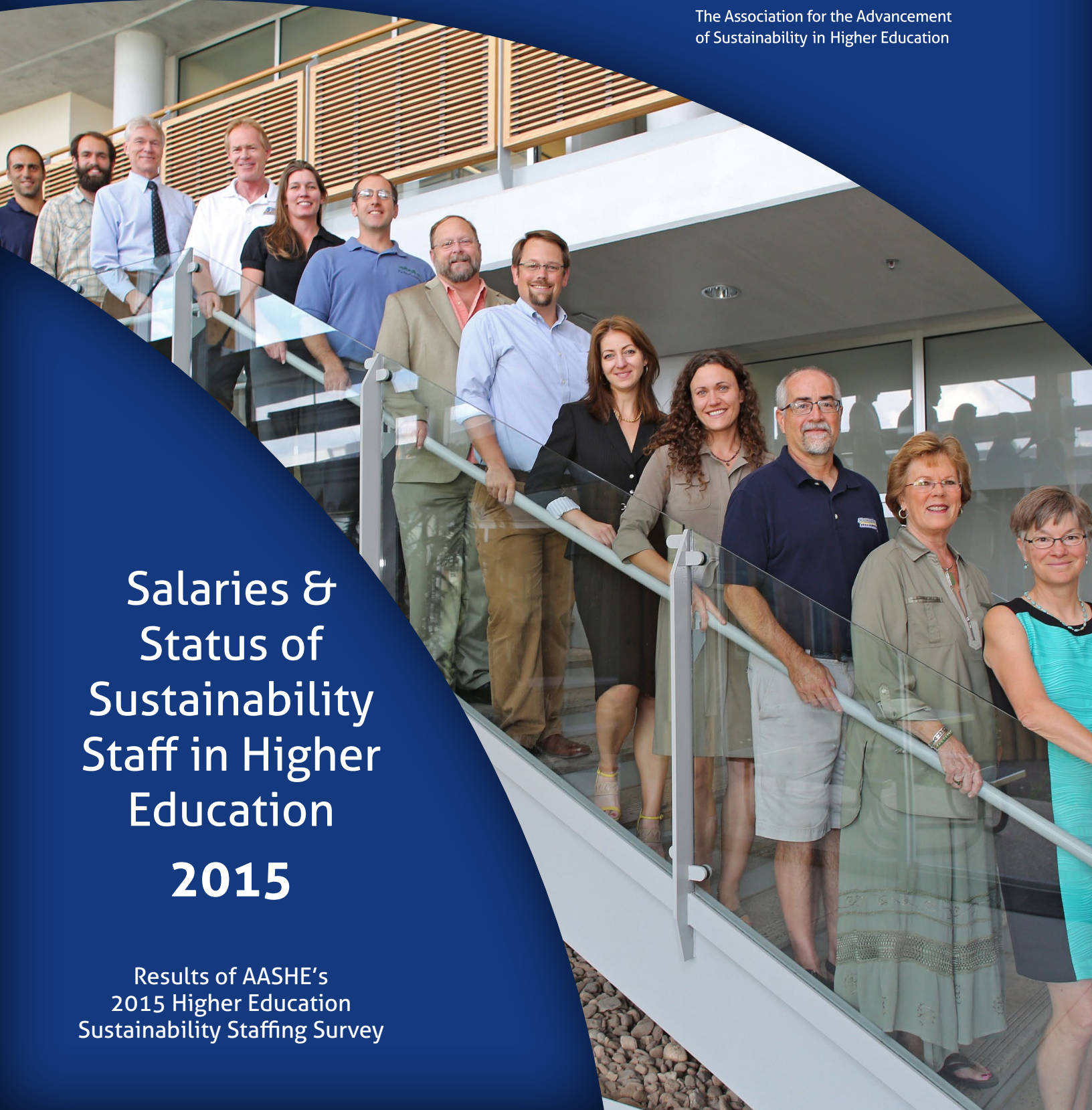




aashe

The Association for the Advancement
of Sustainability in Higher Education



Salaries & Status of Sustainability Staff in Higher Education **2015**

Results of AASHE's
2015 Higher Education
Sustainability Staffing Survey

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On the Cover:

Northern Arizona University's Coordinating Committee for Campus Sustainability (CoCoSus) brings together sustainability officers, vice presidents and high-level staff from across campus departments to advance sustainability and further progress toward carbon neutrality.

Other images throughout this publication are provided courtesy of the following AASHE member institutions:

Jefferson Community & Technical College
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University of Oregon
University of Victoria (Canada)
Wilfrid Laurier University

INTRODUCTION

About AASHE

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) is helping to create a brighter future of opportunity for all by advancing sustainability in higher education. AASHE programs include an annual conference, the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS), a campus sustainability resource center, an awards program, the AASHE Bulletin and other newsletters, and numerous publications. AASHE defines sustainability in an inclusive way, encompassing human and ecological health, social justice, secure livelihoods, and a better world for all generations. Membership in AASHE includes every individual at an institution or organization.

Campus Sustainability Staffing Survey & Report

Since 2008, AASHE has been conducting a survey every few years on campus sustainability staffing. This report presents the results of the 2015 Higher Education Sustainability Staffing Survey. It examines the nature of sustainability positions at colleges and universities in the United States and Canada, providing insights into salaries, funding, supervision, job satisfaction, challenges and more. This report aims to increase our understanding of the continuously growing career field of sustainability professional in higher education.

This report updates AASHE's [2012 Higher Education Sustainability Staffing Survey report](#). These surveys collected data for sustainability officers as well as a number of more focused sustainability positions, such as recycling/waste staff and sustainable energy staff.



Former University of Oregon President Michael Gottfredson and Office of Sustainability Director Steve Mital Award the Media Relations office their PLATINUM GO Certificate. Courtesy of University of Oregon.

METHODOLOGY & DATA

Methodology

AASHE disseminated and publicized a 49-question survey for a six-week period between January and March 2015. The survey targeted individuals in paid sustainability positions at higher education institutions or college/university system offices. The survey was designed to be applicable for positions with broad responsibility for campus sustainability, as well as those that focused on a particular area of sustainability (e.g., energy, recycling & waste, curriculum, communications & outreach.)

Responses to the survey were solicited through electronic mailings to AASHE member contacts, as well as through AASHE newsletters, social media, campus sustainability listservs and other means. There were 489 completed or partially completed surveys in total. Of those, 460 were identified as valid and were included in this report. In addition to collecting information about individual positions, the 2015 survey captured institution-wide data provided by a self-identified “point person” from each institution. Responses from these individuals were used to identify institution-level trends.

The [2015 staffing survey questions](#) are published on the AASHE website. Not every question asked in the survey is reported on directly in this report. For example, some questions were used to filter data. In other cases, the information collected lacked data integrity.

Sampling & Statistical Significance

There is no easy way to determine how many sustainability officers and specialized sustainability positions exist at U.S. and Canadian colleges and universities, so AASHE does not know what proportion of the total campus sustainability population responded to the survey. Though we made efforts to disseminate the survey widely, we cannot definitively claim to have captured representative samples for any position type.

We recommend that readers interpret the contents of this report as a descriptive presentation of the data collected with no claim to statistical significance. That said, we hope readers will 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.

Sustainability Position Types

Using position titles and data provided in survey questions, seven position types were found to be similar in work type and had a sufficient number of respondents to track and analyze as a cohort (see highlighted positions in table below). Representing 86 percent of all survey respondents, these seven position types have been incorporated throughout this report as filters for data views where relevant.

The other position types (those not highlighted) either had too few respondents ($N < 10$) for any meaningful analysis of the data, or the positions varied significantly in their background and level of work so as to make analysis as single group inappropriate (e.g., Faculty).

POSITION TYPES OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Position Type Count	Total	Percent
Sustainability Coordinator	151	33%
Sustainability Director & similar ¹	99	22%
Sustainability Manager & similar ²	60	13%
Communications & Outreach Staff	26	6%
Recycling & Waste Management Staff	24	5%
Assistant or Associate Sustainability Director	18	4%
Energy staff	16	3%
Faculty	16	3%
Assistant	9	2%
Top Administration	6	1%
Specialist	5	1%
Fellow	4	1%
Intern	3	1%
Planner	3	1%
Advisor	2	<1%
Sustainability Officer (title not disclosed)	11	2%
Other ³	7	2%
Total	460	100%

¹ Throughout this report, the position for "Sustainability Director & similar" includes three additional position titles that have been grouped due to similarity in salaries and roles. Included in this category are three Chief Sustainability Officers (CSOs), two Executive Directors, and one Co-Director.

² Throughout this report, the position for "Sustainability Manager & similar" includes two Associate Sustainability Manager positions that are grouped along with Sustainability Managers.

³ The seven respondents in the "other" category had job titles including Sustainability Program & Policy Analyst, Associate Architect, Commodity Buyer, Sustainability Consultant, Sustainability Program Developer, Sustainable Foods Educator, and Campus Horticulturist.

Comparing 2015 Data to Earlier Surveys

The methodology used to identify position types from the 2015 survey was similar to that used in the 2012 report, and the seven positions highlighted in the table on the preceding page are identical to those position types highlighted in the 2012 Staffing Survey Report. Overall, there has been little change over time in the number and ratio of the most common sustainability-related position titles on college and university campuses.

In comparison to 2012, there were more respondents identifying as Sustainability Coordinators (151 versus 124), Sustainability Managers (60 versus 54), and positions with a Communications focus (26 versus 20). There were slightly fewer Sustainability Directors (99 versus 109). Counts within all other positions were relatively consistent. The staffing survey is not a longitudinal survey that follows the same individuals over time and, as a result, differences between survey years should be interpreted with caution.



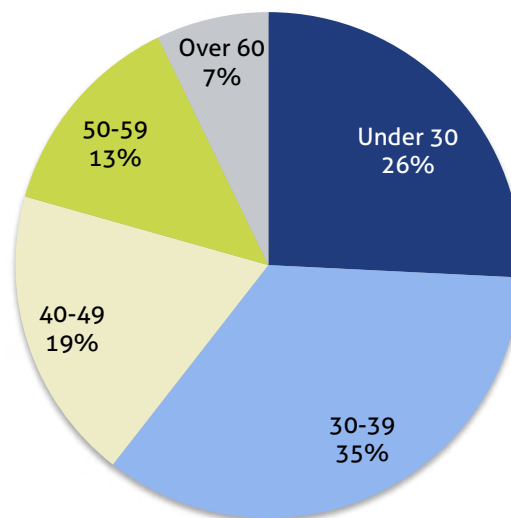
Sustainability Manager Claire Bennett takes part in the Sustainable Waterloo Region community climate action planning process. Courtesy of Wilfrid Laurier University.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

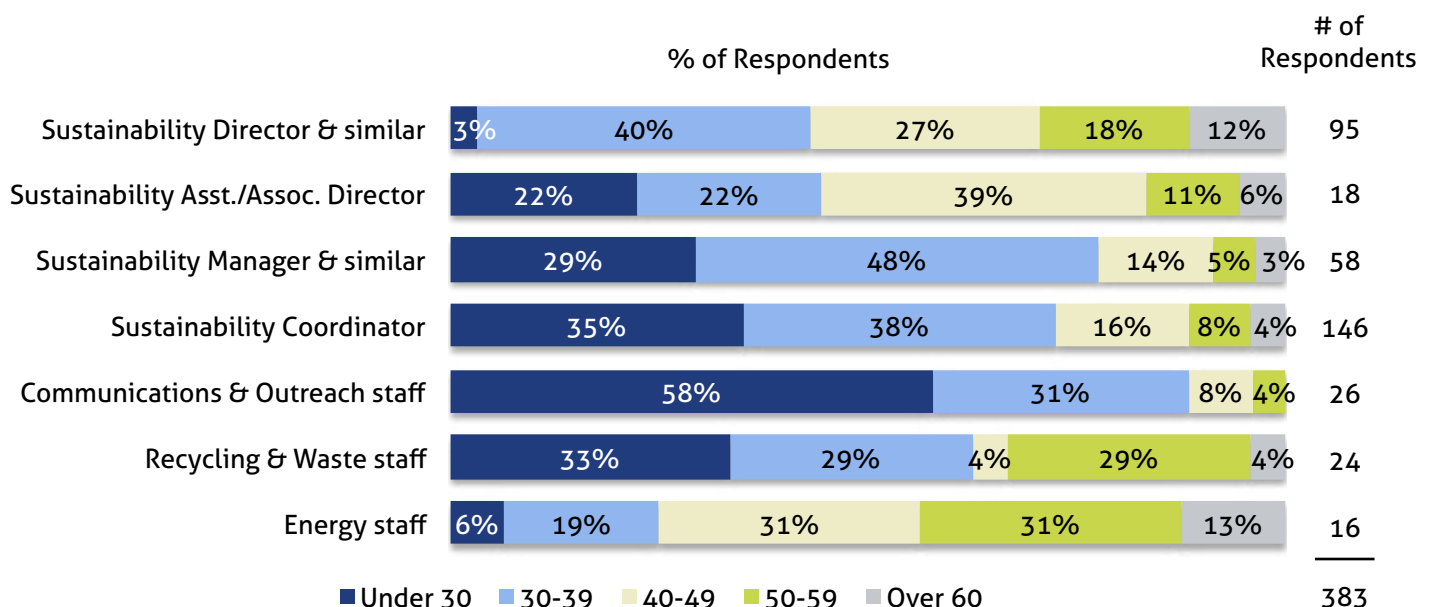
Age

The majority of 2015 survey respondents (57%) were under age 40. Only five percent of respondents were 60 years of age or older. These figures are almost identical to the 2012 survey. Of the various position types, Sustainability Directors had the lowest proportion of respondents under age 30 (3%), while the highest proportion under age 30 was among communications & outreach staff (58%). Positions and areas of focus with the highest proportion of respondents in their 50s or older included energy staff (44%), recycling & waste staff (33%), and Sustainability Directors (30%).

