

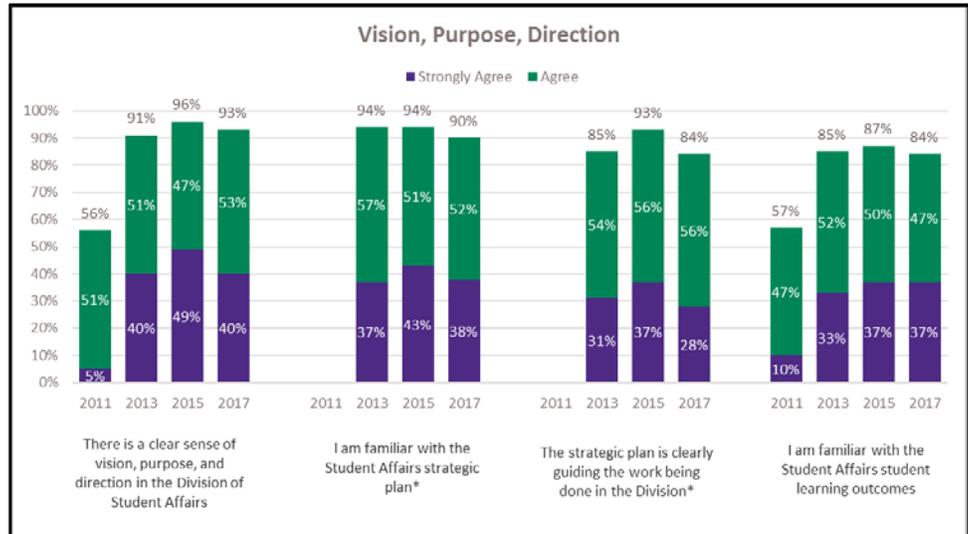
Summary of Findings Student Affairs Staff Survey Northwestern University Fall 2017

The 2017 Student Affairs Staff Survey was distributed between September 5 to September 29, 2017, to 307 staff members in the Division. Eighty-five percent (85% or 260) of the staff responded, a slight decrease from the 90% response rate in 2015. The survey consisted of 133 questions and sought staff members' feedback in six areas: (1) the Division, (2) personal experience in the Division, (3) staff training and development, (4) departments, (5) SALT, and (6) supervisors. Major findings in each area are summarized below, followed by a brief review of respondent demographics.

THE DIVISION

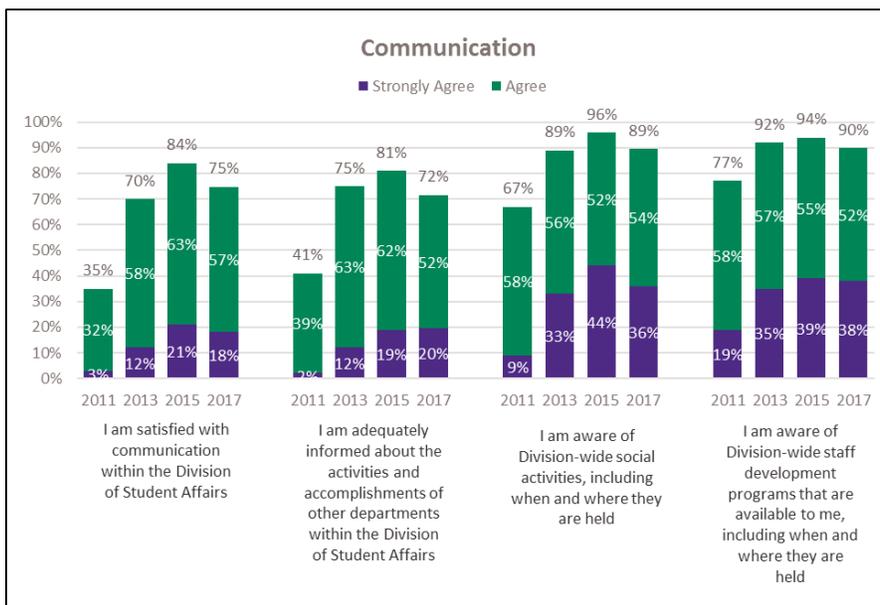
Thirty-four questions about the Division were asked in 2011, 2013, 2015 and/or 2017. Twenty-four of these questions were measured on a 4-point scale where 4 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree. The overall scores slightly decreased from the 2015 administration so that they are similar to 2013's responses.

