

# GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

## 2011 STAFF SURVEY

*Survey Findings*

*Georgia State University  
Staff Council*

*Office of  
Institutional Research*

*Office of  
Institutional Effectiveness*

*September 2011*



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## **Staff Survey Committee**

The 2011 Georgia State University staff climate survey was developed in 2010 by an ad hoc committee of the GSU Staff Council with representation from across the university. The committee was reconstituted in 2011 to coordinate the analysis of the survey findings. Committee members participating in either or both of these processes are as follows:

- Julia Bannerman, Office of Institutional Effectiveness
- David Caudill, Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing and Health Professions
- Ann Claycombe, College of Arts and Sciences
- Dean Dabney, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies
- MaryAnne Gaunt, College of Education
- Cheryl Johnson Ransaw, Employee Development and Wellness Services, Human Resources
- John Medlock (Chair), College of Arts and Sciences
- Bill Prigge, College of Law
- Terry Ward, Office of Institutional Research

## Executive Summary

This report presents the results of Georgia State University's staff climate survey. The 2011 staff survey was developed in collaboration with the university's Staff Council, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and the Office of Institutional Research.

The results presented in this report are based on responses from 854 university staff who completed the survey during its administration in June, 2011 (37.6% response rate). The report begins with an overview of survey development and methodology. Section one presents the respondent characteristics. The second section presents descriptive data that reveals the general response patterns associated with questions on job satisfaction, training, evaluation, environment, and communication. The third section explores the relationship between employee satisfaction and demographics. Recommendations regarding survey development and administration are offered at the end of the report.

### Major Findings

- The staff at Georgia State are highly educated. The majority of staff have college degrees with almost half indicating post-graduate degrees.
- Respondents indicated a moderately high overall satisfaction with their job. They believe that their unit/department is meeting the needs of the University.
- Respondents enjoy working with students, faculty and other university staff and would recommend Georgia State as a good place to work. They enjoy the urban location and job benefits, although they are not pleased with job salaries.
- The inability of management to effectively deal with poor performance by staff was considered an issue that needed attention.
- While the majority of respondents indicated that they get the training they need, those who would like additional training suggested training in the areas of software and computer skills, management skills, cross-training in areas that would benefit their unit/department, and access to conferences and workshops.
- Although the majority of respondents receive annual performance evaluations, those who do not receive evaluations had significantly lower mean scores on survey questions pertaining to job performance and supervisory communication.
- Respondents would recommend their unit/department as a good place to work because of the positive relationships they have with their supervisors and/or staff. They believe that they make a difference and find their work valued and challenging.
- Because the results of the survey were generally positive, it is surprising that half of the respondents had *seriously considered leaving* Georgia State. Workload, no growth or promotion opportunities, supervisory concerns, and bureaucratic environment topped the list of reasons for wanting to leave.
- Those respondents who have been at Georgia State between five and nine years were more likely to have considered leaving.
- Respondents who had considered leaving had significantly lower mean scores on all the survey scale items than those who had not considered leaving.

## Overview

### Methodology

#### *Development of the Survey*

The primary reason for developing the current climate survey was to assess multiple facets of job satisfaction among Georgia State staff employees using quantitative and qualitative data. The questions were designed to generate unambiguous, actionable data on key issues that affect staff and their work-related environment. The questionnaire was a result of the combined efforts of the Staff Council, the Office of Institutional Research, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

#### *Survey Scales and Measures*

It was determined that a six-point semantic differential scale would be the appropriate response scale for the survey. The intent was to measure both direction and intensity. Such a scale would allow statistical procedures that went beyond descriptive measurements including, but not limited to, means and standard deviations, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and regression. The reliability alpha was .908, thus indicating a high level of internal validity associated with the instrument.

#### *Survey Administration*

The survey was administered from June 1, 2011 through June 30, 2011 to all current personnel officially designated as holding staff positions in the university. Email invitations were sent to each staff member and contained a link to the survey and a random access code. The survey was located on a secure server at Georgia State. A series of reminder emails were sent to individuals who had not completed the survey by June 30.

#### *Quantitative Analyses*

Analysis of the quantitative data was performed using SPSS. Statistical procedures included descriptives (counts, frequencies, means, and standard deviations), cross tabulations, chi square procedures, t-tests, and analysis of variance.

#### *Qualitative Analyses*

The survey included several open-ended questions that generated important qualitative data. Data were analyzed using Atlas.ti, a sophisticated CAQDA (computer-assisted qualitative data analytical program) that allows for the linking of codes to text in order to develop hypertext that permits one to perform complex model and network building. Coding was performed at the word, sentence, and paragraph level. Using open thematic coding techniques, 4,013 coded texts were generated and used in the analysis. Network analyses were performed in order to visually reference the thematic relations.