AGE OF RESPONDENTS
N=446



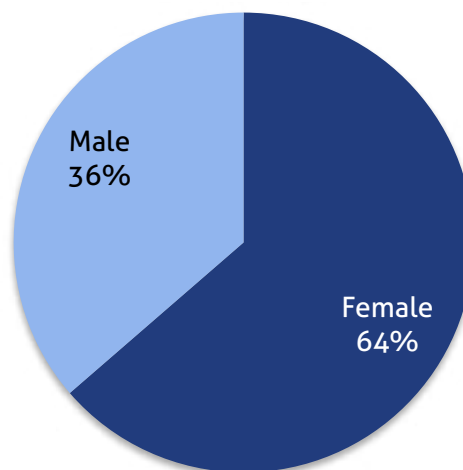
AGE OF RESPONDENTS – BY POSITION TYPE



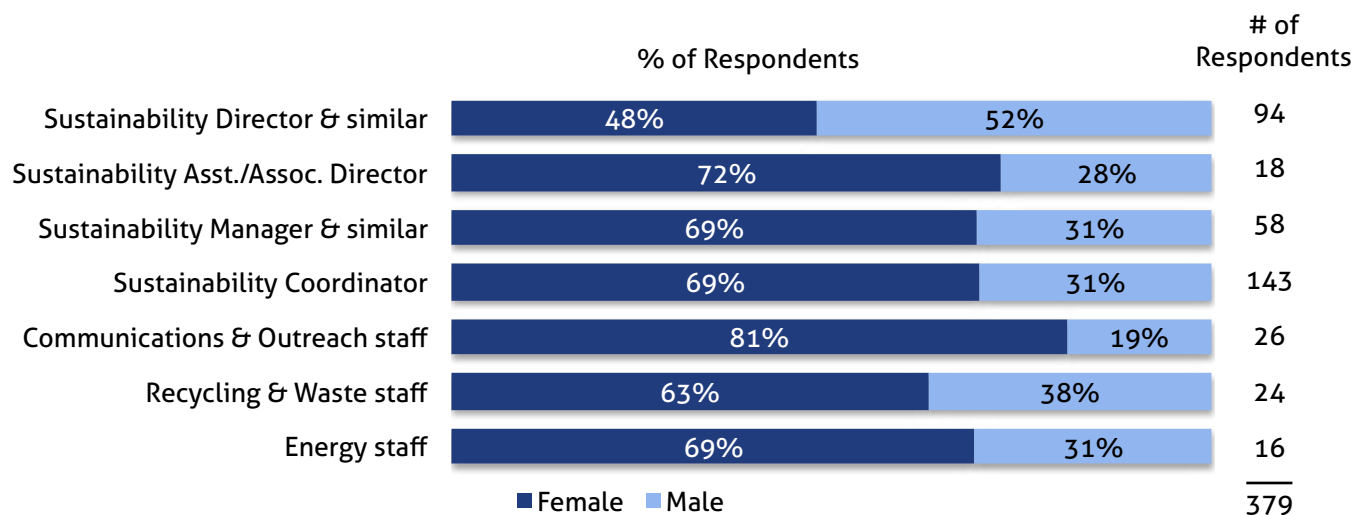
Gender Identity

While campus sustainability is a female-dominated field, men are more likely to be in leadership roles. A notably higher percentage of respondents identified as female (64%) than male (36%). These figures are similar to findings in 2012, where 62 percent identified as female. As the bar graph below shows, the Sustainability Director position was the only category that skewed male (52%). This was also the only position type that skewed male in 2012 (51%).

GENDER IDENTITY OF RESPONDENTS
N=440



GENDER IDENTITY OF RESPONDENTS – BY POSITION TYPE



Race & Ethnicity

The overwhelming majority of 2015 survey respondents identified themselves as White/Caucasian (90%), supporting perceptions of the higher education sustainability movement as a largely “white” movement. However minority respondents increased from eight percent in 2012 to 10 percent in 2015, indicating that progress has been made in diversifying the sustainability movement. The second largest racial category in 2015 was Asian, followed closely by respondents who identified as Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American. There was an increase in the number of respondents identifying as Hispanic/Latino/Latina (eight in 2015 versus three in 2012) and Black/African American (seven in 2015 versus 4 in 2012). As in 2012, four percent of respondents selected more than one race or ethnicity.

RACE & ETHNICITY OF RESPONDENTS

N = 443

Race/Ethnicity	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
White (or Caucasian)	398	90%
Asian	9	2%
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	8	2%
Black or African American	7	2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	<1%
Metis (Canada only)	1	<1%
Multiple races/ethnicities	19	4%
Total	443	100%

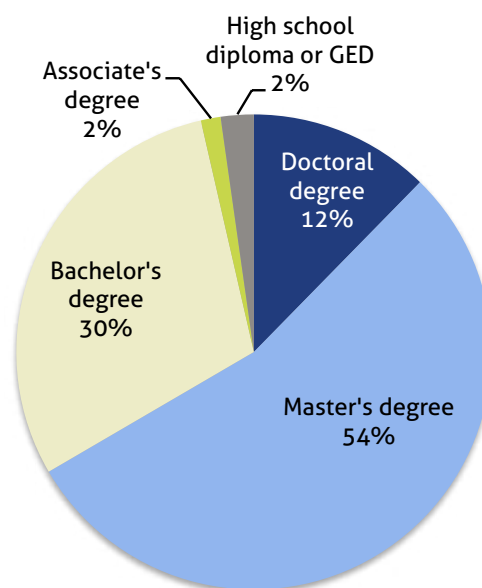
Note: The survey structure for this question mistakenly required at least one selection beyond “other”, and omitted a “prefer not to disclose option”. This will be remedied in future surveys. Individuals who selected an answer choice but indicated that they prefer not to disclose in the comment field were excluded from the table above.

Education Level

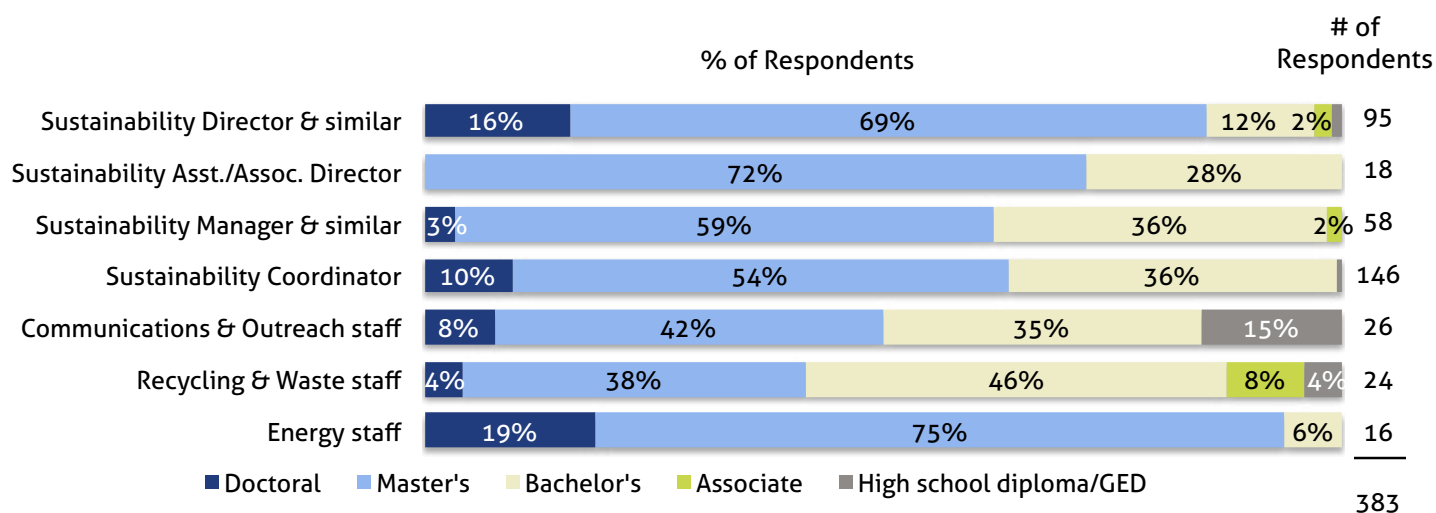
Respondents to the 2015 survey had very similar education levels as compared to 2012, with 96 percent of respondents holding at least a bachelor's degree (identical in 2012) and 66 percent holding at least a master's degree (65% in 2012).

By position type, energy staff had the largest percentage of respondents with master's degrees or higher (94%), followed by Sustainability Directors (85%). Doctoral degree positions for Sustainability Directors were lower in 2015 as compared to 2012 (24%). There was some difference in education level for energy positions, which included three respondents with doctoral degrees (zero in 2012).

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED
N=446



HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED – BY POSITION TYPE

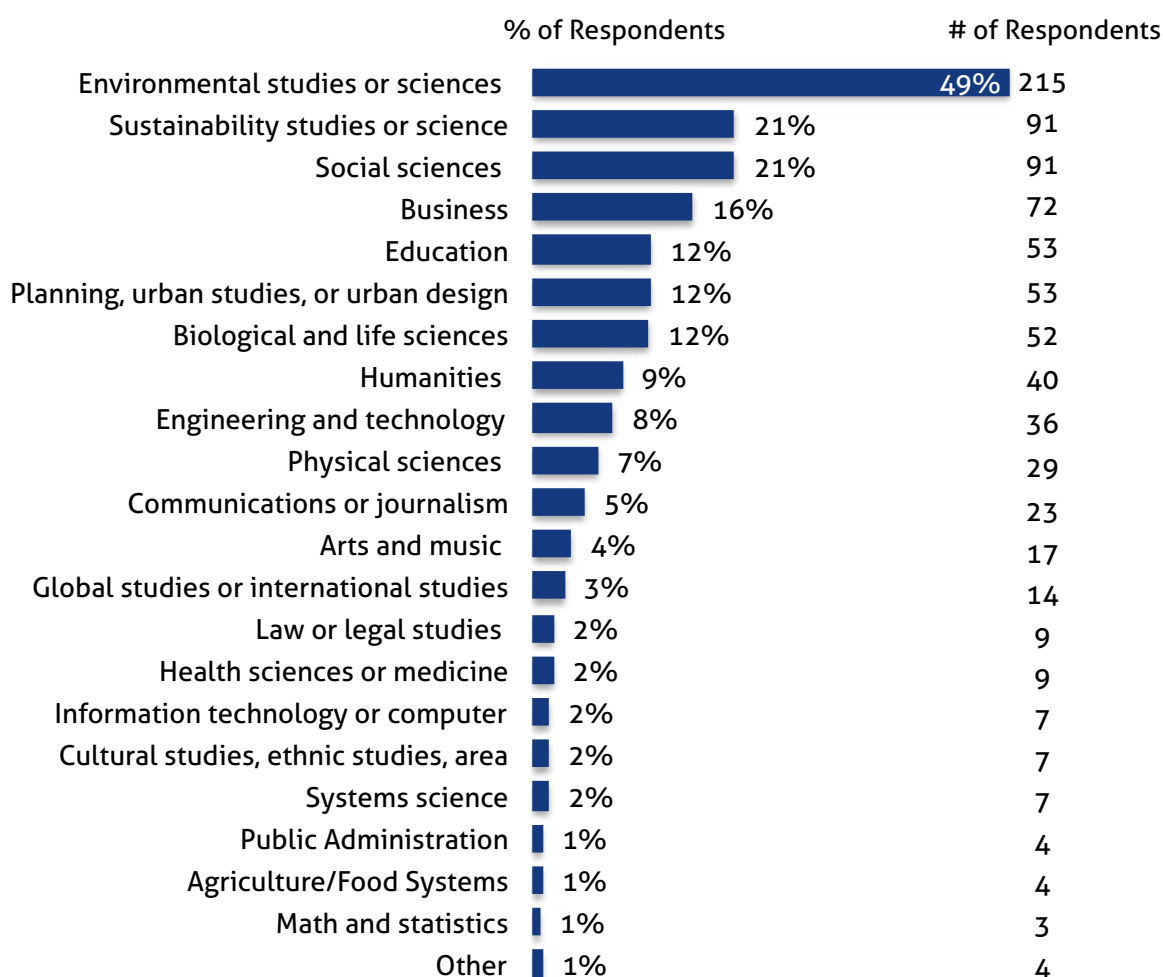


Academic Discipline

Respondents were asked to indicate their academic background, and could select more than one option. Fifty-eight percent of respondents selected more than one academic background in 2015, which is an increase over 2012 respondents (38%). This question was worded slightly differently in 2015 with slightly different response options, but results are still comparable.

The table below shows that the largest number of respondents cited a background in “environmental studies or sciences,” which is more than double the amount in the next highest category. There has been a marked increase in the number of respondents with an academic background in sustainability studies or science (91 respondents (21%) in 2015 versus 61 respondents (14%) in 2012). This is consistent with an overall growth in sustainability-focused academic programs. The sustainability studies or science discipline has moved from the Number Four most-common academic background in 2012 to being tied for Number Two in 2015.