Here are a few highlights:



Vision, Purpose, Direction

- In 2017, 93% of the respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” there is a clear sense of vision, purpose, and direction in the Division. This is a slight decrease from 2015.
- Ninety percent of the respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” they were familiar with the Division’s strategic plan, a slight decrease from prior administrations when this question was asked. Similarly, 84% of respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” the strategic plan guides the work of the Division; this is a 9% decrease from the 2015 survey results.



- Eighty-four percent “strongly agreed” or “agreed” they are familiar with the Student Affairs learning outcomes, a slight decrease from the prior survey administration.

Communication

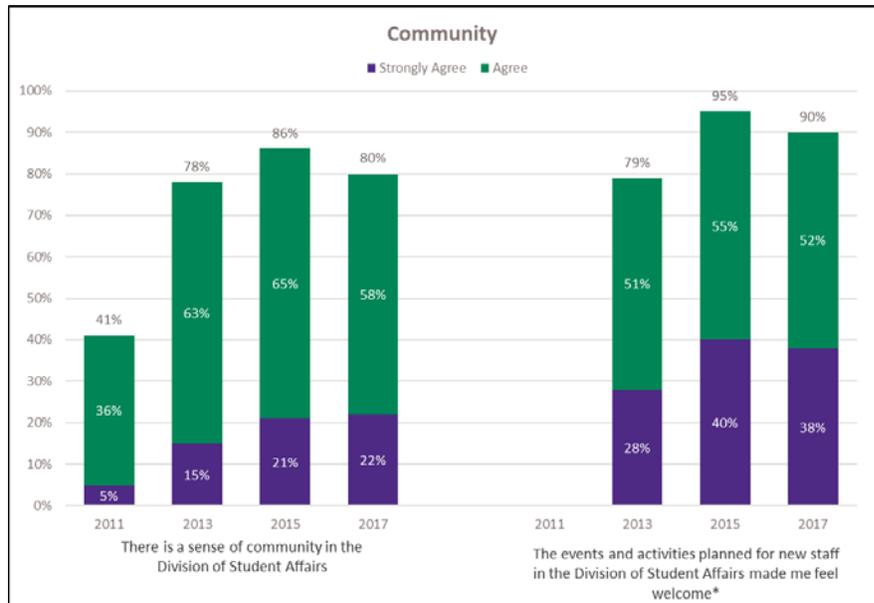
- Three quarters (75%) of the respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” they were satisfied with communication within the Division. This is a 9% decrease from the prior administration of this survey. This is similar to the number in 2013 (70%).
- Seventy-two percent of the respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” they were adequately informed about activities and

accomplishments within the Division, another 9% drop from this survey’s prior administration. This also is similar to the number in 2013 (75%).

- About 9 in 10 respondents (89%) indicated they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with being aware of *social activities* occurring in the Division and when and where the social activities were held. This is a 5% decrease from the survey’s prior administration.
- Regarding Division-wide *staff development programs*, 90% of respondents indicated they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” they were aware of when and where they were held. This is a 4% drop from the 2015 survey, looking similar to the percentage of agreement in 2013 (92%). More on this area will be covered in the section on Staff Training and Development found later in this report.

