



Higher Education Sustainability Staffing Survey

2010

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AASHE, the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, is an association of colleges and universities that are working to create a sustainable future. Our mission is to empower higher education to lead the sustainability transformation. We do this by providing resources, professional development, and a network of support to enable institutions of higher education to model and advance sustainability in everything they do, from governance and operations to education and research.

Survey analysis and chart graphics by Heather Flint Chatto.

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Introduction

Institutions of higher education continue to hire sustainability staff and redirect existing staff to manage and coordinate their sustainability initiatives. To provide AASHE members with a greater understanding of sustainability-related positions, AASHE conducted a survey of campus sustainability staff in winter 2010, using the online tool SurveyGizmo. We promoted the survey through direct outreach to sustainability staff, in our weekly newsletter and in posts to relevant discussion lists. We received 433 completed surveys.

The results of our “Higher Education Sustainability Staffing Survey” are presented in this report, providing information about the demographics, roles, salaries, and positions of sustainability college and university sustainability-related staff.

This report expands and updates the information captured in the 2008 “[Higher Education Sustainability Officer Position and Salary Survey](#).” The 2008 survey focused exclusively on sustainability officers, whereas this survey collected data for several other sustainability position types.

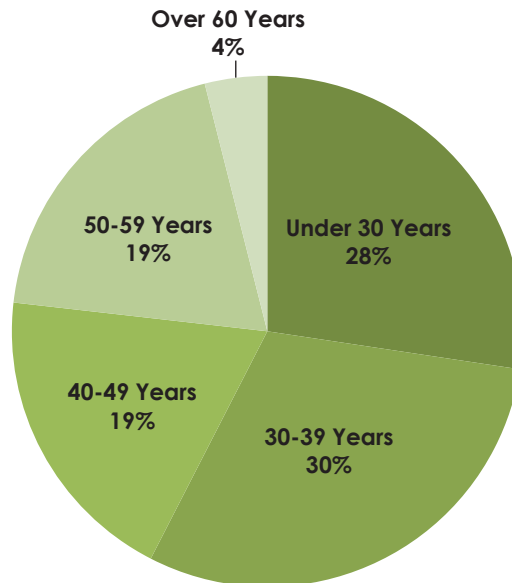
Note: In the charts below, numbers were rounded to the nearest whole digit, which means that some totals may add up to slightly more or less than 100 percent. Also, data was only reported if it represented an adequate sample size. In the tables by position type, data was not included where position type sample sizes were too small.

Respondent Demographics

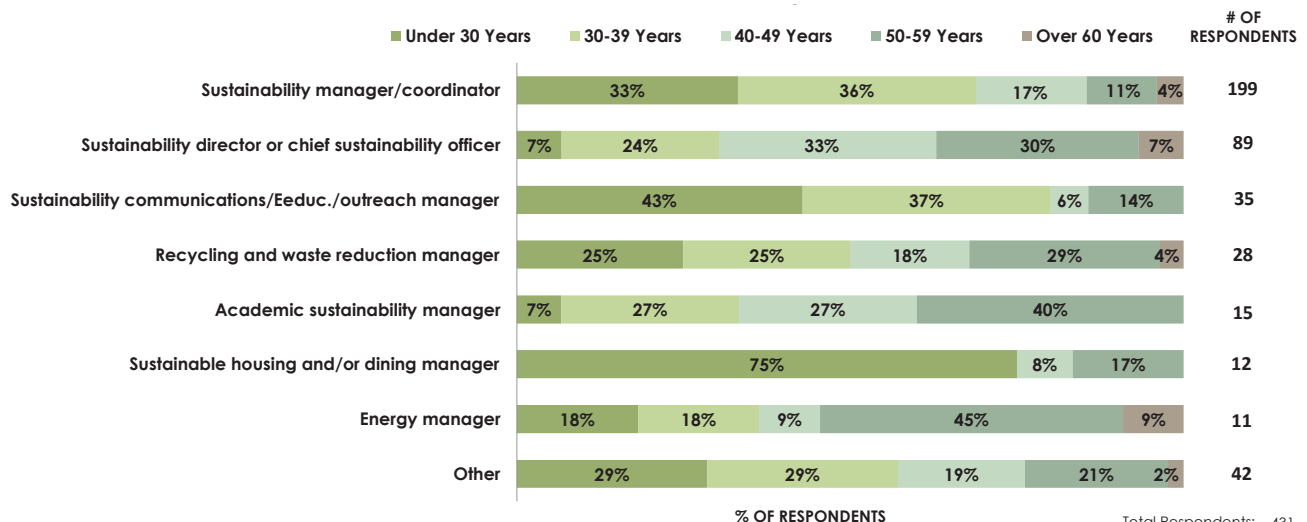
AGE & GENDER

The majority (58 percent) of respondents are 39 years of age or younger. Only 4 percent are 60 years of age or older. “Recycling and waste reduction manager” and “sustainability manager/coordinator” position type respondents had the highest proportion of young people. The majority of respondents are also female (59 percent). “Sustainability director or chief sustainability officer” was the only major position type that skewed male (59 percent).

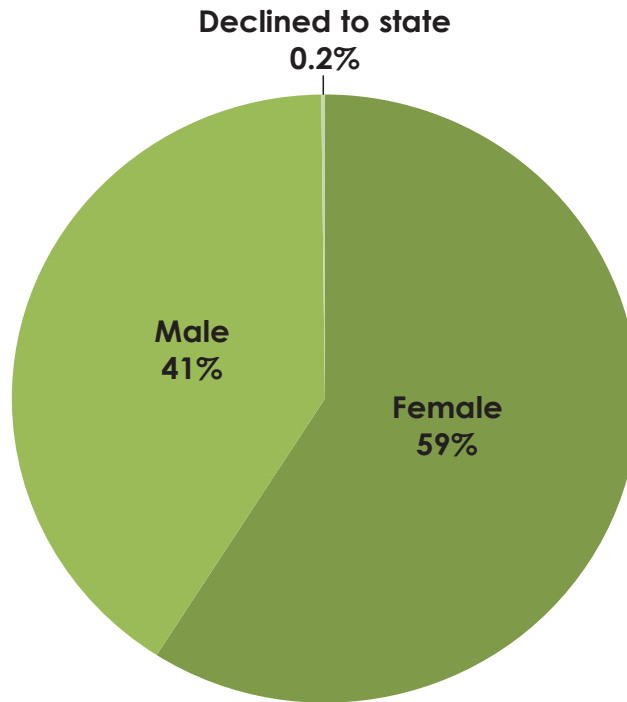
AGE of RESPONDENTS



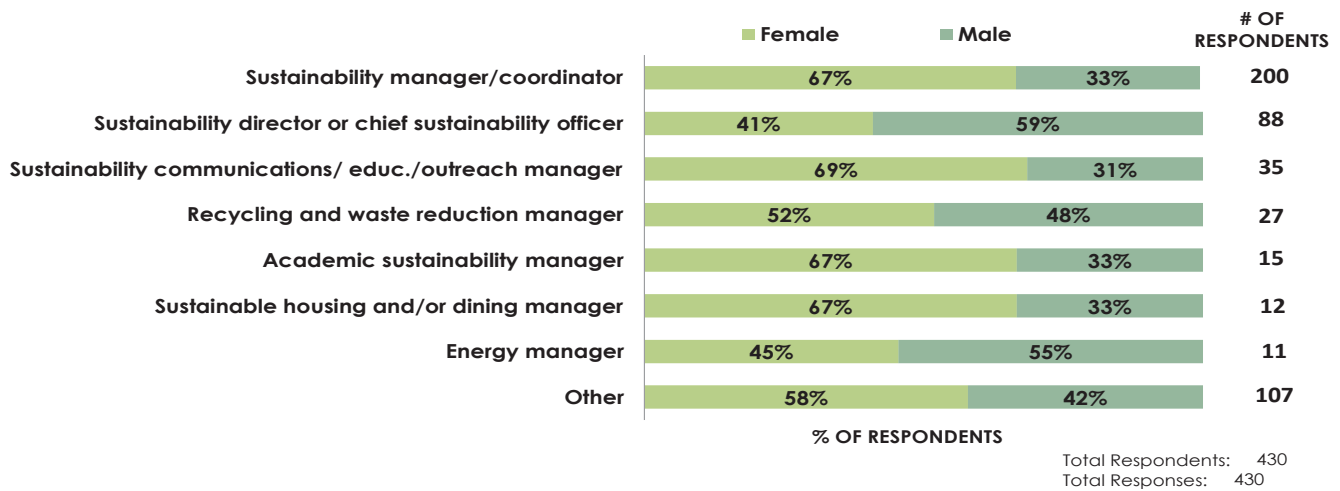
AGE by POSITION TYPE



GENDER of RESPONDENTS

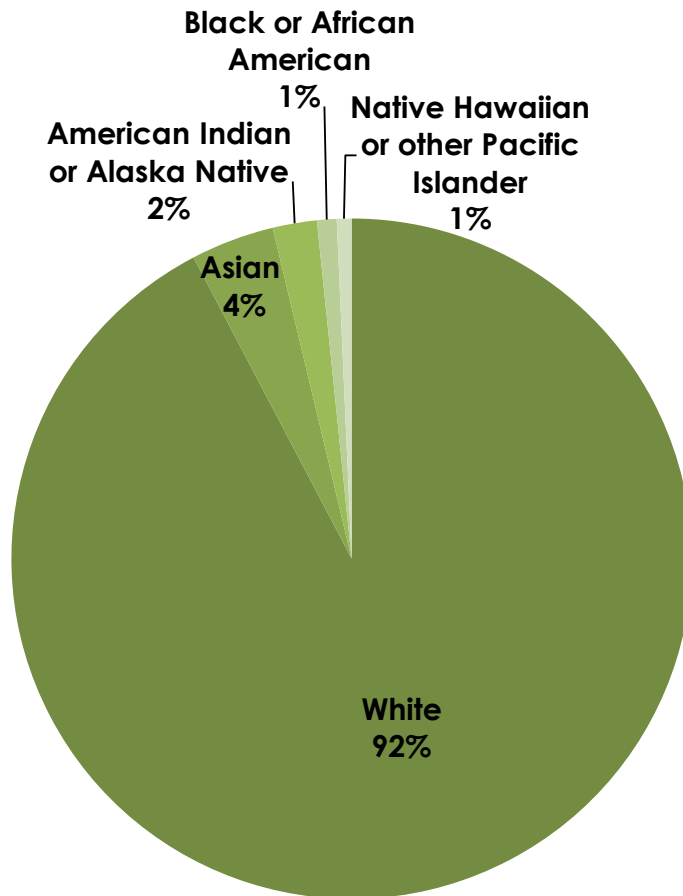


GENDER by POSITION TYPE



RACE & ETHNICITY

Eight percent of responses indicated a minority category. “Asian” was the largest minority category reported, with 4 percent of all responses. Thirteen of 423 respondents reported having a Hispanic or Latino background (not shown on pie chart below).