#### *Sources of Error*

Because the survey was administered to the entire staff population and not a random sample, the response rate takes on added importance. While acceptable, the survey response rate (37.6%) is moderately low. The representativeness of the respondent population deviated in the area of race/ethnicity and gender. Preliminary statistical procedures, however, indicated that weighting procedures were not indicated.

## Section I

### Staff Survey Respondent Characteristics

This section provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the 854 respondents who completed the staff survey resulting in a 37.6% response rate. The respondents were representative of the university staff population in terms of average age and length of service. Female respondents were over represented by 10 percentage points. White respondents were over represented by 10 percentage points while Black respondents were under represented by 10 percentage points. Asians and all other groups were representative of the staff population at Georgia State.

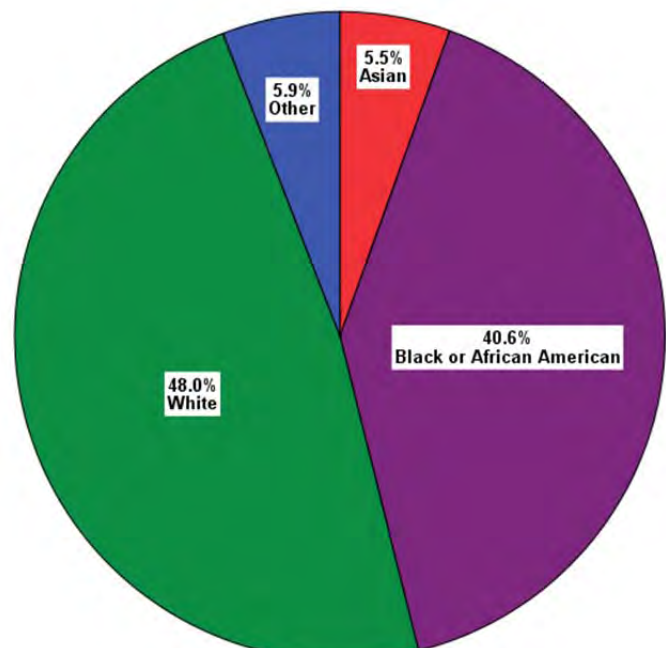
#### ***Gender/Race/Age***

More than two-thirds (67.8%) of the respondents were female (Appendix F).

The average staff member was 42 years old. The age range was 21 to 68 years (Appendix H).

Almost half of the respondents identified themselves as White (48.0%) and 40.6% identified as Black or African American (Appendix G).

Figure 1. Race/Ethnicity



Note. "Other" category includes those groups that make up less than 5% of the respondent population.

#### ***Length of Time in Job/University***

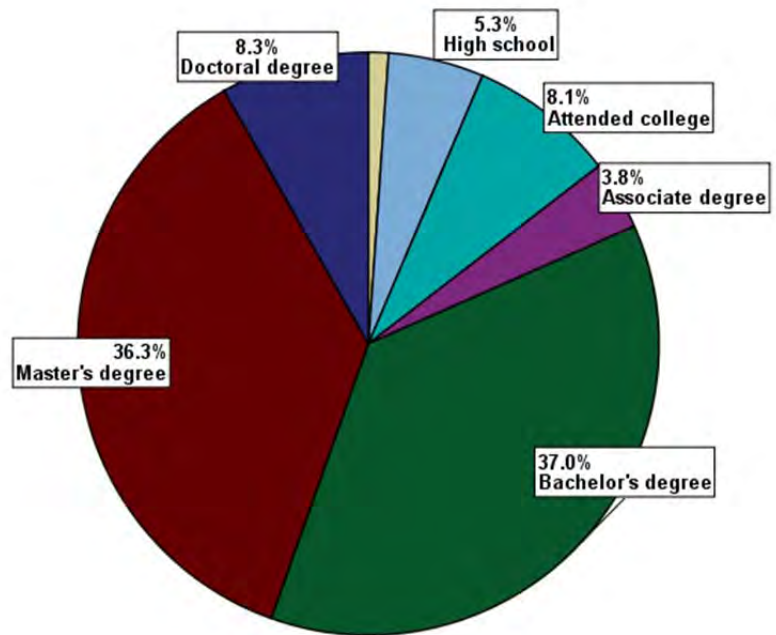
The average length of time staff were employed in their current position was five years. The range was one month to 37 years.

The average length of time staff were employed by Georgia State was 8.6 years. The range was from one month to 42 years.

## Highest Degree

The majority of staff have a bachelor's degree or higher. Indeed, 45% have completed post-graduate work (Appendix K).

Figure 2. Highest Degree



## Section II

### Response Patterns Associated with General Staff Satisfaction

Those statements associated with employee abilities and performance generated higher mean scores than statements related to issues outside of an employee's control.