Community

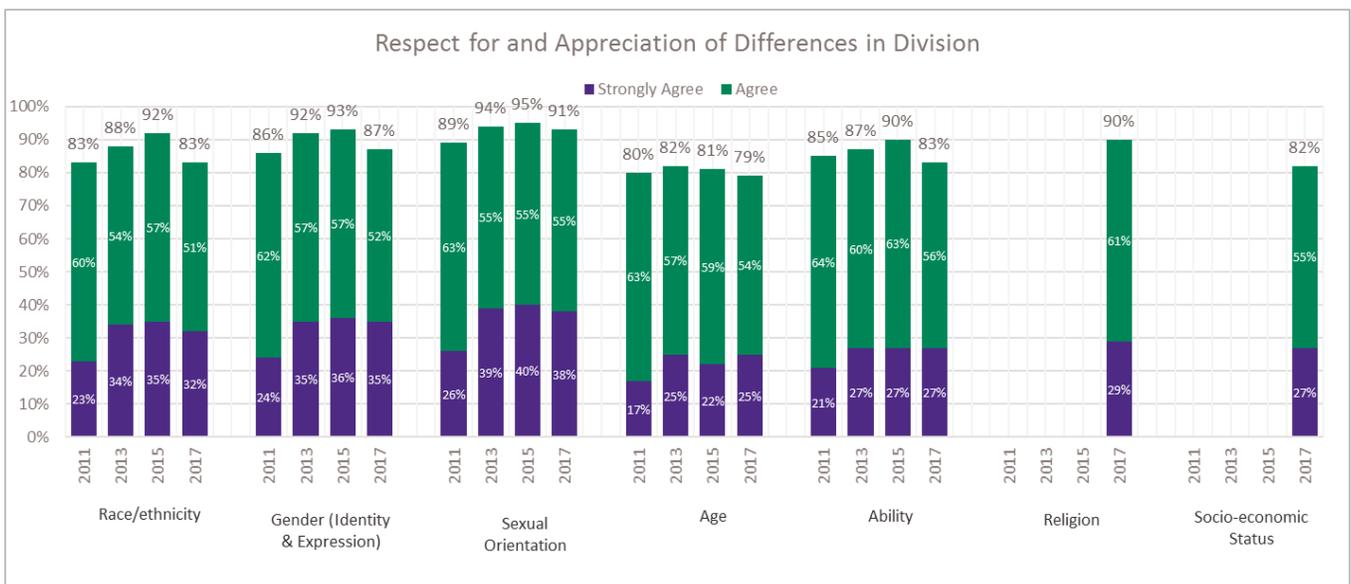
- Eighty-six percent (80%) of the 2017 respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” there is a sense of community in the Division, representing a slight decrease (6%) from 2015.
- In 2017, there was a decrease in the number of respondents new to the Division reporting that the events and activities planned for them made them feel welcome (90%), as compared to 95% in 2015.