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS N = 443 | TOTAL RESPONSES = 840

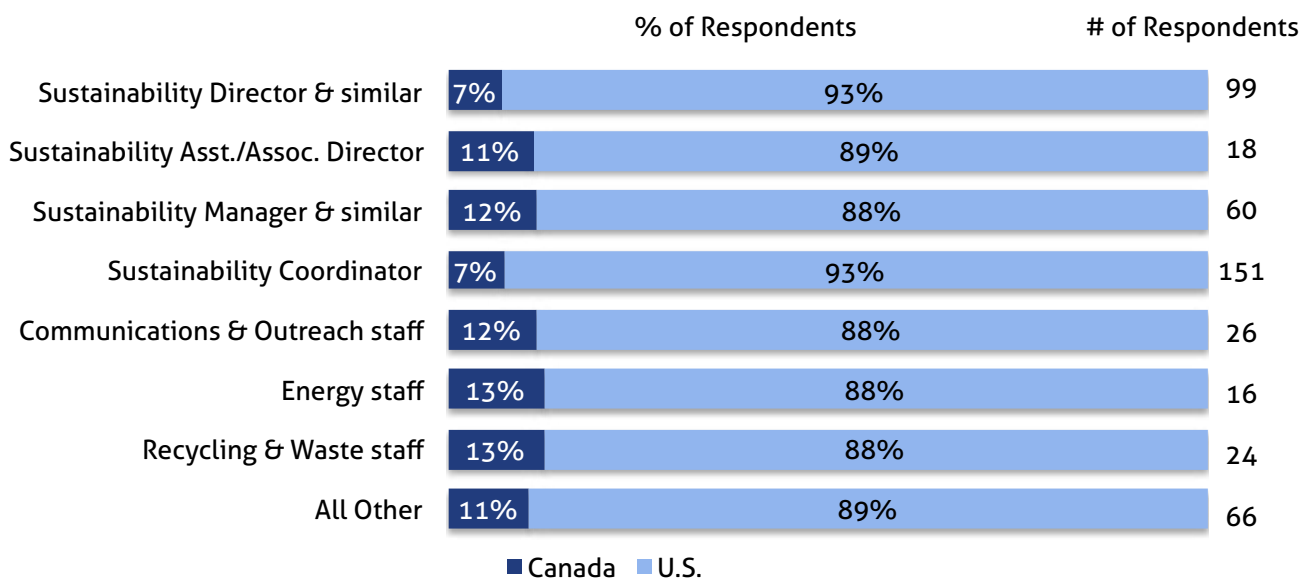


INSTITUTION INFORMATION

Country

The 2015 survey targeted only individuals from the United States or Canada, as was the case with the 2012 survey. The vast majority of respondents (91%) were at institutions located in the U.S. This figure was identical in 2012. The percentages varied somewhat by position type, with energy and recycling & waste staff having the highest proportion of Canadian respondents (13% each).

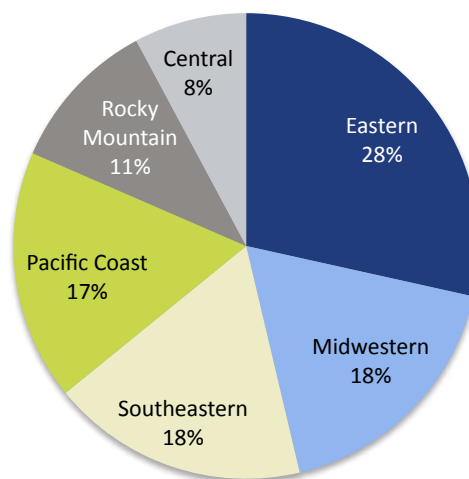
COUNTRY WHERE RESPONDENT INSTITUTION IS LOCATED BY POSITION TYPE
N=460



Region

Respondents were asked which Canadian province/territory or U.S. state/territory the institution or system office is located, and locations were categorized based on APPA regions (see map below). The largest proportion of respondents (28%) came from institutions in the Eastern region of the U.S. and Canada, with the lowest proportion (8%) coming from the Central region. The data parallels 2012 in terms of regions with the highest and lowest proportions.

APPA REGION
N=460



APPA REGIONAL MAP

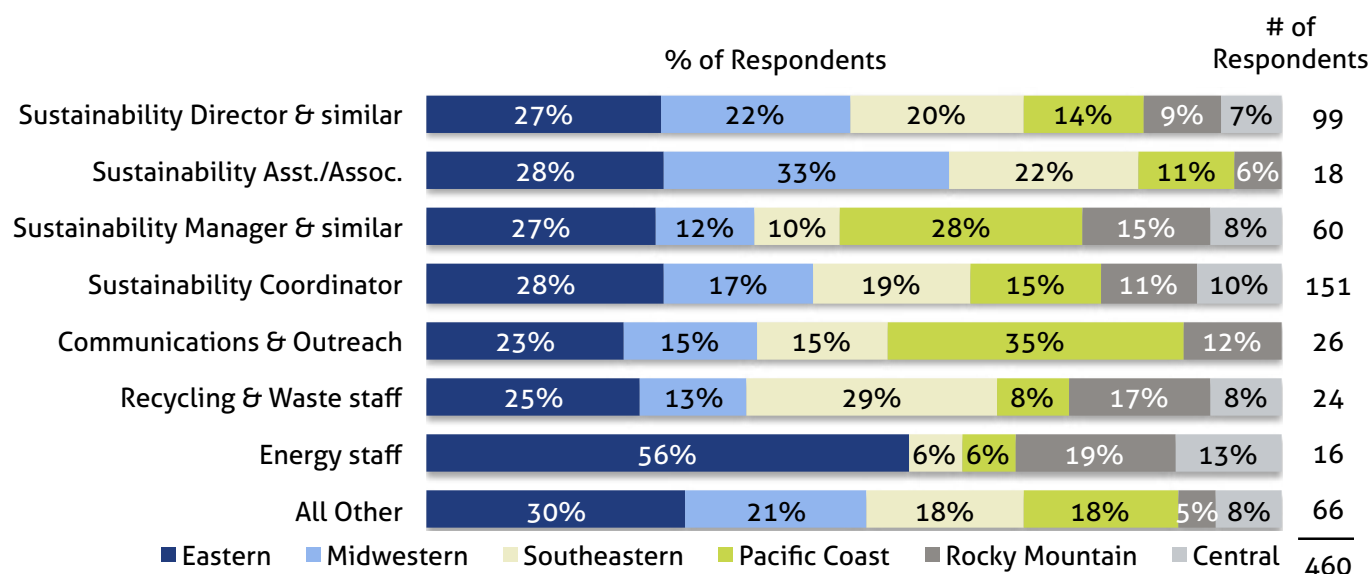


Map reprinted with permission from APPA, Leadership in Educational Facilities.

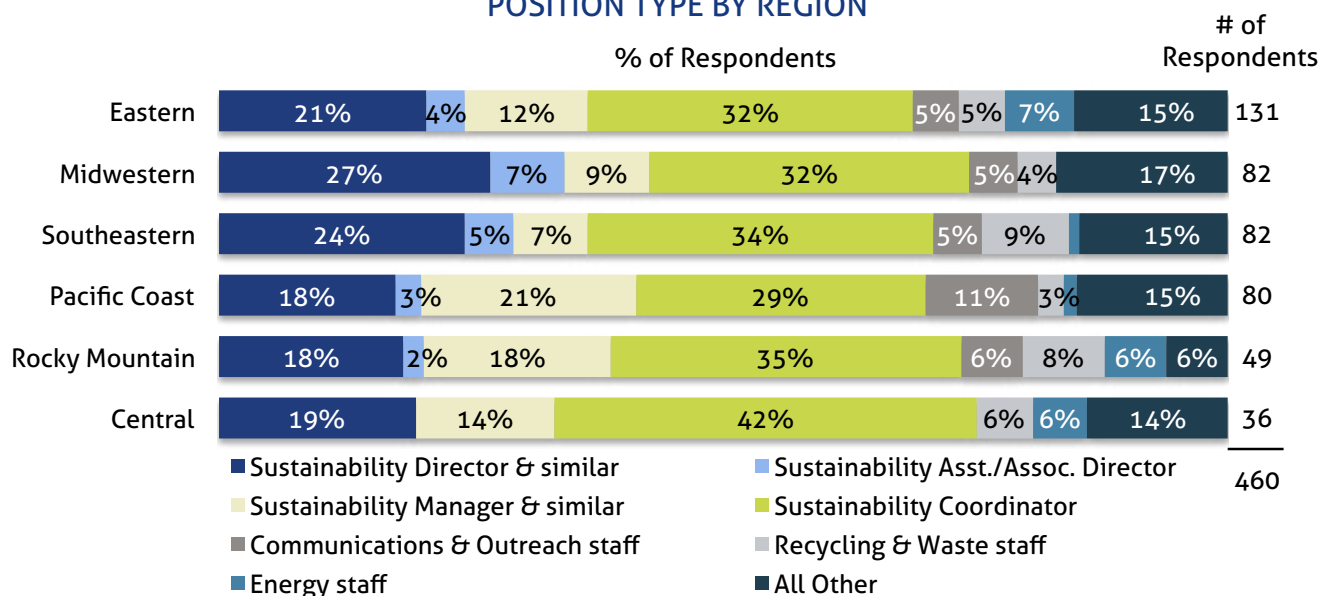
The first bar graph below shows the proportion of region for each position type. A high proportion of energy staff were from Eastern institutions, and a high proportion of communications & outreach staff and Sustainability Managers came from the Pacific Coast region.

For comparative purposes, the second bar graph shows the proportion of position types for each region. Regions with higher proportions of Sustainability Directors, Assistant/Associate Directors, and Sustainability Managers include the Pacific Coast and Midwest. While Sustainability Coordinators were prevalent everywhere, the proportion was somewhat higher in the Central Region. Positions related to communications & outreach were more prevalent in the Pacific Coast.

REGION BY RESPONDENT POSITION TYPE



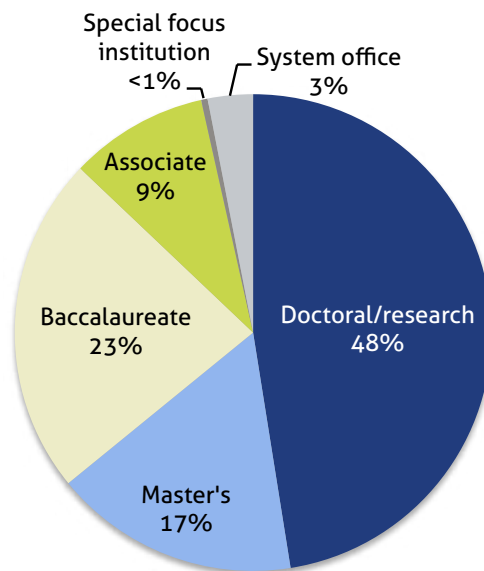
POSITION TYPE BY REGION



Institution Type

The institution type question on the 2015 survey included a new response option not included in previous years that allowed respondents to identify if they were from a system office instead of a single institution. This new question option may account for some differences between 2015 and 2012 findings. Forty-eight percent of respondents were located at doctoral or research institutions, which is slightly lower from what was reported in 2012 (50%). The second most common institution class was baccalaureate institutions at 23 percent, which was nearly identical with what was reported in 2012 (24%).

INSTITUTION TYPE
N=457

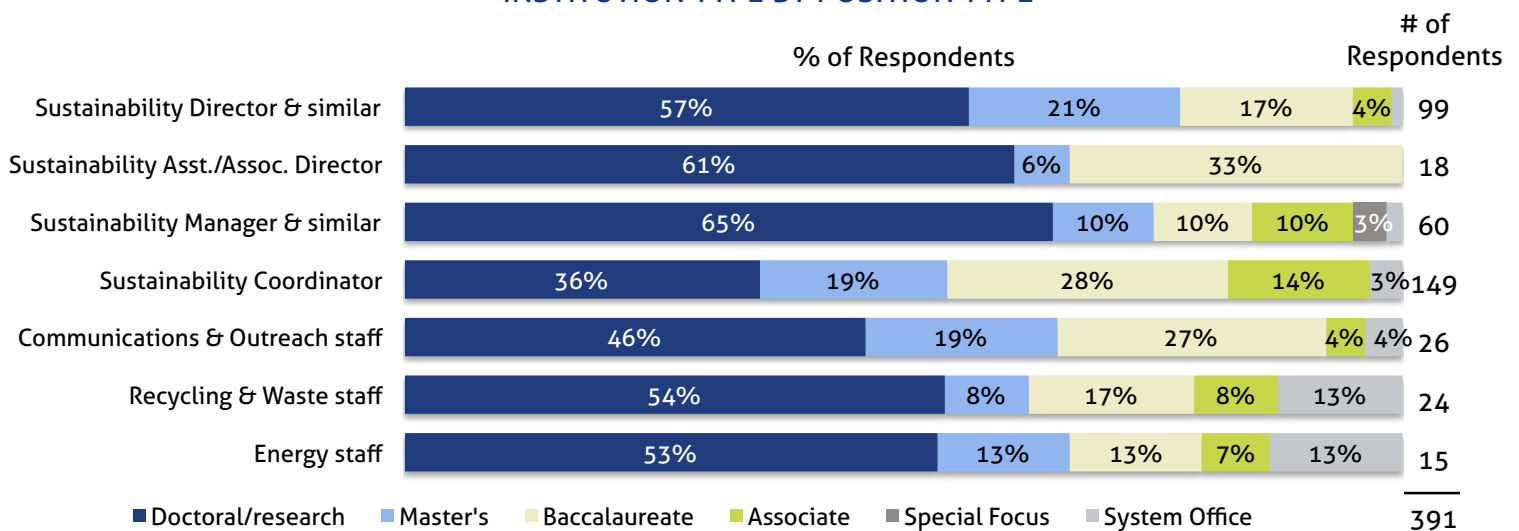


Sonia Yeh, a research scientist of the Institute of Transportation Studies, stands with a plug in car. Courtesy of University of California, Davis.