Most employees (81.7%) agreed with the statement that their unit/department is meeting the needs of Georgia State (36.3% strongly agreed).

Just over three-fourths of the respondents were inclined to agree with the statements that their job makes good use of their skills, they are encouraged to increase their skills, and they have access to the resources they need to do their job well (32%, 33%, and 26% strongly agreed with the statements, respectively).

Statements related to the performance of others or communication between supervisors or administrators and employees had lower mean scores.

A third of the respondents (33%) moderately disagreed with the statement that their unit/department effectively deals with poor performance by staff (14.4% strongly disagreed) while just over a third (38%) moderately agreed (14.7% strongly agreed).

Almost a quarter of the respondents (24.2%) moderately disagreed with the statement that they can communicate important information to those in higher levels of administration compared to 43% who moderately agreed with the statement.

Table 1. Mean Scores for Scale Items

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.		
	N	M (SD)
My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.	852	4.54 (1.46)
My immediate supervisor encourages me to increase my workplace skills.	852	4.46 (1.57)
I have access to the resources I need to do my job well.	852	4.47 (1.36)
My unit/department deals effectively with poor performance by staff.	838	3.59 (1.66)
I am confident that my unit/department is meeting the needs of Georgia State.	848	4.72 (1.39)
My supervisor keeps me informed so that I know what is happening in the university that impacts my work.	848	4.35 (1.59)
Georgia State provides me with a safe working environment.	851	4.65 (1.31)
I feel comfortable using the procedures in place at Georgia State to report violations of regulations.	843	4.27 (1.49)
I can communicate important information to those in higher levels of administration.	848	4.09 (1.63)

This question had the lowest mean score with 14.7% strongly agreeing and 14.4% strongly disagreeing with the statement.

This question had the highest mean score with 36.3% strongly agreeing and 4.4% strongly disagreeing with the statement.

Statements concerning communication with supervisors or upper administration elicited generally moderate agreement 41.8% 46.6% 43.0%

Note. Mean range: 1=Strongly disagree to 6=Strongly agree.

**Evaluation and Training**

The majority of respondents (87%) indicated that their supervisor has given them a performance evaluation within the past 12 months.

While the mean scores for those individuals who had not received an annual evaluation within the past twelve months were lower than those who had received an evaluation, there were statistically significant differences in the areas of supervisory communication and performance measures (Table 2).

Table 2. Relationship of Scale Items to Annual Performance Evaluation

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.	Performance evaluation in last 12 months					
	Yes (n= 590)			No (n=72)		
	Mean	SD	Sig.	Mean	SD	
My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.	4.62	1.40	*	4.25	1.58	←
My immediate supervisor encourages me to increase my workplace skills.	4.55	1.53	***	3.51	1.62	←
I have access to the resources I need to do my job well.	4.52	1.34		4.38	1.39	
My unit/department deals effectively with poor performance by staff.	3.65	1.67	**	3.00	1.59	←
I am confident that my unit/department is meeting the needs of Georgia State.	4.81	1.33	*	4.33	1.59	←
My supervisor keeps me informed so that I know what is happening in the university that impacts my work.	4.46	1.53	***	3.66	1.68	←
Georgia State provides me with a safe working environment.	4.68	1.27		4.61	1.30	
I feel comfortable using the procedures in place at Georgia State to report violations of regulations.	4.31	1.45		4.07	1.51	
I can communicate important information to those in higher levels of administration.	4.13	1.58		3.78	1.79	

Note. Respondents who have been in their current position less than one year are excluded from the analysis.

\*p<.05 \*\*p<.01 \*\*\*p<.001

Individuals who have not received an annual evaluation have significantly lower mean scores on items related to supervisory communications.

Individuals who have not received an annual evaluation have significantly lower mean scores on items related to job performance.

While the majority of respondents (62.1%) indicated that they get the training they need, 13.8% responded that they do not need additional training (Appendix C). A small percentage (13.5%) chose not to answer the question.

Table 3. Types of Training Needed

n = 47	%
Accessing Information	6.4
Attending Conferences/Workshops	19.2
Continuing Education	14.3
Cross-training	6.4
Financial Training	4.3
Management/People Skills	6.4
New Employee, Job Specific	2.1
Personalized Training	18.2
Professional Development	6.4
Software/Computer	29.8
Workshops	6.4

6.4% of respondents wanted “cross-training,” training in skills that were not directly related to their jobs, but would help them perform their jobs more effectively.

Close to a third of the respondents indicated a need for more training on the computer or specific types of software.

Note. Percentages exceed 100.0% because of multiple codes embedded in individual responses.

### Overall Job Satisfaction with Georgia State University

The majority of respondents (80.8%) would recommend Georgia State as a good place to work, citing staff, faculty, and students as the main reason (Appendix E).