* This question was not asked in 2011

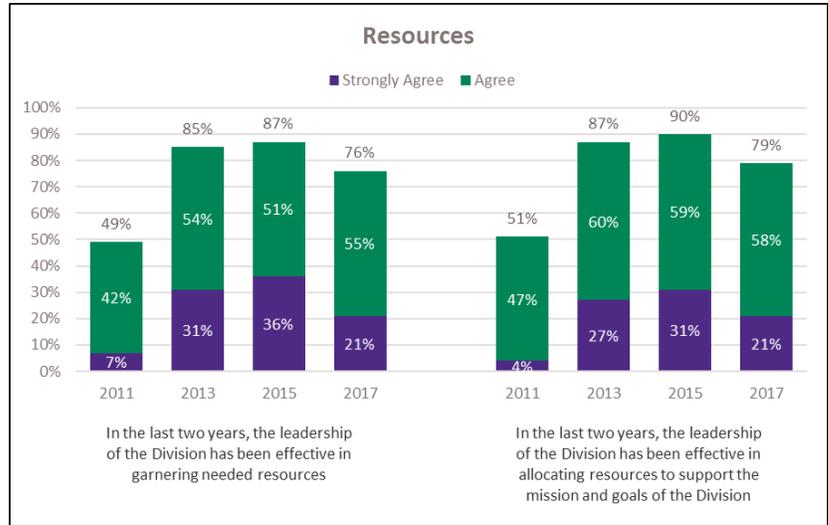
Respect for/Appreciation of Difference

- Respect for and appreciation of differences in the Division decreased in 2017 for race, age, and ability by 9, 6, and 7 percentage points, respectively. Numbers of agreement for similar questions based on sexual orientation and age decreased by 2% each.
- In 2017, two new items were added to this section regarding religion (90% “strongly agreed” or “agreed”) and socio-economic status (82% “strongly agreed” or “agreed”).



Resources

- Seventy-six percent of respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that Division leadership has been effective in garnering needed resources, a 9% decrease from 2015.
- Similarly, 79% of respondents strongly agreed” or “agreed” that Division leadership has been effective in allocating resources per the Division’s mission and goals, a 12% decrease from 2015.



Personal Experience in the Division

Thirteen questions about staff’s personal experience in the Division were asked in 2017. Some items decreased while others either increased or remained the same. However, there were no significant differences in average scores between 2017 and 2015 in any of these items.

- Notable is the high percentage of staff who reported in 2017 that they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they understand how their current job contributes both to the mission and success of the Division: 97% and 95% respectively. These are similar to the responses from 2015.
- Just under 9 out of 10 respondents (88%) indicated they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” they get a sense of personal accomplishment from their work. This is a 6% decrease from 2015.
- Seventy-eight percent of respondents indicated they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” they are satisfied with their work environment. This is an 8% decrease from 2015.
- Just under three quarters of respondents (73%) indicated they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” their opinion counts at work, a 7% drop from 2015.

	2011	2013	2015	2017
I understand how my current job contributes to the mission of the Division of Student Affairs	89%	92%	97%	97%
I understand how my work contributes to the overall success and vision of the Division of Student Affairs	86%	90%	96%	95%
I get a sense of personal accomplishment from my work	88%	86%	94%	88%
I am satisfied with my job functions	79%	78%	87%	86%
I am satisfied with my work environment	75%	81%	86%	78%
I am committed to a long-term career in the functional area of my employment	78%	79%	83%	85%
My opinions count at work			80%	73%
I am satisfied with the number of hours that I work	78%	69%	80%	80%
I am satisfied with the resources available within my department	63%	72%	79%	72%
I receive recognition from my co-workers when I do a good job	67%	73%	75%	79%
I am committed to a long-term career within the Division of Student Affairs at Northwestern University	72%	74%	73%	79%
I am satisfied with my workload	67%	64%	69%	68%
In relation to my job or position, the level of stress at work is healthy or manageable	56%	57%	67%	63%

- About 8 in 10 respondents (79%) indicated they “strongly agree” or “agree” that they are committed to a long-term career within Northwestern’s Division of Student Affairs. This is a 6% increase from 2015.

