

SALARIES & STATUS

of Sustainability Staff in Higher Education – 2012



The Association for the Advancement
of Sustainability in Higher Education

SPONSORED BY





SALARIES & STATUS

of Sustainability Staff in Higher Education – 2012

Results of AASHE's 2012 Higher Education Sustainability Staffing Survey

WRITTEN AND EDITED BY:

Judy Walton, Former AASHE Chief Publications Officer

SURVEY ANALYSIS AND DATA VISUALS:

Monika Urbanski, AASHE Programs Coordinator/Analyst

LAY-OUT AND DESIGN:

Fry Graphics

About AASHE

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) 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.

About our SPONSOR **ARAMARK** HIGHER EDUCATION

ARAMARK Higher Education is dedicated to excellence in dining, facility, and stadium and arena services. ARAMARK enhances the living and learning experience and environment for more than 600 colleges and universities throughout North America. United by a passion to serve, our more than 250,000 employees make a meaningful difference each day for millions of people around the world. For more information and a list of services, visit www.aramarkhighered.com.

© 2013 Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
1536 Wynkoop St., Denver, CO 80202 • (303) 395-1331 • www.aashe.org • info@ashe.org

COVER PHOTO: Faculty and staff participate in the annual, city-wide Bike to Work Week. Photo courtesy of Royal Roads University.

Table of CONTENTS

I	Introduction	1
II	Methodology & Data	2
III	Respondent Demographics	4
IV	Institution Information	10
V	Nature of Position	14
VI	Supervision	24
VII	Salary & Funding	27
VIII	Job Satisfaction & Challenges	31
X	Institution-wide Staffing & Offices	34
XI	Conclusion	38

I • INTRODUCTION

Among the most visible indicators of a shift toward sustainability in higher education is the increase in new staff positions dedicated to sustainability, along with support staff and offices.

To provide our members with a greater understanding of these new positions, AASHE has been conducting a biennial survey of campus sustainability staff since 2008. Results of the 2012 Higher Education Sustainability Staffing Survey are presented in this report. Sponsored by Aramark Higher Education, this report provides information about the demographics, roles, salaries, and nature of positions of sustainability staff at colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada.

This report expands and updates the 2010 Higher Education Sustainability Staffing Survey report. Both surveys collected data for general sustainability officers as well as a number of focused sustainability positions, such as recycling/waste staff and sustainable energy staff.



Students and a faculty member work on a recycling project.. Photo courtesy of Kankakee Community College.

[back to table of contents](#)

II • METHODOLOGY & DATA

METHODOLOGY

A 57-question survey was disseminated and publicized in December 2012, with a month-long period for responses, through January 11, 2013. Respondents were solicited through electronic mailings to relevant individuals, as well as through AASHE newsletters, social media, campus sustainability listserves, and other means of notification. We received 489 completed or partially completed surveys; and of those, 462 were identified as valid and were included for analysis.

The 2012 survey captured, for the first time, institution-wide data such as number of sustainability offices and number of sustainability staff. This data were provided by self-identified “point persons” for each institution (since multiple people at an institution could take the survey). The 265 respondents to these special questions therefore represented a subgroup of the 462 total survey respondents.

Since we have no easy way of knowing how many sustainability officers and specialized sustainability positions exist on U.S. and Canadian campuses, we do not know the proportion of the total who responded to our survey. In some cases (such as sustainability directors) we estimate that we captured a majority of respondents; but in others, such as recycling staff, we know our sample was very small. Further we do not claim to have captured representative samples for any position type, given our methodology and resources.

DATA

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A copy of the 2012 survey questions is located on AASHE’s [Survey Publications webpage](#). Note that not every question asked in the survey is reported on directly in this report. For example, some questions were used to filter respondents. In other cases, the data collected lacked integrity for one reason or another. This survey is a work in progress, and there is always room for improvement.

POSITION TYPES

Using position titles and data provided in survey questions 3-5, we identified seven position types that had a sufficient number of respondents (N) to track and analyze. These seven position types are highlighted on the next page (first seven titles, highlighted). The other position types (not highlighted) had too few respondents (N < 15) for any meaningful analysis of the data. The 26 respondents in the “other” category in the table had job titles ranging from “vice-chancellor for sustainability,” “sustainable procurement manager,” and “sustainability intern.”

[back to table of contents](#)

POSITION TYPES OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Position Type	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Sustainability Coordinator	124	27%
Sustainability Director or CSO	109	24%
Sustainability Manager	54	12%
Recycling & Waste Staff	25	5%
Asst./Assoc. Sustainability Director	22	5%
Comm/Educ/Outreach Staff	20	4%
Energy Staff	19	4%
Sustainability Specialist or Analyst	14	3%
Dining Services Staff	10	2%
Program/Project Assistant or Associate	9	2%
Asst./Assoc. Sustainability Coordinator	6	1%
Housing & Residence Life Staff	6	1%
Curriculum Development Staff	5	1%
Transportation Staff	5	1%
Asst./Assoc. Sustainability Manager	4	1%
Building & Grounds Staff	4	1%
Other	26	6%
Total	462	100%

Because only five respondents had the title, chief sustainability officer (CSO), and because their salaries and position data were similar enough to sustainability directors, we combined these titles for purposes of analysis. Director positions in this group included those who direct sustainability centers or institutes that have general responsibility for sustainability across campus.

For the assistant/associate sustainability director position, data analysis showed this group as somewhat bifurcated between those in higher-level jobs with high salaries and academic achievement and those in more entry-level type jobs, with a high school diploma or B.A. as the highest degree. Averages derived from this group should be read with a note of caution.

COMPARING 2012 DATA TO EARLIER SURVEYS

Many 2012 survey responses are compared to results from previous surveys; however, comparisons at the level of position type were not possible since data by position type was not collected prior to 2010, and the 2010 survey used different categories (for example, sustainability manager and sustainability coordinator were treated as one category in 2010, and separate categories in 2012). It is important to remember that the staffing survey is not a longitudinal survey that follows the same individuals over time. This should be kept in mind when considering comparisons between survey years.

STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

It is important that readers understand the contents of this report as a descriptive presentation of the data collected with no claim to being statistically significant. That said, we hope readers can use the data as a helpful aid in creating new positions or offices, upgrading existing positions, and generally gaining a deeper understanding of the nature of campus sustainability positions.

[back to table of contents](#)

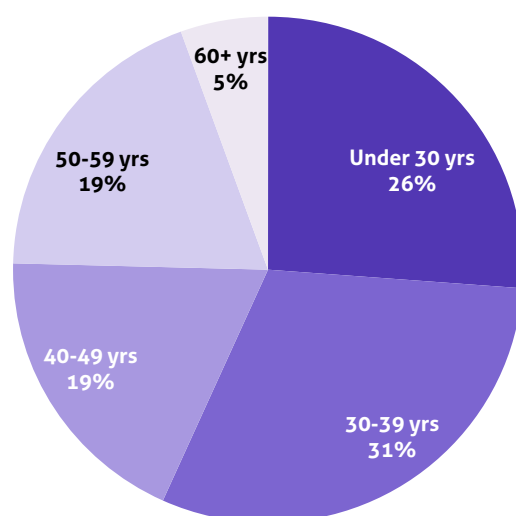
III • RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

This section presents general demographics of respondents, including by position type where N=15 or more.

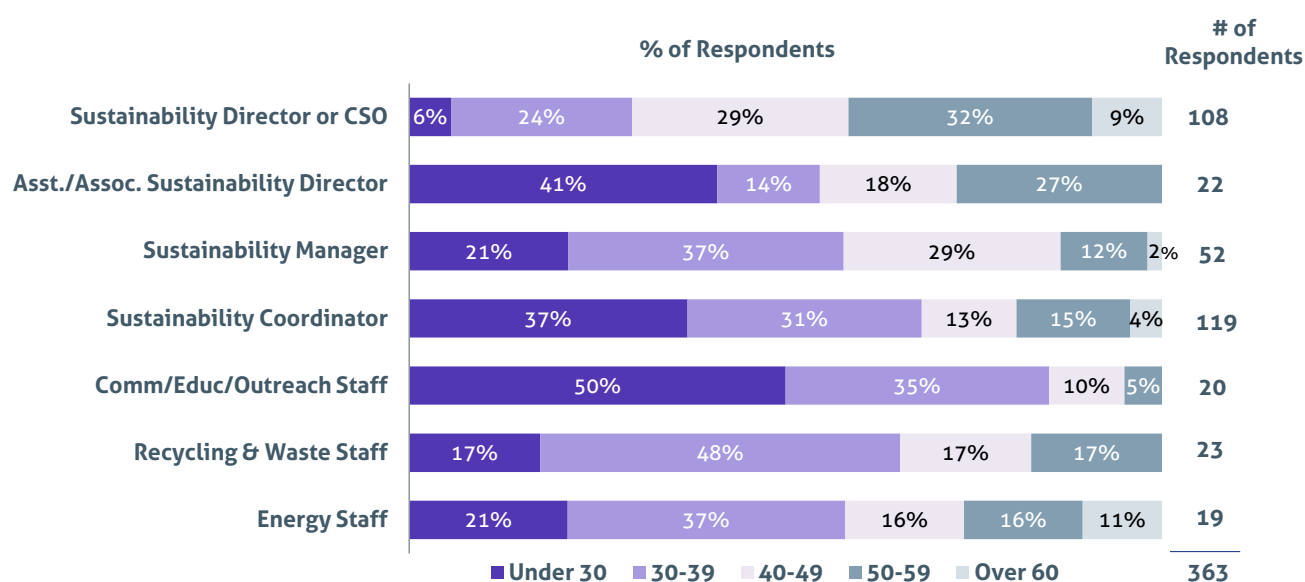
AGE

The majority of 2012 survey respondents (57%) were under age 40. (See pie chart below.) Only 5% of respondents were 60 years of age or older. These figures are almost identical to the 2010 survey. Of the various position types, sustainability directors/CSOs had by far the lowest proportion of respondents under age 30 (6%) and the highest proportion in their 50s or older (41%), likely reflecting the senior status of that position. (See bar graph below.)

AGE OF RESPONDENTS | N=450



AGE OF RESPONDENTS – BY POSITION TYPE

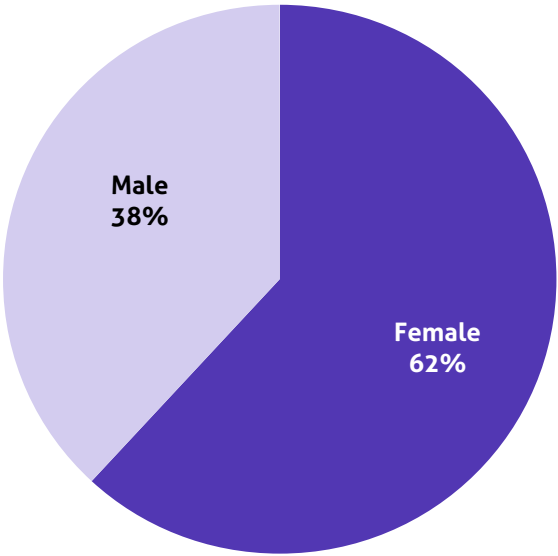


[back to table of contents](#)

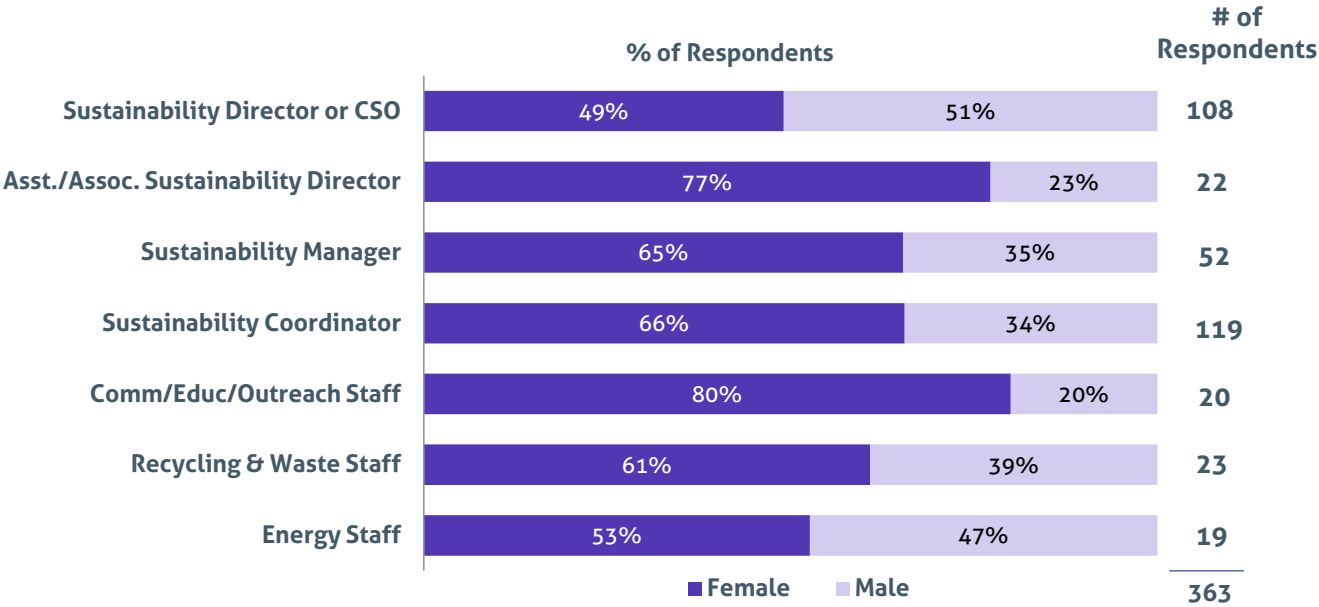
GENDER IDENTITY

A notably higher percentage of respondents identified as female (62%) than male (38%) (see pie chart below). These figures are similar to the 2010 survey, where 59% identified as female. As the bar graph below shows, sustainability director/CSO – the most senior position type – was the only category that skewed male (51%).