Table 4. *Reasons for Recommending Georgia State as a Good Place to Work*

N=551	%
Enjoy working in academia	15.1
University activities	3.6
Benefits	31.8
Diversity in the University	11.3
Expansion/Change	14.7
Staff, students, and faculty	47.0
Facilities	2.7
Good Environment/Community	19.6
Good Leadership	4.2
Growth Opportunities	18.8
GSU cares about employees	5.3
Making a Difference	4.7
High quality research institution	8.9
Resources and support for staff	14.3
Salary	3.4
Security and Safety	1.3
Job Stability	5.6
Urban/Location/Commute	18.0

Almost half the respondents indicated that they would recommend Georgia State because they enjoyed working with university staff, students, and faculty.

Note. Percentages exceed 100.0% because of multiple codes embedded in individual responses.

Of those who would not recommend the university (19.2%), bureaucracy was the main issue (Table 5). Although they would not recommend the university, some respondents suggested that there were departments in the university that they would recommend as good places to work. Discrimination issues were cited by staff representing a variety of ethnic groups.

Table 5. *Reasons for Not Recommending Georgia State as a Good Place to Work*

n = 60	%
Bureaucracy	43.3
Dangerous Location	3.3
Discrimination	8.3
No Growth	8.3
No Respect	6.7
No Support	5.0
Other Departments	13.3
Poor Environment/Culture	8.3
Poor Facilities	1.7
Low Salary and Poor Benefits	28.3
Supervisor/Coworker Conflict	3.3
Heavy Workload	8.3

For many respondents (43%) the excessive bureaucracy and red tape were reasons why they would not recommend GSU.

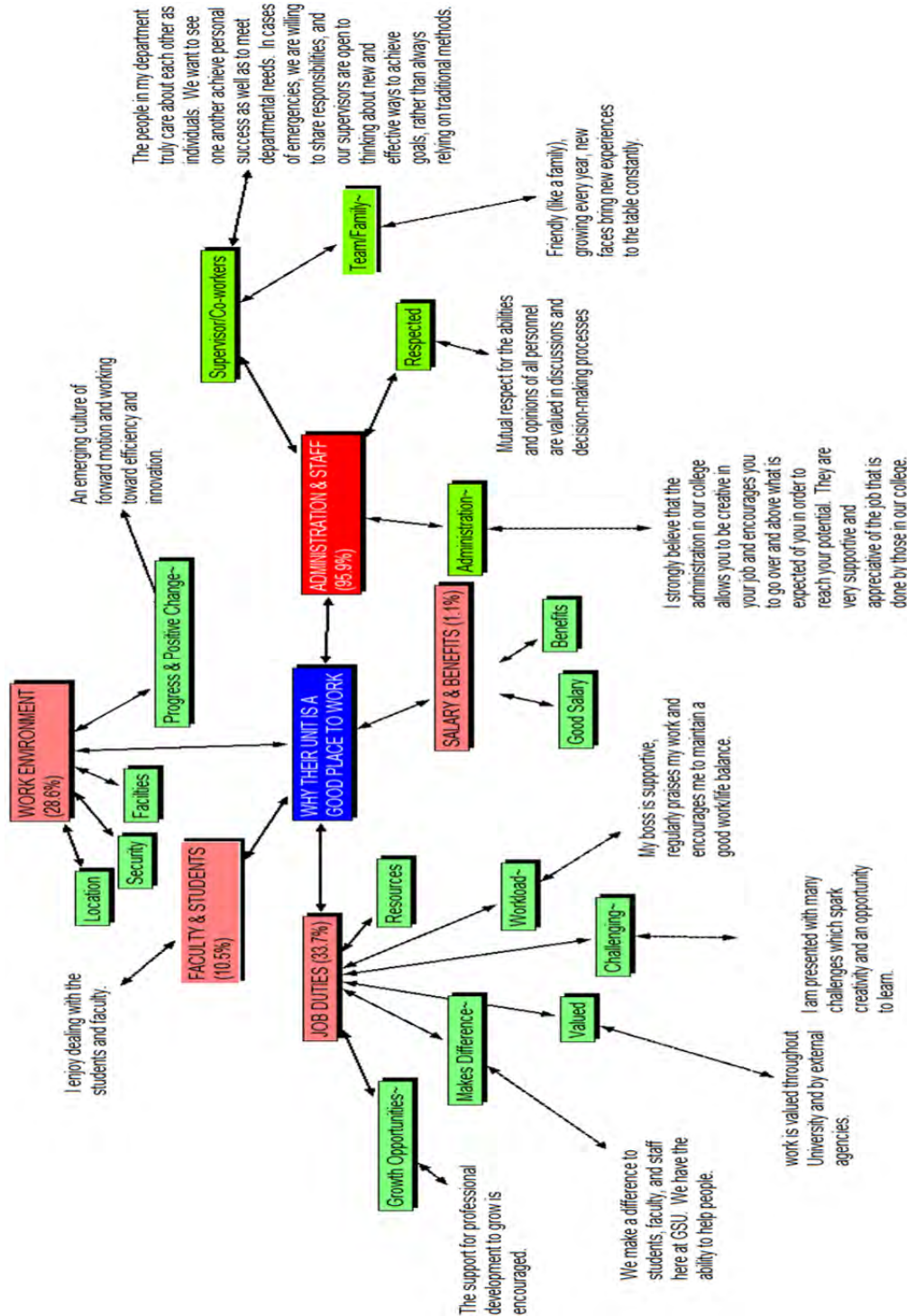
Over a quarter of the respondents (28%) stated that low salary, no raises, and poor benefits were the reasons why they would not recommend GSU.