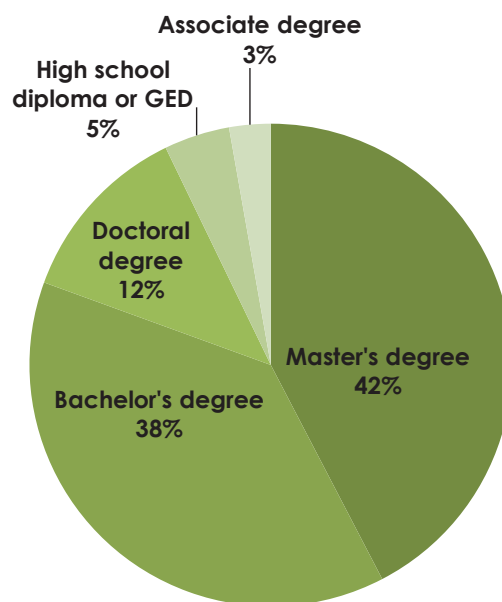
Total Respondents: 420
Total Responses: 429

HIGHEST LEVEL *of* EDUCATION COMPLETED

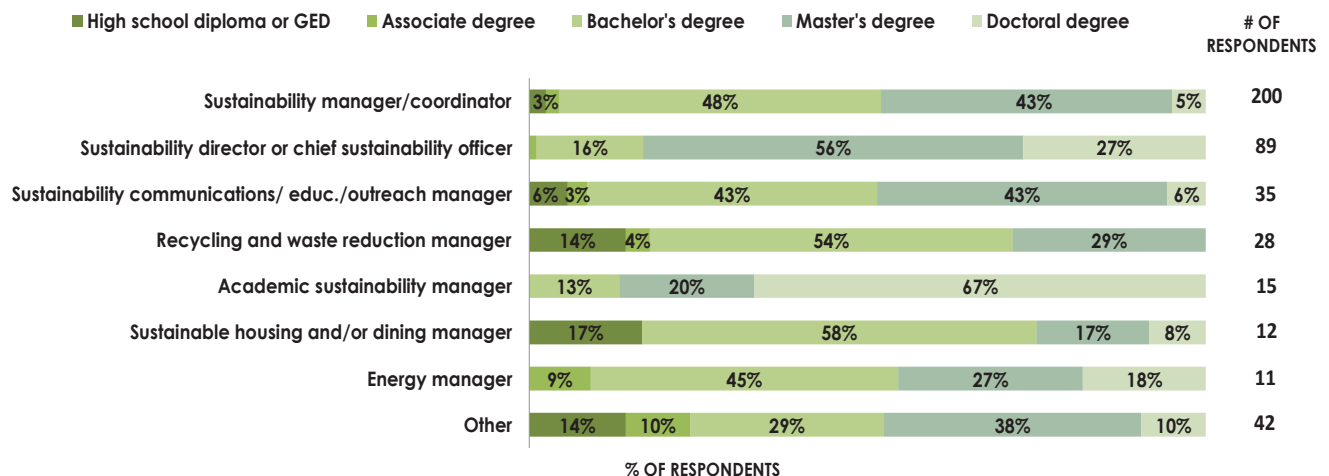
All but one of the 433 survey takers answered this question. More than 90 percent of respondents had at least a bachelor's degree, and 54 percent of respondents possessed a master's or doctoral degree. The largest proportion of respondents (42 percent) listed a master's degree as their highest level of education completed.

Fifty-six percent of "sustainability director or chief sustainability officer" position type respondents have a master's degree while 27 percent have doctoral degrees. This is the highest percentage of both degrees among all position types.

EDUCATION LEVEL
of RESPONDENTS



EDUCATION LEVEL
by POSITION TYPE



Total Respondents: 432
Total Responses: 432

COUNTRY

The majority of the 403 survey takers who answered this question live in the U.S. All but one reported the U.S. or Canada as the country they live in.

POSITION TYPE	COUNTRY		
	United States	Canada	Other
Sustainability manager/coordinator	182	18	1
Sustainability director or chief sustainability officer	86	3	0
Sustainability communications/educ./outreach manager	33	2	0
Recycling and waste reduction manager	25	3	0
Academic sustainability manager	14	1	0
Sustainable housing and/or dining manager	12	0	0
Energy manager	10	1	0
Sustainable transportation manager	5	0	0
Sustainable IT manager	2	0	0
Sustainable procurement manager	1	0	0
Other	33	1	0
TOTAL	403	29	1

COUNTRY by POSITION TYPE

REGION (U.S. & CANADA)

States and provinces within the U.S. and Canada were grouped into geographical regions. (We used **SAPPA Regions**.) The largest percentage (28 percent) of all respondents work in the Eastern region.

POSITION TYPE	REGION					
	Eastern Region	Southeastern Region	Midwestern Region	Pacific Coast Region	Rocky Mountain Region	Central Region
Sustainability manager/coordinator	63	23	38	43	18	13
Sustainability director or chief sustainability officer	27	24	15	6	8	8
Sustainability communications/educ./outreach manager	6	13	7	7	1	1
Recycling and waste reduction manager	8	8	3	5	3	1
Academic sustainability manager	5	2	3	2	0	2
Sustainable housing and/or dining manager	2	3	1	4	1	1
Energy manager	2	5	3	0	0	1
Sustainable transportation manager	0	1	0	1	2	1
Sustainable IT manager	0	1	1	0	0	0
Sustainable procurement manager	0	0	0	1	0	0
Other	8	3	9	7	5	2
TOTAL	121	83	80	76	38	30

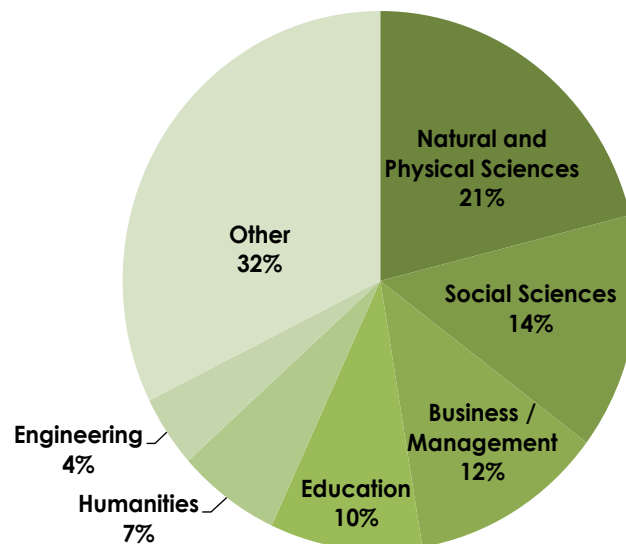
REGION by POSITION TYPE

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

With 650 responses from 344 respondents (survey takers could select multiple answers), the information gathered here shows that sustainability staffers come from a wide variety of academic backgrounds. Of the total, 35 percent cited a background in either the natural and physical sciences (21 percent) and/or the social sciences (14 percent) and/or the social sciences (14 percent).

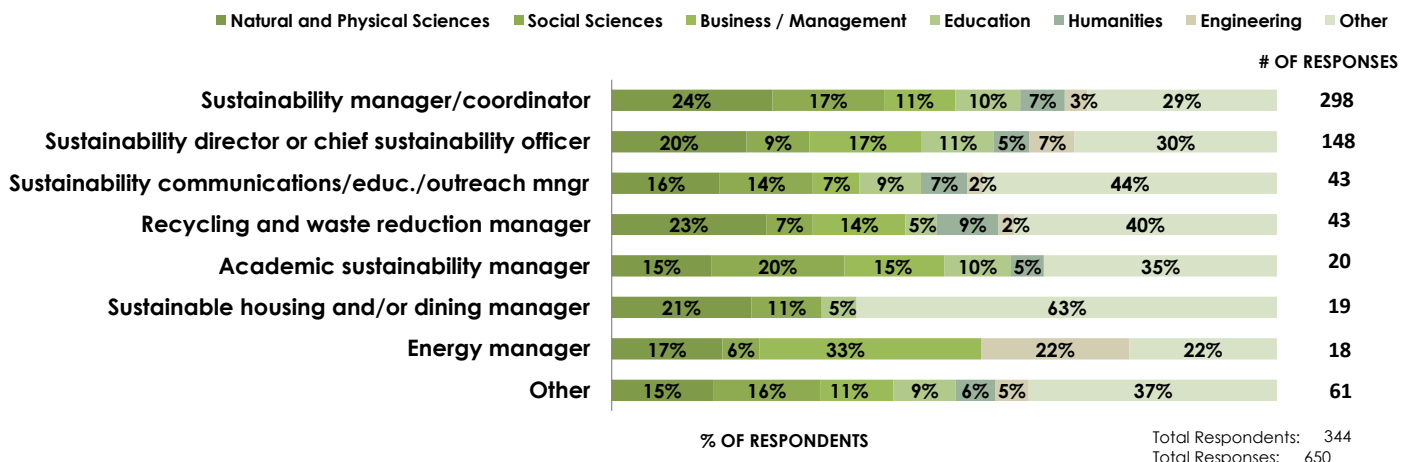
The largest single category of responses (32 percent) was “Other.” Environmental studies (including environmental science, studies, planning/policy, conservation, and management) was by far the most popular type (38 percent) of academic background in the “Other” category. Urban planning/planning and sustainability were popular as well.

