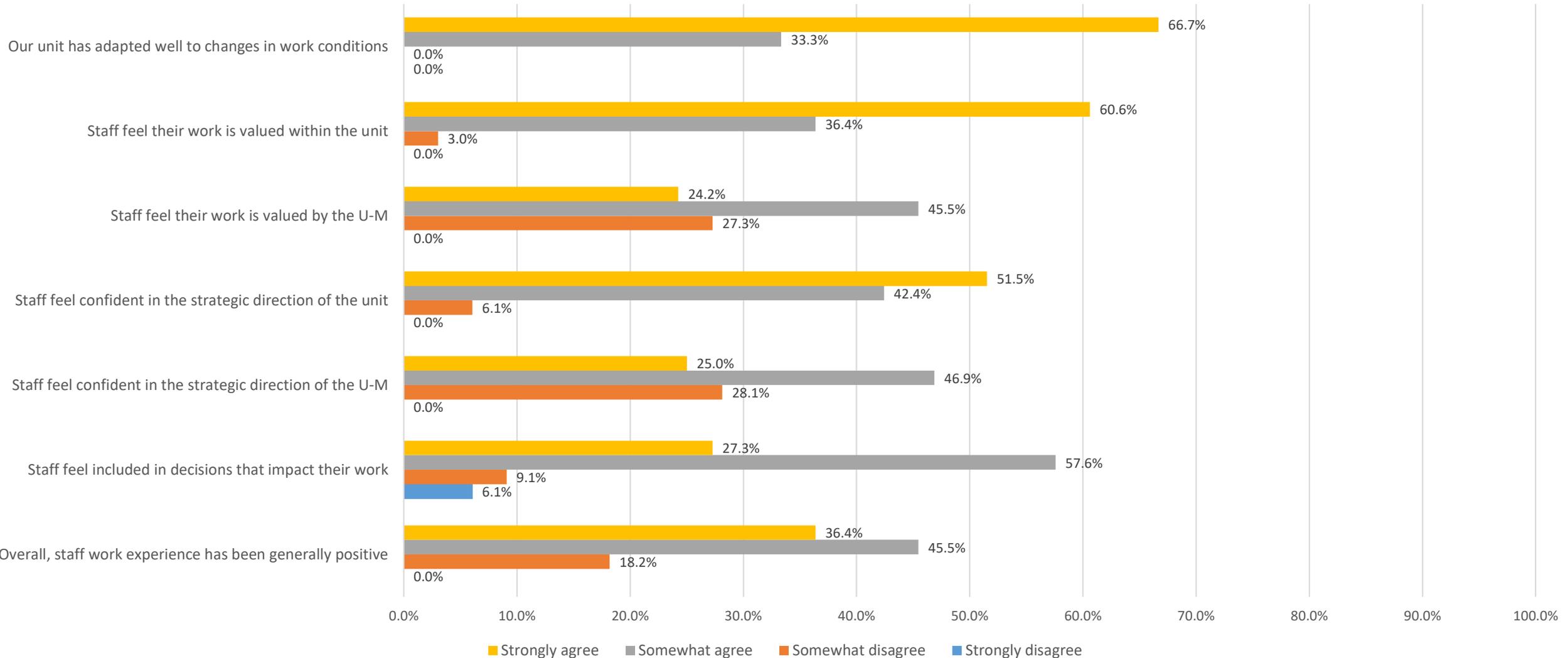
Q11 - If Winter 2021 is fully remote, I am especially concerned about:



Staff Survey – 33 BAG & HRCG

Please tell us about what you're hearing from staff in your unit.

Q13 - Indicate the level of agreement with the following statements for **Fall 2020**:



Staff Survey – 33 BAG & HRCG

Please tell us about what you're hearing from staff in your unit.

- The U-M approach to Winter 2021 should stay the same as the public health-informed approach to Fall 2020
 - 91% Somewhat or strongly agree

Q15: The U-M approach to Winter 2021 should stay the same as the public health-informed approach to Fall 2020