GENDER IDENTITY OF RESPONDENTS | N=450



GENDER IDENTITY OF RESPONDENTS – BY POSITION TYPE



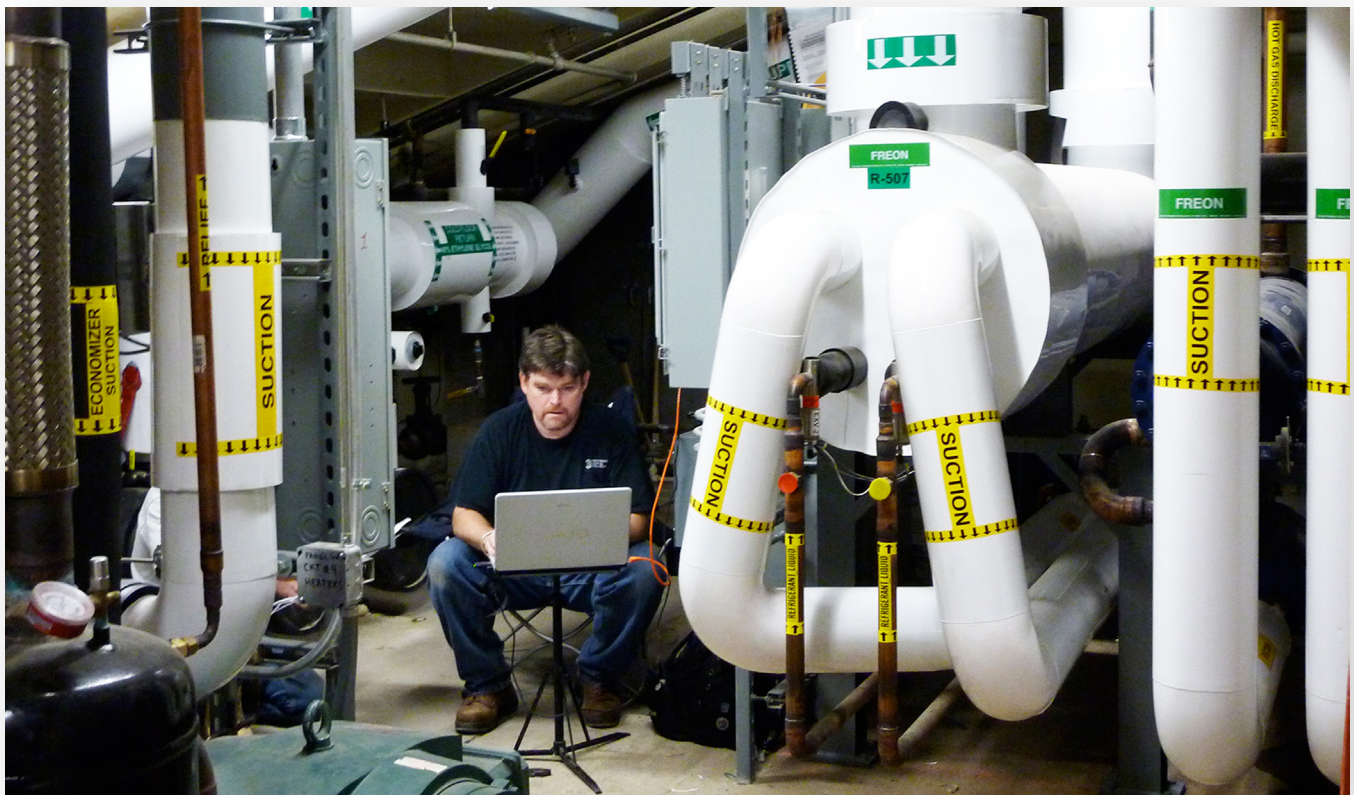
[back to table of contents](#)

RACE & ETHNICITY

The overwhelming majority of 2012 survey respondents identified themselves as “white/Caucasian” (92%). An identical percentage was reported in the 2010 survey. These figures support perceptions of the higher education sustainability movement as a largely “white” movement. The second largest racial category was “Asian,” also consistent with 2010. Four percent of respondents selected more than one race or ethnicity (see table below).

RACE & ETHNICITY OF RESPONDENTS

Race/Ethnicity	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
White	410	92%
Asian	10	2%
Black or African	4	1%
Hispanic or Latino	3	1%
American Indian, Alaskan, or Metis	2	<1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2	<1%
Mixed Race/Ethnicity	17	4%
Total	448	100%



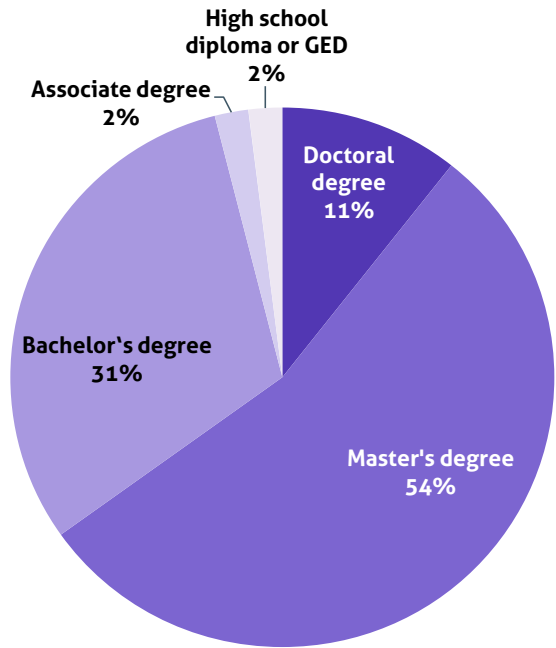
Boston University HVAC equipment tuning at the Case Center. Courtesy of Boston University.

[back to table of contents](#)

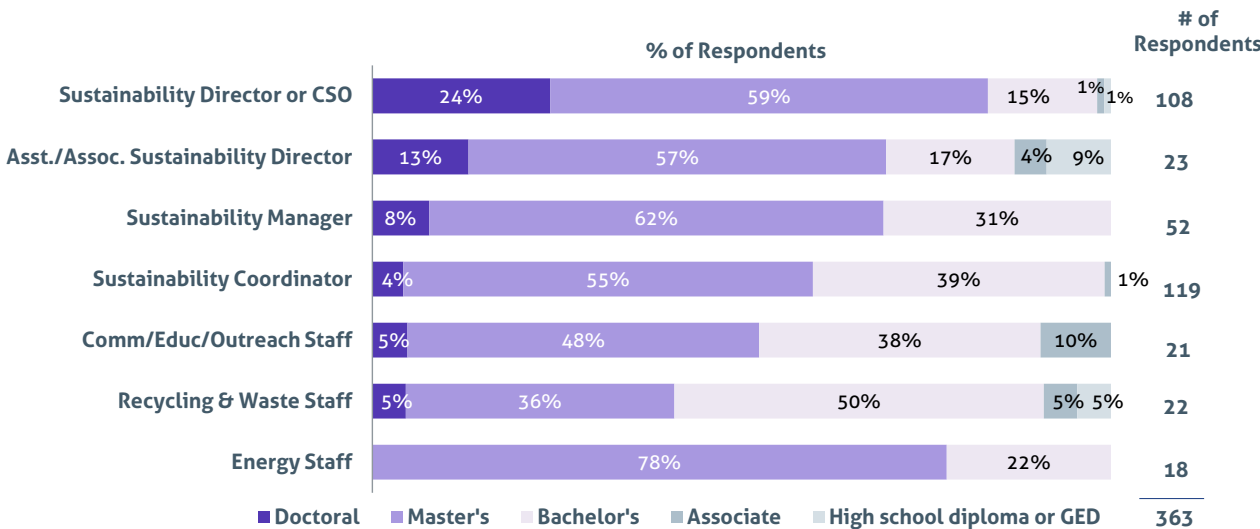
EDUCATION LEVEL

The 2012 survey respondents had higher levels of educational attainment than those in 2010, with 96% of respondents holding at least a bachelor's degree (compared to 92% in 2010) and 65% holding at least a master's degree (compared to 52% in 2010). See pie chart below. In both years, a master's was the degree cited by the largest percentage of respondents as their highest level of academic achievement (54% in 2012 and 42% in 2010). By position type, as might be expected, sustainability directors/CSOs had the largest percentage of respondents with doctoral degrees – 24%, compared to other position types. The assistant/associate sustainability director position type showed the bifurcation mentioned in Section 3: Data, with relatively large percentages on either end of the education level scale.

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED | N=448



HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED – BY POSITION TYPE



[back to table of contents](#)

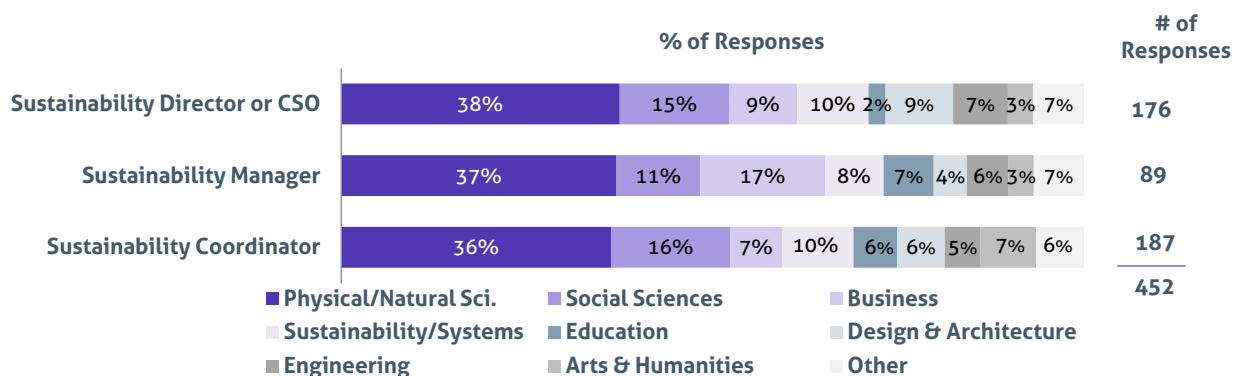
ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

The 2012 survey included different response options for this question than in the 2010 survey, so the results cannot be compared meaningfully. Most respondents (62%) selected one academic background, while 23% selected two, and 15% selected three or more backgrounds. The table below shows that the largest number of respondents cited a background in “environmental studies or sciences,” which is double the amount in the next highest category, “social sciences.” To show academic background by position type, it was necessary to consolidate a few categories and focus on the three position types with the highest N (see graph below). The physical and natural sciences dominate markedly for all three position types, with social science backgrounds the next most popular response, but at less than half the percentage of physical and natural science responses.

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS | N= 447; TOTAL RESPONSES=714

Academic Background	# Responses	% Respondents
Environmental studies or sciences	171	38%
Social sciences	87	19%
Business	67	15%
Sustainability studies or science	61	14%
Biological and life sciences	44	10%
Engineering and technology	43	10%
Education	38	9%
Planning, urban studies, or urban design	29	6%
Humanities	29	6%
Physical sciences	26	6%
Design disciplines	22	5%
Communications or journalism	20	4%
Arts and music	14	3%
Cultural studies, ethnic studies, area studies, or gender studies	11	2%
Global studies or international studies and affairs	11	2%
Health sciences or medicine	11	2%
Law or legal studies	7	2%
Math and statistics	6	1%
Systems science	4	1%
Information technology or computer science	4	1%
Library science	2	0%
Other	7	2%

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS – BY POSITION TYPE | N=357; TOTAL RESPONSES=452



NOTE: Number of responses is higher than number of respondents (N) since multiple answers could be selected.

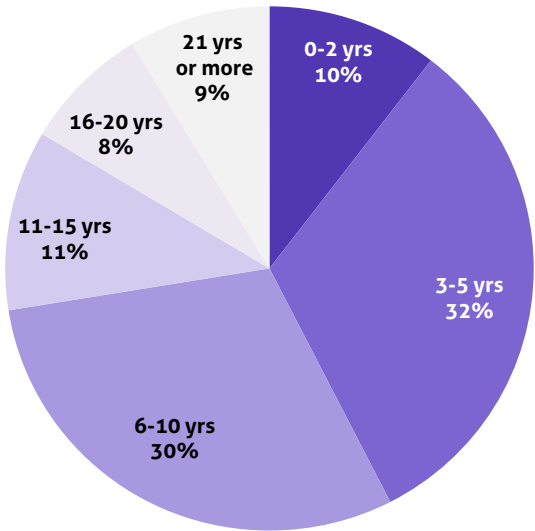
[back to table of contents](#)

LENGTH OF SUSTAINABILITY EXPERIENCE

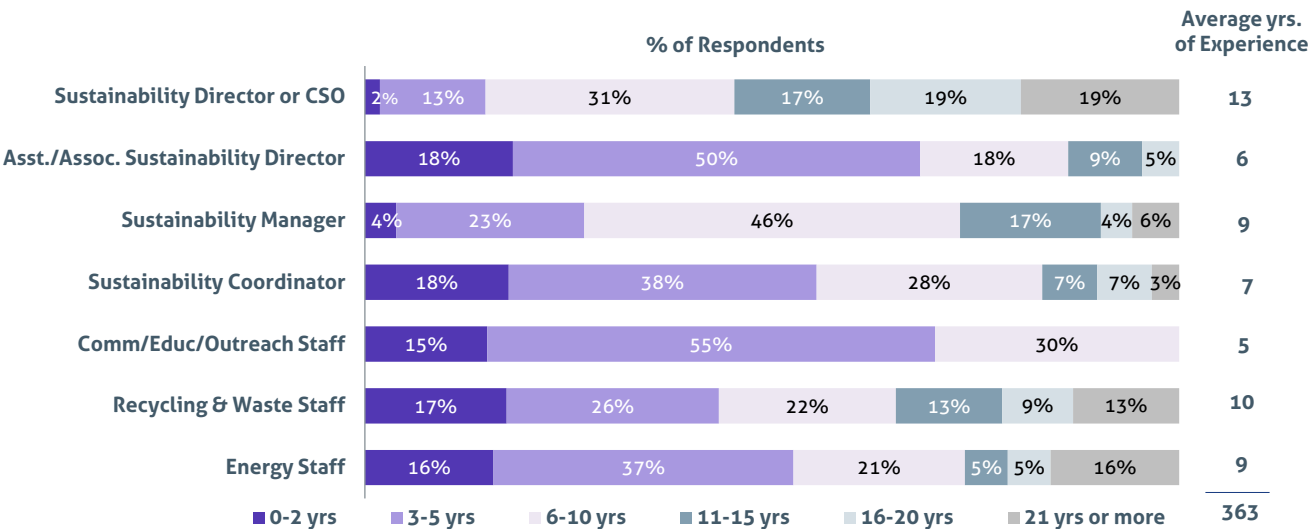
Respondents in 2012 had slightly fewer years of relevant professional experience in general than in 2010, most likely indicating a different population sample rather than a trend (see Section 3: Data above). Seventy-two percent of respondents reported 10 or fewer years of relevant work experience in sustainability (see pie chart below) compared to only 62% in 2010. On the other end of the scale, only 9% of 2012 respondents reported 21 or more years of professional sustainability experience while nearly double that percentage (16%) reported such in 2010.