By position type, “sustainability managers/coordinators” showed the largest single percentage (24 percent) with backgrounds in the natural and physical sciences, as well as the largest single percentage (17 percent) with backgrounds in the social sciences.



ACADEMIC BACKGROUND of RESPONDENTS

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND by POSITION TYPE



PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

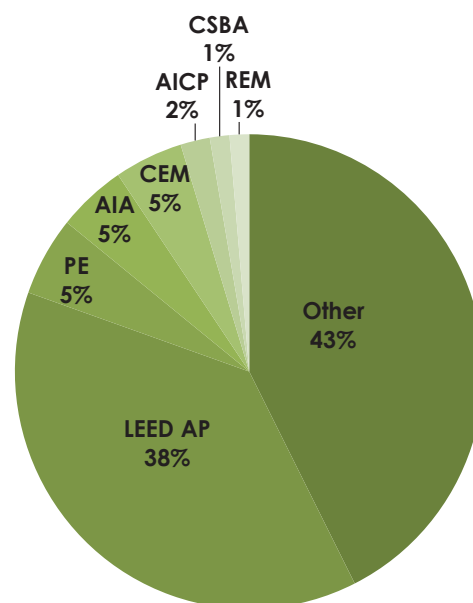
There were only 114 respondents to this question; 74 percent of survey takers did not indicate any professional credentials. LEED AP (LEED Approved Professional) was cited the most often (38 percent) by the respondents to this question.

Forty-three percent listed “Other” for this question. Among the “Other” answers were certifications in architecture, carbon reduction, renewable energy, recycling, and teaching. A few of the common certification titles in the “Other” category include Registered Architect, Certified Environmental Auditor (CEA) and Certified Hazardous Materials Manager (CHMM).

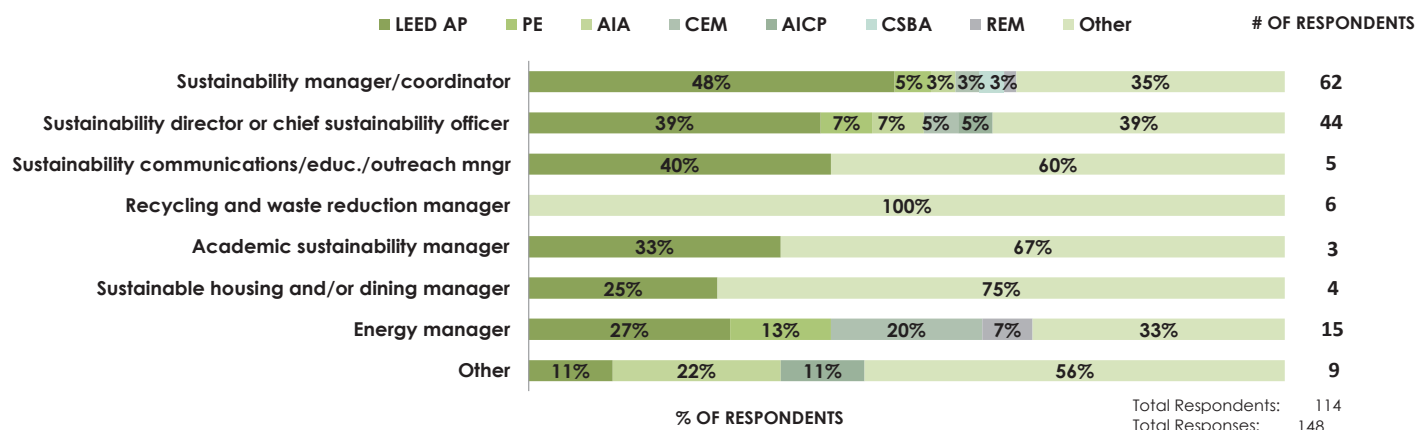
PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS KEY

- AIA (American Institute of Architects)
- AICP (American Institute of Certified Planners)
- CEM (Certified Energy Manager certification by Association of Energy Engineers)
- CSBA (Certified Sustainable Building Advisor certification by National Sustainable Building Advisory Program)
- HPBD (High Performance Building Design Professional certification by American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-conditioning Engineers)
- LEED AP (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Applied Professional certification by U.S. Green Building Council)
- PE (Professional Engineer license)
- REM (Registered Environmental Manager certification by National Registry of Environmental Professionals)

PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS of RESPONDENTS



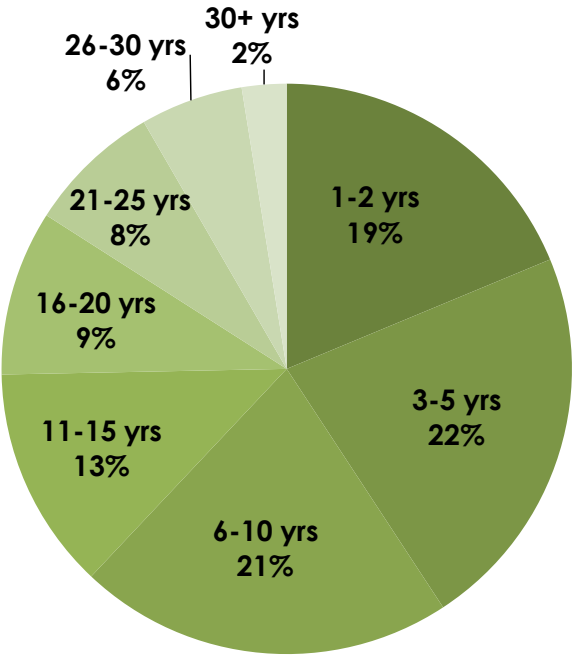
PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS by POSITION TYPE



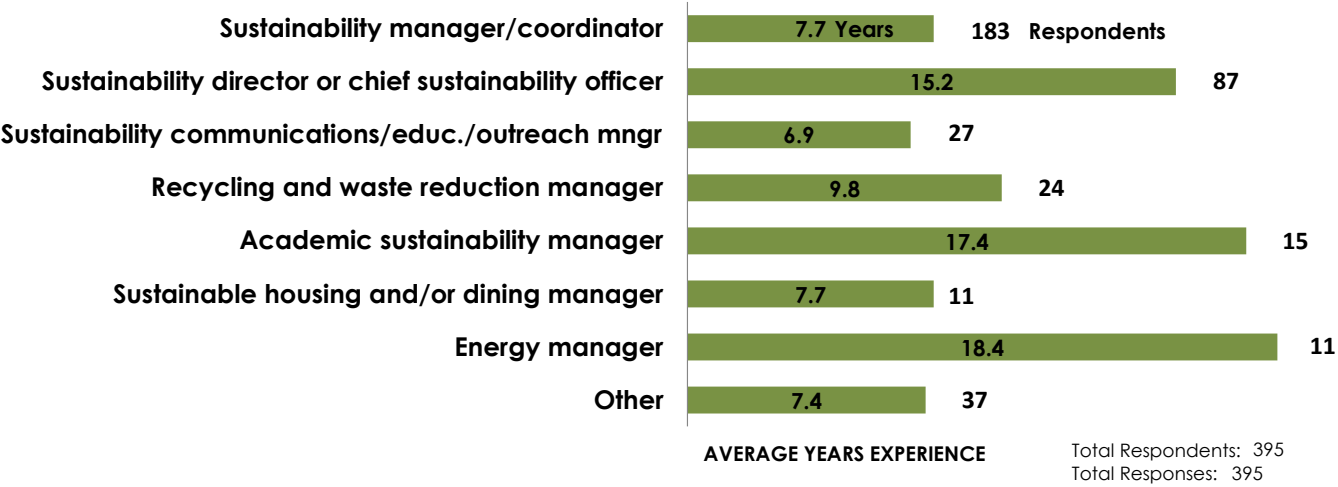
PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

There were 395 respondents to this question. More than 60 percent reported 10 years or less of relevant professional experience, not including student activism or internships. The “energy manager” position type respondents had the highest average years of experience with 18.4 years, followed closely by the “academic sustainability manager” and “sustainability director or chief sustainability officer” position types.