Staff Training and Development

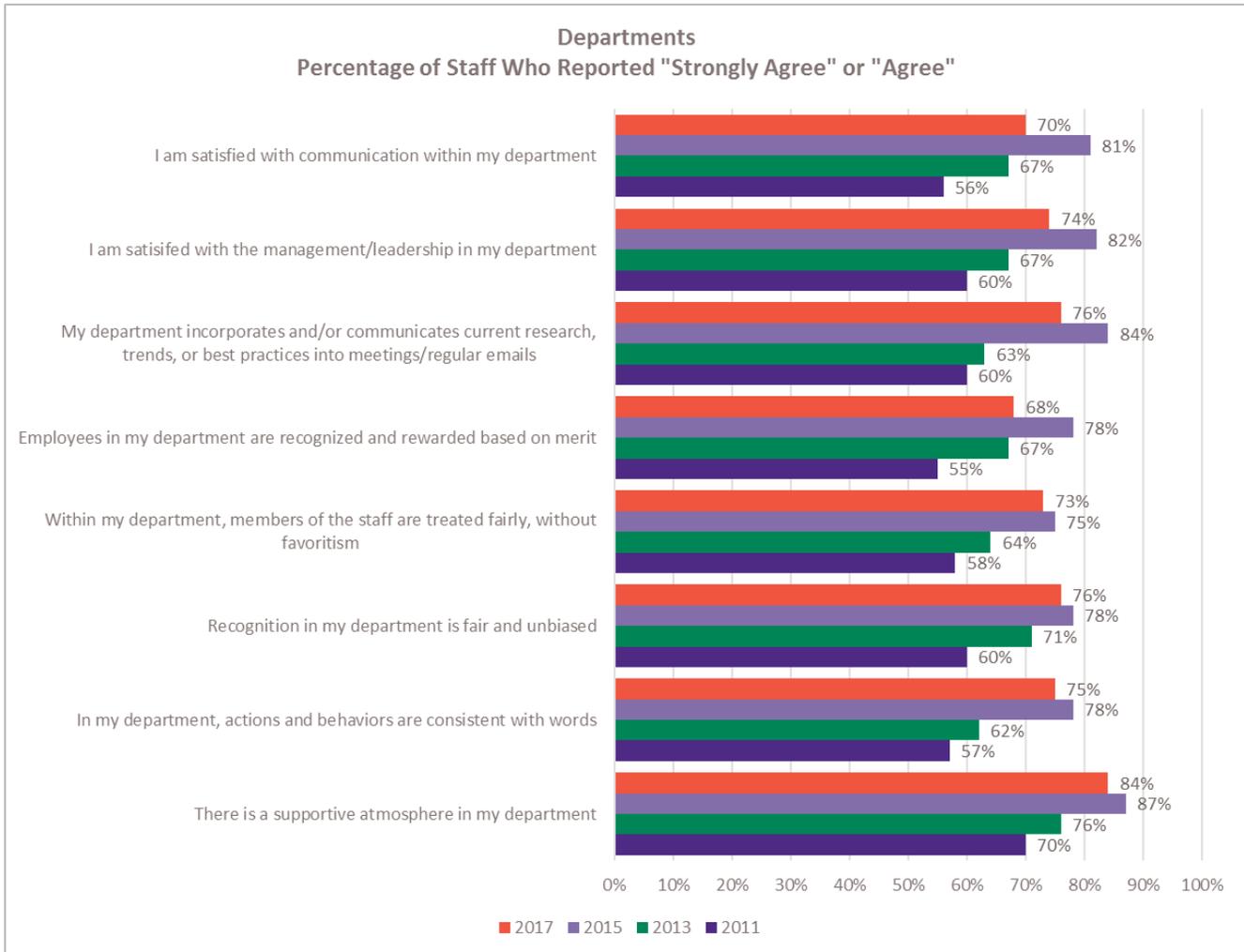
- There were 13 questions related to staff training and development. Most items have remained statistically the same from 2015.
- There were 4 areas where staff responses are significantly lower than in 2015: 1) resource/information availability for attending professional conferences and other professional development opportunities; 2) having sufficient time to read professional literature and research pertaining to my functional area; 3) being encouraged to stay up-to-date on current issues

and research in the field; and 4) the aforementioned item on staff-wide development programs. While most decreases were small, decreased satisfaction scores for *staying up to date on current issues and research in the field* and *staff development* are considered moderate (Cohen's $d > .3$). The largest significant decrease between 2015 and 2017 (Cohen's $d > .6$) was satisfaction with *events and activities planned for new staff* (95%-90% agree and strongly agree).

- The top five areas in which staff would like to see additional training for the entire Division are (1) workplace dynamics (28%); (2) personal wellness (27%); (3) leadership, supervision & mentorship (26%) (4) supporting specific student populations, career advancement (25%); and (5) personal development (24%).