Note. Percentages exceed 100.0% because of multiple codes embedded in individual responses.

## Overall Job Satisfaction with the Unit/Department

Of all respondents, 72.6% would recommend their unit/department as a good place to work for a number of reasons. Figure 3 represents a visual network of the factors that play an important role in why a respondent would recommend their unit/department.

Figure 3. Network Analysis: Reasons Why Staff Would Recommend Their Unit/Department



Note. Quotations are presented without any changes to punctuation, grammar, or spelling.

Overwhelmingly, positive work-related relationships play the most significant role in job satisfaction as measured by recommendation (cited by 95.9% of the respondents). The feeling of being a member of a “team” or “family” contributes significantly to general job satisfaction in this area.

Of the 27.4% who would not recommend their unit/department, the majority of these respondents (59%) cited poor leadership and their supervisor as the main reason (Table 5). A non-supportive work environment and lack of advancement opportunities in their job were also cited by numerous staff who would not recommend their unit/department.

Table 6. *Reasons For Not Recommending Their Unit/Department as a Good Place to Work*

N = 107	%
Discrimination	4.7
Excessive Workload	7.5
Favoritism	12.1
Lack of Respect	5.6
No Accountability	3.7
No Growth	16.8
Poor Facilities	0.9
Poor Leadership/Supervisors	58.9
Poor Morale	10.3
Poor Salary	6.5
Poor Treatment by Faculty	4.7
Poor Work Environment	18.7

Some employees in the unit/department are treated more favorably than others by supervisors for non-merit based reasons.

Poor leadership and/or ineffective supervisors were the most prevalent reasons for not recommending their unit/department.

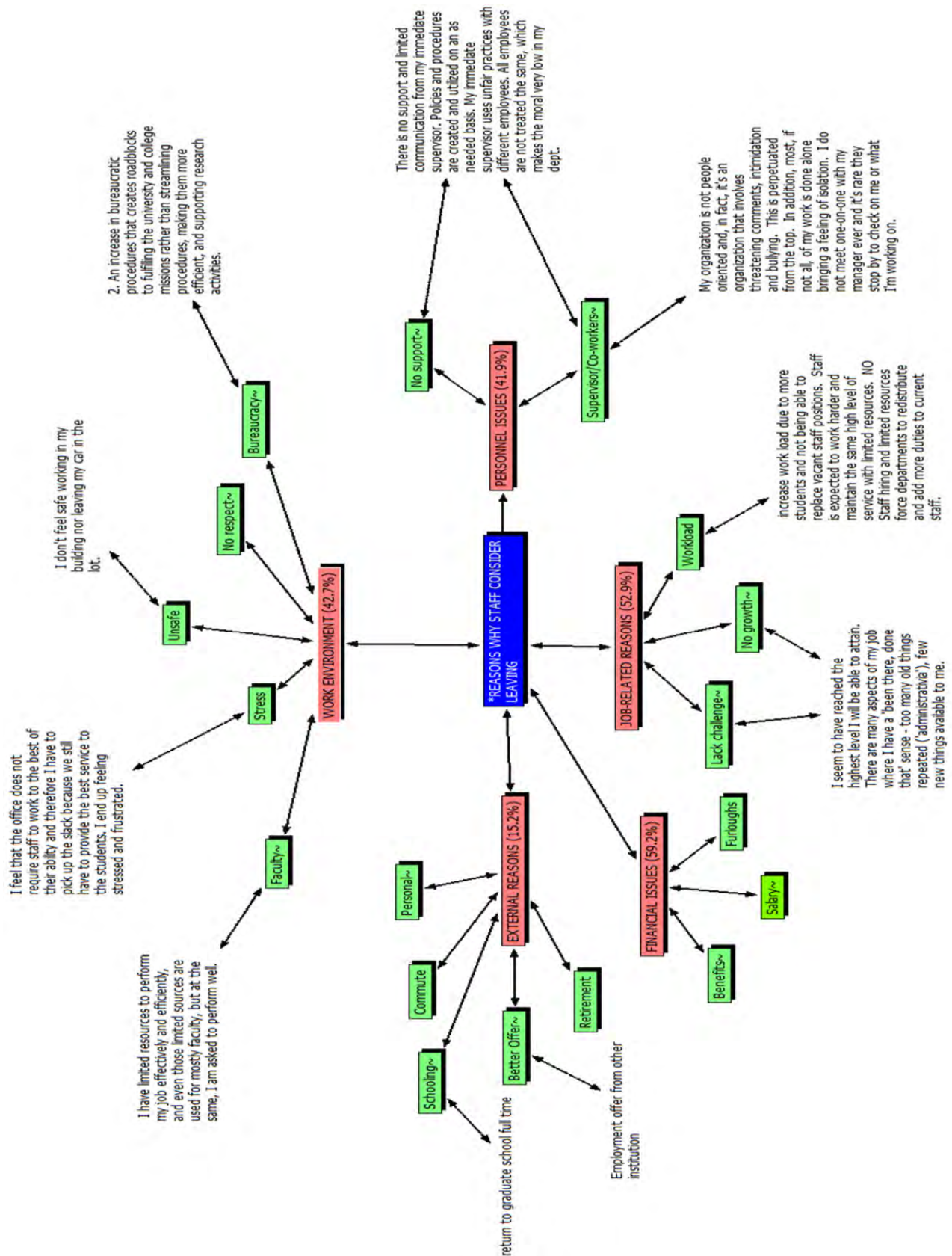
*Note.* Percentages exceed 100.0% because of multiple codes embedded in individual responses.