Sustainability directors/CSOs had the highest percentage of respondents with 21 years or more of experience and the lowest percentage with 2 or fewer years of experience (see bar graph below). Two positions had notably higher percentage of respondents reporting 5 or fewer years of experience: assistant/associate sustainability director and communication/education/outreach staff. In terms of average number of years of experience, sustainability directors had the highest average (13 years), and communications, education & outreach staff had the lowest (5 years).

YEARS OF RELEVANT SUSTAINABILITY WORK EXPERIENCE | N=450



YEARS OF RELEVANT SUSTAINABILITY WORK EXPERIENCE – BY POSITION TYPE



[back to table of contents](#)

IV • INSTITUTION INFORMATION

COUNTRY

The 2012 survey targeted only individuals from the U.S. or Canada. The vast majority of respondents (91%) were at institutions located in the U.S. This figure is similar to 2010 (93%). The percentages varied somewhat by position type, with a communications, education & outreach staff having the highest percentage (25%) located at institutions in Canada.

COUNTRY WHERE RESPONDENT INSTITUTION IS LOCATED | N=462

Position Type	Canada	U.S.	# of Respondents
Sustainability Director or CSO	7	102	109
Asst./Assoc. Sustainability Director	0	22	22
Sustainability Manager	9	45	54
Sustainability Coordinator	13	111	124
Comm/Educ/Outreach Staff	5	15	20
Recycling & Waste Staff	1	24	25
Energy Staff	1	18	19
Other	5	84	89
All Respondents	41	421	463

REGION

As the table below shows, the largest proportion of respondents (26%) came from institutions in the Eastern region of the U.S. and Canada – as defined by APPA – with the lowest proportion (10%) coming from the Central region. The data parallels 2010 in terms of regions with the highest and lowest proportions. The proportions varied somewhat by position type, as the table shows.

REGION WHERE RESPONDENT INSTITUTION IS LOCATED – BY POSITION TYPE

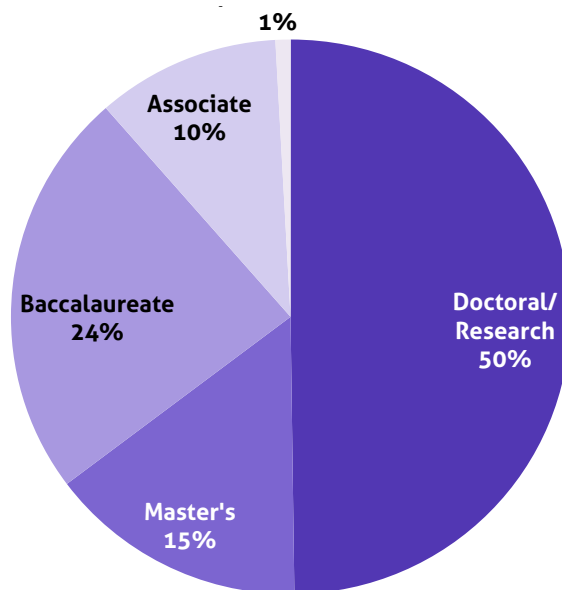
Position Type	Eastern	Mid-Western	South-Eastern	Pacific Coast	Rocky Mountain	Central	# of Respondents
Sustainability Director or CSO	27	23	22	14	11	12	109
Asst./Assoc. Sustainability Director	8	4	6	2	2	0	22
Sustainability Manager	13	11	6	11	8	5	54
Sustainability Coordinator	32	32	19	11	14	16	124
Comm/Educ/Outreach Staff	5	2	3	3	5	2	20
Recycling & Waste Staff	4	7	7	3	1	2	24
Energy Staff	8	2	3	4	1	1	19
Other	21	15	14	16	16	6	88
All Respondents	118	96	80	64	58	44	460

[back to table of contents](#)

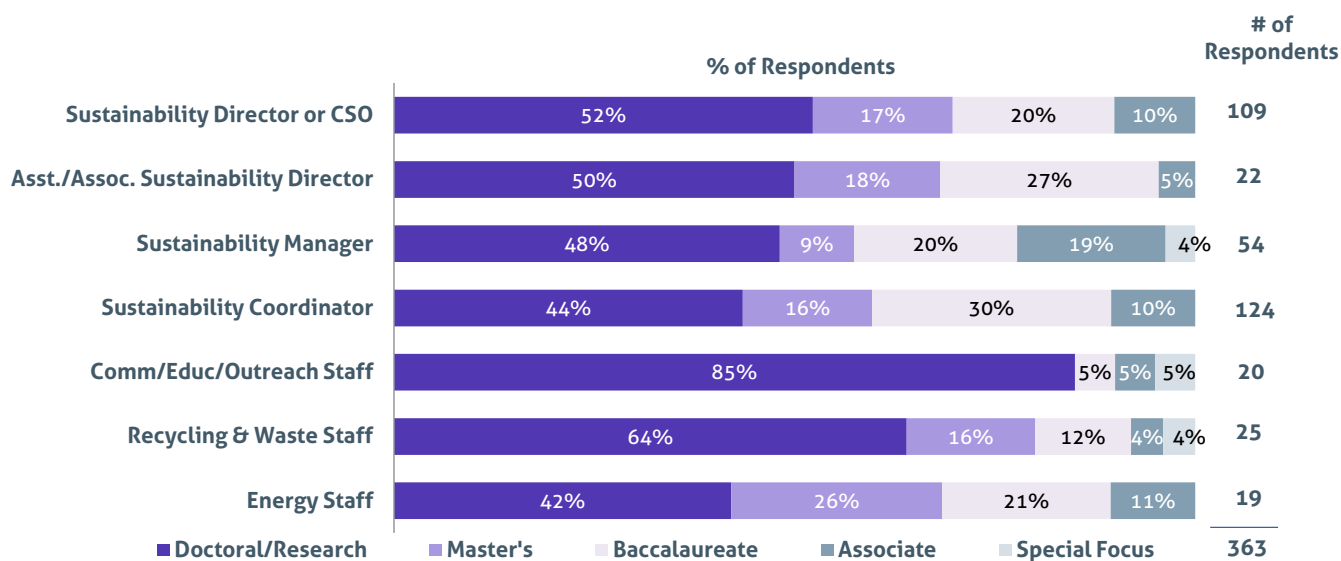
INSTITUTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Half of the respondents' institutions were "doctorate-granting," which is identical to the 2010 figure. The next largest percentage of respondents' institutions (24%) were "baccalaureate-granting" (see pie chart below), compared to 21% in 2010. Compared to other position types, the bar graph below shows that a notably higher percentage of communication, education & outreach staff respondents (85%) were at doctorate-granting institutions, and a notably higher percentage of sustainability manager respondents (19%) were at associate colleges.

INSTITUTIONAL CLASSIFICATION



INSTITUTIONAL CLASSIFICATION – BY RESPONDENT POSITION TYPE

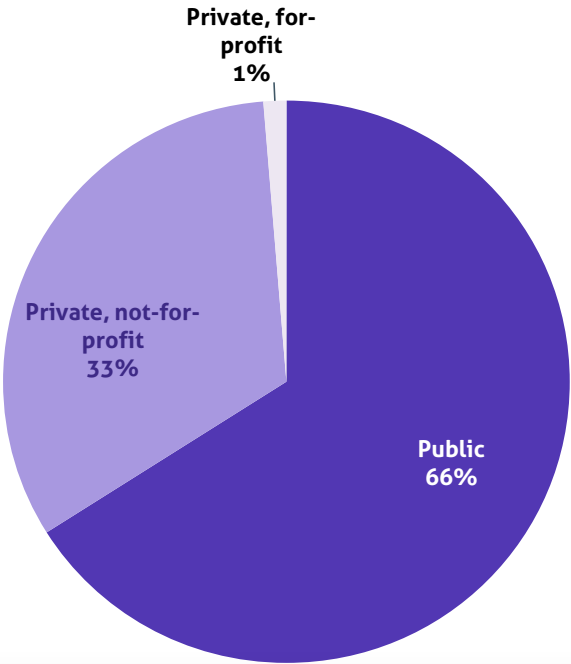


[back to table of contents](#)

INSTITUTIONAL CONTROL

Two-thirds of respondents' institutions were publicly controlled, and one-third were privately controlled (see pie chart below). These figures are nearly identical to the 2010 survey. Percentages were similar by position type (not shown here).

INSTITUTIONAL CONTROL



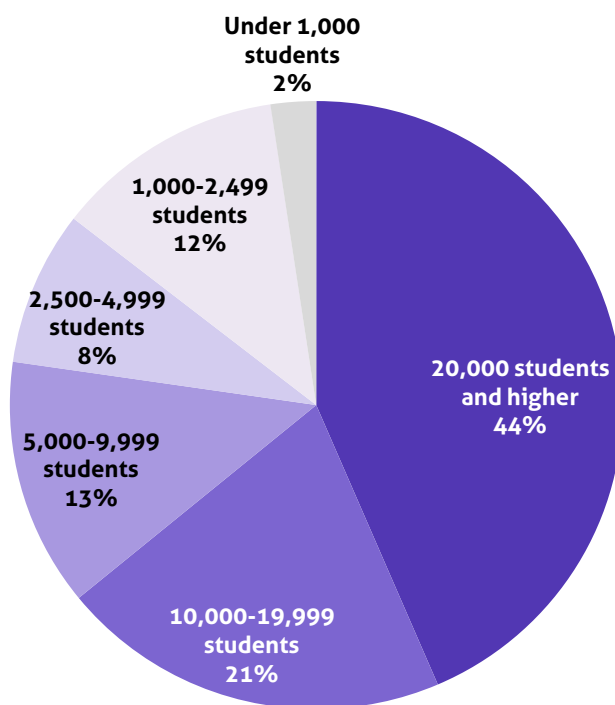
Training UDEM students in waste separation through games and dynamics. Photo courtesy of Universidad de Monterrey.

[back to table of contents](#)

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

The 2012 survey collected data by head count rather than by FTE as in the 2010 survey, hence results are not comparable. The majority of respondents' institutions (65%) enrolled 10,000 or more students (see pie chart below). Percentages were largely similar by position type (not shown here).

STUDENT ENROLLMENT – BY HEAD COUNT



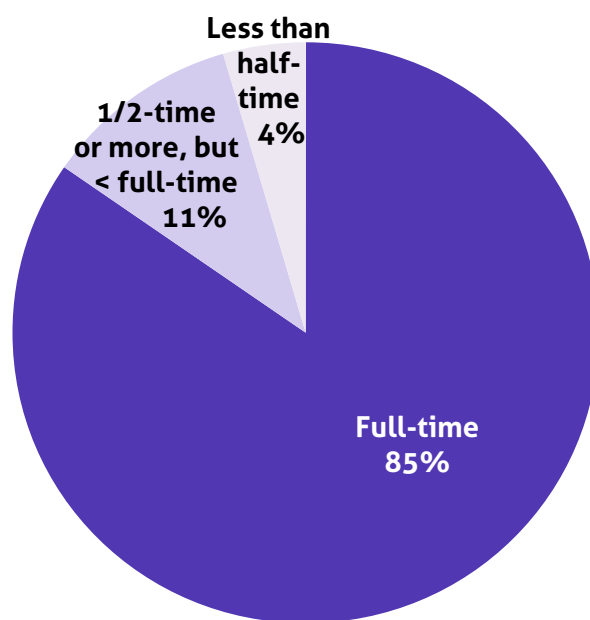
[back to table of contents](#)

V • NATURE OF POSITION

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

As the pie chart below shows, the vast majority of respondents' positions (85%) were full-time. This compares with 74% in 2010. Only 4% of positions were less than half-time. Results were similar by position type (not shown here). The 2012 survey asked about job-sharing, with 11 respondents (2%) reporting being in a job-share arrangement.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS | N=462