WORK EXPERIENCE
of RESPONDENTS



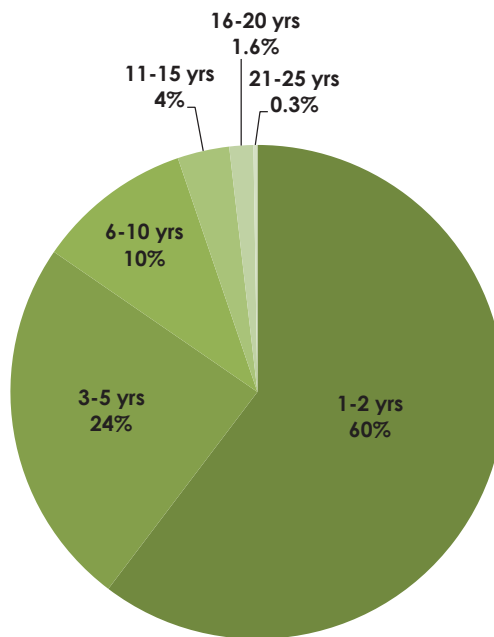
WORK EXPERIENCE
by POSITION TYPE



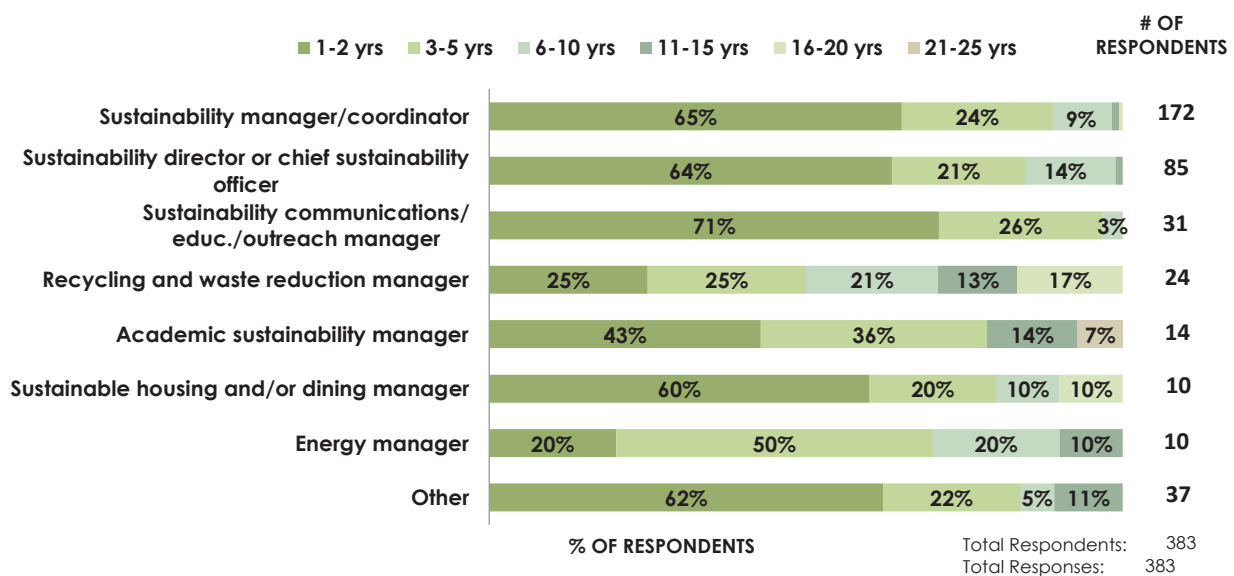
LENGTH *of* SUSTAINABILITY EMPLOYMENT

Of the 433 survey takers, 395 reported the length of time they have been a paid employee at a higher education institution. The majority of respondents reported being at their position five years or less. “Sustainability manager/coordinator” and “sustainability director or chief sustainability officer” position types had the highest percentage (65 percent and 64 percent, respectively) in the one- to two-year range.

SUSTAINABILITY EMPLOYMENT
of RESPONDENTS



SUSTAINABILITY EMPLOYMENT
by POSITION TYPE



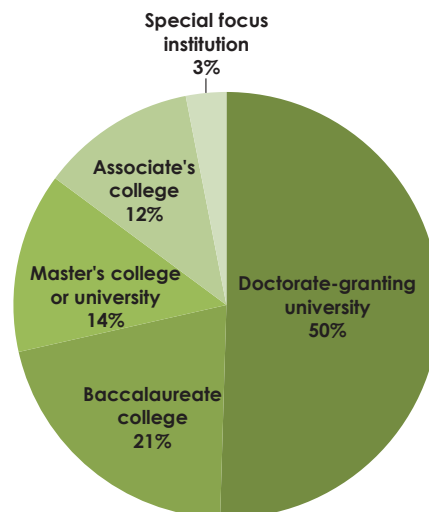
Institution Structure

Survey Question: Select the classification that best describes your institution.

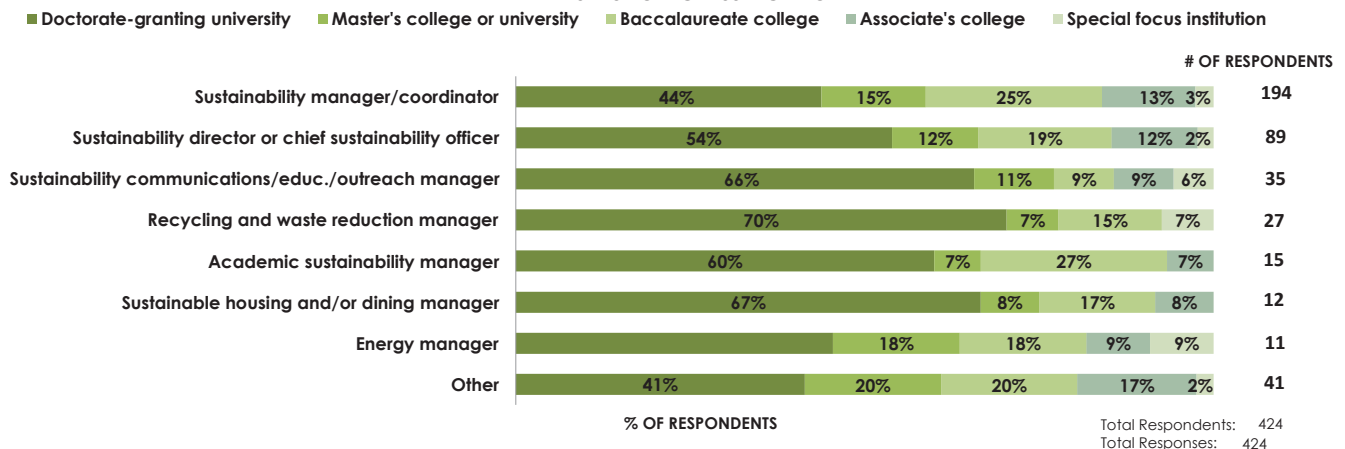
Exactly half of the 424 respondents to this question selected “doctorate-granting university” as the best description of their institution. Of the remaining half, most (21 percent of all respondents) were from baccalaureate colleges.

“Sustainability manager/coordinator” cited “doctorate-granting university” and “baccalaureate college” as their institution classification more than any other position type with 85 and 49 responses, respectively. “Sustainability director or chief sustainability officer” had the second-highest numbers in the “doctorate-granting university” and “baccalaureate college” classifications with 48 and 17 responses, respectively.

INSTITUTION CLASSIFICATION
of RESPONDENTS



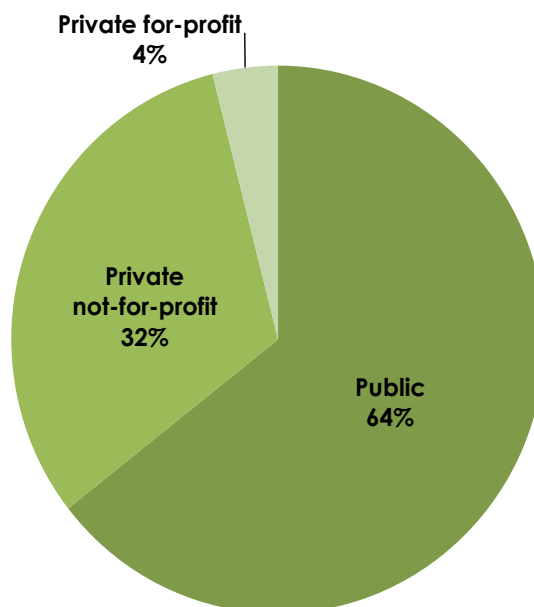
INSTITUTION CLASSIFICATION
by POSITION TYPE



Survey Question: What type of control describes your institution?

All but three survey takers responded to this question. About two-thirds (64 percent) listed their institution's control as public, and nearly one-third (32 percent) listed control as private, not-for-profit. Private, for-profit was by far the smallest group with only 4 percent.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTROL
of RESPONDENTS' INSTITUTIONS

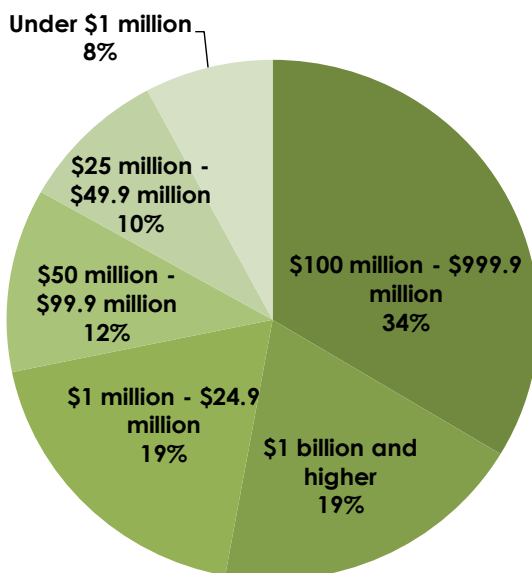


Total Respondents: 430
Total Responses: 430

Survey Question: What is your institution's endowment size in dollars?

Of the 333 survey takers who responded to this question, more than half were from institutions with endowments of \$100 million or higher.

ENDOWMENT SIZE of
RESPONDENTS' INSTITUTIONS

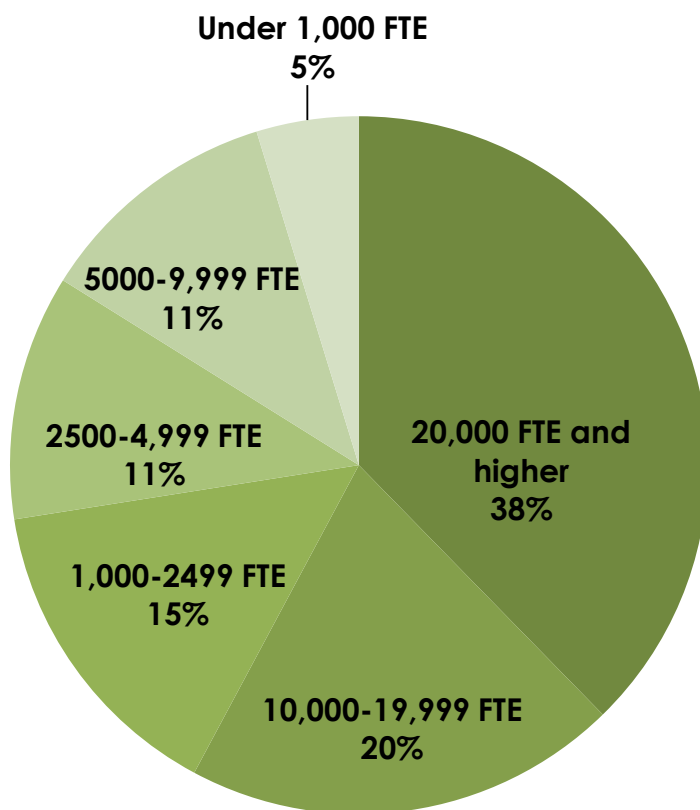


Total Respondents: 333
Total Responses: 333

Survey Question: What is your institution's enrollment in FTE?