Although 81% would recommend Georgia State as a good place to work, it is interesting to note that almost half (45.2%) have seriously considered leaving their job in the past year compared to 45.7% who indicated that they had not considered leaving their job (Appendix D)

Financial reasons, cited by 59.2%, and job-related reasons (52.9%) were the top two factors followed by work environment (42.7%) and personnel issues (41.9%). External issues contributed the least, cited by only 15.2%.

Figure 4 is a network analysis of the factors respondents articulated in their narratives with a breakdown of the themes that constitute each factor. Included in the network analysis are respondent comments that have been selected because they represent the general theme.

Figure 4. Network Analysis: Reasons Why Staff Have Considered Leaving



Note. Quotations are presented without any changes to punctuation, grammar, or spelling.

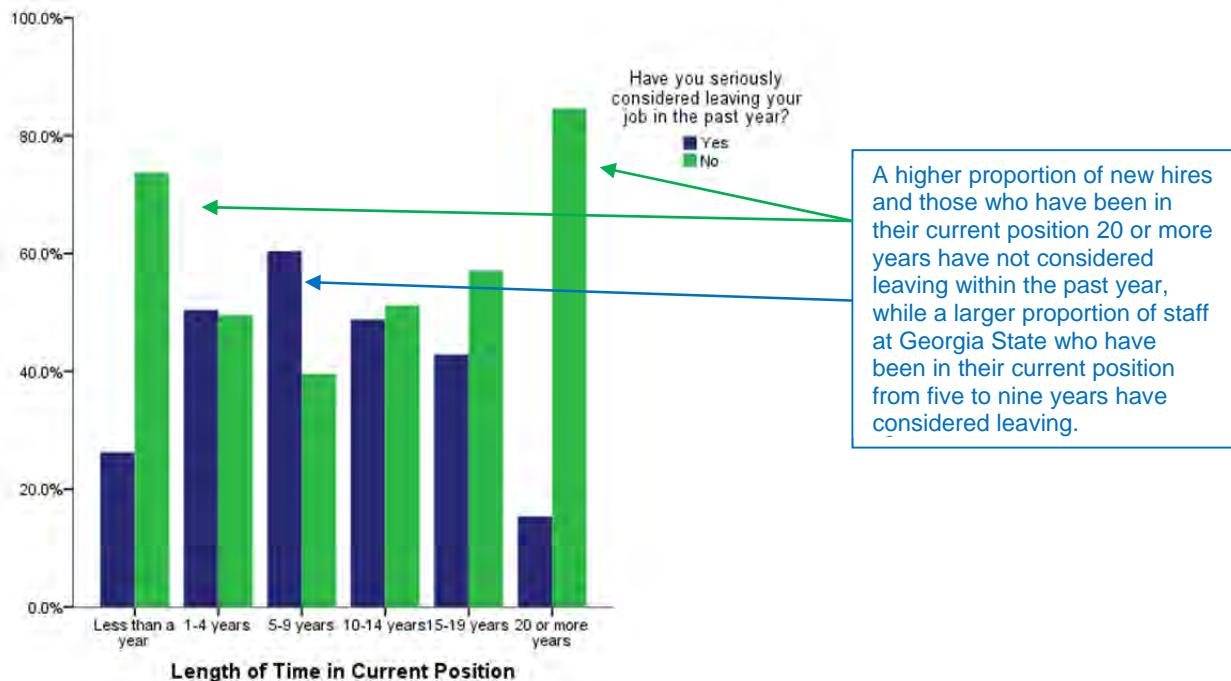
### Section III

#### Differences Between Groups

One of the more significant findings is that half of all respondents indicated that they had seriously considered leaving their job in the past year; this finding may portend important staff retention and satisfaction issues. In light of the finding, it was determined that a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between this item and the following items would be appropriate: 1) length of time in current position, 2) general job satisfaction, and 3) demographic data.

There is a significant relationship between the length of time respondents have been in their current position and whether they have seriously considered leaving their job in the past year. Those who have been in their current position less than a year (73.7%) or 20 or more years (84.6%) indicated that they have not considered leaving Georgia State over the past year, while the majority (60.4%) of those who have been in their current position between five to nine years have seriously considered leaving their job.

Figure 5. Relationship between Leaving Georgia State and Length of Time in Current Position



These findings suggest that employees in the five to nine year time frame constitute the most at-risk group followed by the one to four year group.

There were differences between respondents who had seriously considered leaving their jobs and those who had not considered leaving on the survey scale. Those who had considered leaving had significantly lower mean scores than those who had not considered leaving (Table 6).

There were statistically significant differences between the scale items and length of time in current position. Those respondents who had been in their current position five to nine years had significantly lower mean scores in the area of workplace skills and skill development. Those respondents who had been in their current position 10-14 years had significantly lower mean scores in areas of communication.

Table 7. Relationship Between Scale Items and Leaving Georgia State

	Have you seriously considered leaving your job in the past year?					
	Yes			No		
	Mean	SD	Sig.	Mean	SD	
My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.	4.06	1.54	*	5.08	1.17	
My immediate supervisor encourages me to increase my workplace skills.	3.99	1.65	*	5.02	1.29	