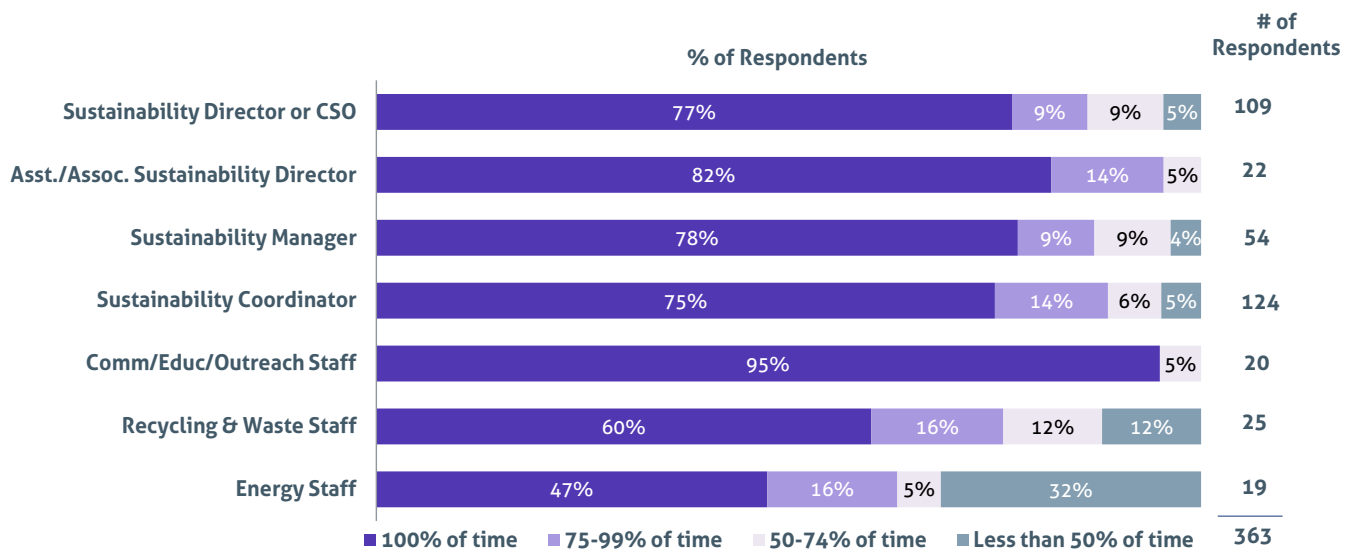


[back to table of contents](#)

PORTION OF POSITION DEDICATED TO SUSTAINABILITY

A new question added for the 2012 survey asked respondents to identify the approximate percentage of daily work dedicated to sustainability, as defined by the institution. A large majority of respondents (83%) were in positions dedicated to sustainability at least 75% of the time. Only 8% of positions were dedicated to sustainability less than half-time. For position types with more respondents, the percentage of respondents whose jobs were 100% dedicated to sustainability ranged from 75% to 78%. For position types with fewer respondents (below 50), that figure ranged quite widely, as the bar graph below shows.

PERCENTAGE OF TIME DEDICATED TO SUSTAINABILITY – BY POSITION TYPE

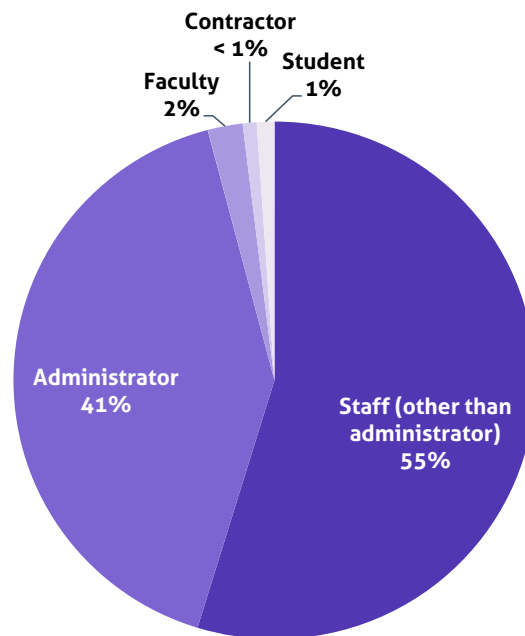


[back to table of contents](#)

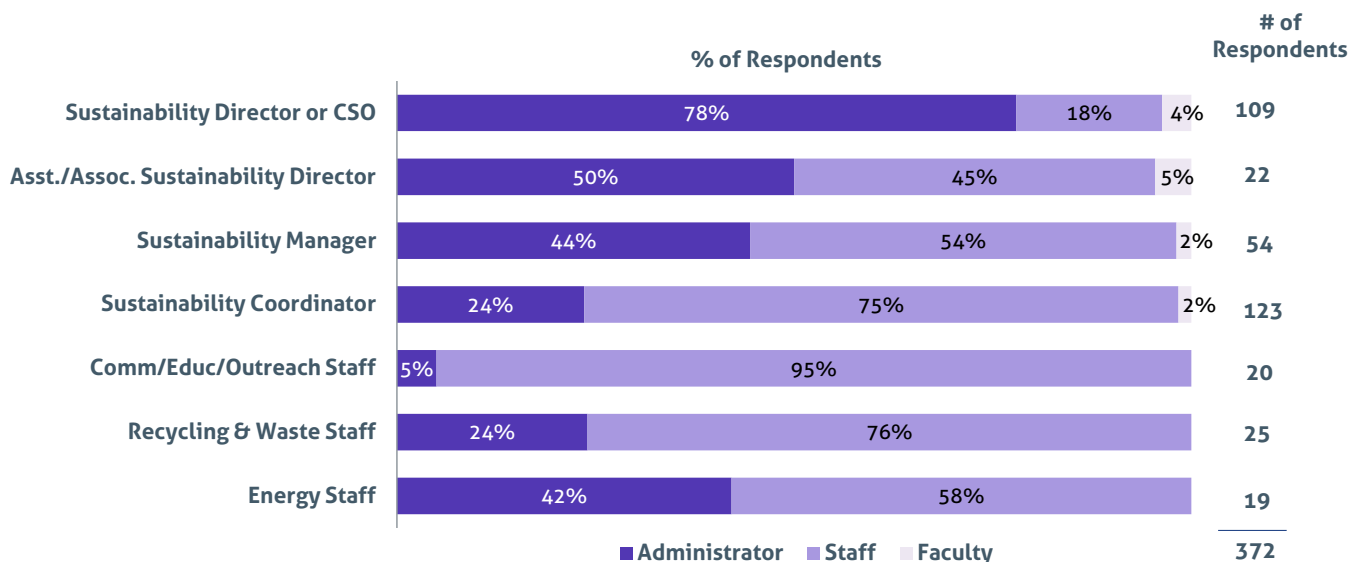
PRIMARY ROLE IN POSITION

The role – or primary role for those who held more than one role in their position – of the vast majority of respondents (96%) was either “administrator” or “staff, other than administrator” (see pie chart below). Only 10 respondents (2%) listed “faculty” as their primary role, and only 1% listed “student.” This question was not asked in the 2010 survey, although it did collect number of “student jobs” (5%). By position type, as might be expected, sustainability directors/CSOs had the largest percentage of administrators (70% compared to 50% for assistant/associate directors, the next highest percentage). See bar graph below.

RESPONDENT'S PRIMARY ROLE IN SUSTAINABILITY POSITION



RESPONDENT'S PRIMARY ROLE IN SUSTAINABILITY POSITION – BY POSITION TYPE



[back to table of contents](#)

POSITION'S SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

The 2012 survey asked respondents about their range of responsibilities across five campus sectors:

- Academics – includes formal curriculum, extended studies, research centers, extension services, instructional development, medical and other professional schools, etc.
- Student affairs – includes housing and residential life, co-curricular activities, student gardens and farms, recreation, intramural sports, student government, community service, etc.
- Facilities, operations, and finance – includes physical plant, transportation, auxiliary services, business, purchasing, human resources, etc.
- Development – includes investments, endowments, advancement, alumni relations
- Athletics

Two-thirds of respondents indicated that they had responsibilities in 2 to 4 campus sectors. Twenty percent of respondents said they had responsibilities in just one sector, while 12 percent claimed responsibilities in all 5 sectors. Several respondents who selected "other sector" identified external/community engagement & outreach as a relevant campus sector.

Eighty-seven percent of respondents indicated that responsibilities fell within facilities, operations & finance, making this the most common sector of responsibility. As the table below indicates, responsibilities within the student affairs sector were more common for communications & outreach staff and directors/CSOs. Directors/CSOs reported the greatest levels of responsibilities in academics and development in comparison to other position types. Responsibilities related to athletics were relatively common for recycling & waste staff. This question was not asked in previous surveys.

POSITION'S SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY IN CAMPUS SECTORS – BY POSITION TYPE N= 461; TOTAL RESPONSES = 1,377

Position Type	Facilities, operations & finance	Student affairs	Academics	Development	Athletics	Other	# of Respondents
Sustainability Director or CSO	94%	89%	82%	47%	24%	17%	109
Asst./Assoc. Sustainability Director	86%	85%	68%	32%	27%	18%	22
Sustainability Manager	96%	72%	70%	34%	8%	15%	53
Sustainability Coordinator	91%	82%	58%	30%	20%	16%	124
Comm/Educ/Outreach Staff	75%	90%	60%	10%	20%	10%	20
Recycling & Waste Staff	100%	72%	40%	12%	48%	12%	25
Energy Staff	84%	32%	42%	11%	5%	11%	19
Other	79%	73%	52%	28%	21%	15%	89
All Respondents	89%	79%	63%	31%	21%	15%	461

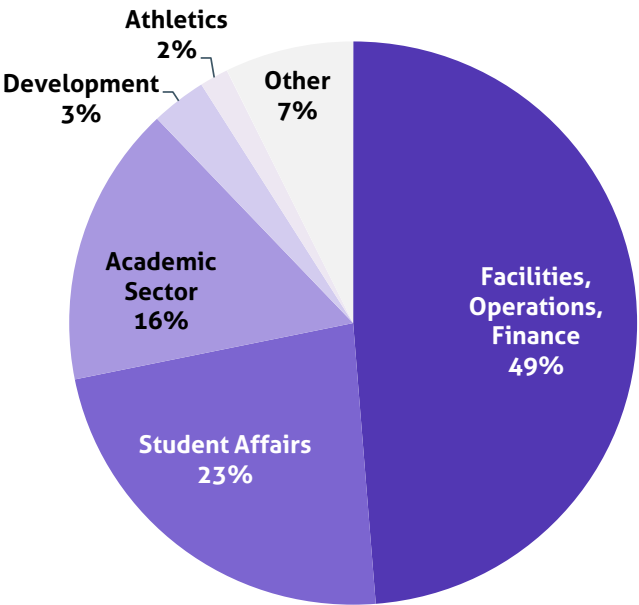
NOTE: Percentages represent proportion of respondents who have responsibilities in that sector

[back to table of contents](#)

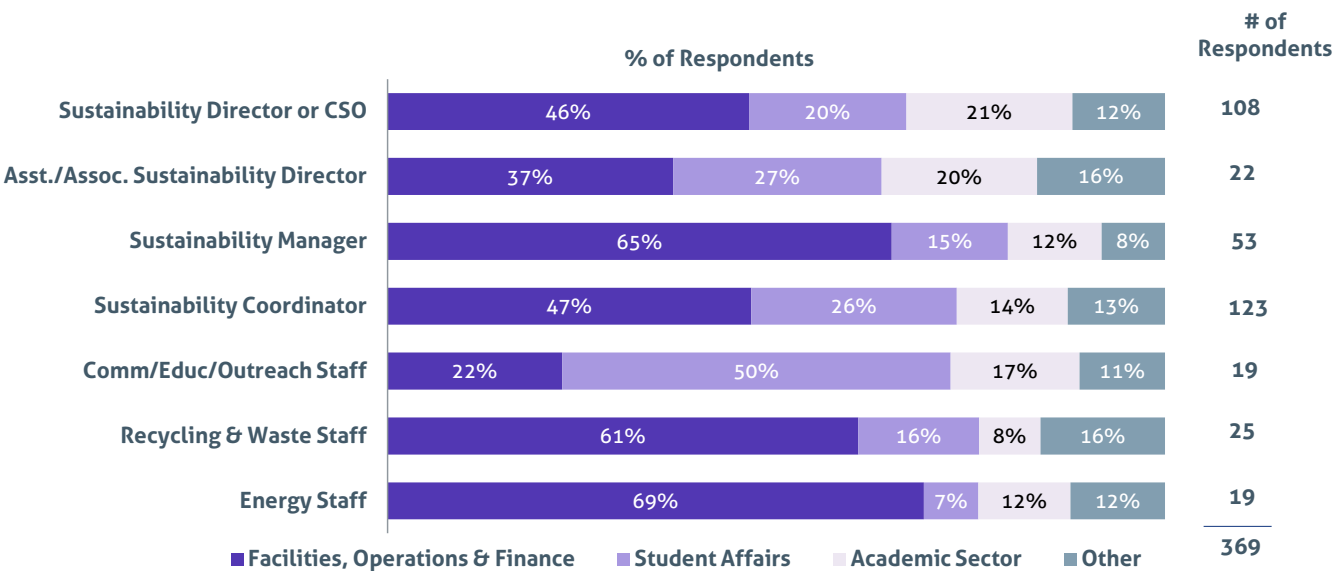
PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT IN EACH SECTOR

As can be expected based on the results outlined in the previous section, respondents spent the largest proportion of time (49%) in the facilities, operations & finance sector, and another 23% in student affairs (see pie chart below). Results by position type were fairly similar with a few variations: In comparison to other position types, communications & outreach staff spent more time in student affairs, while energy staff spent more time in facilities, operations & finance. Compared to other position types, sustainability directors/CSOs and assistant/associate directors spent a larger share of their time in the academic sector. This question was not asked in previous surveys.

PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT IN EACH SECTOR



PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT IN EACH SECTOR – BY POSITION TYPE

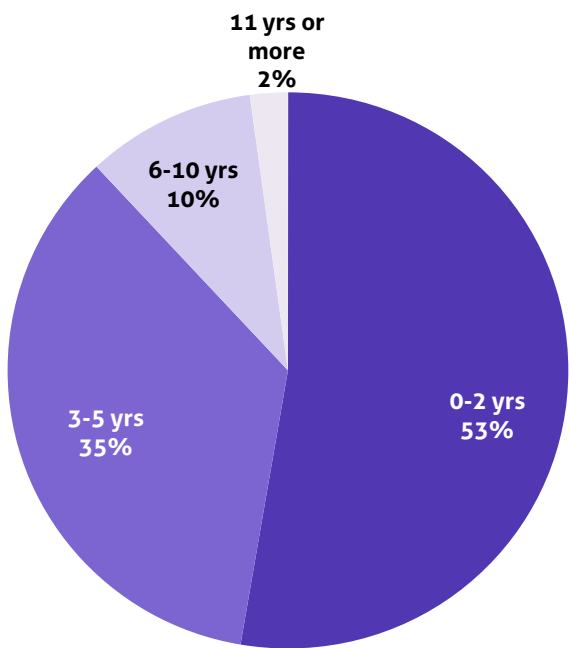


[back to table of contents](#)

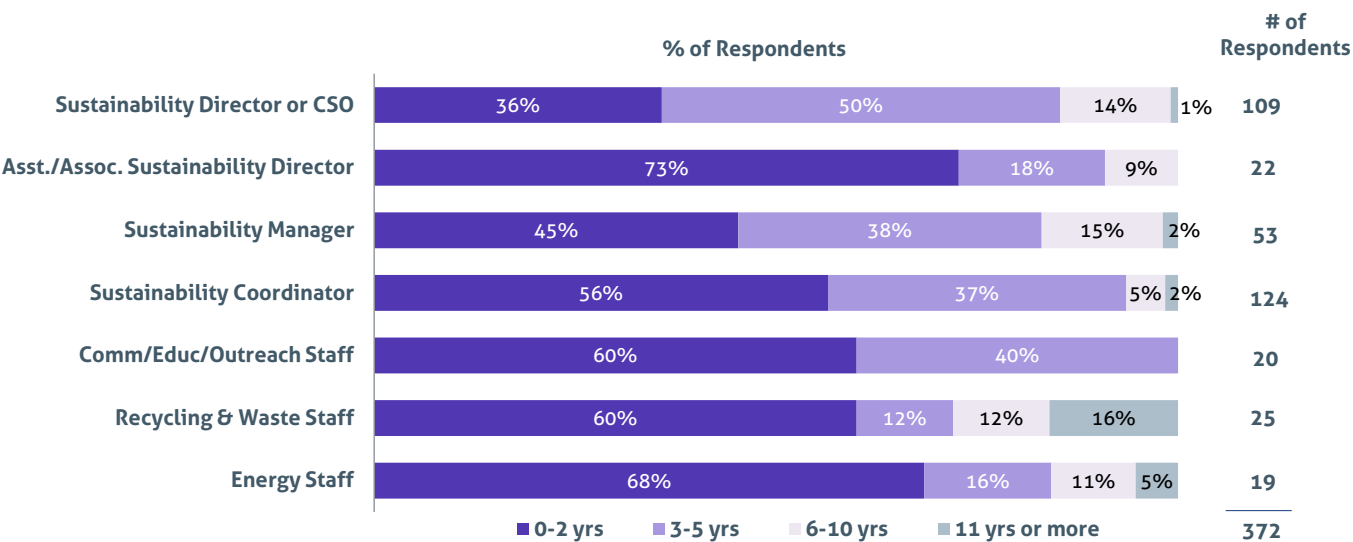
LENGTH OF TIME IN CURRENT POSITION

Nearly 90% of respondents indicated that they had been in their current positions for five years or less, in part reflecting the newness of many such positions (see pie chart below). By position type, length of time in current position was highest for recycling & waste staff and lowest for communications & outreach staff. This question was not asked in previous surveys.

LENGTH OF TIME IN CURRENT POSITION | N=461



LENGTH OF TIME IN CURRENT POSITION – BY POSITION TYPE

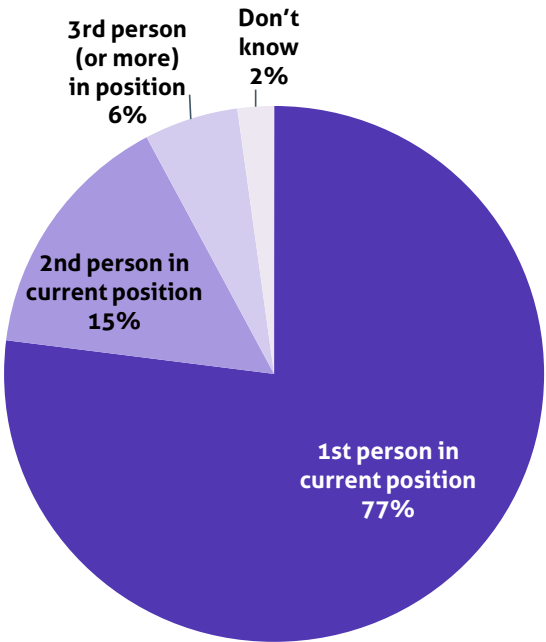


[back to table of contents](#)

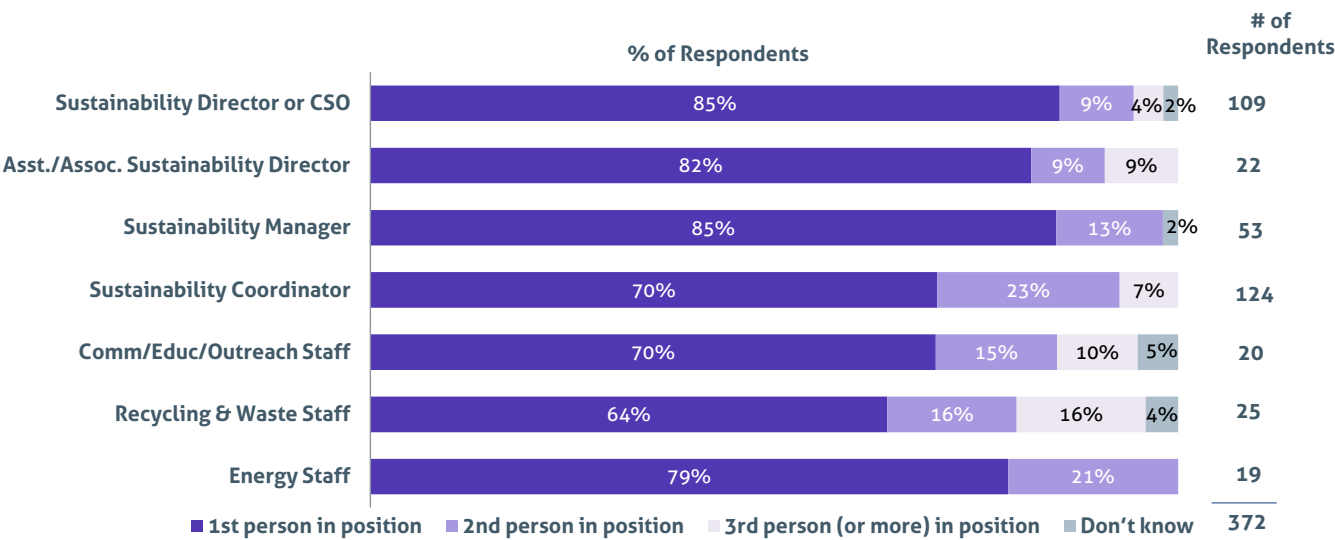
NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO HAVE HELD POSITION

The vast majority (92%) of respondents were either the first or second person to hold their current position. This likely reflects the newness of sustainability staff positions in general (see also previous section). By position type for positions with over 50 respondents, notably larger percentages of sustainability directors/CSOs and managers (85% each) were the first to hold their position, compared to coordinators (70%). This question was not asked in previous surveys.

NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO HAVE HELD POSITION | N=461



NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO HAVE HELD POSITION – BY POSITION TYPE



[back to table of contents](#)

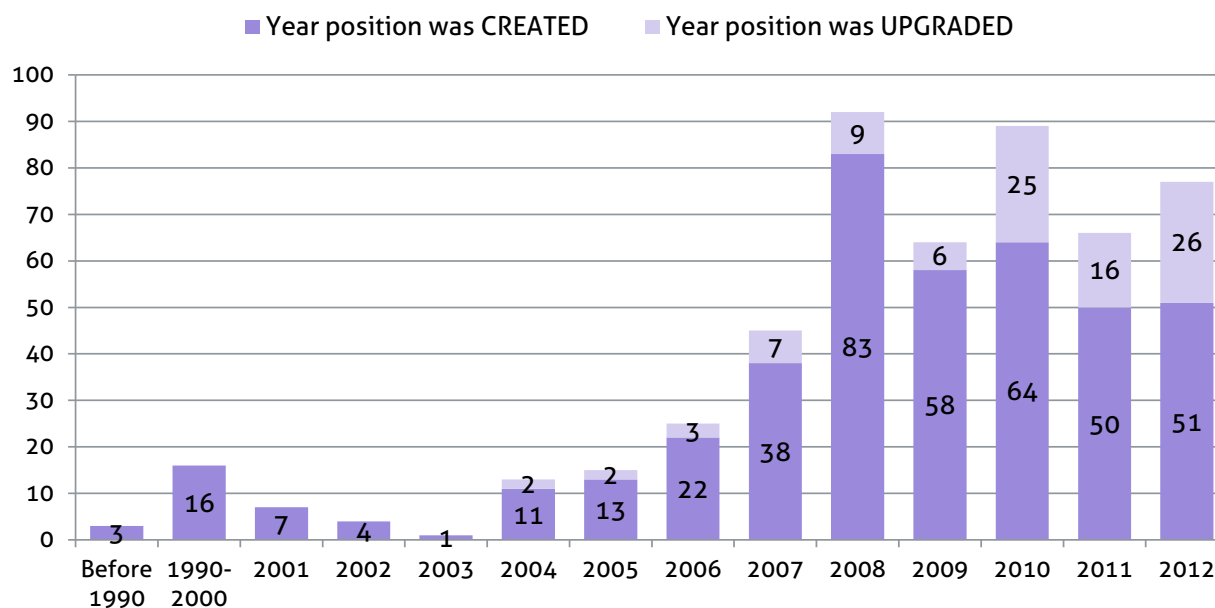
YEAR POSITION WAS CREATED/UPGRADED

The graph below illustrates the rapid growth in number of campus sustainability staff positions over the last two decades, reflecting the rise of a new career field. These results are mirrored in previous surveys. Consistent with 2010 results, the 2012 survey showed a small spike in 2008 in number of new positions created. Numbers continued to remain high afterward, reflecting a move beyond early adopters in terms of institutionalizing sustainability on campus (2008 may be seen as the tipping point, supported by other statistics as well).

The 2012 survey requested information on “upgraded” positions that resulted in no new net positions being created. Between 2009 and 2012, the number of new positions created (not counting upgrades) ranged between 50-64 per year compared to 38 or fewer in years prior to 2008. The period 2010-12 shows a marked increase in positions upgraded each year – 16 in 2011 and 26 in 2012, compared to 0 to 9 upgrades annually for all previous years.

Notably, 47 percent of all respondents in 2012 were in positions created or upgraded since 2010, indicating significant growth for sustainability positions in recent years (see also previous two sections regarding newness of positions).

YEAR POSITION WAS CREATED OR UPGRADED | N=440

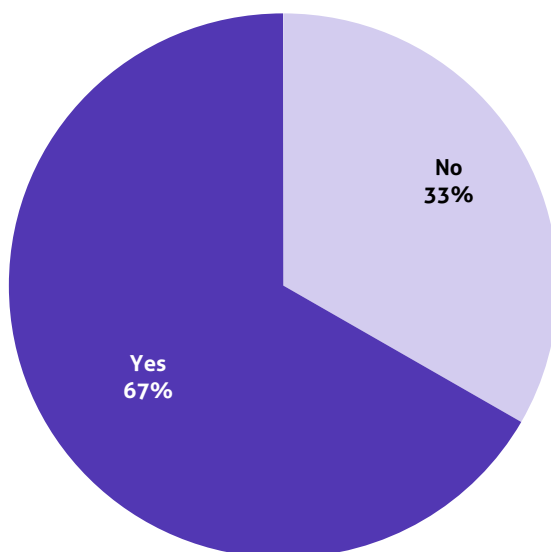


[back to table of contents](#)

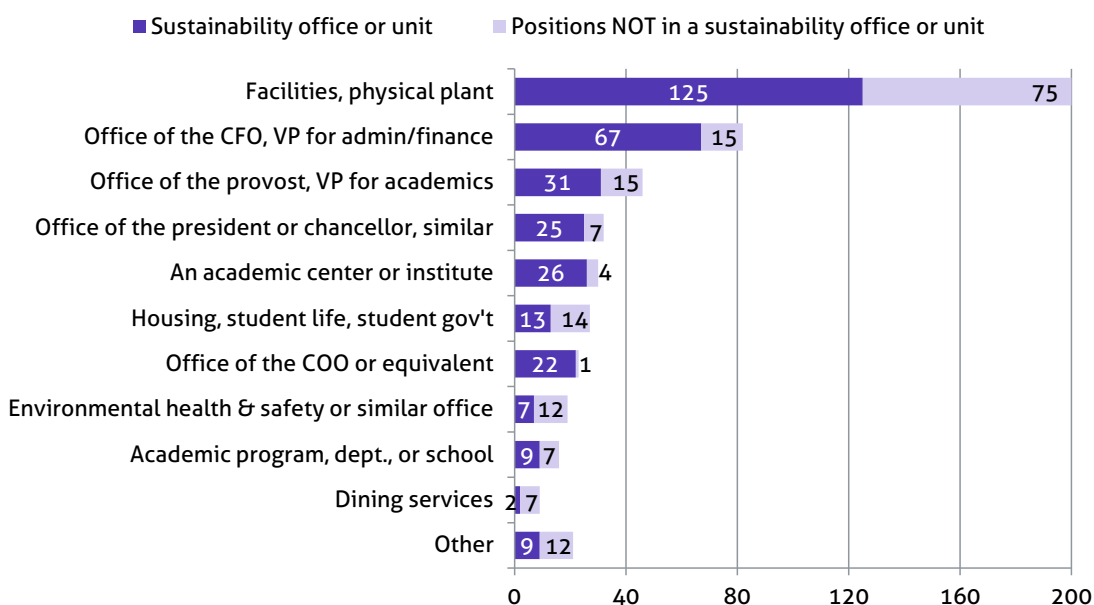
WHERE POSITION IS HOUSED

A full two-thirds of respondents said their position was housed administratively in a sustainability office or unit with sustainability in its name (see pie chart below), compared to only 23% who said so in 2010. This likely reflects the rise in number of new offices since 2010. In 2012, we also asked where the sustainability office/unit or position was housed administratively. Respondents could select more than one option (some positions, for example, were housed in two different departments). The results are shown in the bar graph below. By far the largest number of positions and offices were housed fully or in part in "facilities, physical plant." The second largest number of positions and offices were housed in the "office of the CFO, VP for admin/finance." Forty-two respondents indicated that their position was housed within the office of the president/chancellor. Results were not comparable with previous surveys because response options changed.