Of the 422 respondents to this question, 58 percent work at an institution with a full-time student enrollment of 10,000 or higher.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT
of RESPONDENTS' INSTITUTIONS



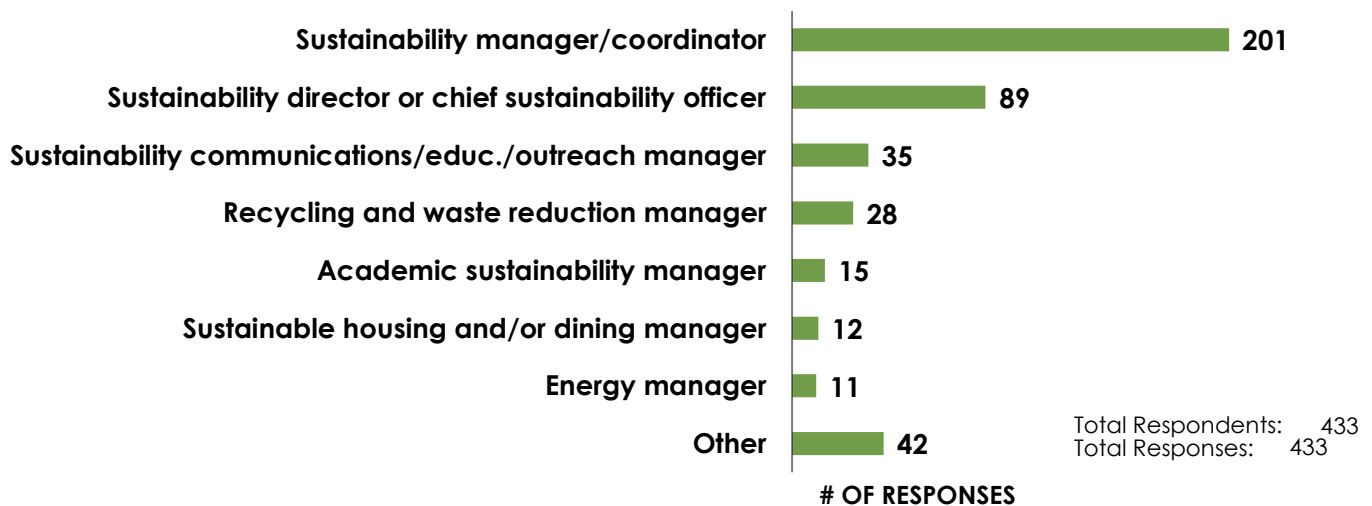
Total Respondents: 422
Total Responses: 422

Nature of Sustainability Staff Positions

Survey Question: Select the position type that best describes or is most similar to your sustainability staff position.

With 201 responses, the category selected by the most respondents was “sustainability manager/coordinator.” It had more than twice as many respondents as the next largest category, “sustainability director or chief sustainability officer” (89 responses). Only two respondents selected “sustainable IT manager” and one selected “sustainable procurement manager.” The 34 “Other” responses included faculty/instructor (7), assistant or other support role (7), student/intern (4), and sustainability committee member (3). Respondents could only select one answer.

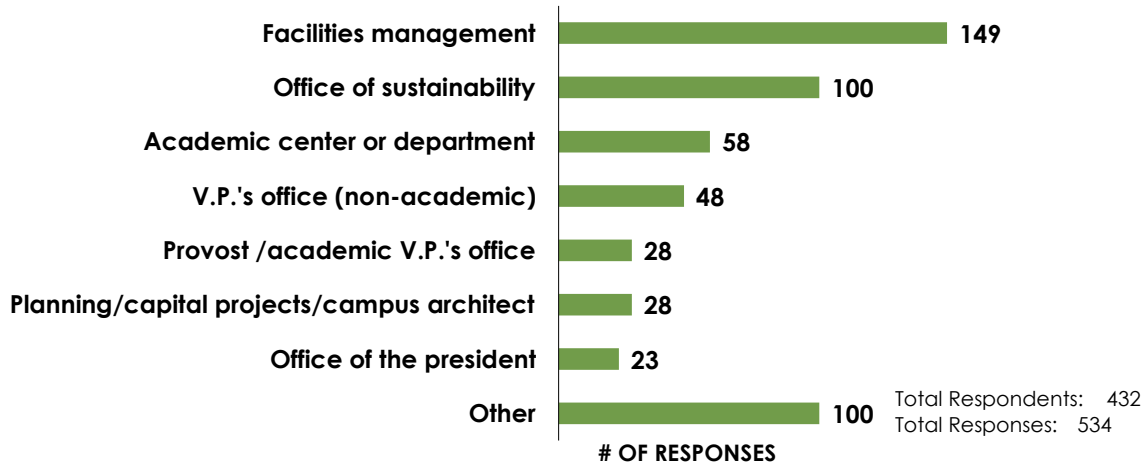
SUSTAINABILITY STAFF
by POSITION TYPE



Survey Question: Select the department or office that best describes where your position is located.

Respondents were allowed to select more than one answer to this question. Note that the most frequently selected position location (149 responses) was “facilities management,” followed by “office of sustainability” (100). Offices mentioned in the 100 “Other” responses included: campus services, communications/public affairs/government, library, university recreation, cooperative extension, and real estate services.

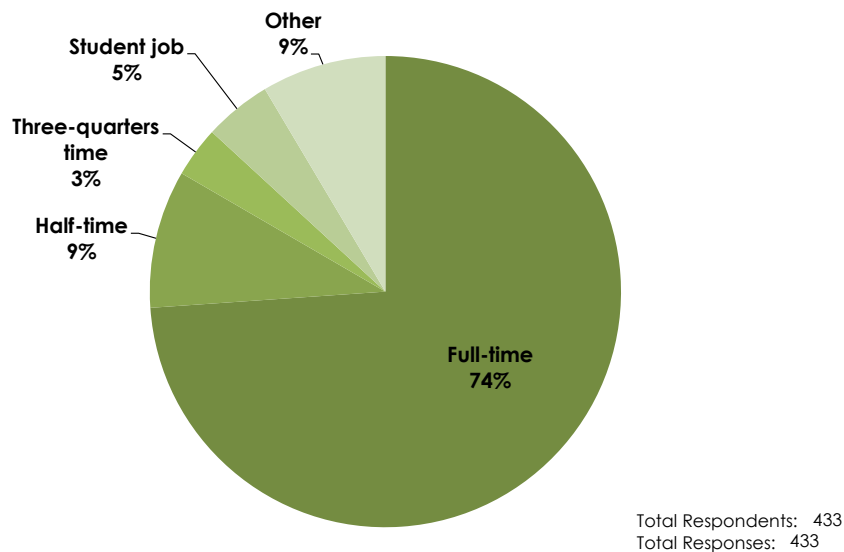
OFFICE LOCATION of RESPONDENTS



Survey Question: What is the status of your position?

Virtually three-quarters of positions represented (74 percent) were full-time. Another 12 percent of positions represented are either half-time (9 percent) or three-quarters time (3 percent). Only 5 percent are student jobs.

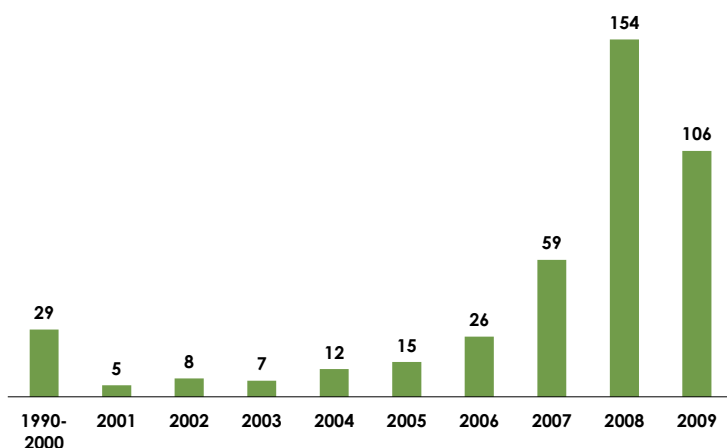
POSITION STATUS of RESPONDENTS



Survey Question: In what year did your institution create the position you hold?

There were 428 total respondents/responses to this question. The chart below represents 421 respondents whose position was created before 2010. This survey closed in February 2010, making 2010 position totals data incomplete.

Notably, over three-quarters (76 percent) of respondents' positions were created in 2007 or later, so a total of 326 positions are fairly new. In fact, 36 percent (154) of all respondents' positions were created in 2008 alone, the largest number in any year. From 2001 to 2006, just 73 positions (17 percent) were created. Only 29 positions (7 percent) were created in 2000 or earlier.



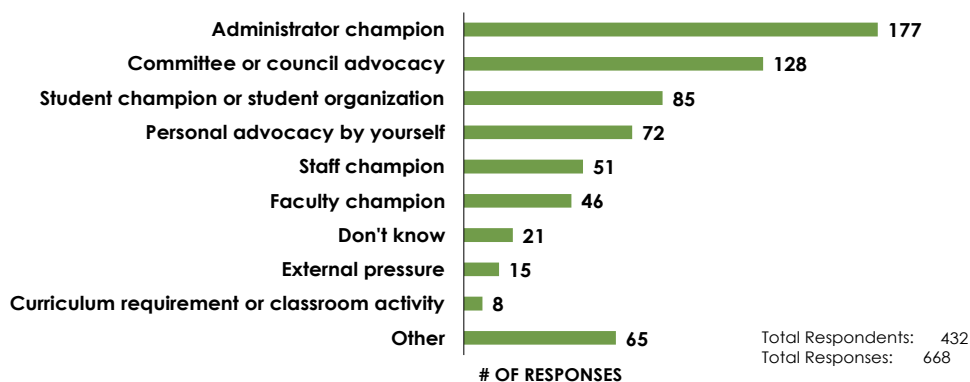
POSITION CREATION DATE
of RESPONDENTS

Total Respondents: 421
Total Responses: 421

Survey Question: What was the primary impetus that led to the creation of your position?