The Departments

The section of the survey about departments consisted of 25 questions. Last year, eight (8) items stood out, and the following graph is an update on these items of note.



SALT

- Staff were asked nine questions about the person who represents them on SALT. The “practices”—in rank order based on the mean scores—can be found in the table to the right.
- Two items had significantly different means in 2017 when compared with 2015: 1) ethical conduct/integrity and b) good communication skills. While these are lower in 2017, the magnitude of these differences is nominal.

The person who represents me on SALT displays the following practices that I would expect from someone in that position . . .	Mean		
	(4 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree)		
	2013	2015	2017
Ethical conduct/integrity	3.19 [†]	3.48*	3.34
Encourages professional growth/skills development	3.00 [†]	3.31	3.22
Good decision-making skills	2.94 [†]	3.29	3.14
Visionary thinking	2.98 [†]	3.27	3.2
Good communication skills	2.93 [†]	3.22*	3.03
Good interpersonal relations/skills	3.03 [†]	3.22	3.07
Good teamwork abilities	3.03 [†]	3.22	3.08
Ability to inspire trust	2.90 [†]	3.19	3.08
Mentoring and coaching	2.75 [†]	2.98	2.99

† Statistically significant difference between 2013 and 2015. These questions were not asked in 2011

* Statistically significant difference between 2015 and 2017. These questions were not asked in 2011

Supervisors

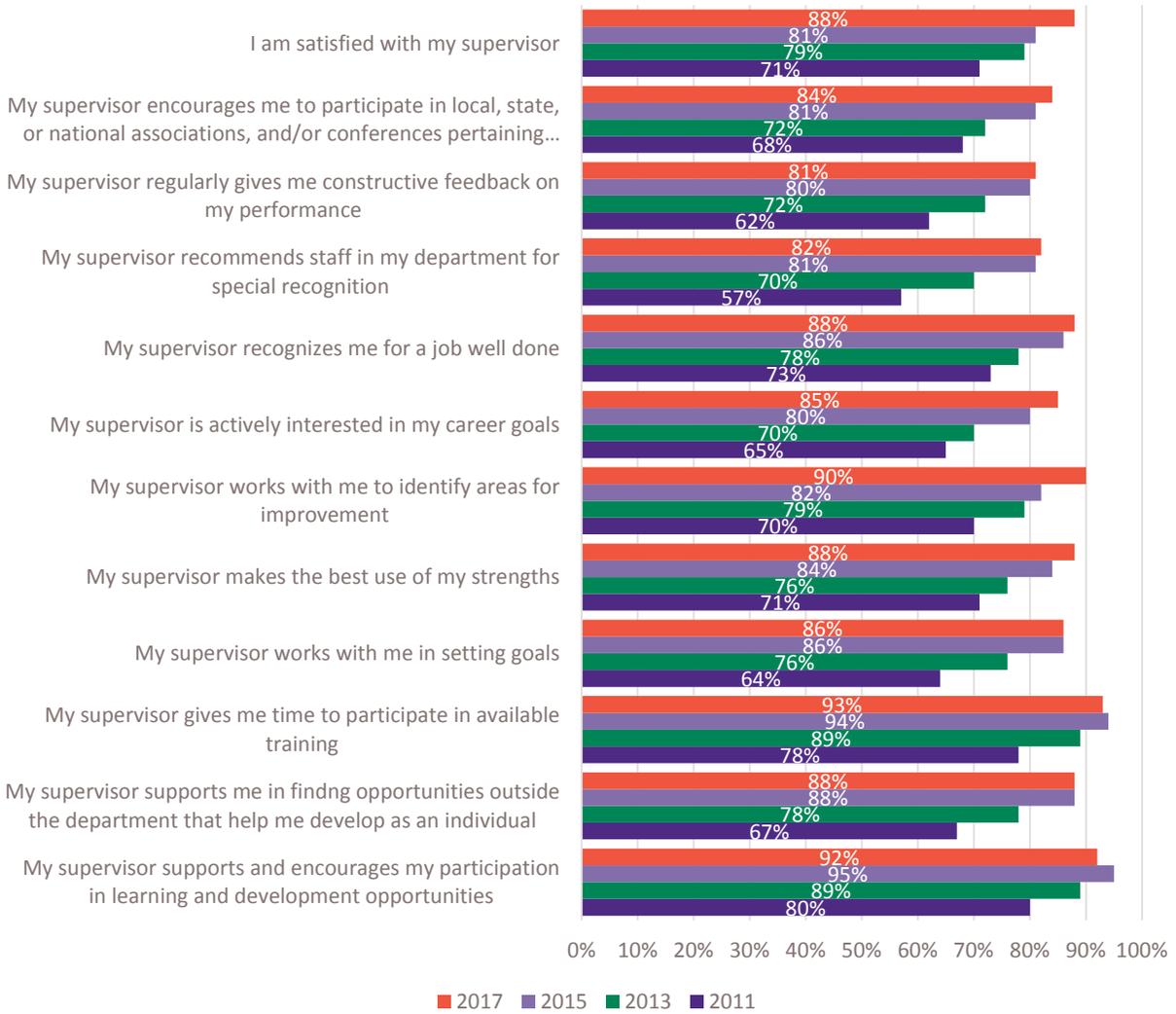
Staff were asked twelve questions about their supervisors. Overall means have remained very similar to 2015 and are presented on this page. A chart with additional details appears on the next page, and the highlights are discussed below:

Supervisor Items	2013 (n=92)	2015 (n=179)	2017 (n=206)
Q109. My supervisor supports and encourages my participation in learning and development opportunities.	3.5	3.7	3.6
Q110. My supervisor supports me in finding opportunities outside the department that help me develop as an individual.	3.3	3.5	3.5
Q111. My supervisor gives me time to participate in available training.	3.4	3.7	3.5
Q112. My supervisor works with me in setting goals.	3.3	3.5	3.4
Q113. My supervisor makes best use of my strengths.	3.1	3.4	3.3
Q114. My supervisor works with me to identify areas for improvement.	3.3	3.4	3.3
Q115. My supervisor is actively interested in my career goals.	3.1	3.4	3.3
Q116. My supervisor recognizes me for a job well done.	3.2	3.5	3.5
Q117. My supervisor recommends staff in my department for special recognition.	2.9	3.3	3.3
Q118. My supervisor regularly gives me constructive feedback on my performance.	3.1	3.4	3.2
Q119. My supervisor encourages me to participate in local, state or national associations, and/or conferences pertaining to my functional area.	3.1	3.4	3.3
Q120. I am satisfied with my supervisor.	3.3	3.5	3.4

- In 2017 there were gains over 2015 in percentages of respondents indicating “agree” or “strongly agree” (see p. 6) that they were satisfied with one’s supervisor, encouraged by one’s supervisor to participate in conferences, recognized by the supervisor for a job well done, the supervisor took interest in the employee’s career goals, and that the supervisor would identify areas for improvement.
- While similar metrics at the Division level have decreased, clearly engagement with one’s supervisor has increased since the 2015 survey. This is in accordance with a particular emphasis in the past two years on improving supervision skills across the Division.

Supervisors

Percentage of Staff Who Responses "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" by year



Themes from Open-Ended Items

The following summary and quotations represent over-arching themes found in the open-ended items in the 2017 survey:

Community

1. Division pop-ups, staff breakfasts, socials, and receptions are very-much welcome and appreciated
2. Volunteer opportunities like Commencement, move-in, and Dillo Day provide opportunities for building community in Evanston
3. Many expressed they enjoy the work they do in Student Affairs at Northwestern, and also acknowledge great strides made in the Division during the last 7 years
4. More work is needed on the Chicago campus to improve the Student Affairs staff community

Work Environment

1. Several respondents noted discrepancies among Student Affairs departments regarding dress code and flex time. While many acknowledge it may not be appropriate to create one standard for all departments, some noted additional discussions should be held to ensure some consistency
2. There were several requests for addressing issues of telecommuting
3. "There is a very high bar set for excellence, and perhaps perfection. The division continues to improve in every way. At the same time, there is a pervasive work ethic that is unhealthy."

