



**MEMORANDUM**

May 1, 2023

**To:** University of Oregon Leadership  
**From:** Officers of Administration Council  
**Re:** Winter 2023 OA Survey Results

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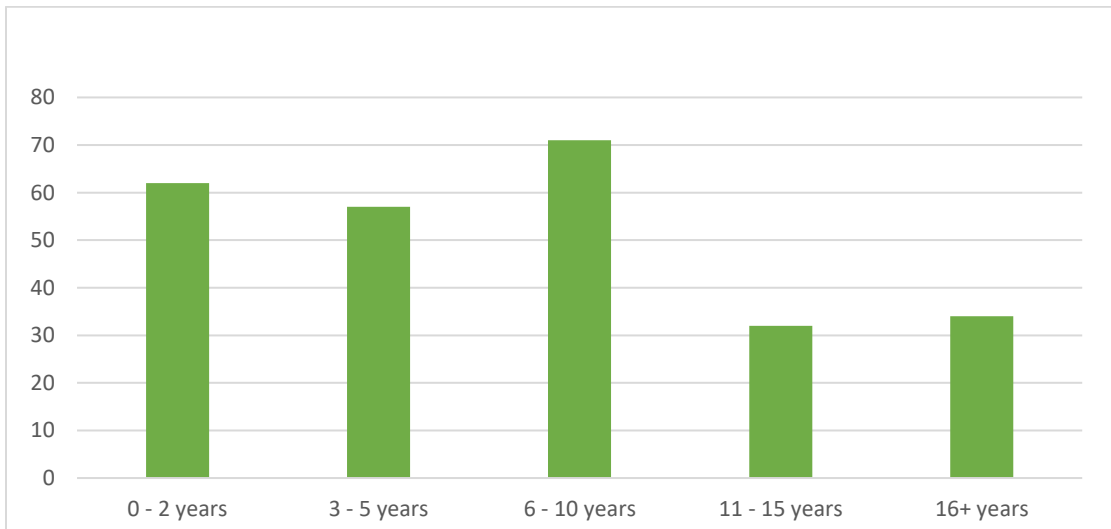
**Executive Summary**

On February 6, the OA Council sent out an email to OAs with a link to a Qualtrics survey. There were seven questions in the survey asking about how OAs are feeling around their work arrangements and what matters to them in terms of benefits and retention. There were 260 individuals who responded to the survey.

The overarching theme that arose throughout the survey results was that OA staff are looking for a balance in workload as well as an increase in pay. There was expressed concern that Officers of Administration continue to see an increase in workload and many feel that the pay is not keeping pace with inflation or market rates. These factors combine with other concerns that result in OAs feeling undervalued and unappreciated, which does not foster a culture of inclusion and belonging and encourages turnover.

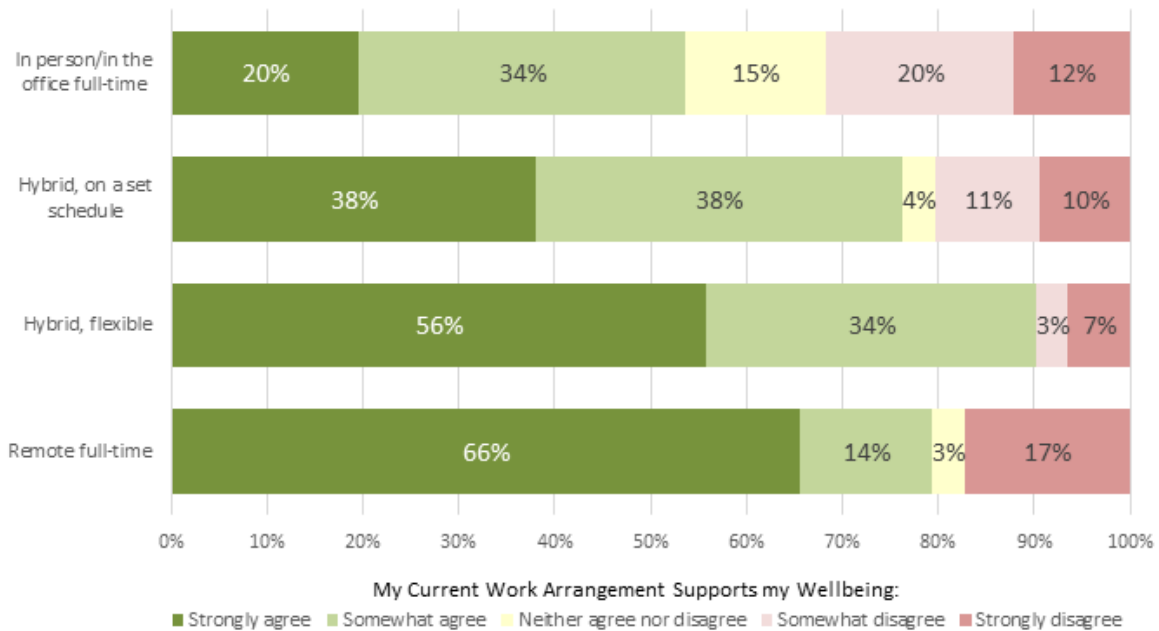
**Years of Experience of OA Survey Respondents**

We received 260 responses from OAs with a good mix of years of experience at UO:



### OA Work Arrangements and Wellness

We asked OAs about their current working arrangements, and whether they felt it supported their personal well-being. Analyzing the results of those two questions, we found that in general, OAs appreciate the ability to work remotely.