There were 668 responses to this question from 432 respondents. Survey takers were allowed to select more than one answer. "Administrative champion" and "committee or council advocacy" were the top two reasons respondent positions were created. Almost 10 percent of the responses were in the "Other" category. Among the "Other" responses, the most common response was "signing the American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment."

IMPETUS for POSITION CREATION



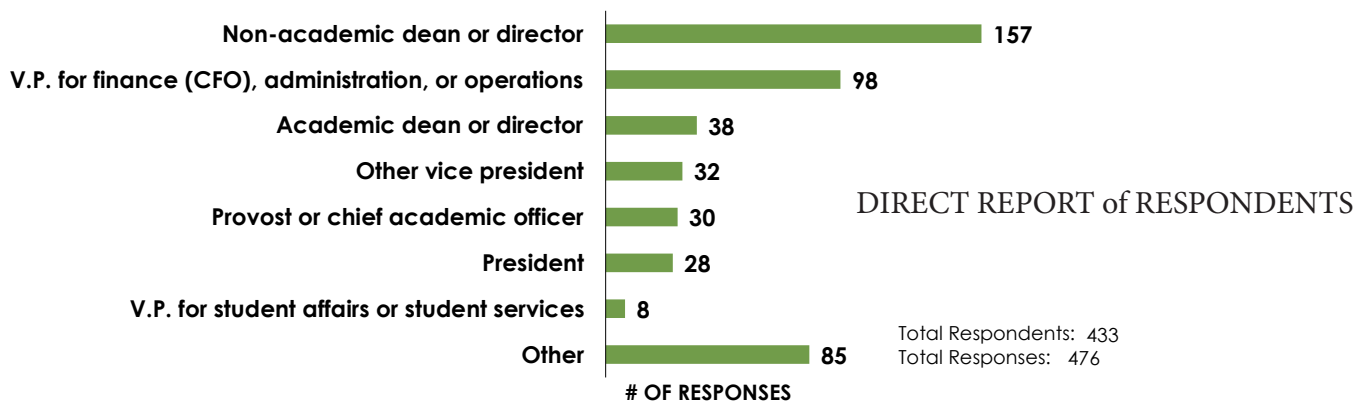
Total Respondents: 432
Total Responses: 668

Survey Question: To whom do you directly report?

Respondents were asked to select the person (or position type) to whom they directly reported. They were allowed to select more than one response. Out of 476 total responses, “non-academic dean or director” was by far the most popular choice followed by “V.P. for finance (CFO), administration, or operations” and “Other.” Frequent responses in the “Other” category included “sustainability director/manager/coordinator,” “associate director” (various departments on campus) and “chief of staff.”

Forty-one percent of respondents report to a vice president or higher. Forty-one percent of “sustainability manager/coordinator” job position type respondents report to “V.P. for finance (CFO), administration, or operations,” by far the highest percentage among all position types reporting to “V.P. for finance (CFO), administration, or operations.”

“Sustainability manager/coordinator,” “sustainability director or chief sustainability officer” and “recycling and waste reduction manager” were the only position types that indicated they reported to a president.



POSITION TYPE	DIRECT REPORT TO:							
	Non-academic dean or director	V.P. for finance (CFO), admin., or operations	Academic dean or director	Other vice president	Provost or chief academic officer	President	V.P. for student affairs or student services	Other
Sustainability manager/coordinator	82	46	12	16	8	13	4	40
Sustainability director or chief sustainability officer	19	40	5	7	14	13	1	0
Sustainability communications/educ./outreach manager	12	4	2	2	2	0	1	14
Recycling and waste reduction manager	10	4	7	2	3	2	2	11
Academic sustainability manager	13	3	1	0	0	0	0	13
Sustainable housing and/or dining manager	1	0	11	1	3	0	0	0
Energy manager	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Other	11	1	0	4	0	0	0	4
TOTAL	157	98	38	32	30	28	8	85

DIRECT REPORT by POSITION TYPE

Salary & Support

Survey Question: Enter your current base salary.

On average, “sustainability director or chief sustainability officer” and “academic sustainability manager” salaries are highest out of all campus sustainability position types. Salaries for “sustainability manager/coordinator” and “sustainability director or chief sustainability officer” position types were also analyzed by region (other position types sample sizes were too small). Salaries for “sustainability manager/coordinator” are highest on average in the Pacific and Eastern regions.

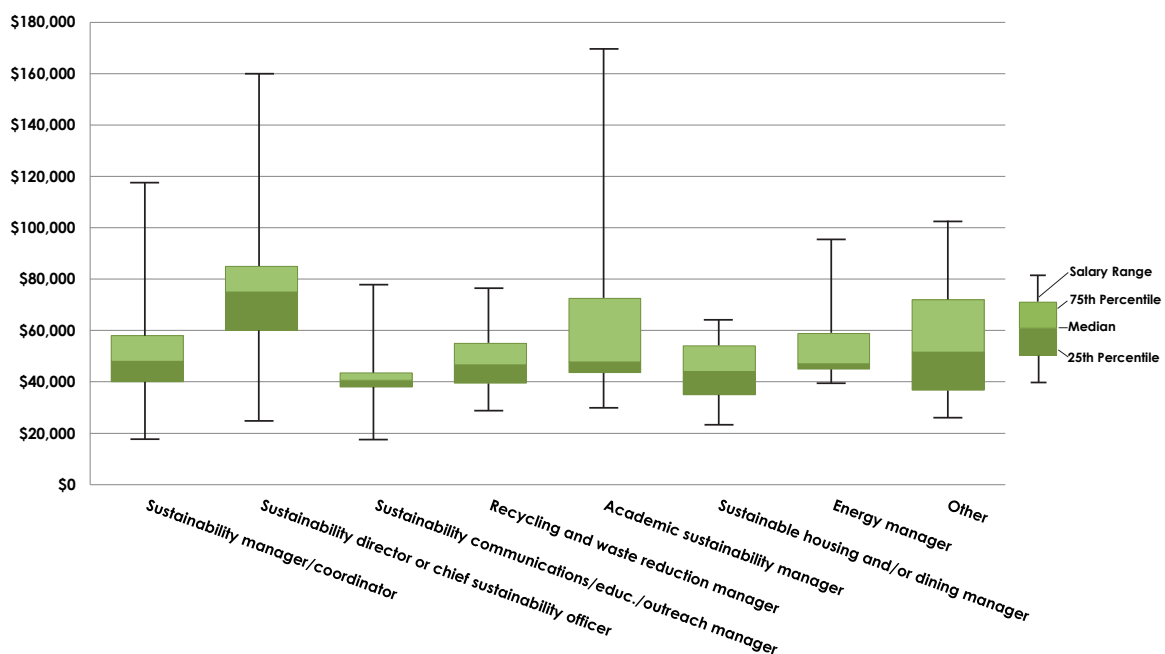
On average, “sustainability manager/coordinator” position types that work at a doctorate-granting institution have a higher salary (\$51,636) than “sustainability manager/coordinator” position types that work at other types of institutions.

Average salaries for “sustainability director or chief sustainability officer” position types that work at either a doctorate-granting or master’s institution are very similar (~\$81,000). The average salary for the “sustainability director or chief sustainability officer” position type drops off significantly for baccalaureate and associate’s institutions.

Seventy-five percent of respondents work full-time. Ninety-eight percent of these respondents reported a salary.

Note: Part-time sustainability staff including graduate students are not included in these calculations.

AVERAGE FULL-TIME SALARIES
by POSITION TYPE



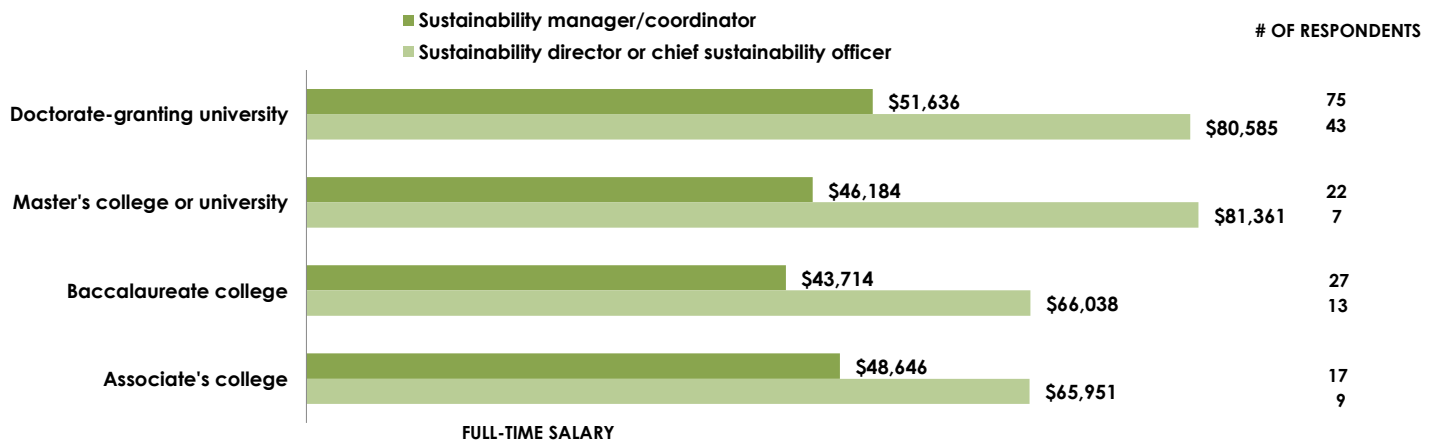
Total Full-Time Respondents: 317
Total Full-Time Responses: 323