I have access to the resources I need to do my job well.	4.11	1.38	*	4.89	1.20	
My unit/department deals effectively with poor performance by staff.	3.04	1.63	*	4.13	1.57	
I am confident that my unit/department is meeting the needs of Georgia State.	4.30	1.50	*	5.16	1.15	
My supervisor keeps me informed so that I know what is happening in the university that impacts my work.	3.90	1.67	*	4.92	1.29	
Georgia State provides me with a safe working environment.	4.38	1.35	*	4.94	1.17	
I feel comfortable using the procedures in place at Georgia State to report violations of regulations.	3.80	1.54	*	4.79	1.28	
I can communicate important information to those in higher levels of administration.	3.57	1.69	*	4.69	1.36	

Note. Mean range: 1=Strongly disagree to 6=Strongly agree. \*p<.001

Those respondents who had been in their current position between 15 and 19 years and considered leaving had a significantly lower mean score (p<.05) than other groups on these two questions regarding communication (see Appendix L).

There were no statistically significant differences between scale items and gender, ethnicity/race, or degree.

Approximately 22% of respondents who had a high school degree or who had not completed a bachelor's degree had considered leaving their job within the past year compared to approximately half of those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

## **Recommendations**

In light of the qualitative findings, future surveys should expand the scale questions to include more items related to the interpersonal aspects of job satisfaction.

Future surveys may want to create specific questions for at-risk staff (staff more likely to leave the university).

The staff survey should continue to be administered over a 30-day period during the summer semester. An analysis of response patterns associated with the survey show that 27% of staff responded to the survey during the last two weeks of administration. Close to a third of Blacks and Asians submitted their surveys during the last two weeks of administration.

## Appendix A: Staff Satisfaction, Environment, and Communication

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	Strongly Agree %	N	M (SD)
My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.	5.4	6.3	10.1	17.4	28.8	32.0	852	4.54 (1.46)
My immediate supervisor encourages me to increase my workplace skills.	7.3	8.6	8.5	15.8	26.8	33.1	852	4.46 (1.57)
I have access to the resources I need to do my job well.	4.1	5.9	11.0	22.4	30.6	25.9	852	4.47 (1.36)
My unit/department deals effectively with poor performance by staff.	14.4	16.3	16.6	16.0	22.0	14.7	838	3.59 (1.66)
I am confident that my unit/department is meeting the needs of Georgia State.	4.4	5.2	8.7	13.4	32.0	36.3	848	4.72 (1.39)
My supervisor keeps me informed so that I know what is happening in the university that impacts my work.	7.4	9.3	11.2	14.9	26.9	30.3	848	4.35 (1.59)
Georgia State provides me with a safe working environment.	3.3	5.3	8.3	18.8	34.5	29.7	851	4.65 (1.31)
I feel comfortable using the procedures in place at Georgia State to report violations of regulations.	6.4	7.7	14.8	18.6	28.0	24.4	843	4.27 (1.49)
I can communicate important information to those in higher levels of administration.	9.3	12.5	11.7	16.0	27.0	23.5	848	4.09 (1.63)

Note. Mean range: 1=Strongly disagree to 6=Strongly agree.