For those who are able to work remotely, we asked them to identify the top three things they liked the most about it. A majority appreciated not having to commute, closely followed by having flexibility for personal matters and more time to engage in wellness practices.

Answer	%	Count
No commute	21.59%	163
Flexibility for personal matters, appointments, etc.	18.94%	143
More time to engage in wellness/self-care practices	18.01%	136
Flexibility for caregiving responsibilities	11.26%	85
Ability to travel/work from other locations	8.87%	67
More time with pets	6.62%	50
Not needing to dress up for work	6.36%	48
Other:	6.23%	47
Not applicable/I do not work remotely	2.12%	16

We included an “other” category where people could write in responses. Over forty survey respondents provided comments. Those text responses fell within four categories.

- A vast majority (24) commented on how remote work affords more focused and productive work with fewer distractions and interruptions. A few of these comments also mentioned how that productivity and a quiet work environment resulted in less stress.
- Another nine comments had to do with the expense and environmental impact of commuting.

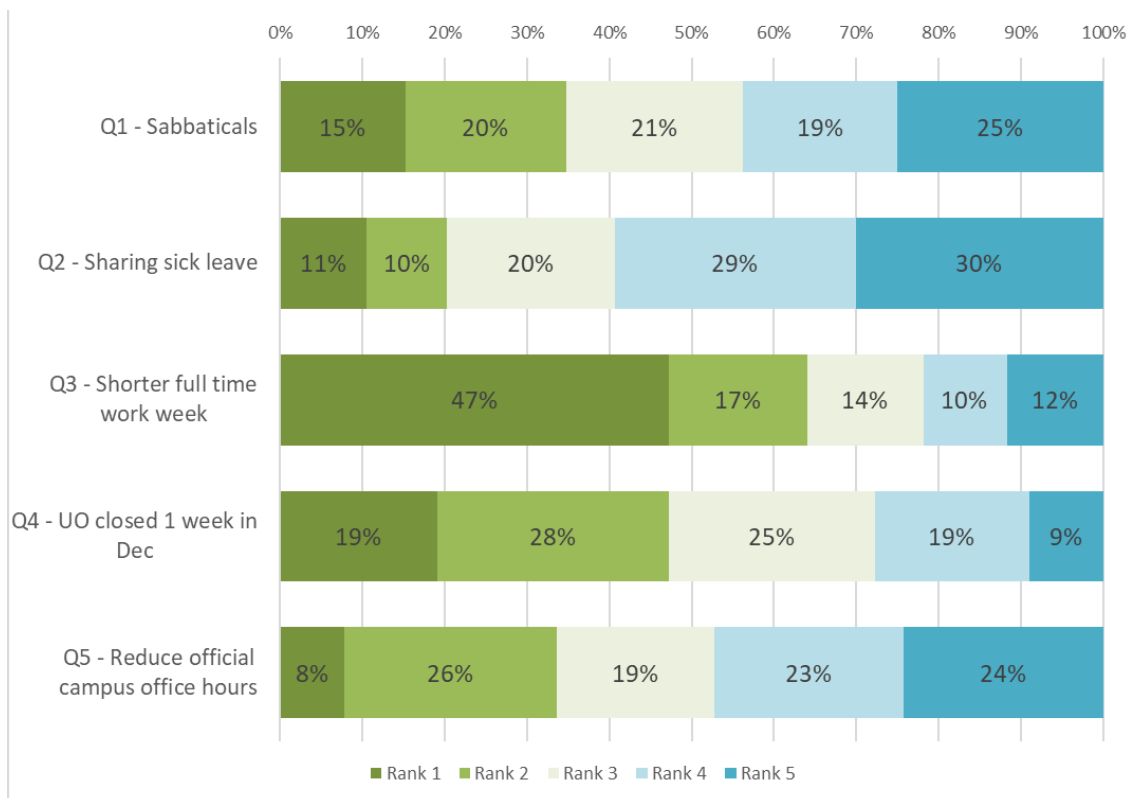
- Five comments had to do with personal health and safety; people felt they were less likely to get sick working from home.
- Five comments had to do with enabling better work/life balance.