PERCENTAGE OF POSITIONS HOUSED IN A SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE | N=461



WHERE SUSTAINABILITY POSITIONS ARE HOUSED | N=461; TOTAL RESPONSES = 505

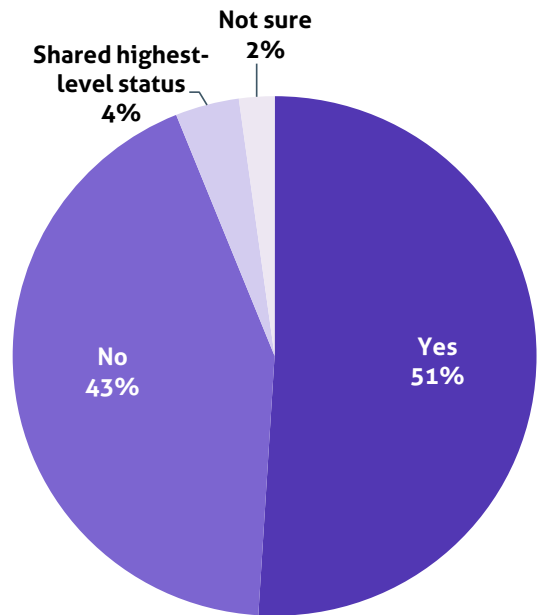


[back to table of contents](#)

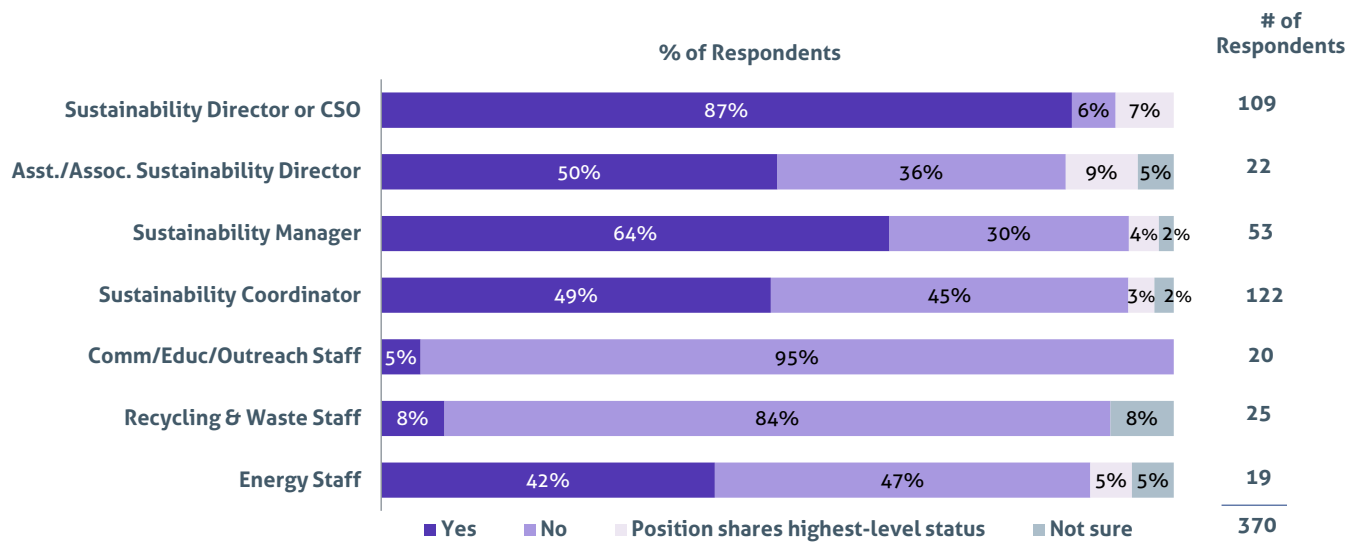
HIGHEST-LEVEL SUSTAINABILITY POSITION

Fifty-one percent of all respondents said their position was the highest-level sustainability position on campus. Another 4% reported sharing the highest-level position (see pie chart below). By position type, as expected, sustainability directors/CSOs had the largest proportion of respondents (94%) either in highest-level sustainability positions or in positions that shared such status, compared to other position types. For sustainability managers that figure was 68%, while it was 52% for coordinators (see bar graph below). Interestingly, 59% of assistant/associate directors reported holding or sharing the highest-level sustainability position on campus. This question was not asked in previous surveys.

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS IN HIGHEST-LEVEL SUSTAINABILITY POSITION | N=457



HIGHEST-LEVEL SUSTAINABILITY POSITION – BY POSITION TYPE | N=370



[back to table of contents](#)

VI • SUPERVISION

WHO POSITION REPORTS TO

When asked, “who do you report to directly?”, respondents could select more than one response if their position reported directly to two or more individuals. The response category with the largest percentage of responses (21%) was “sustainability officer.” Notably, 32% of respondents reported to someone in “facilities or physical plant.” Since most response categories for this question changed from previous surveys, results are not comparable.

By position type, we looked at the three positions with the highest N, and placed respondents who listed dual reports into a separate category so that number of responses matched number of respondents. More directors/CSOs reported to someone in “operations, finance & admin.” than to someone in any other office. For managers and coordinators, more respondents reported to someone in “facilities” than to someone in any other office. As expected, compared to other position types, a higher percentage of coordinators reported to a “sustainability officer,” while a higher percentage of directors/CSOs reported to a “president/chancellor.” Of the 33 respondents that listed dual reports in supervision, the most common combination was within “operations, finance & admin” and “facilities” (11 out of 33). The second most common supervision combination was within “academics” and “facilities” (4 out of 33).

WHO POSITION REPORTS TO | N=461; TOTAL RESPONSES =497

Direct Report To:	# of Responses	% of Respondents
A sustainability officer	98	21%
Top person in charge of facilities or physical plant	83	18%
Someone who works under the top person in charge of facilities or physical plant	64	14%
Top person in charge of finances and/or administration	43	9%
Someone who works under the top person in charge of finances and/or administration	41	9%
Provost/Chief academic officer	31	7%
Someone who works under the provost/chief academic officer	30	7%
President or chancellor	24	5%
Chief operations officer (or similar)	22	5%
Someone who works under the top person in charge of auxiliaries, housing, or student affairs	22	5%
Top person in charge of auxiliaries, housing, or student affairs	8	2%
Top person in charge of environmental health & safety	7	2%
Someone who works under the top person in charge of environmental health & safety	3	1%
Other	21	5%

[back to table of contents](#)

WHO POSITION REPORTS TO – BY POSITION TYPE | N=461

Direct Report To:	Facilities		Sustain- ability Officer	Operations, Finance & Admin		Academics		Student Affairs		President/ Chancellor	Dual Report	Other Areas	# of Respond- ents
	Top person	Other		Top person	Other	Top person	Other	Top person	Other				
Sustainability Director/CSO	19%	3%	<1%	24%	11%	9%	6%	2%	2%	8%	11%	5%	109
Sustainability Manager	30%	19%	15%	4%	7%	4%	4%	0%	4%	2%	7%	4%	53
Sustainability Coordinator	12%	18%	23%	10%	6%	5%	5%	<1%	5%	3%	7%	5%	124
Other	7%	14%	31%	6%	5%	3%	7%	2%	5%	6%	5%	9%	175
# of Respondents	125		91	85		50		25		24	33	28	461



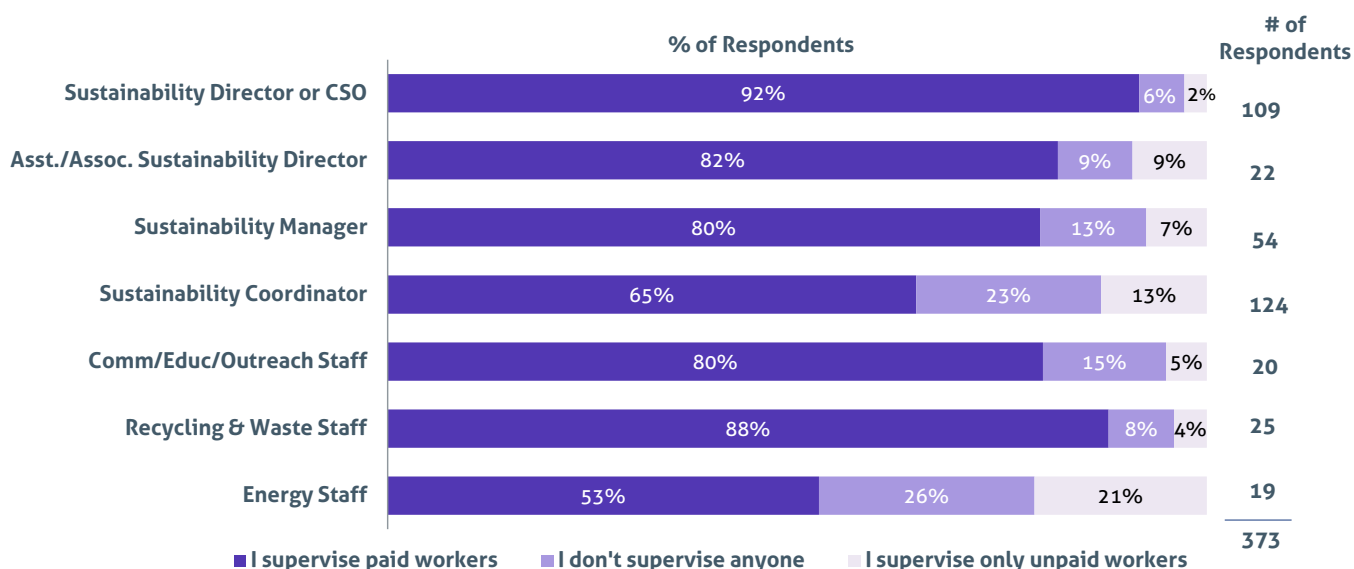
During E-Waste Days, staff and volunteers sort through large quantities of electronic waste.
Photo courtesy of Indiana University, Bloomington.

[back to table of contents](#)

STAFF SUPERVISION

As might be expected, the sustainability director/CSO position type had the largest percentage of respondents who supervised paid and unpaid staff (94%). With the exception of sustainability coordinators and energy staff, at least 80% of respondents in all position types supervised paid staff. This question was not asked in 2010.

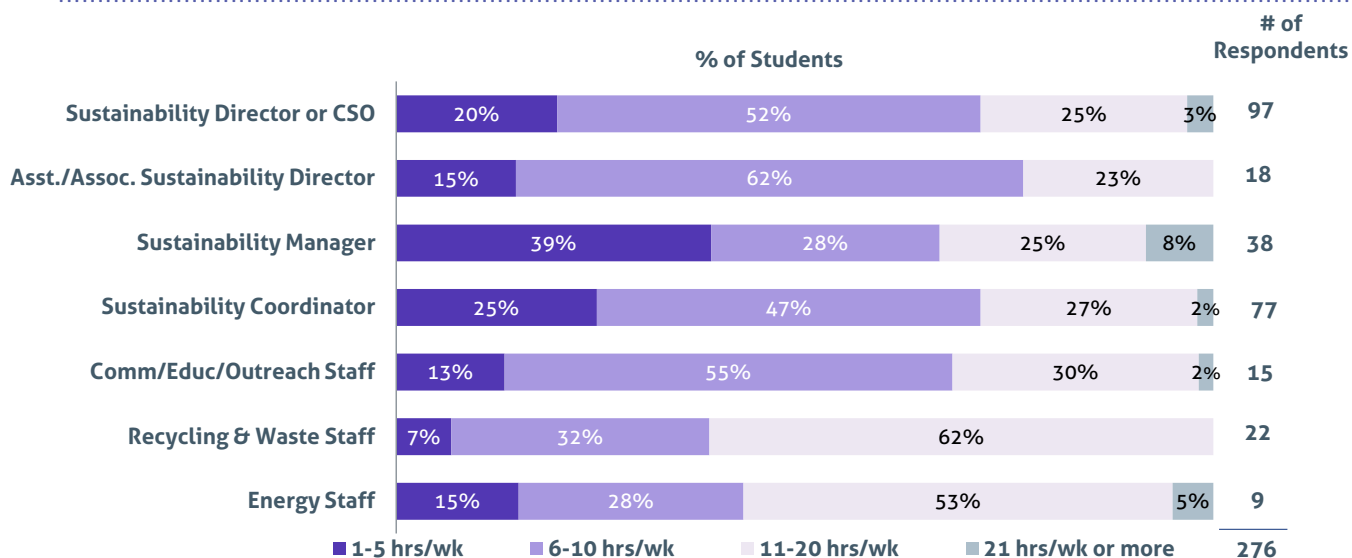
NUMBER OF STAFF SUPERVISED – BY POSITION TYPE



STUDENT SUPERVISION

As the bar graph below shows, very few students supervised by respondents in any position type work more than half-time. The majority of students supervised by respondents in each position type work 10 hours or fewer per week, with the exception of recycling/waste staff and energy staff, where the majority of supervised students work slightly longer, at 11-20 hours per week. In terms of institutional classification (not shown here), there is much similarity. This question was not asked or not analyzed in 2010 and previous surveys.