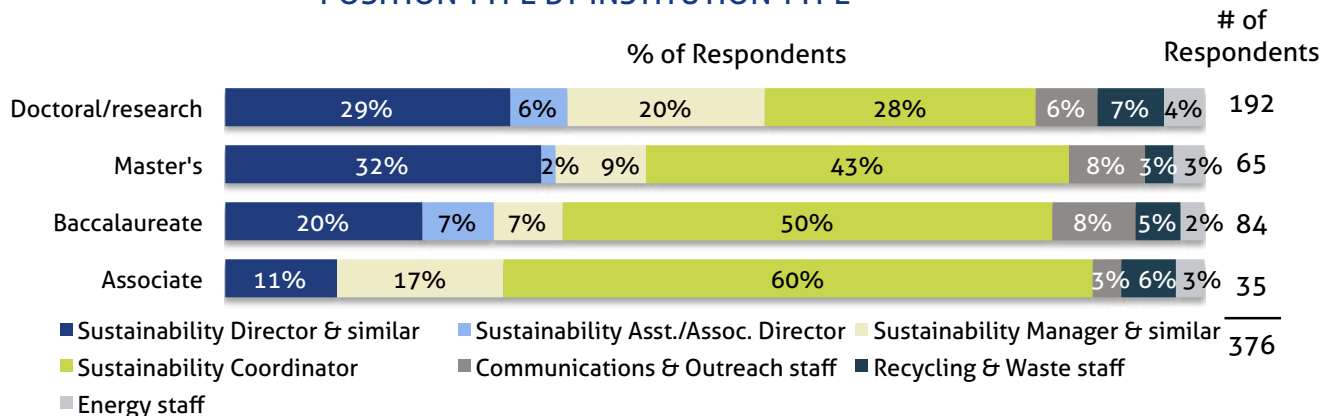
The first bar graph below shows the proportion of institution type for each position. Sustainability Directors, Assistant/Associate Directors and Managers were more likely to be located at doctoral/research institutions. This is an increase in comparison to 2012 (52%, 50%, and 48% respectively). There was an increase in Sustainability Coordinator positions at associate colleges (14% in 2015 versus 10% in 2012). There was a decrease in Sustainability Manager positions (10% in 2015 versus 19% in 2012).

For comparative purposes, the second bar graph shows the proportion of position types for each institution type. While Sustainability Coordinators were prevalent at all institutions, the proportion was somewhat higher at associate colleges and lower at doctoral/research institutions, where Sustainability Directors were most prevalent. There was a relatively high proportion of Sustainability Managers at doctoral/research institutions and associate colleges.

INSTITUTION TYPE BY POSITION TYPE



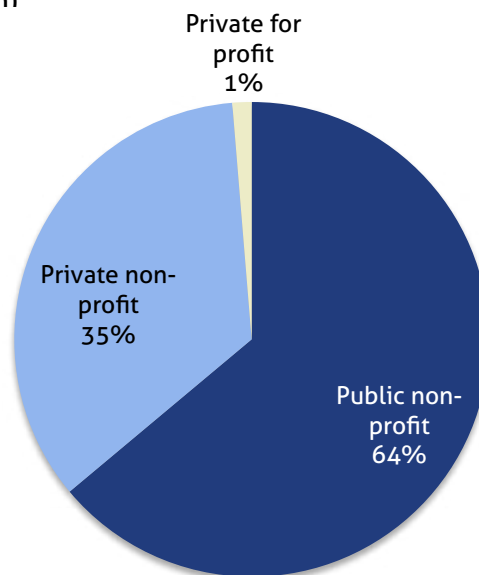
POSITION TYPE BY INSTITUTION TYPE



Institution Control

Just under two-thirds of respondents were from publicly controlled institutions while one-third were at privately controlled institutions. These figures are nearly identical to findings in 2012 (66% and 33% respectively). A one percent response for "private, for-profit institutions in 2015 was identical to 2012. Percentages were similar by position type (not shown)

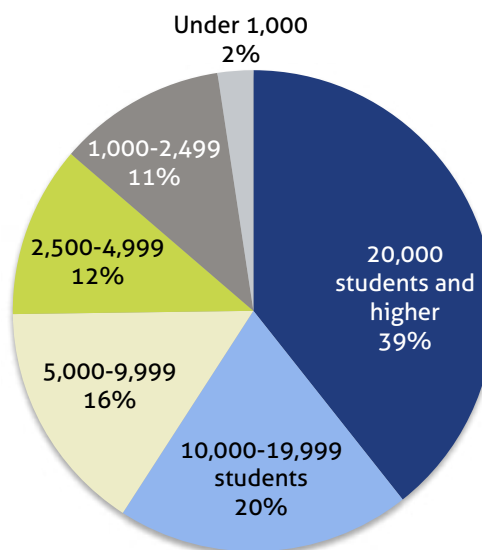
INSTITUTION CONTROL
N=460



Student Enrollment

The majority of respondents (59%) were from institutions that enrolled 10,000 or more students. This number was higher in 2012 (65%). Percentages were largely similar by position type (not shown).

STUDENT ENROLLMENT – BY HEADCOUNT
N=460

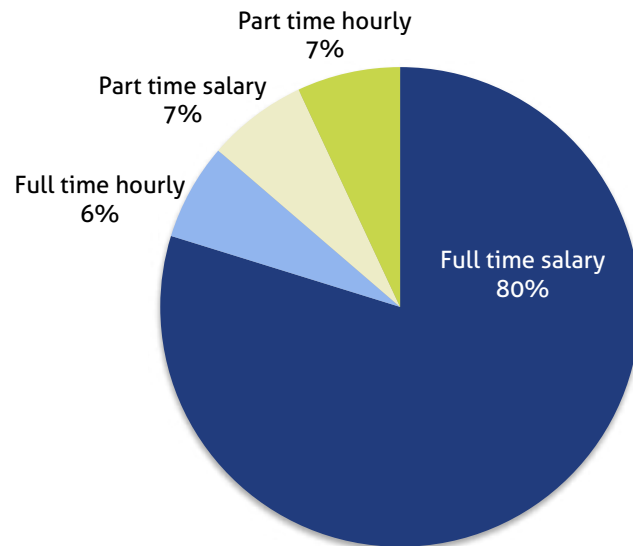


NATURE OF POSITION

Employment Status

As the pie chart below indicates, the vast majority of respondents' positions (86%) were full-time, and most of these were in salaried rather than hourly positions (80%). This is similar to employment status results in 2012 (85%). Results were similar by position type (not shown here).

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS
BY HEADCOUNT
N=460

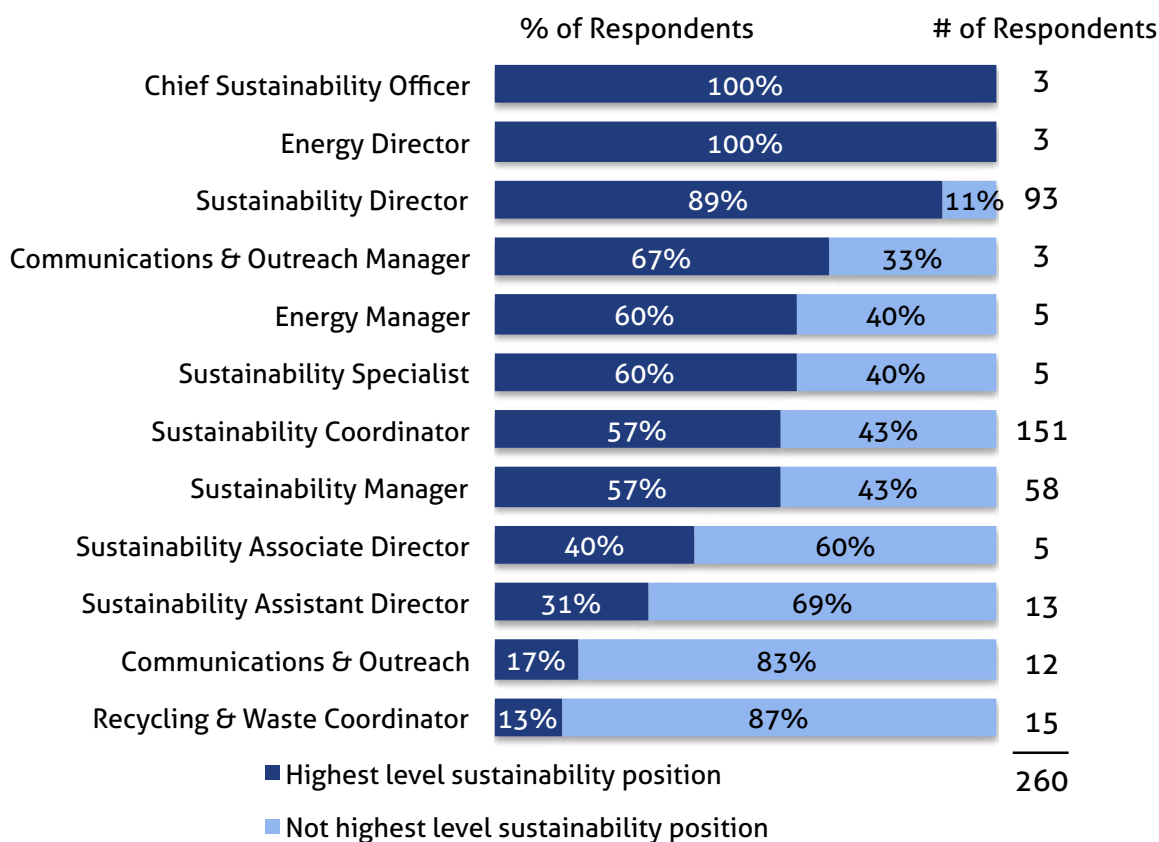


Purchasing supervisor Pamela Dumm was the recipient of the 2013 Joan Riehm Memorial Environmental Leadership Award. Courtesy of Jefferson Community & Technical College.

Highest Level Positions

To gain insight into leadership roles for various sustainability positions, respondents were asked "Is your position the highest-level sustainability position at your institution or organization?" Answer choices included "Yes", "No", "Not sure" and "My position shares highest-level status with one or more other positions." Overall, 57 percent of respondents indicated that their position was the highest level sustainability position. When combined with information about position types, it is clear that highest level position titles vary quite a bit between institutions. Chief Sustainability Officers and Sustainability Directors were the most likely group to be in highest-level sustainability positions (89%). However, the majority of Sustainability Coordinators (57%) indicated that they also represented the highest-level sustainability position at their institutions. This level of variation may be explained by the fact that sustainability initiatives are well-established and long-standing at some institutions and may still be in their infancy at others.

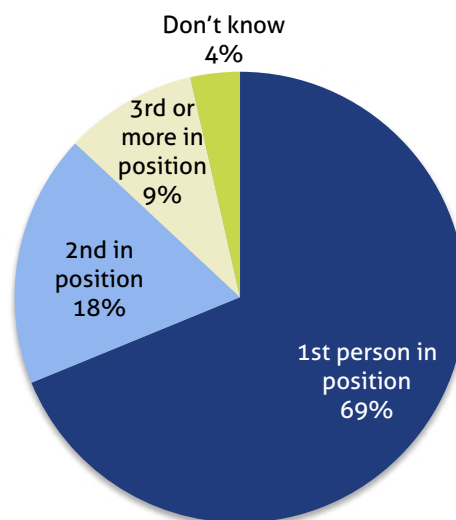
HIGHEST LEVEL POSITION (OR SHARED STATUS) OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS



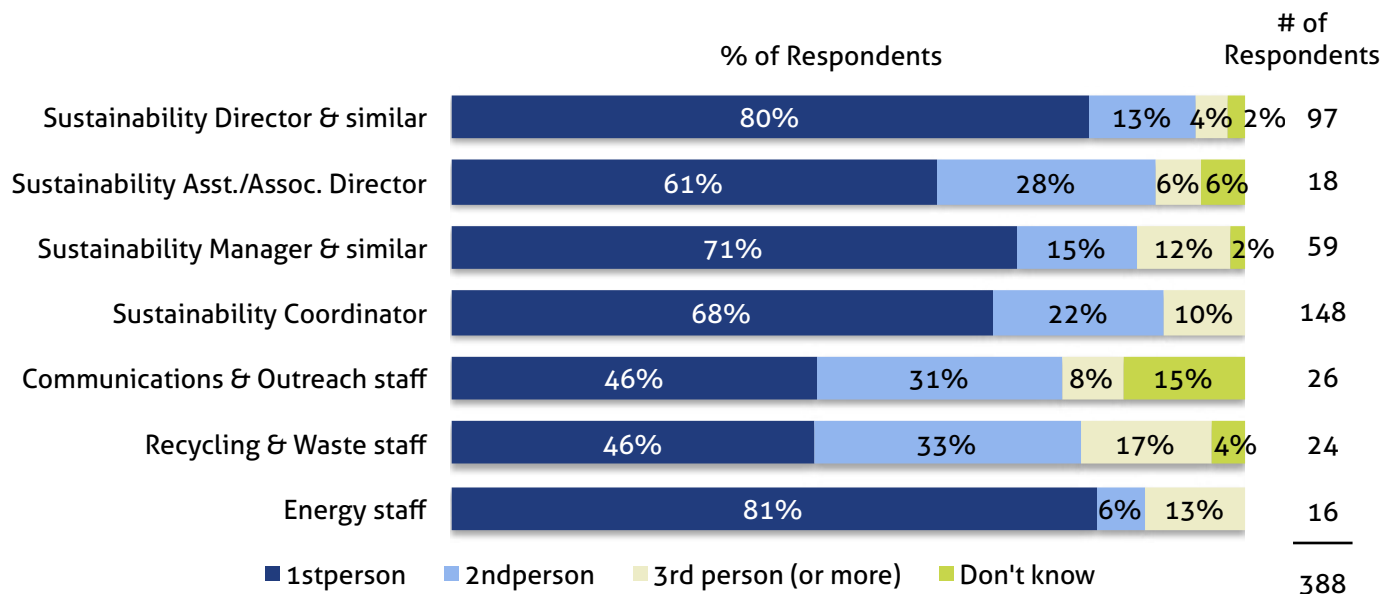
Number of Persons Who Have Held Position

To help determine the creation of new sustainability positions, respondents were asked, "I am the _____ person to hold my position at its current rank/level." Answer choices included "1st," "2nd," "3rd," "4th or more" and "not sure." This question was also asked in 2012. The majority of respondents (87%) were either the first or second person to hold their current position. This is a slight reduction since 2012 (92%). By position type, notably larger percentages of Sustainability Directors (80%) and energy staff (81%) were the first to hold their positions.

NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO HAVE
HELD POSITION
N=452



NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO HAVE HELD POSITION – BY POSITION TYPE

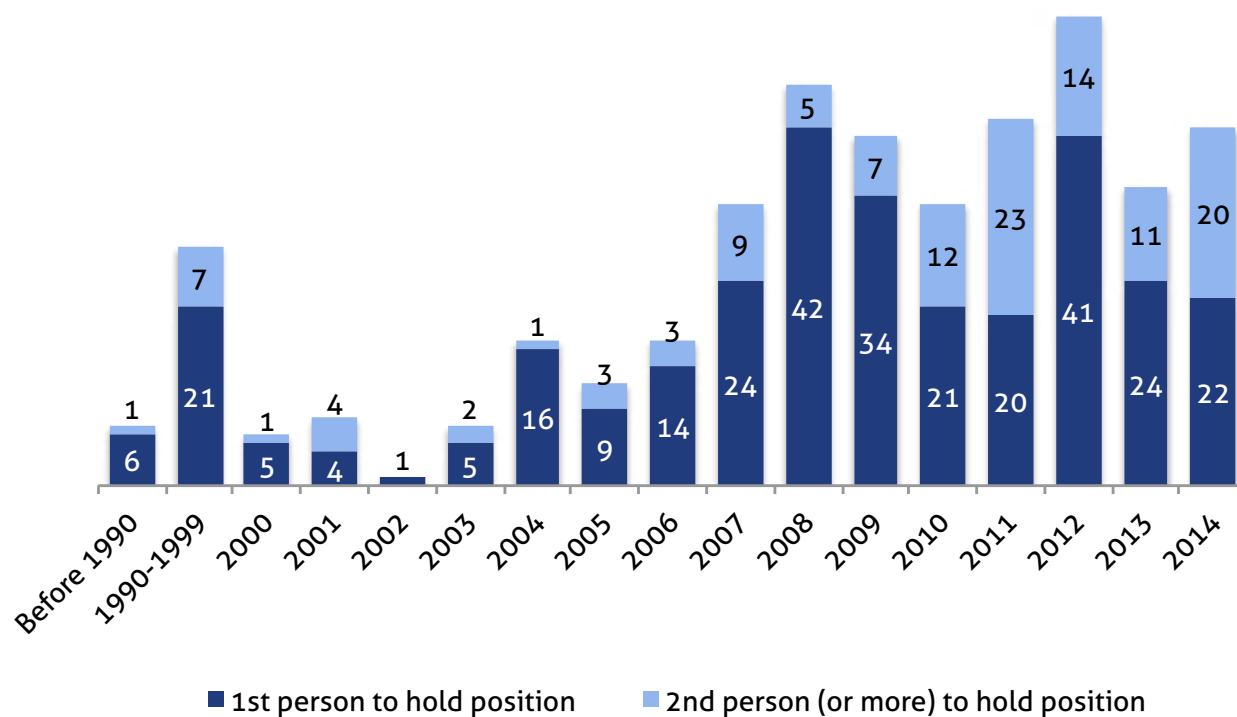


Year when Campus Sustainability Work Began

Respondents were asked to answer the question, "In what year did you begin working in higher education sustainability overall?" When combining results of this question with respondents who indicated that they were the first person to hold their position at its current rank/level (see [previous page](#)), the results provided insight into the history and recent growth of campus sustainability positions. A differently worded version of this question was asked in 2012.

Consistent with 2012 results, the 2015 survey showed a small spike in 2008 in number of new individuals working in campus sustainability positions that were the first to hold their position (see graph below). Since 2012, 87 respondents indicated that they entered into new, first-time positions in campus sustainability, with a significant spike in 2012. This demonstrates the continued growth of the campus sustainability profession since the last spike occurred in 2008.

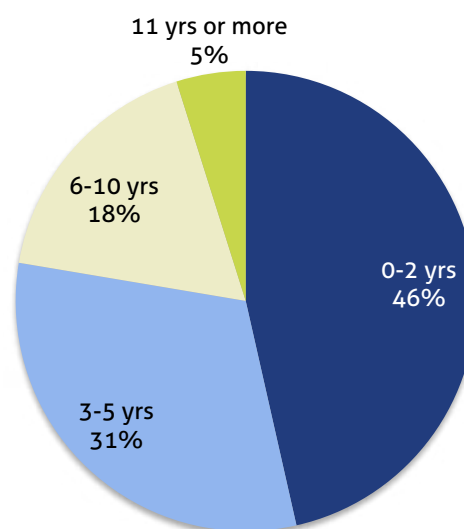
YEAR WHEN HIGHER EDUCATION SUSTAINABILITY WORK BEGAN
N=432



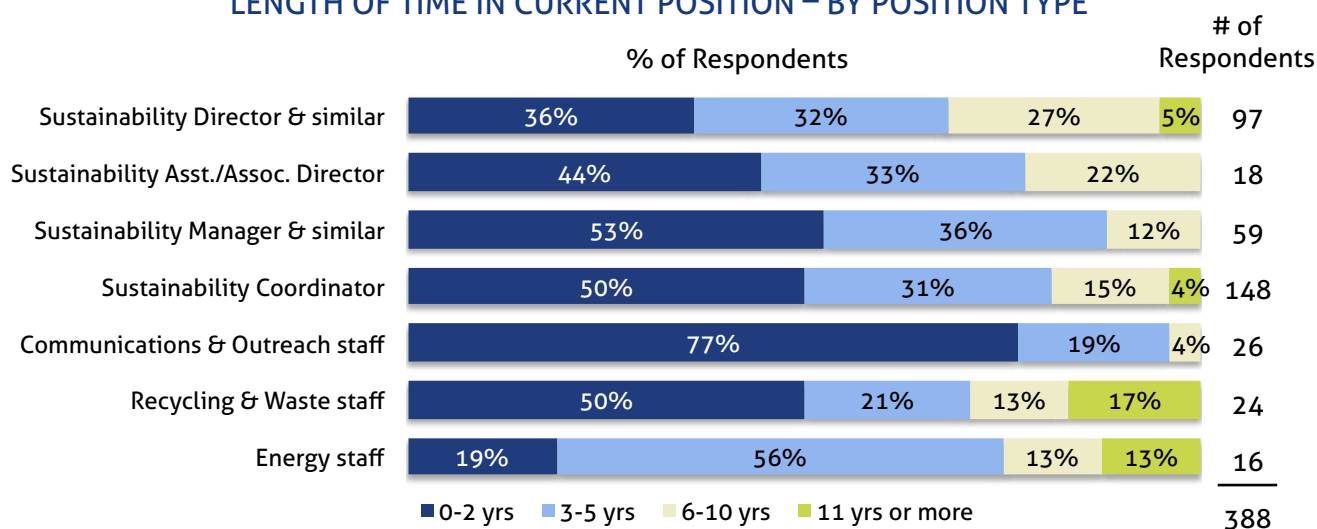
Length of Time in Current Position

A question similar to the one mentioned above asked respondents, "In what year did you begin working in the position that you currently hold?" Seventy-seven percent of respondents indicated that they had been in their current positions for five years or less, compared to nearly 90 percent in 2012. Compared to 2012, more sustainability professionals have held their positions for 6 to 10 years (18% in 2015 versus only 10% in 2012). Overall, the findings indicate that sustainability officers are becoming seasoned sustainability professionals in higher education. Respondents holding their positions for six years or more increased from 12 percent in 2012 to 23 percent in 2015. By position type, length of time in current position was highest for energy staff and lowest for communications & outreach staff.

NUMBER OF YEARS IN CURRENT POSITION
N=452



LENGTH OF TIME IN CURRENT POSITION – BY POSITION TYPE



Main Driver for Position Creation

Respondents were asked to indicate the main driver(s) for the creation of their current positions. The most common option identified was “institutional priority”, with one-third of respondents indicating that this was among the main drivers. Twenty-three percent of respondents indicated that a staff or faculty champion was among the main drivers, while 17 percent of respondents said commitment from the president/chancellor, such as becoming an ACUPCC signatory, was among the main drivers.

Several respondents selecting the “other” category referenced a need to expand the scope of an existing sustainability office or unit as impetus for creating their positions. This option was not an answer choice in this survey but will be included in future surveys.

MAIN DRIVER FOR POSITION CREATION N=452



Where Position is Housed

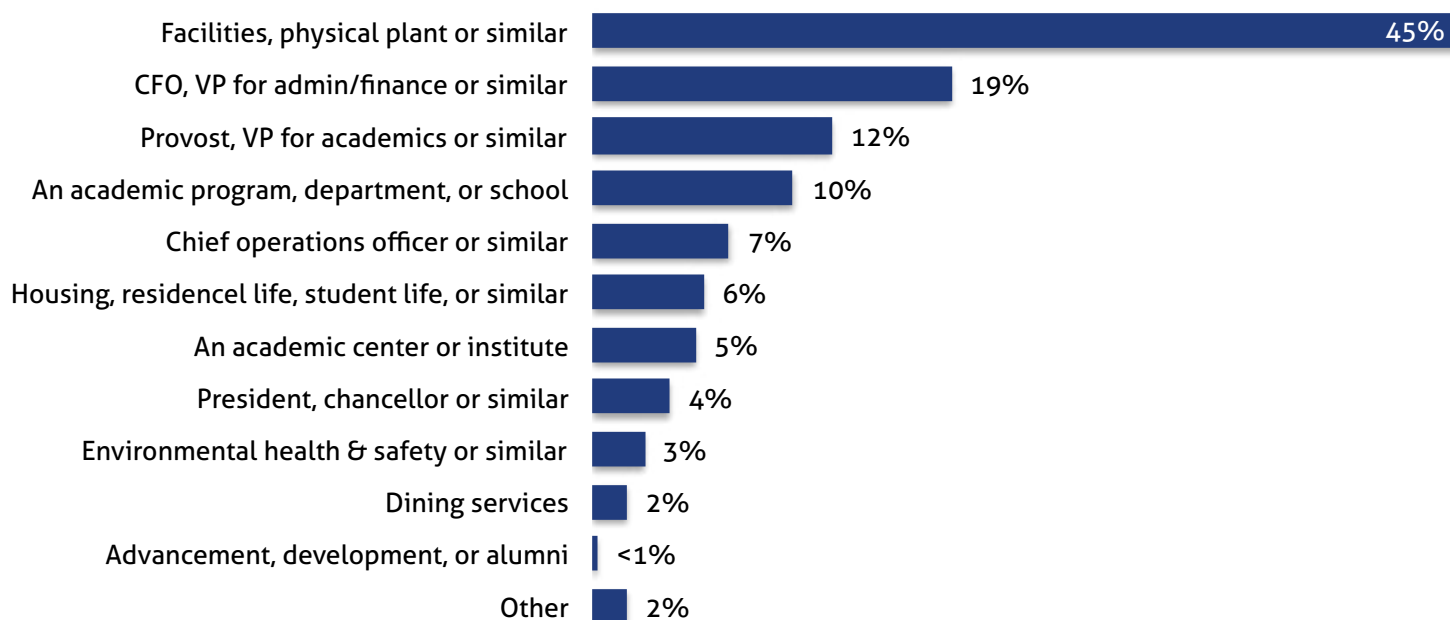
The 2015 survey asked respondents, "Is your position housed in a sustainability office, unit, center, or institute with "sustainability" in its name?" Sixty percent of respondents said their position was housed in a sustainability office or unit with sustainability in its name (not shown), compared to 66 percent in 2012 and 23 percent in 2010. This slight decrease since 2012 is likely due to different sample of respondents rather than closing of sustainability offices or units.

In 2015, we also asked, "Where is your sustainability position, office, and/or unit housed organizationally? Respondents could choose two options if a single location was not the most appropriate answer. Sixty-two respondents (14%) selected more than one option. The results are shown in the bar graph below, and are similar to 2012 results. By far the largest number of positions and offices were housed fully or in part in "facilities, physical plant or similar", with The second largest number of positions and offices were housed in the "CFO, VP for admin/finance or similar." Eighteen respondents indicated that their position was housed within the office of the president/ chancellor.

WHERE SUSTAINABILITY POSITIONS ARE HOUSED

N=458

TOTAL RESPONSES = 520



Level of Campus Engagement

A new question in the 2015 survey asked respondents, "Within your sustainability position, indicate the level of engagement you have with the following offices or divisions at your institution/system office." For each of the offices or divisions listed below, respondents could reply "very engaged (almost daily interaction)," "Frequently engaged (several interactions per month)," "Occasionally engaged (several interactions per year)," "Rarely engaged (a few interactions per year)," "Not at all engaged (no interaction)" and "N/A - No such office or division exists." This question expands on a question asked in 2012 related to percent of time spent in five broad campus sectors. Results were tabulated using a weighted average.

Respondents were most highly engaged with facilities, on average having several interactions per month with individuals in this area. This may not be surprising considering the results of the previous question, where an overwhelming majority of positions were housed in facilities or physical plant. The second highest area of engagement was with Dining Services. Areas with the least amount of engagement included Admissions, Diversity Offices, Advancement/Alumni offices, Athletics offices, and Human Resources. Overall, these findings demonstrate higher levels of engagement with departments and offices dealing with campus operations, student affairs, and communications & outreach. In an optional follow-up field for this question, several respondents indicated that they are highly engaged with specific academic departments, so this option will be added for future surveys.