### OA Priorities

We wanted to know what OAs care about in terms of benefits for their job classification and asked them to rank five possibilities in order of most beneficial to their health and well-being (1) to least beneficial (5).

The survey showed that for these five areas presented, the largest percentage of interest was in shorter work weeks, UO being closed one week in December, and reducing official campus office hours.

However, a key topic that arose from the text from the following question was that a reduction in hours would not translate into a reduction in the work that needed to be completed and without an increase in capacity there would be no meaningful contribution to work/life balance.

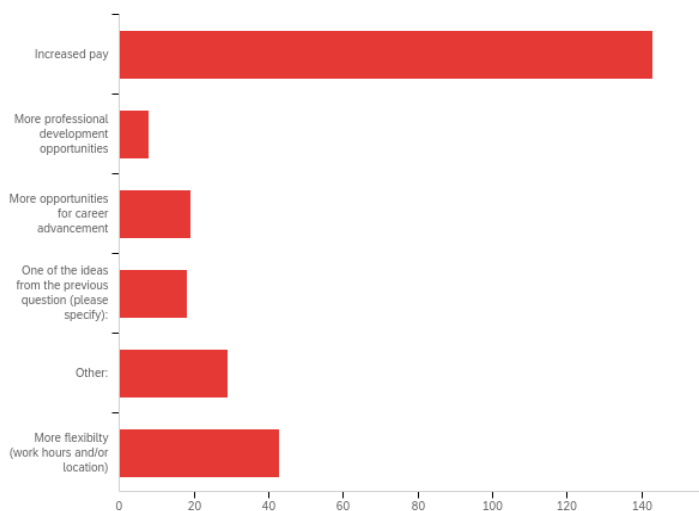


## OA Retention

A key outcome we hoped to achieve from the OA survey was to determine the top areas that would help us retain OAs. One of the questions that we ask was “Keeping in mind that the OA Council is an advocacy body, and not a governing body, if OA Council could advocate for one or more these concepts, what could be most impactful to your health and well-being?” The five areas were: Sabbaticals, sharing sick leave, shorter full time work week, UO being closed one week in December, and reduced official campus office hours.

The survey also asked what was the most important thing that the University of Oregon could do to increase retention and encourage OAs to stay. The council was able to identify three main themes in the responses:

- The largest ask by far was an increase in pay for OAs. Of the 260 responses to this question, 55% (143 respondents) said that an increase in pay was the key contributor to staff wanting to remain working at the University of Oregon.
- The second largest ask was for more flexibility (work hours and/or location) at 16.54% (43 respondents.)
- An additional common theme in the notes was the need to reduce the workload of our current OAs while providing better pay for retention efforts.



OAs had a chance to enter open text regarding things that would help to retain OA staff for the University of Oregon. Not everyone offered additional comments, but of those who did, several asked for a 32-hour work week if it coincided with management of the workload. There was a reiteration of the need to manage the workload and improve the culture so that individuals feel valued and appreciated.

## Recommendations

### Near-Term Recommendations:

1. OAs benefit from flexibility. Continue to facilitate remote work and give managers the ability to be as flexible as possible with OAs. For example:
  - a. Flexing start and end times to the workday
  - b. Allowing for work from home
2. Conduct a feasibility study on the possibility of a shared sick leave bank like what our SEIU colleagues are able to access. Along with a shared sick leave bank, we ask that UO continue to offer 80 hours of **COVID leave** but restructure this to be called **Emergency leave**, in lieu of bereavement leave. The need for additional leave is apparent and comes up frequently for OAs but is only recognized by those who are experiencing the need.
3. Using an outside consultant or internal resources, analyze the costs associated with UO's turnover rates over the past 5-10 years. There is a cost to turnover. What is it for UO? Could we redirect those costs to focus on retaining valuable OAs?

### Mid-Term Recommendations:

4. OAs feel their workloads are untenable. For example, as with many initiatives that will help the institution grow into the future, there has been little to no recognition that it has fallen on OAs to implement and activate action plans from the recent climate survey in addition to their normal workloads. We ask the institution to engage an outside consultant to benchmark current staffing structures with other similar institutions to assess whether and to what extent UO is understaffed.
5. In a similar vein, OAs feel underpaid. Engage an outside consultant to conduct an equity review and market analysis of current OA salaries on campus to assess whether OAs are in fact underpaid. Include benchmarking against other institutions in Oregon and across the county, both in higher education and market for comparable industries, factoring in UO's benefits. Having this data on the health of our current salary structure could help us to identify our strengths and be able to tell that story to OAs while also revealing the areas that are not in line with industry standards and need to be adjusted.

### Long-Term Recommendation:

6. Use the information from recommendations 2 and 3 to decide on a considered institutional staffing strategy. Will we hire more people and allow salaries to fall behind, or will we run lean, with fewer staff, and pay more? Or some combination of the two depending on function?