STUDENT SUPERVISION – BY POSITION TYPE



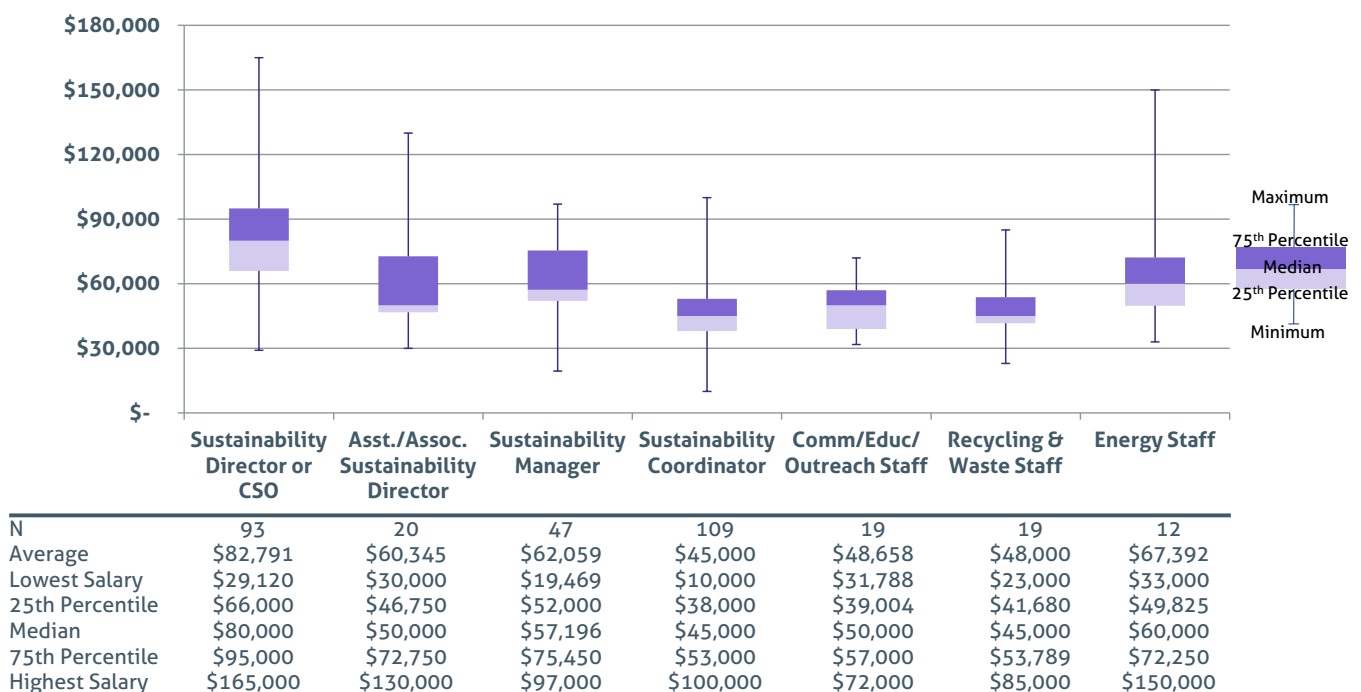
[back to table of contents](#)

VII • SALARY & FUNDING

SALARY DATA

For this question, respondents whose positions were dedicated to sustainability less than 75% of the time were excluded. Part-time & hourly workers were included for the first time in 2012 (they were asked to enter the amount they would earn annually based on the number of hours they were working). The chart below illustrates the salary range (indicated by the vertical lines) and salary percentiles for each position type, while the table below provides the details. As might be expected, sustainability directors and CSOs had the highest top salary (\$165,000) and highest median salary (\$80,000). Although methodology for salary data changed slightly in the 2012 survey, results show that average salaries increased slightly across all regions and positions.

SALARY RANGE AND PERCENTILES – BY POSITION TYPE | N=316



[back to table of contents](#)

SALARY DATA BY REGION, INSTITUTION TYPE & GENDER

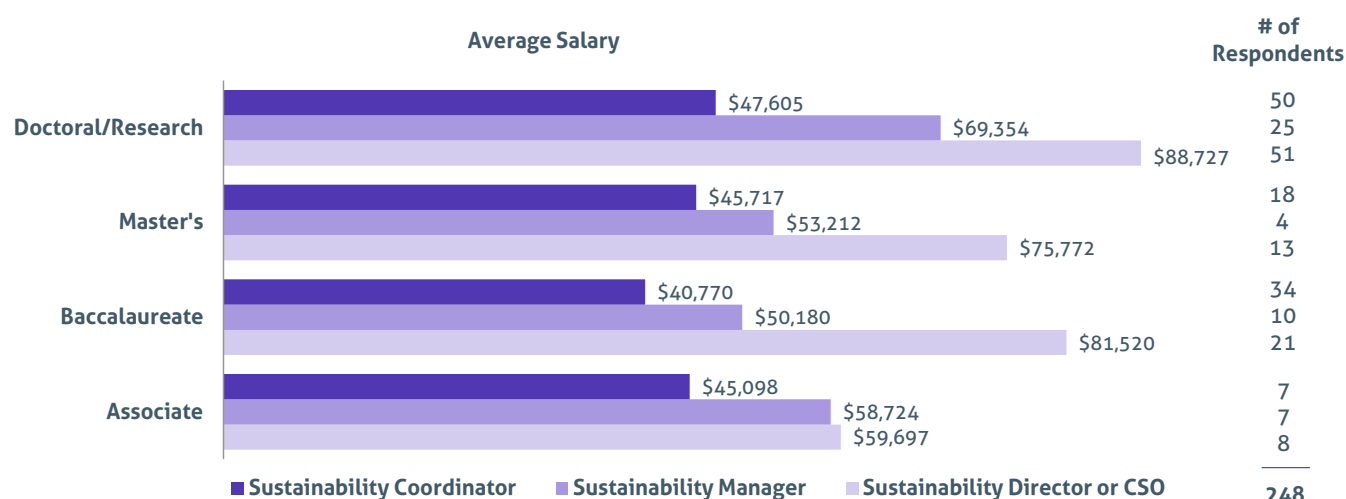
The table below shows average salaries by position type and region for all respondents and for the three most common position types. Again as expected, sustainability directors/CSOs have the highest average salaries overall and in each region, and coordinators the lowest of the three position types. The Rocky Mountain region had the highest average salaries of any region for directors and managers, while the Pacific Coast region had the highest average salary for coordinators.

The bar graph below shows average salary by position type for each institutional classification. A note of caution in interpreting these figures: the N values are quite low in some instances, particularly at associate degree-granting colleges.

AVERAGE SALARY – BY REGION

Position Type	All regions		Central	Eastern	Mid-Western	Pacific Coast	Rocky Mountain	South-Eastern
	Average Salary	Standard Deviation						
Sustainability Director or CSO	\$82,791	\$26,147	\$82,782	\$85,155	\$82,364	\$87,852	\$93,818	\$70,732
Sustainability Manager	\$62,059	\$16,509	\$63,867	\$65,679	\$56,940	\$60,109	\$68,571	\$59,003
Sustainability Coordinator	\$45,000	\$14,894	\$48,402	\$43,928	\$44,065	\$50,514	\$40,949	\$46,007
All Respondents	\$58,413	\$26,265	\$60,164	\$62,027	\$56,344	\$58,188	\$58,353	\$54,964

AVERAGE SALARY – BY INSTITUTIONAL CLASSIFICATION



[back to table of contents](#)

When analyzing responses by gender, average salaries were higher for males in all positions by nearly \$8,000, demonstrating that the gender wage gap that exists across sectors in society today can also be found in higher education sustainability positions.

AVERAGE SALARY BY GENDER

Position Type	# Female Respondents	# Male Respondents	Average Salary- Female	Average Salary - Male
Sustainability Director or CSO	47	46	\$82,534	\$83,055
Sustainability Manager	29	16	\$64,683	\$56,371
Sustainability Coordinator	69	35	\$43,565	\$47,683
Other	89	43	\$47,466	\$57,278
All Respondents	234	140	\$55,493	\$63,245



A group of students engaged in community service. Photo courtesy of Ball State University.

[back to table of contents](#)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

The vast majority of funding for all positions (82%) came from “general fund/operating funds,” which is almost identical to the 2010 figure (81%). The next highest category – at only 4% both years – was “external grants or sponsorships.” Results were similar by position type (not shown here).

SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR POSITION – BY AVERAGE PERCENTAGE | N=448

Funding Source	Average % of Funding
General fund/operating funds	82%
External grants or sponsorships	4%
Student sustainability or green fees	4%
Fee for service	2%
Savings from sustainability initiatives	1%
Sustainability-related endowment	1%
Alumni or private donations	1%
Other source	5%
Total funding	100.00%



Professor Timothy Wilhelm and his Solar PV students. Photo courtesy of Kankakee Community College.

[back to table of contents](#)

VIII • JOB SATISFACTION & CHALLENGES

BIGGEST CHALLENGES

Respondents were allowed to select more than one response to this question. “Lack of time to get everything done” was cited by the greatest percentage of respondents as among their biggest challenges, followed by “structural barriers” (see table below). Results were similar by position type (not show here) – the only noticeable deviation was the exceptionally high percentage of directors/CSOs (60%) who cited “lack of time to get everything done” – likely reflecting their greater scope of responsibility. Results cannot be compared to previous surveys, as the response options were different.

BIGGEST CHALLENGES | N=446; TOTAL RESPONSES=791

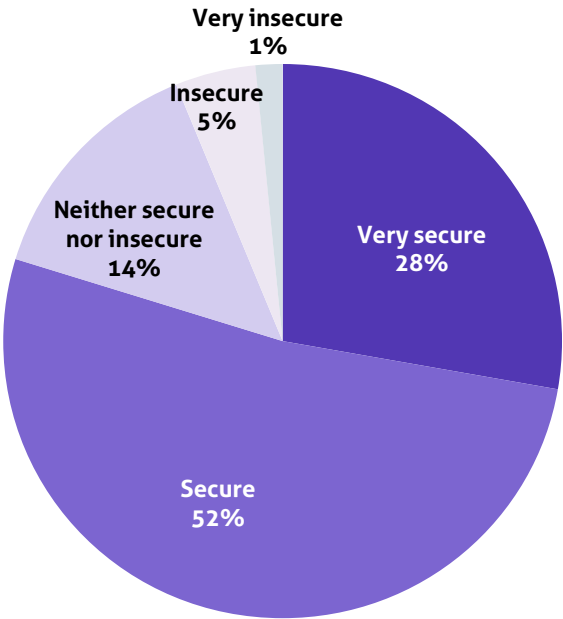
Challenges Faced in Position	# of Responses	% of Respondents
Lack of time to get everything done	224	50%
Structural barriers	189	42%
Lack of financial resources or security	123	28%
Institution has other priorities	99	22%
Lack of sustainability support culture	53	12%
Lack of influential power	43	10%
Weak administrative support	39	9%
Lack of skills, knowledge, specialized training	9	2%
Other	12	3%

[back to table of contents](#)

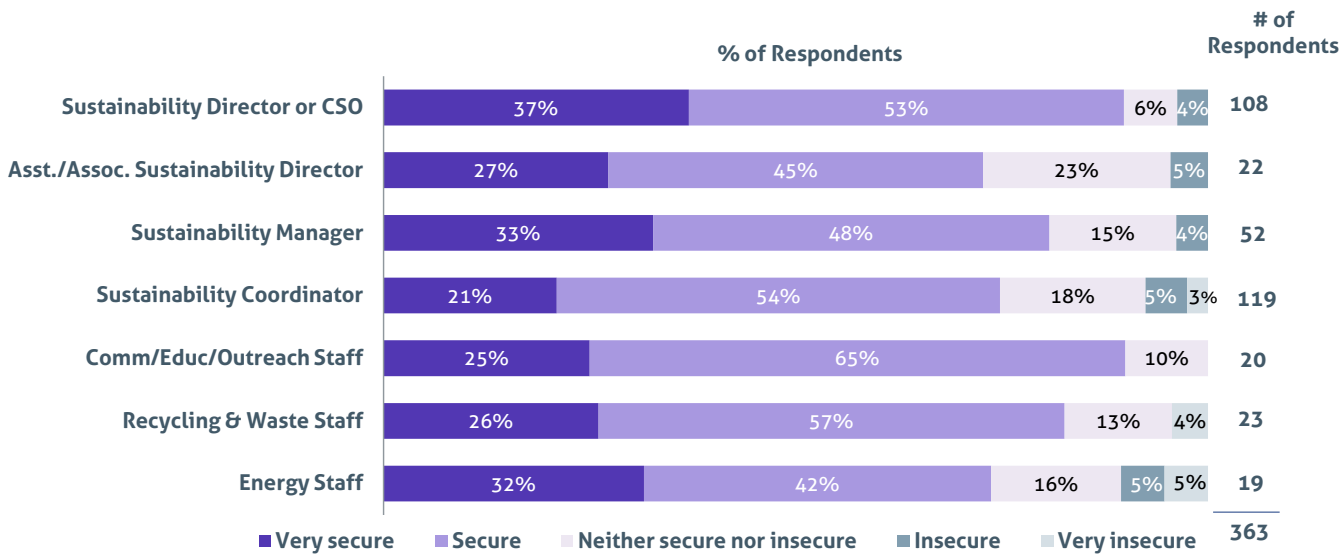
DEGREE OF JOB SECURITY

The great majority of respondents (80%) rated their level of job security as “secure” or “very secure” (see pie chart below). This compares to a slightly higher figure (84%) for 2010. Results varied by position type (see bar graph below). Of all position types, sustainability directors/CSOs and communications & outreach staff had the highest percentage of respondents (90% each) who said they were “secure” or “very secure.” Seven respondents indicated they were “very insecure” in their positions.