AVERAGE FULL-TIME SALARIES by REGION

SUSTAINABILITY POSITION TYPE	REGION	AVERAGE F.T. SALARY	STANDARD DEVIATION	Pacific Coast Region	Rocky Mountain Region	Central Region	Midwestern Region	Southeastern Region	Eastern Region
Sustainability manager/coordinator	\$ 49,586	\$15,834	\$ 56,537	\$ 42,642	\$ 43,192	\$ 42,824	\$ 47,544	\$ 52,413	
Sustainability director or chief sustainability officer	\$ 75,914	\$23,314	\$ 82,000	\$ 88,921	\$ 79,500	\$ 71,872	\$ 64,310	\$ 80,926	
All sustainability positions	\$ 55,614	\$21,963	\$ 57,474	\$ 53,212	\$ 55,925	\$ 51,798	\$ 51,119	\$ 60,918	

Total Full-Time Respondents: 317
Total Full-Time Responses: 323

INSTITUTION CLASSIFICATION AVERAGE SALARIES by POSITION TYPE

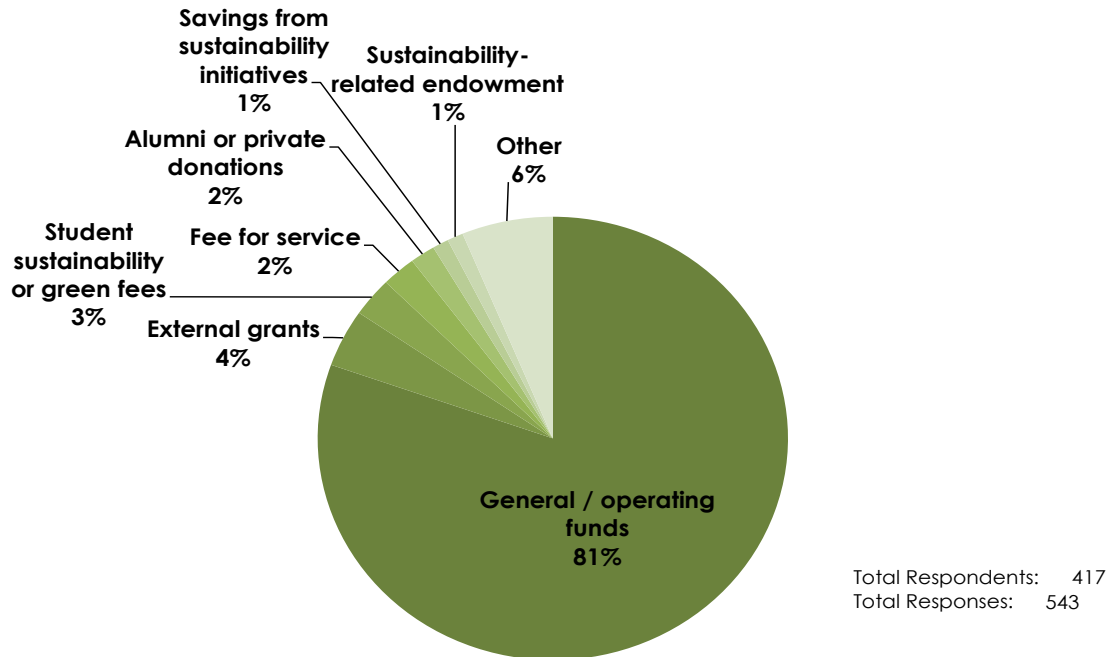


Full Time Respondents: 213
Total All Responses: 283

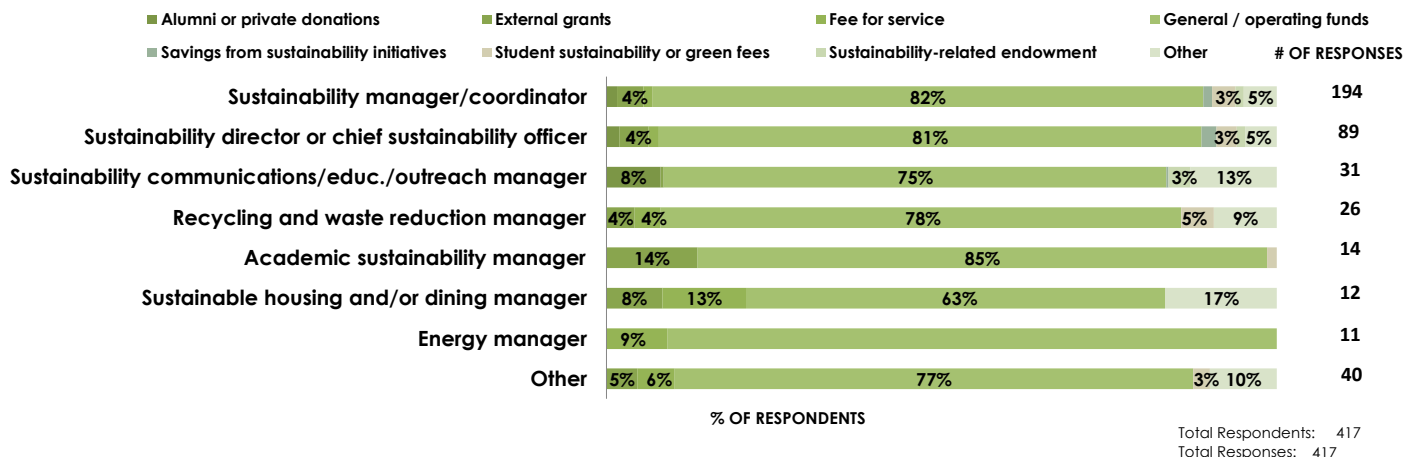
Survey Question: What percentage of the funding for your position comes from each of the following sources?

417 survey takers responded to this question with 543 total responses. Survey takers were allowed to select more than one answer. General/operating funds was by far the most popular response with 81 percent of all responses.

SUSTAINABILITY POSITION FUNDING SOURCES of RESPONDENTS

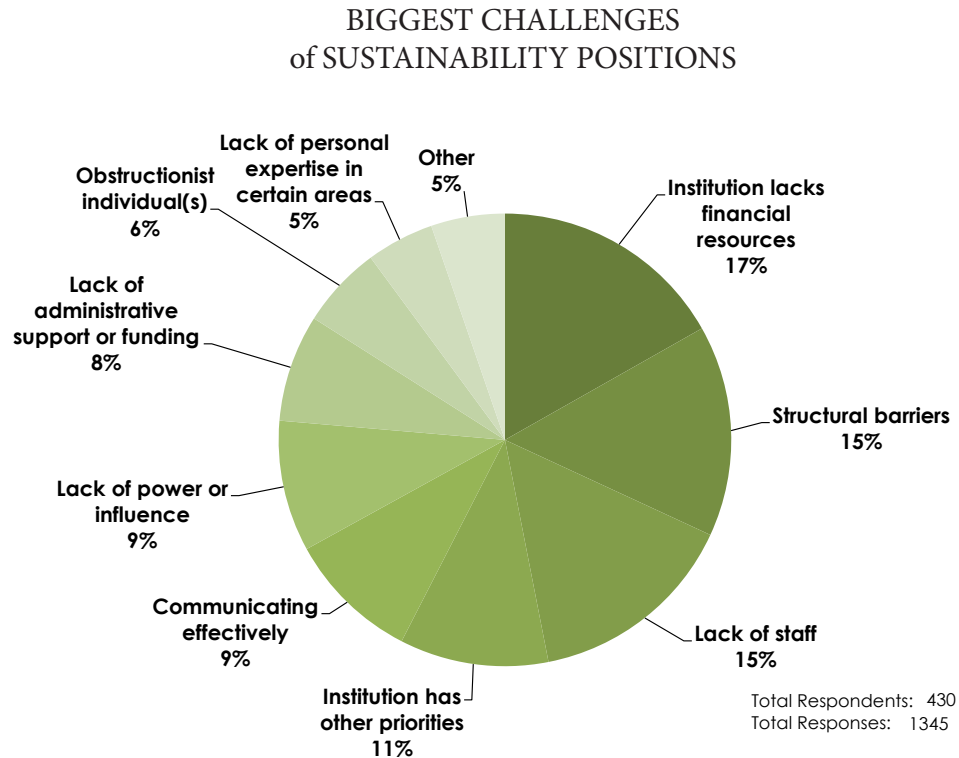


SUSTAINABILITY POSITION FUNDING SOURCES by POSITION TYPE



Survey Question: What are the biggest challenges you face in your position?

430 survey takers responded to this question with 1,345 total responses. Survey takers were allowed to select more than one answer. Responses varied widely. The most popular answer was “Institution lacks financial resources” at 17 percent. “Structural barriers,” “lack of staff” and “institution has other priorities” were the next most popular overall. “Other” was chosen at 5 percent of all responses. Among the “Other” responses, the most popular answers were around the topics of academics integration/curriculum change, bureaucracy, changing the culture, lack of time, and lack of student support/focus.



Follow-up Question: What would help you to overcome these challenges?