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT ACROSS CAMPUS

N=446

FREQUENTLY ENGAGED

Facilities office	3.34
Dining Services office	2.54

OCCASIONALLY ENGAGED

Housing/residence life office or similar	2.40
Student affairs, student government office	2.34
Communications/Marketing office	2.33
Finance/Administration office	1.98
Environmental Health & Safety office	1.89
Procurement/Purchasing office	1.87
Information Technology office	1.60
Provost or Academic Affairs office	1.57

RARELY ENGAGED

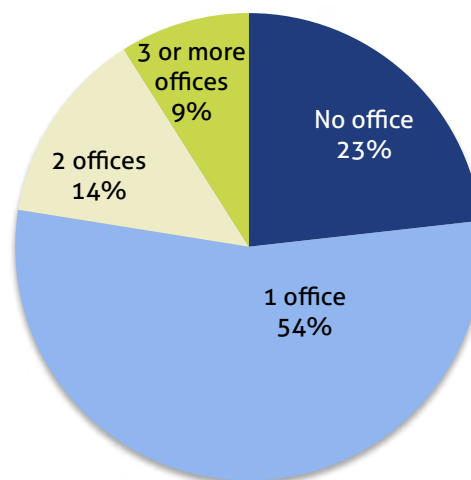
President or Chancellor office	1.48
Health & Wellness office	1.47
Institutional research office	1.44
Human resources office	1.36
Athletics office	1.33
Advancement, development, or alumni office	1.31
Diversity office	1.13
Admissions office	1.09

Number of Sustainability Offices/Units

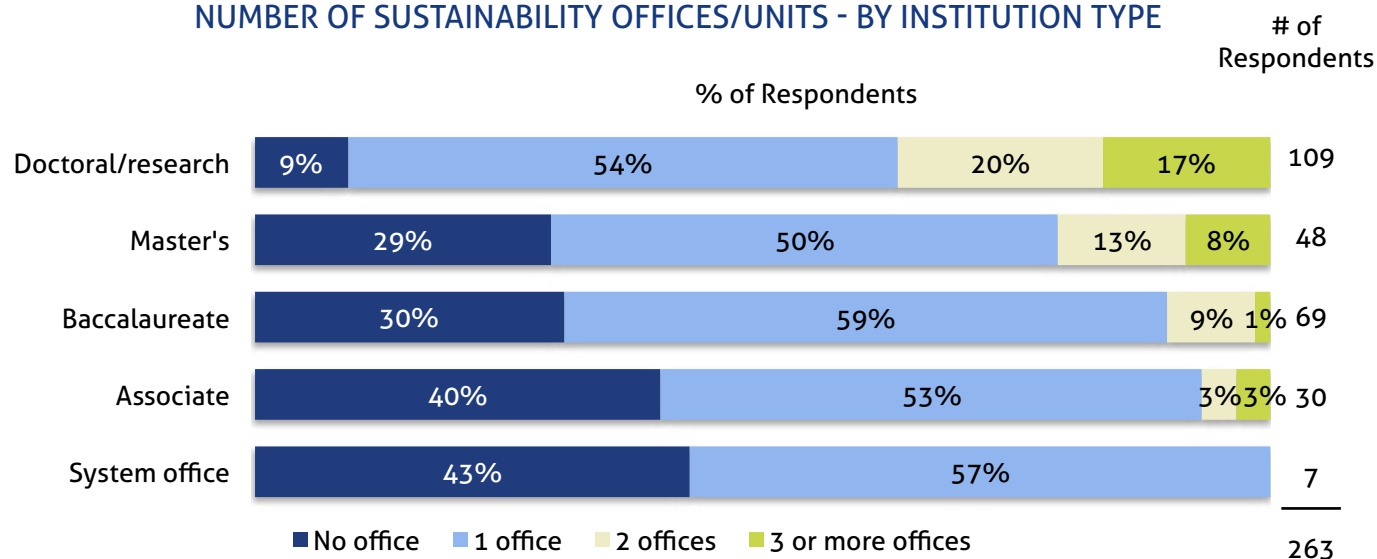
Self-identified sustainability points of contact at a particular institution were asked "How many sustainability offices, units, centers or institutes with "sustainability" in its name does your institution/system office have?" This question was also asked in 2012. The rate of institutions with at least one office, center or institute with "sustainability" in its name has increased from 71 percent in 2012 to 76 percent in 2015. The number of institutions with no office decreased from 27 percent in 2012 to 23 percent in 2015. These results indicate that sustainability is a growing priority in higher education.

When looking at results by institution type, institutions offering advanced degrees were increasingly more likely to have one or more offices, units or centers with "sustainability" in the name (see bar graph below). Doctoral/research institutions had the largest percentage with at least one office (91%), while just over half of associate colleges and system offices had at least one office.

NUMBER OF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICES/UNITS
N=269



NUMBER OF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICES/UNITS - BY INSTITUTION TYPE

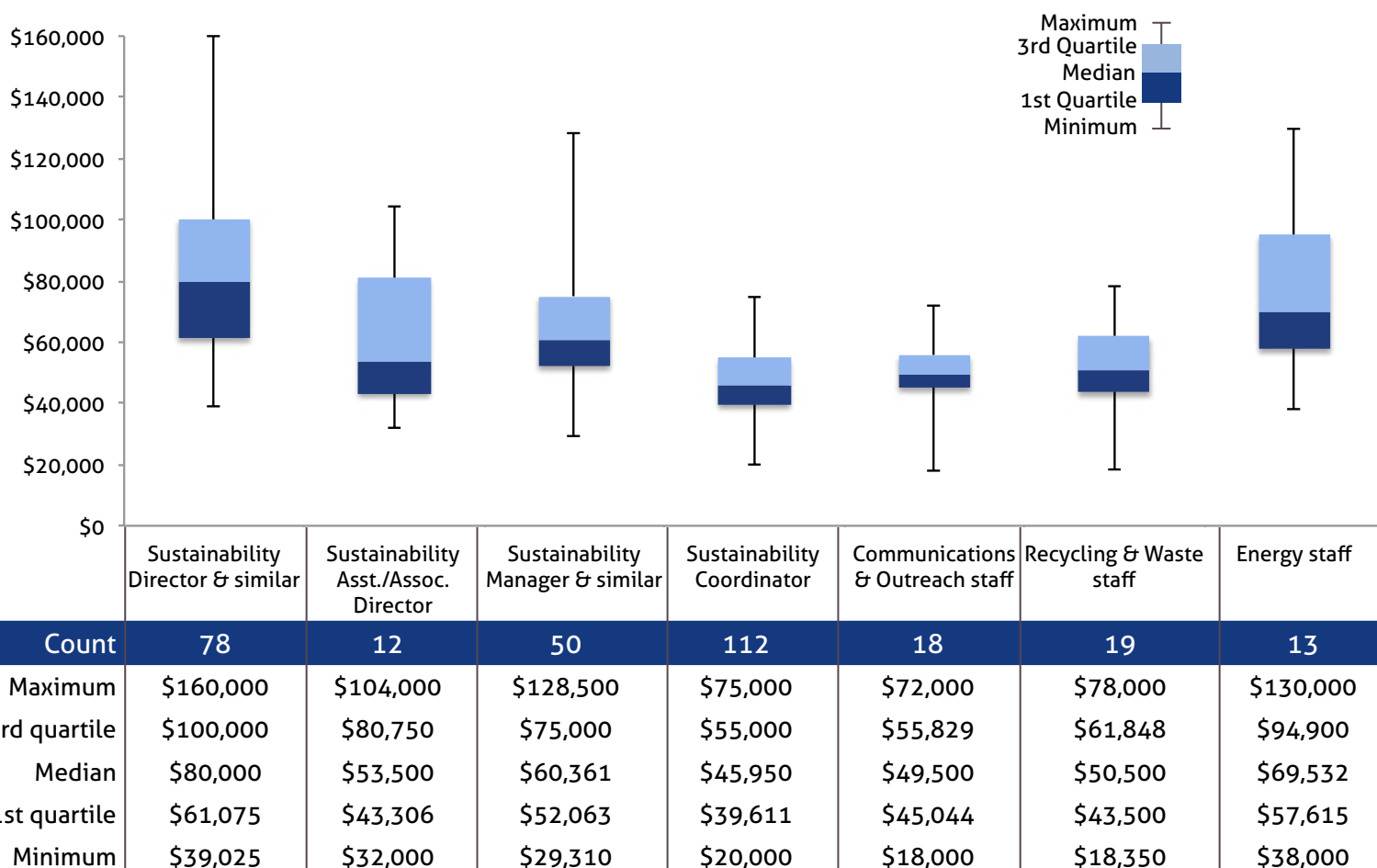


SALARY, BENEFITS & FUNDING

Salary Data

For salary data presented in this section, respondents were excluded if their positions were dedicated to sustainability less than 75 percent of the time. Low and high outliers were also excluded. Part-time & hourly workers were included (they were asked to enter the amount they would earn annually based on the number of hours they were working). The box and whisker plot below summarizes the salary range (indicated by the vertical lines) and salary quartiles for each position type, while the table below provides details. As might be expected, Sustainability Directors and similar positions had the highest top salary (\$160,000) and highest median salary (\$80,000). The methodology for salary data was similar in the 2012 survey and results were also similar. There is an overall trend toward slightly higher median salaries in 2015 as compared to 2012 that suggests growing experience among sustainability staff.

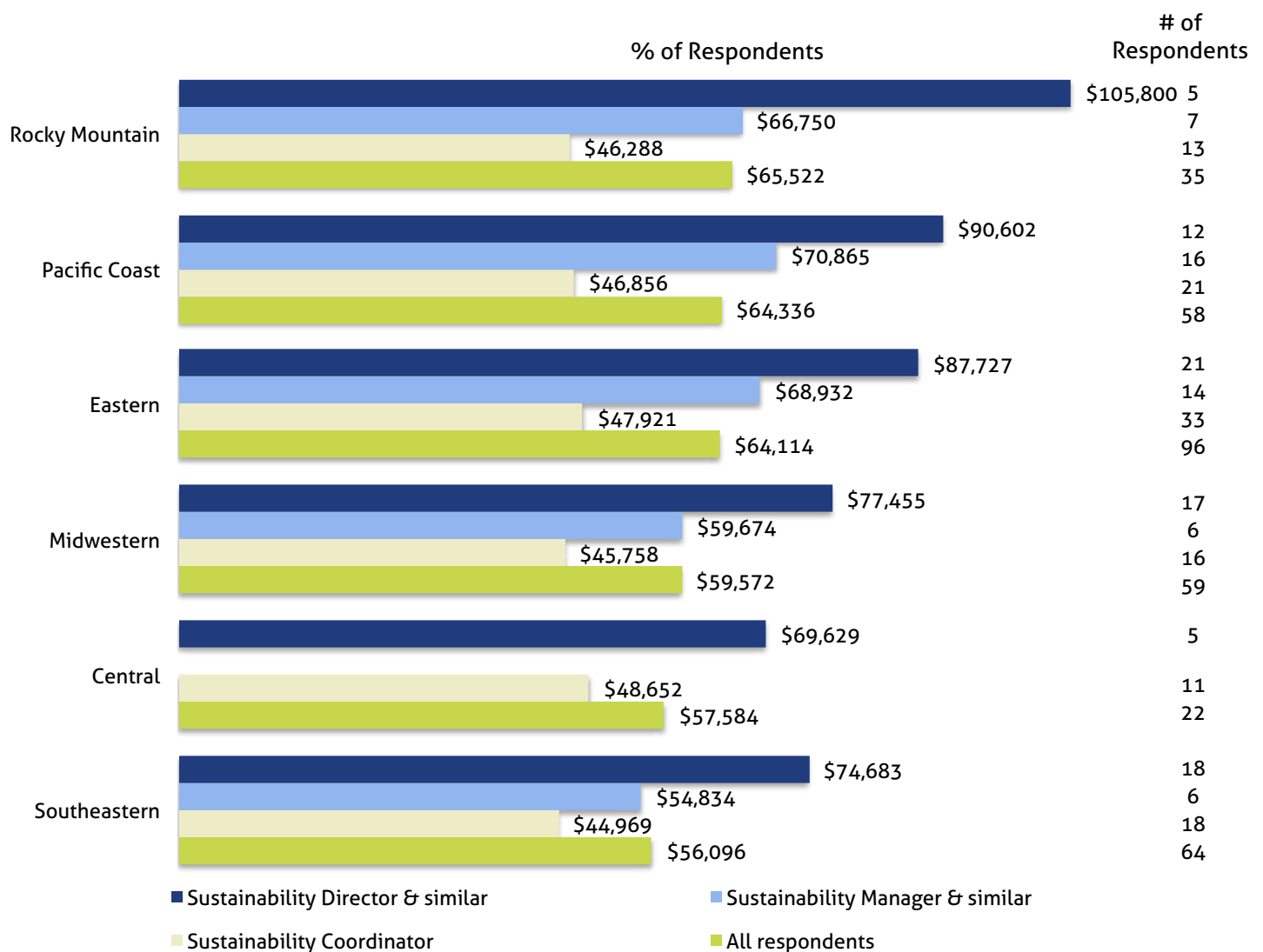
SALARY RANGE & PERCENTILES – BY POSITION TYPE
N=302



Salary by Region

The table below shows average salaries by region for all respondents and for the three most common position types. The Rocky Mountain region had the highest average salaries overall and for Sustainability Directors. The Pacific Coast region had the highest average salary for Sustainability Managers. Although the Central region had the highest average salary for Sustainability Coordinators, it had the lowest average salary for Managers and Directors. The Southeastern region had the lowest average salaries overall. These results are very similar to findings in 2012.