DEGREE OF JOB SECURITY | N=450



DEGREE OF JOB SECURITY – BY POSITION TYPE

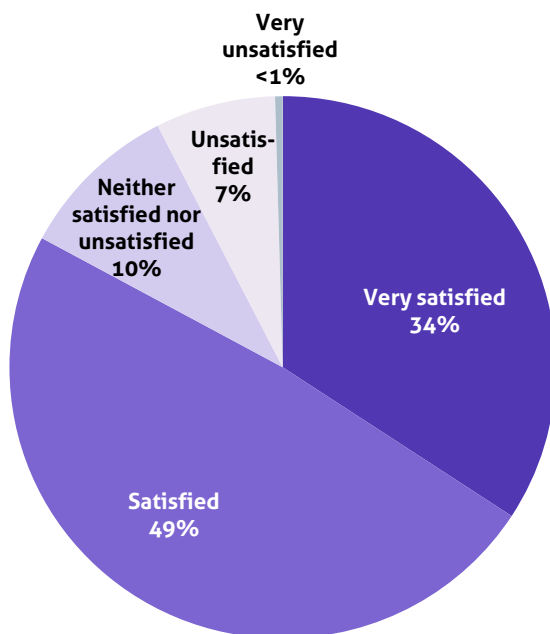


[back to table of contents](#)

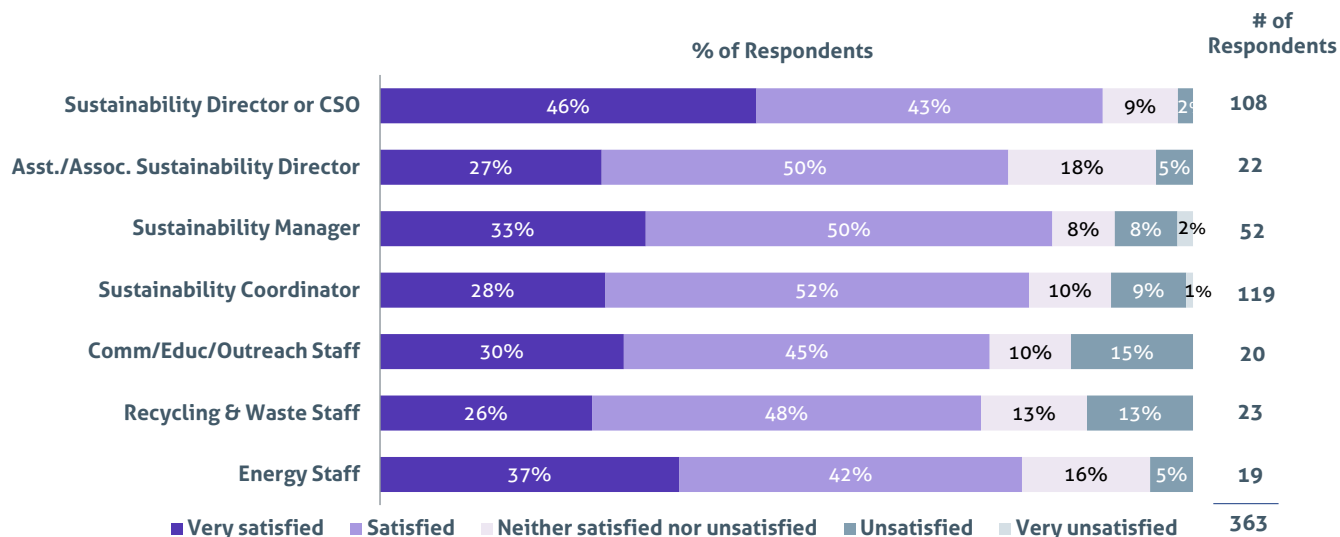
JOB SATISFACTION

The large majority of respondents (83%) reported being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” in their jobs (see pie chart below). This compares to a somewhat greater percentage (89%) in 2010. Results varied by position type, with sustainability directors/CSOs expressing the most job satisfaction (89%) of all position types, and recycling & waste staff and communications & outreach staff having the highest percentage of respondents who were “unsatisfied” in their jobs, at 13% and 15% respectively. Only two respondents indicated they were “very unsatisfied” in their jobs.

DEGREE OF JOB SATISFACTION | N=450



DEGREE OF JOB SATISFACTION – BY POSITION TYPE



[back to table of contents](#)

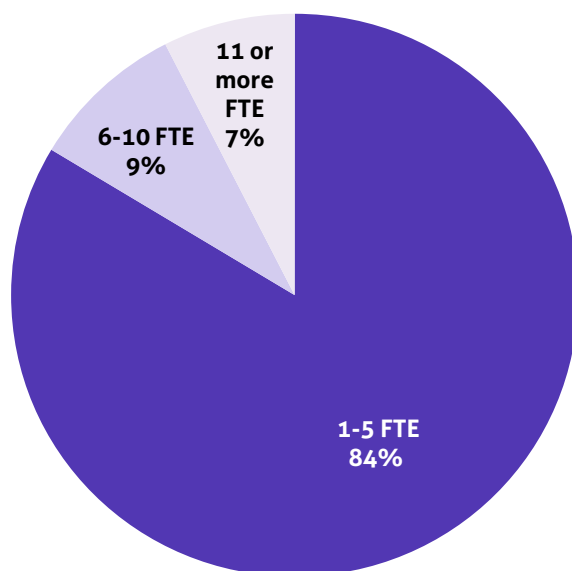
X • INSTITUTION-WIDE STAFFING & OFFICES

This is a new section introduced in the 2012 survey. The questions in this section were answered only by self-identified “point persons” for sustainability at their institution. There were 265 such point persons who completed the survey.

NUMBER OF SUSTAINABILITY STAFF AT INSTITUTION

The vast majority of respondents reported that their institutions had 1-5 FTE of paid, non-student sustainability staff. Only 16% reported 6 or more such FTE at their institution (see pie chart below). When looking at results by institutional classification (not shown here), doctoral-granting institutions had the largest percentage of respondents reporting “11 or more” sustainability staff FTE, and associate degree-granting colleges had the largest percentage reporting in the “1-5” FTE range. These results are not too surprising given institutional size and budget realities.

NUMBER OF PAID, NON-STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY STAFF INSTITUTION-WIDE | N=226

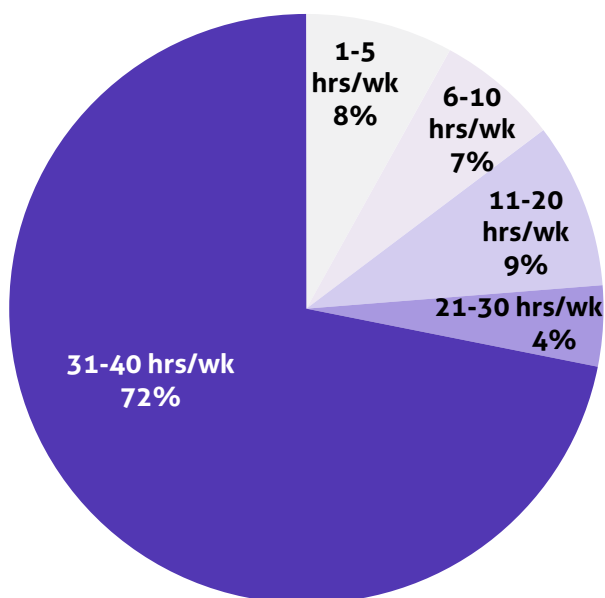


[back to table of contents](#)

HOURS WORKED BY SUSTAINABILITY STAFF

As the pie chart below shows, the great majority of sustainability staff at respondents' institutions had at least three-quarters time status, working 31-40 hours per week. About one quarter of staff had half-time status or less (working 1-20 hours per week). These figures were fairly consistent across position types.

HOURS WORKED BY SUSTAINABILITY STAFF, INSTITUTION-WIDE | N=231

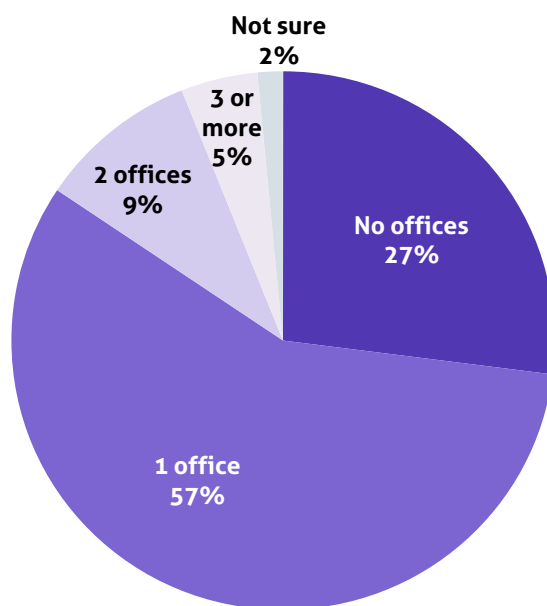


[back to table of contents](#)

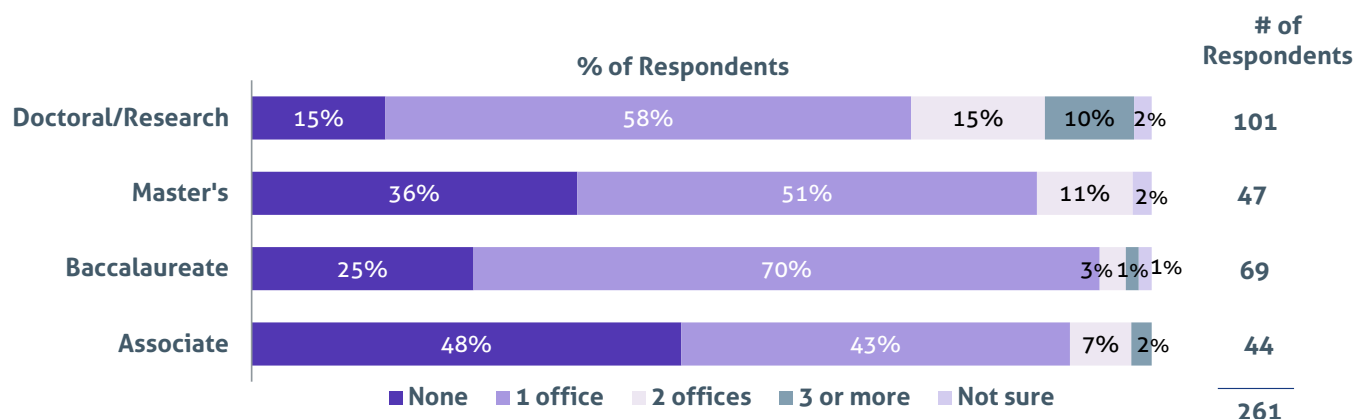
NUMBER OF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICES/UNITS

While 27% of institutions reported having no sustainability office or unit with sustainability in its name, the majority of institutions (57%) had a single sustainability office or unit, and 14% had two or more offices (see pie chart below). When looking at results by institutional classification (see bar graph below) baccalaureate-granting institutions had the largest percentage of respondents reporting a single sustainability office in comparison to other institution types. Associate degree-granting institutions had by far the largest percentage of all institutional classifications reporting “no office.” Doctoral-granting institutions had the largest percentage of respondents reporting two or more offices on campus.

NUMBER OF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICES/UNITS | N=263



NUMBER OF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICES/UNITS - BY INSTITUTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

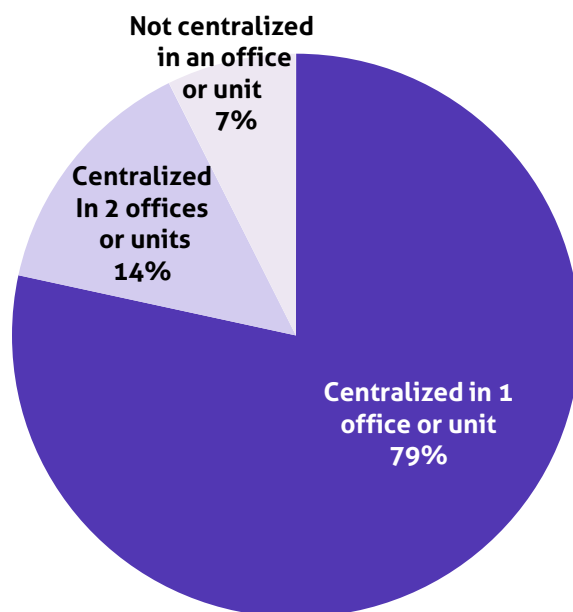


[back to table of contents](#)

CENTRALIZATION OF SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

Among respondents at institutions with at least one sustainability office or unit, 79% reported that the majority of sustainability efforts were centralized in one office, while only 7% reported that efforts were not centralized in their sustainability office(s). See pie chart below.

CENTRALIZATION OF SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS AT INSTITUTIONS WITH AT LEAST ONE SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE/UNIT | N=190



*Sustainable Village student workers meet with Cold Climate Housing Research Center CEO Jack Hebert before the workday begins.
Photo by Takashi Sakurai courtesy of University of Alaska Fairbanks.*

[back to table of contents](#)

XI • CONCLUSION

Results of the 2012 survey indicate that, while campus sustainability positions are relatively new within higher education, they are growing and evolving. The newness of sustainability positions can be reflected in the finding that nearly 90% of respondents have been in their current positions for five years or less. Nearly half of all respondents in 2012 were in positions created or upgraded since 2010, indicating significant growth for sustainability positions in recent years.

As the sustainability profession has evolved, establishment of a sustainability office is increasingly becoming the norm among colleges and universities. Sixty-seven percent of 2012 respondents indicated that their positions were housed in a sustainability office, compared to just 23% in 2010. Full-time sustainability positions focused on sustainability are also increasingly common, growing from 74% in 2010 to 85% in 2012. Survey results also indicate that average salaries have increased slightly across all regions and positions. Educational attainment for sustainability officers is also on the rise, with 65% of respondents holding a master's degree or higher in 2012, compared to 54% in 2010.

With 84% of 2012 respondents indicating that their institutions had 1-5 FTE of paid, non-student sustainability staff, there are significant opportunities for continued growth in higher education sustainability staffing positions moving forward.

[back to table of contents](#)