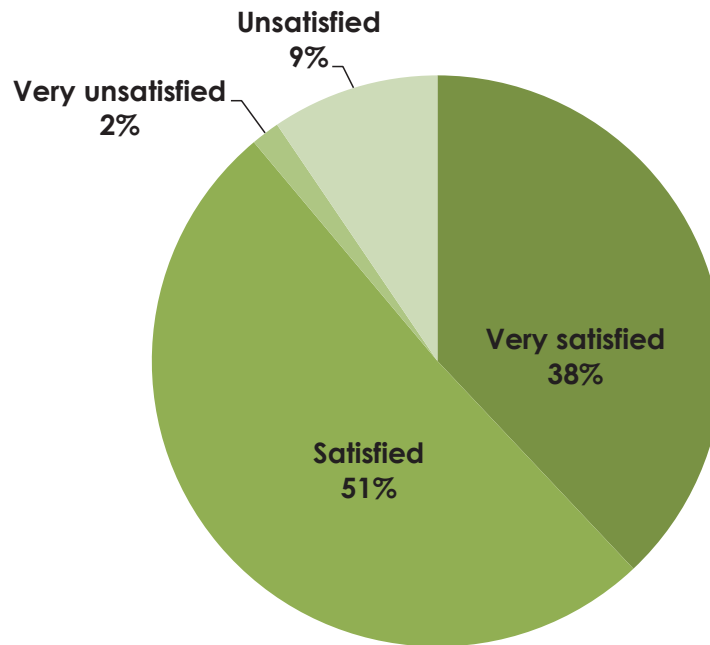
The most common themes include:

- More Funding/Financial Resources
- More Time/Staff
- More Senior Leadership for Sustainability on Campus
- Better Communication Among Departments and Among Executive Management
- External Funding/Grants
- Change in Organizational Structure
- Awareness of Sustainability Across Campus/Cultural Shift
- Training Opportunities

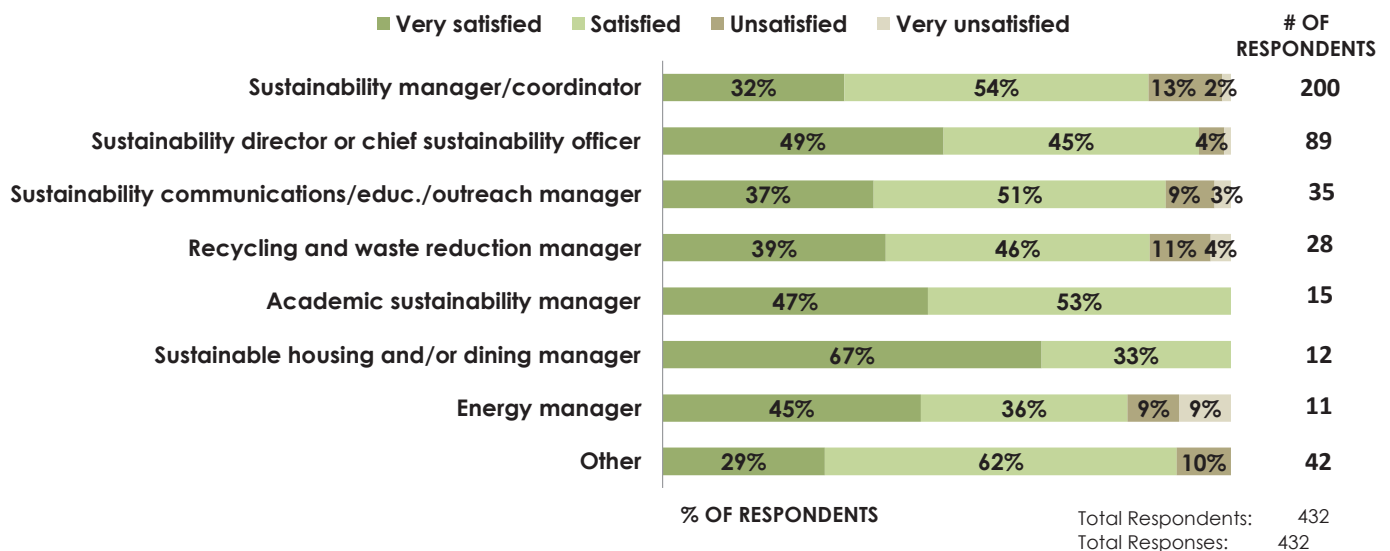
Survey Question: How satisfied are you in your position overall?

All but one survey taker responded to this question. An overwhelming majority (89 percent) of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with their position. Respondents who held a “sustainability director or chief sustainability officer” position indicated they were the most satisfied among all position types.

LEVEL of JOB SATISFACTION
of RESPONDENTS



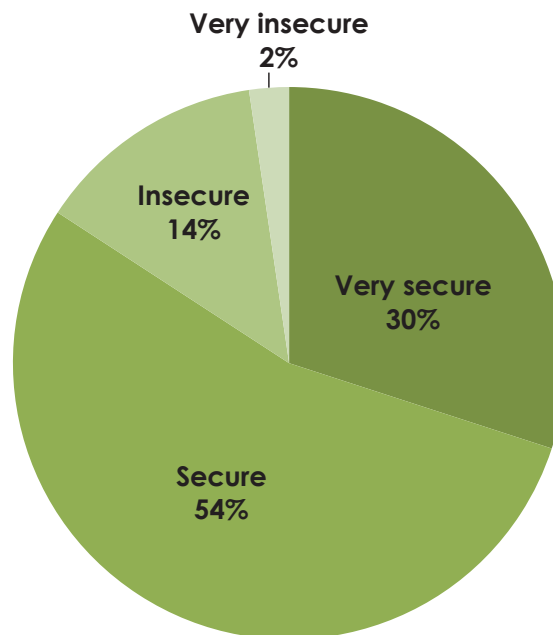
LEVEL of JOB SATISFACTION
by POSITION TYPE



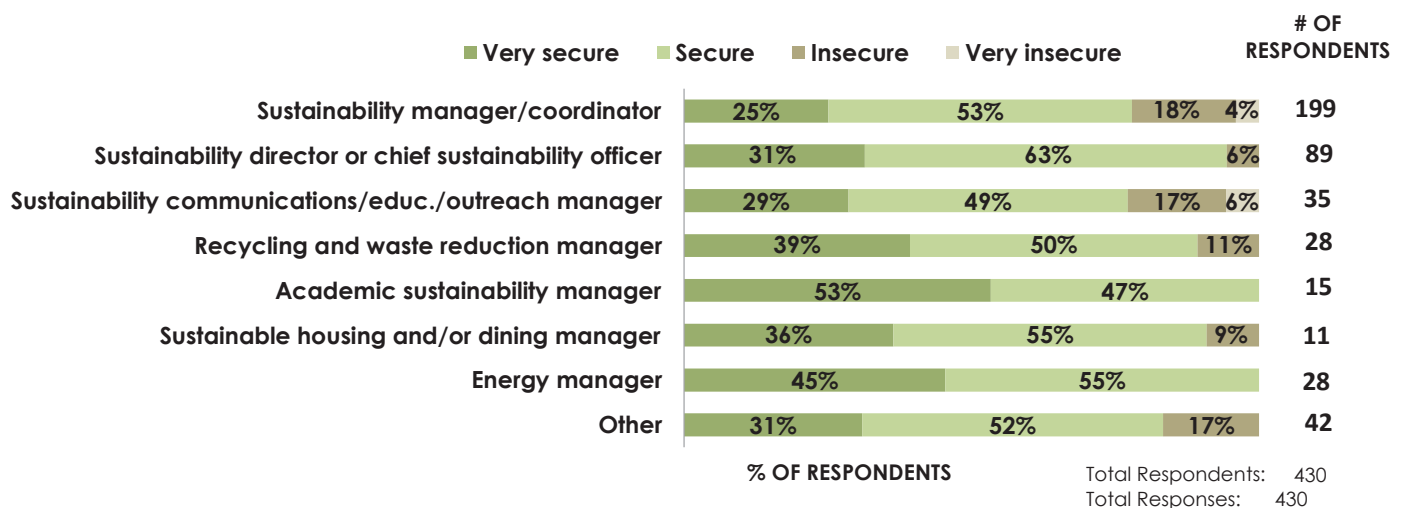
Survey Question: How would you rate your level of job security?

All but three survey takers completed this question. The vast majority (84 percent) either rated their level of job security as “secure” or “very secure.” Among the position types with a large enough sample size to evaluate for this question, “sustainability manager/coordinator” and “sustainability communications/educator/outreach manager” had the highest percentages of respondents who indicated “insecure” or “very insecure.” “Sustainability director or chief sustainability officer” had the highest proportion (94 percent) who indicated “secure” or “very secure.”

LEVEL of JOB SECURITY
of RESPONDENTS



LEVEL of JOB SECURITY
by POSITION TYPE



Follow-up Question: Please elaborate on your level of job satisfaction and job security.

Elaborating on job satisfaction and job security, the most common themes include the following:

- **BUDGET CUTS:** This was mentioned several times. Some feel secure even amid budgets cuts, others not as secure.
- **LEADERSHIP/MANAGEMENT SUPPORT:** Security for many depends on leadership and management support for campus sustainability.
- **WORK OVERLOAD:** “I love my job/work!” but “overwhelmed/tired” due to the amount of work.
- **SECURITY/SUPPORT:** Some are not secure about their jobs because their positions are grant funded. They are concerned and expressed uncertainty about what will happen when the grant period is over. Some are frustrated about not having support from top management/administration.

Conclusion

Despite national unemployment rates that hovered near 10 percent in 2010, the demand for sustainability staff on higher education campuses continued to grow. Of the 433 positions represented in this survey, only 49 had been created prior to 2004, indicating an exponential growth of campus sustainability in recent years. By far the most common impetus cited for the creation of a sustainability staff position was an administrator champion, followed by committee or council advocacy.

This comprehensive look at the demographics, roles, salaries, and positions of college and university sustainability-related staff in the U.S. and Canada also reveals an overwhelming percentage of campus sustainability staff who report a sense of job security during a tough economic climate and feel satisfied with the work they are doing.

“During the past five years we have seen more campus leaders show their commitment to sustainability by creating new sustainability positions,” notes AASHE Executive Director Paul Rowland. “Moreover, the people in these positions are finding them to be satisfying jobs that make a difference.”

Other notable takeaways include:

- At 81 percent, general/operating funds are by far the most cited funding source for sustainability positions.
- The median salary for “sustainability director or chief sustainability officer” (\$75,000) was the highest of all campus sustainability position types. Median salaries for most other positions fell between \$40,000 and \$50,000.
- Campus sustainability staff are overwhelmingly white (92 percent) and nearly 60 percent are women.
- Nearly a quarter of sustainability managers/coordinators have academic backgrounds in the natural and physical sciences, and 17 percent in the social sciences.
- Lack of financial resources on the part of the institution was cited most frequently by respondents as the biggest job challenge they faced. Structural barriers, lack of staff and other institutional priorities were the next most popular answers.