## Appendix B: Performance Evaluation

My supervisor has given me a performance evaluation within the past 12 months.

n = 846	%
Yes	87.0
No	13.0

## Appendix C: Training

I get the training I need to do my job well.

n= 854	%
Yes	62.1
No	10.7
I do not need additional training.	13.8
I choose not to answer	13.5

#### Appendix D: Job Stability

*Have you seriously considered leaving your job in the past year?*

n= 854	%
Yes	45.2
No	45.7
I choose not to answer	9.1

#### Appendix E: Overall Satisfaction

	Yes	No	Choose not to answer	
	%	%	%	n
Overall, would you recommend your UNIT/DEPARTMENT as a good place to work?	72.6	14.3	13.1	854
Overall, would you recommend GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY as a good place to work?	80.8	7.6	11.6	854

#### Appendix F: Gender

n = 825	%
Female	67.8
Male	32.2

#### Appendix G: Ethnicity/Race

n = 785	%
American Indian/Alaska Native	.6
Asian	5.5
Black or African American	40.6
Latino/a	1.7
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	.5
White	48.0
Other	3.1

#### Appendix H: Age

n = 703	%
20-29 years	13.9
30-39 years	28.9
40-49 years	28.6
50-59 years	21.6
Over 59 years	7.0
Minimum = 21, Maximum = 68	
Mean = 42.38, Median = 41.00	

**Appendix I: Length of Time  
in Current Position (years)**

n = 771	%
Less than a year	13.6
1-4 years	46.6
5-9 years	20.9
10-14 years	12.7
15-19 years	4.2
20 or more years	2.1
Minimum = .10, Maximum = 37	
Mean = 5.20, Median = 3.00	

**Appendix J: Length of Time at  
Georgia State (years)**

n = 785	%
Less than a year	9.0
1-4 years	31.0
5-9 years	23.8
10-14 years	16.2
15-19 years	7.6
20 or more years	12.4
Minimum = .10, Maximum = 42	
Mean = 8.63, Median = 6.00	

**Appendix K: Highest Degree Earned**

n = 810	%
Did not finish high school	1.1
Graduated from high school	5.3
Attended college but did not complete degree	8.1
Completed an associate's degree	3.8
Completed a bachelor's degree	37.0
Completed a master's degree	36.3
Completed a doctoral degree	8.3

**Appendix L: Scale Item Mean Scores by Length of Time and Seriously Considered Leaving**

	Length of Time in Current Position											
	Less than a year		1-4 years		5-9 years		10-14 years		15-19 years		20+	
	Have you seriously considered leaving your job in the past year?											
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.	3.92	5.14	4.07	5.13	3.99	5.19	4.93	4.72	4.92	5.25	4.50	5.27
My immediate supervisor encourages me to increase my workplace skills.	4.19	5.15	4.04	5.04	4.02	4.93	4.13	4.77	3.92	5.25	5.50	5.18
I have access to the resources I need to do my job well.	4.38	4.86	4.12	4.91	4.21	4.86	4.35	4.86	3.92	5.25	4.50	5.00
My unit/department deals effectively with poor performance by staff.	3.36	4.24	3.08	4.16	3.06	4.18	3.03	3.62	3.00	4.63	5.00	4.64
I am confident that my unit/department is meeting the needs of Georgia State.	4.46	5.25	4.29	5.20	4.43	5.21	4.53	4.81	4.58	5.63	5.00	5.36
My supervisor keeps me informed so that I know what is happening in the university that impacts my work.	4.15	4.96	4.09	5.08	3.98	4.96	3.74	4.23	3.25	5.44	5.00	4.82
Georgia State provides me with a safe working environment.	4.38	5.04	4.43	4.97	4.51	4.98	4.65	4.50	4.08	5.25	5.50	5.09
I feel comfortable using the procedures in place at Georgia State to report violations of regulations.	3.88	4.86	3.89	4.82	4.07	5.02	3.68	4.26	3.67	4.88	5.50	4.45
I can communicate important information to those in higher levels of administration.	3.42	5.04	3.65	4.86	3.87	4.70	3.45	3.76	3.42	4.81	5.00	4.55

*Note.* Mean range: 1=Strongly disagree to 6=Strongly agree.