Stress

1. "Northwestern is an extremely competitive and stressful environment for both students and staff....As a division we talk about striving for excellence, but we do not discuss the toll that excellence and flawless execution takes on those on the ground."
2. "It feels largely that the people who are in the trenches with students, working nights, planning the programs, starting the initiatives are largely undervalued here."
3. "Respect work-life balance; some of us thoroughly love being part of the division, but, it doesn't mean it's our whole life, and that's okay."

Diversity and Social Justice

1. Some commented on issues of diversity and social justice, indicating that issues they experience at work are similar to issues being discussed in current events around the country.
2. "...I think staff are just as stressed and miserable as our students, and staff with marginalized identities feel just as unsupported as students with marginalized identities. I think we are part of the problem."
3. There were many suggestions for continued training on diversity: "Diversity/inclusion/social justice; I think we always need focus and training as the world evolves."

Professional Development and Opportunities for Advancement

1. "There a lack of process in training employees and establish concrete roles that does not lend itself toward creating an effective work team."
2. "I think the division needs to improve in setting up professionals for upward mobility."
3. "The opportunity for advancement is unclear in the division structure."
4. Several respondents suggested professional development specifically targeted at support staff and maintenance staff in addition to the current offerings for student-facing staff.

Support

1. "I think there is room for improvement within my department and the division. With that being said, I still believe the best in my department and division. We are adjusting to the needs of staff and students. It will take time for us to hit our stride, but I think we all care and are slowly getting to where we want to be."
2. "I have had occasion several times to need to contact the 'Dean on Call' and in every occasion I found solid, caring, and immediate administrative support. I would like to thank the administrators for caring so well for the staff when we need to call in extra support, especially after hours. It makes me feel valued as a team member and that I belong to a genuinely caring Division."

Respondent Characteristics

The following table shows the respondent characteristics based on race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, ability, position type, and education. Responses were received from 260 of 307 possible respondents, though some respondents did not complete all items.

Category	n	%
Race/ethnicity		
American Indian/Native American or Alaskan Native	4	1.8
Asian or Pacific Islander	9	4.0
Black/African American	40	17.7
Latinx/Hispanic	19	8.4
Middle Eastern/North African	0	0
Other racial/ethnic background	3	1.3
Prefer not to respond	51	22.6
White	100	44.2
Gender Identity		
Genderqueer	1	0.5
Female	113	52.1
Male	55	25.3
Prefer not to respond	48	22.1
Sexual Orientation		
Not straight/Not heterosexual	18	8.3
Straight/Heterosexual	150	69.1
Prefer not to respond	49	22.6
Age		
< 20	1	0.5
21 - 25	8	3.7
26 - 30	20	9.2
31 - 40	60	27.6
41 - 45	19	8.8
46 - 50	17	7.8
51 - 55	14	6.5
56 +	24	11.1
Prefer not to respond	54	24.9
Long Lasting or Chronic Condition (ability)		
Yes	13	6.2
No	155	74.2
Prefer not to respond	41	19.6
Position Type		
Exempt	125	56.6
Non-exempt	47	21.3
Prefer not to respond	49	22.2
Education Level		
Less than High School	3	1.4
High School Diploma or GED	8	3.7
Trade Degree/Certificate	2	0.9
Some College (no degree received)	17	7.8
Associate's Degree	6	2.8
Bachelor's Degree	34	15.7
Master's Degree	74	34.1
Doctorate/Professional Degree	31	14.3
Prefer not to respond	42	19.4