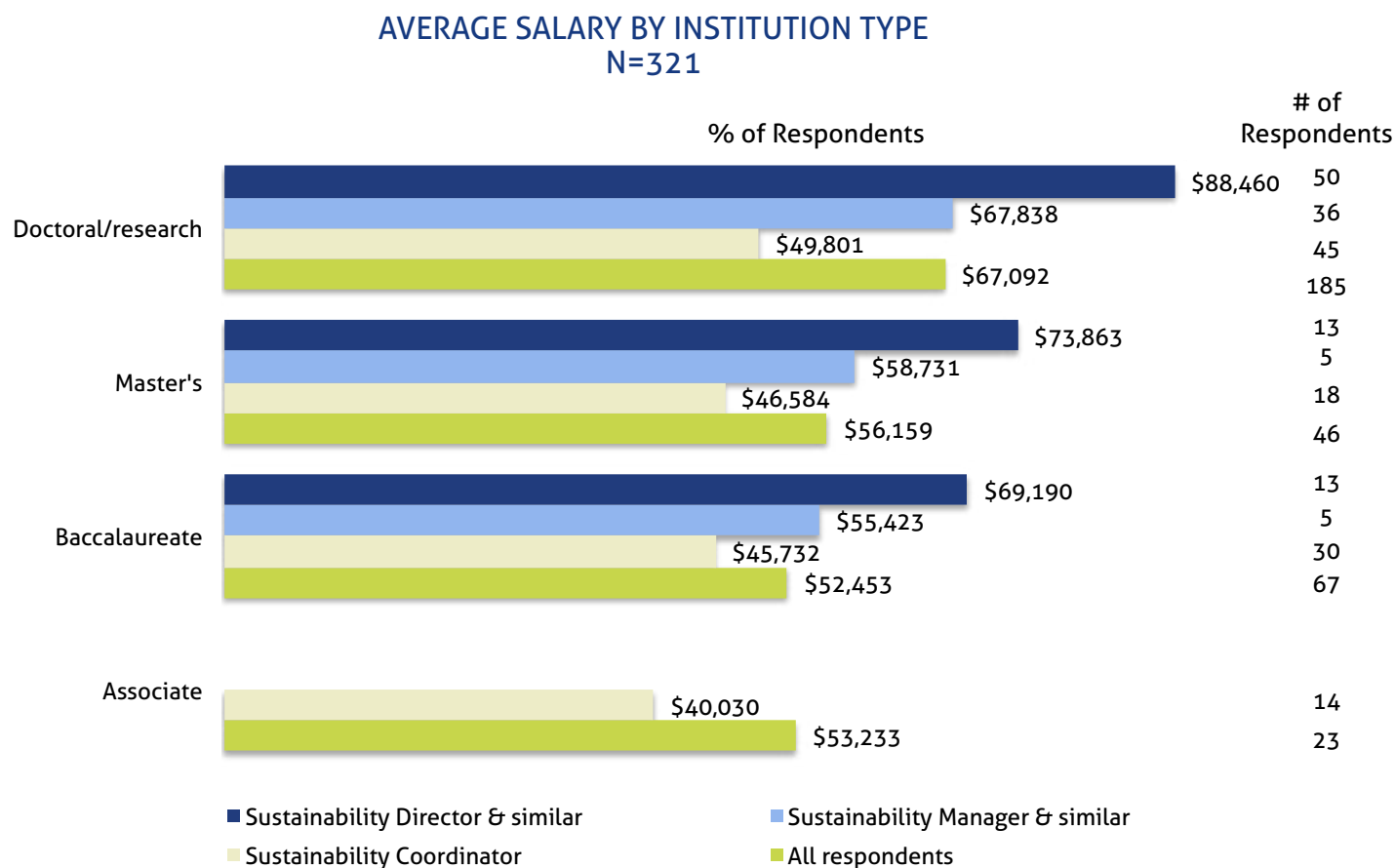
AVERAGE SALARY BY REGION N=334



Note: The average salary for Sustainability Managers in the Central region is not displayed in this graph because there was only one such respondent.

Salary by Institution type

The bar graph below shows average salary by position type for each institution type. Overall, average salaries were highest at doctoral/research institutions and lowest at baccalaureate and associate institutions, with salaries for master's institutions falling in the middle.

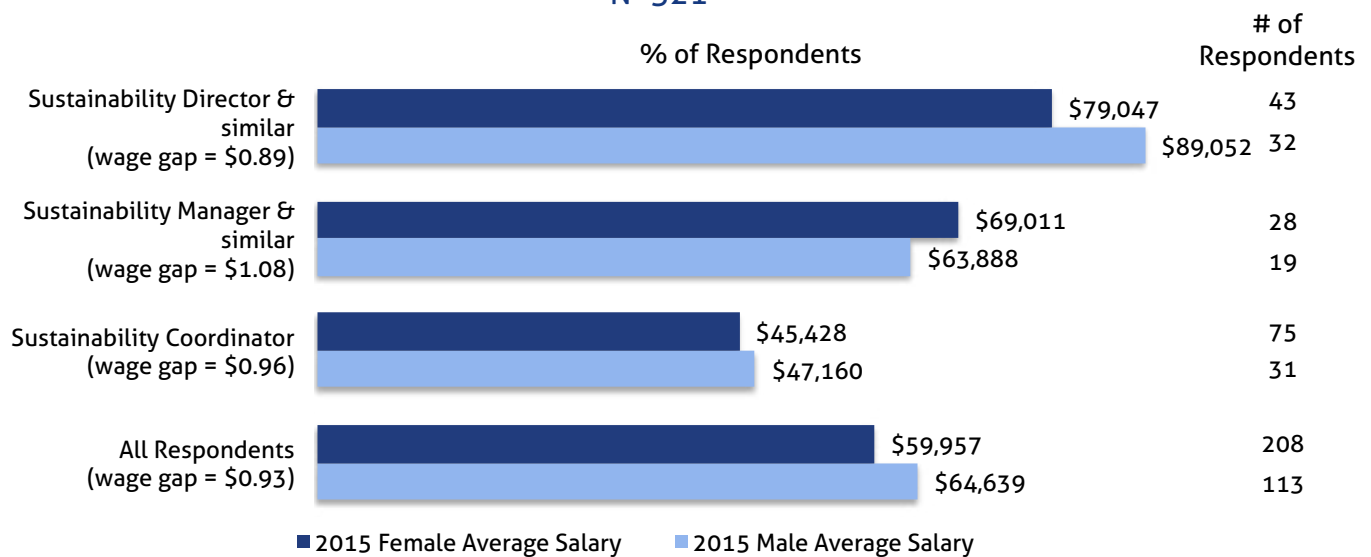


Note: Average salaries for Sustainability Directors and Sustainability Managers at associate colleges are not displayed in this graph due to low responses for these positions (1 and 3 respectively).

Salary by Gender Identity

When analyzing responses by gender identity, average salaries were higher for males in Director and Coordinator positions, with female respondents earning 89 cents and 96 cents to the dollar respectively compared to male respondents. For the Sustainability Manager position however, female respondents earned \$1.08 to the dollar in comparison to males. For all respondents overall, the gender wage gap shrank between 2012 and 2015, with female respondents earning 93 cents to the dollar in 2015 compared to 88 cents to the dollar in 2012.

AVERAGE 2015 SALARY BY GENDER N=321



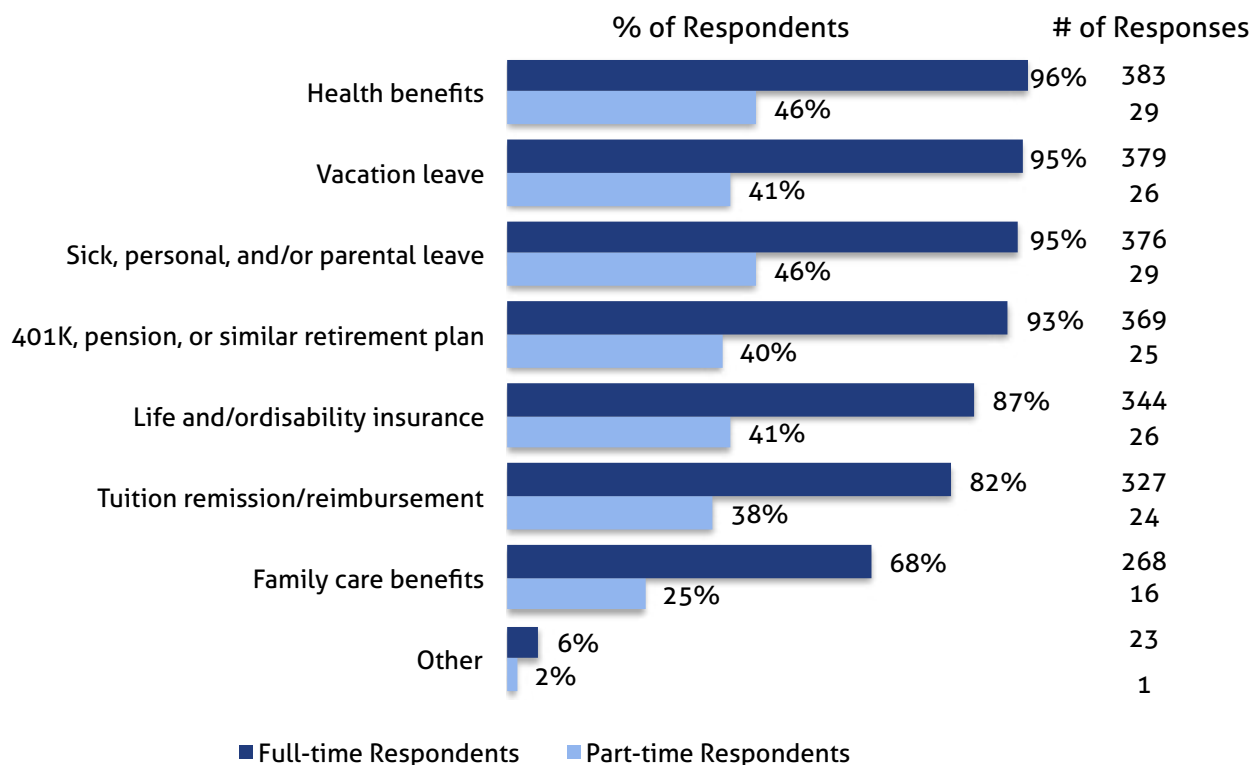
Student and staff member pose in front of the UVic Bike Centre. Image courtesy of University of Victoria.

Employee Benefits

The 2015 staffing survey asked about the types of employee benefits that respondents receive through their sustainability positions. This question was not asked in previous surveys.

As the table below shows, the vast majority of full-time respondents (over 90%) receive retirement, health, sick leave, and vacation benefits. However, these types of benefits are offered to less than half of part-time respondents. A common benefit within higher education is tuition remission/reimbursement, and over 80 percent of full-time respondents indicated that they are able to take advantage of such an option. Some of the "other" benefits identified by respondents included adoption cost reimbursement, home buying assistance, flex time, wellness programs and free or reduced access to transit, parking, fitness and/or athletic facilities.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS – BY HEADCOUNT
N=460



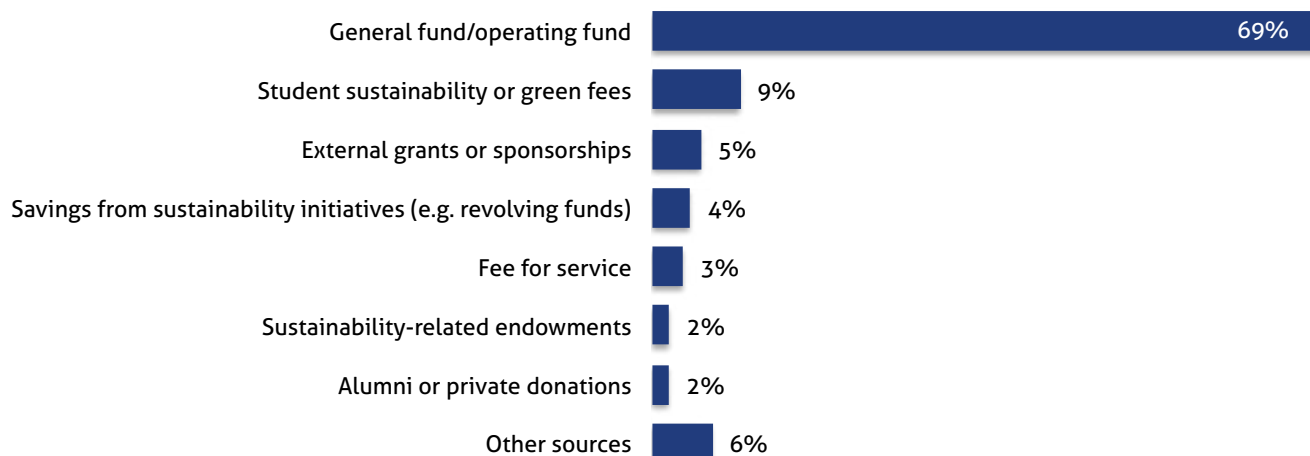
Sources of Funding

Respondents were asked to provide the approximate percentage of their discretionary budget coming from eight funding sources, and could skip the question if unsure. This question was slightly different in language and format from a similar question in 2012, but general comparisons can still be made.

Seventy-seven percent of respondents who control a budget completed this question, while nearly a quarter of respondents did not indicate source of discretionary funding. The vast majority of funding for all positions (69%) came from "general fund/operating fund." Funding for sustainability through student sustainability fees or green funds increased from 4 percent in 2012 to 9 percent in 2015, which is indicative of growing student interest in addressing sustainability challenges. Results were similar by position type (not shown here).

SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR POSITION – AVERAGE PERCENTAGE

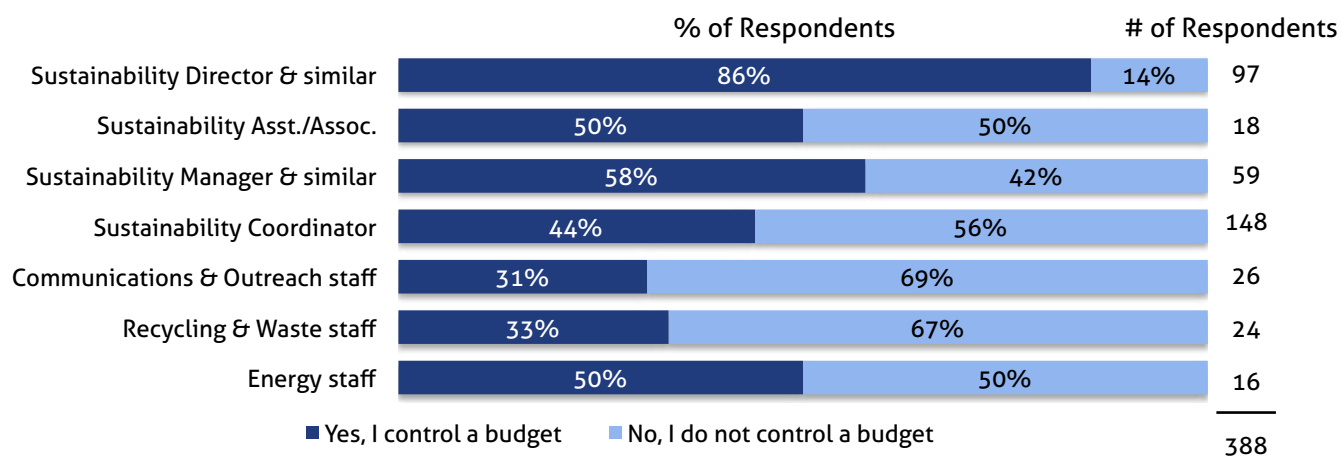
N=191



Control of a Budget

Fifty-five percent of respondents indicated that they personally control a budget in their positions. As might be expected, Sustainability Director positions were most likely to control a budget, with 86 percent answering yes. Staff in communications & outreach and recycling & waste were least likely to control a budget (31% and 33% respectively). Findings were similar in 2012.

CONTROL OF A BUDGET – BY POSITION TYPE

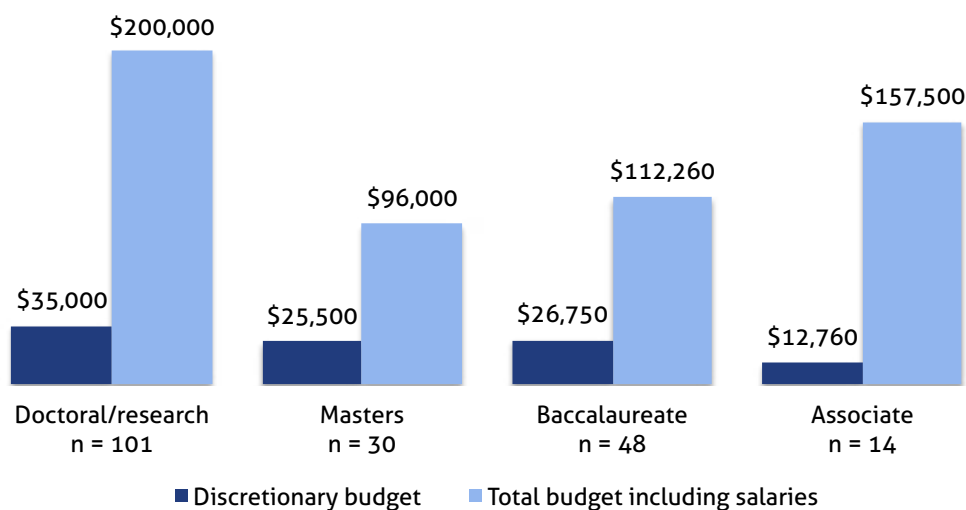


Sustainability Budgets

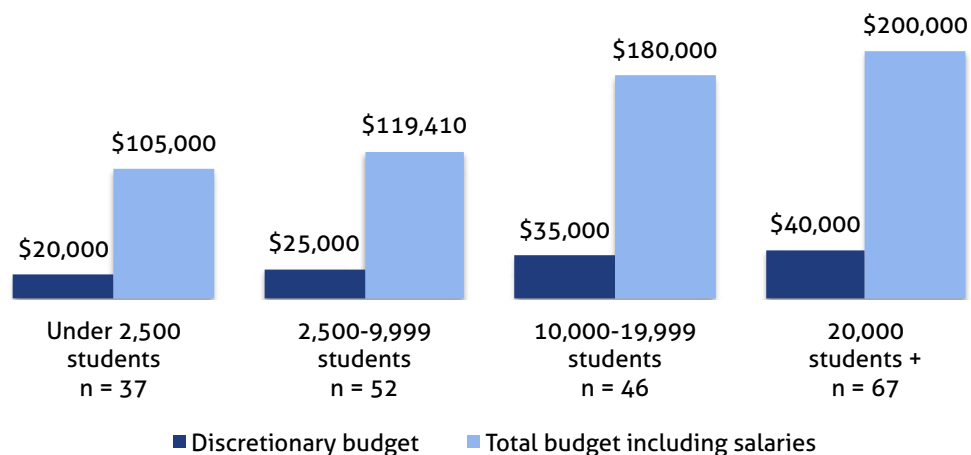
Respondents who indicated that they controlled a budget were asked a series of questions related to their discretionary and total budgets, including salaries for the current and previous years. Respondents could leave fields blank if they did not know the budget amounts. This question was asked in 2012 but has been changed, so results are not directly comparable.

Findings were most useful when presented in terms of institution type and institution size based on student enrollment. In terms of institution type, discretionary and total budgets were highest among doctoral and research institutions. Discretionary budgets were lowest for associate colleges while total budgets including salaries were lowest for master's institutions. In terms of student enrollment size, median discretionary and total budgets tended to increase with enrollment size. Overall, median budgets for the previous year were equal to or slightly lower than for the current year with few exceptions (previous year's budget data not displayed in charts below).

MEDIAN ANNUAL BUDGET BASED ON INSTITUTION TYPE



MEDIAN ANNUAL BUDGET BASED ON STUDENT ENROLLMENT

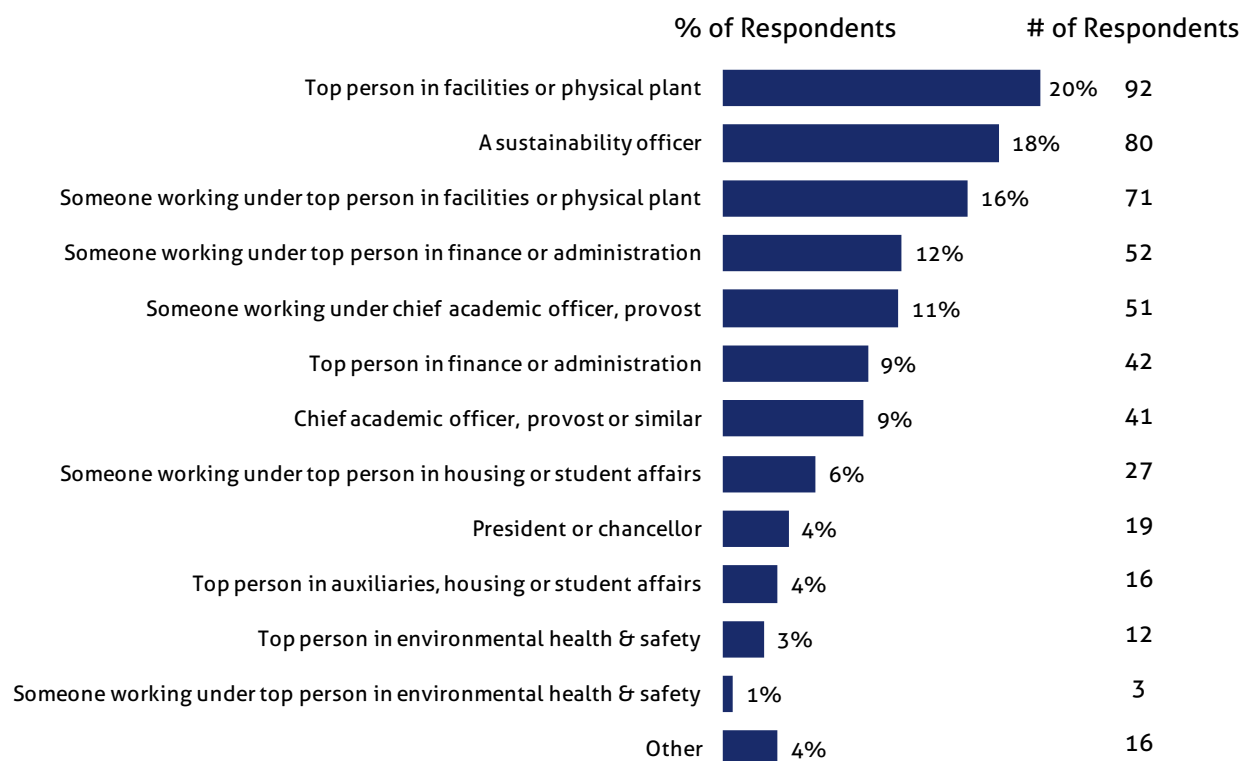


SUPERVISION

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. This question was structured similarly in 2012. The direct report with the largest percentage of responses (20%) was "top person in facilities or physical plant," followed closely by "a sustainability officer" (18%). In 2012, direct reports to a sustainability officer were slightly higher than reports to a top person in facilities (21% and 18% respectively). Overall, 36 percent of respondents reported to someone in facilities or physical plant, up from 32 percent in 2012.

WHO POSITION REPORTS TO N=451 TOTAL RESPONSES= 522

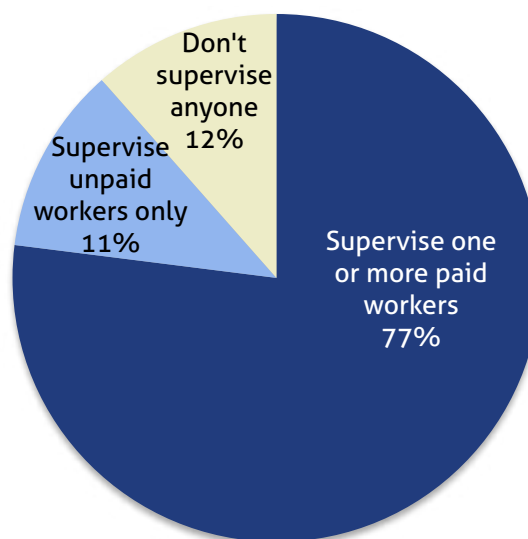


Staff Supervision

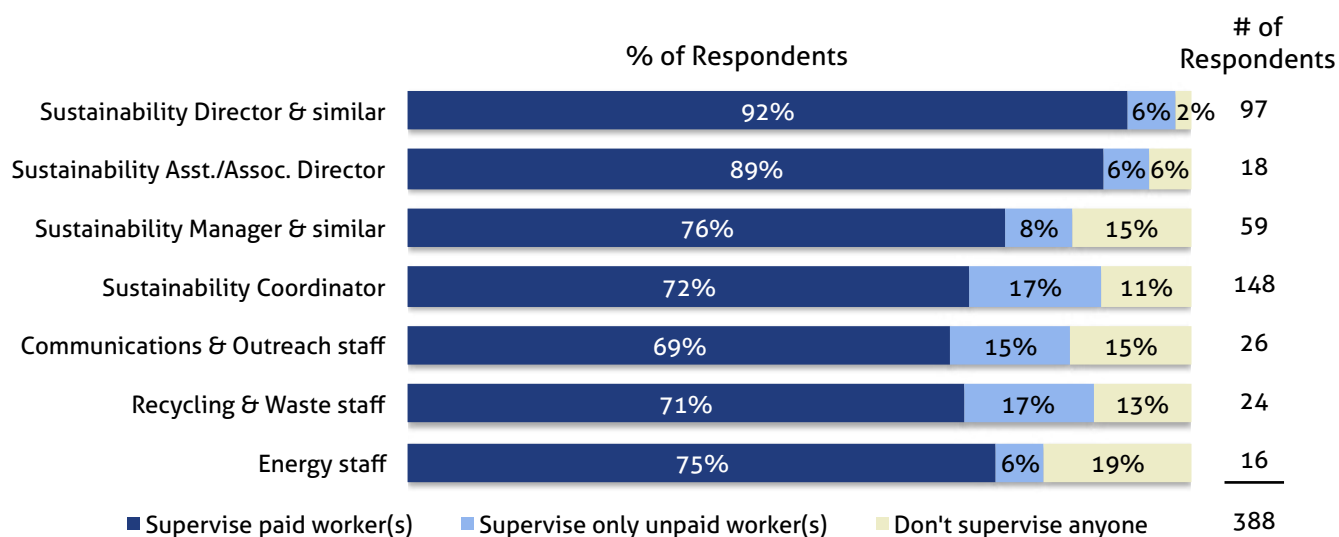
The number of respondents supervising paid or unpaid workers increased from 83 percent in 2012 to 88 percent in 2015, indicating increasing responsibility of sustainability professionals. Supervision of paid workers was most common. The number of respondents that supervise neither paid nor unpaid workers dropped from 17 percent in 2012 to 12 percent in 2015.

As might be expected, the Sustainability Director group had the largest percentage of respondents who supervised paid and unpaid staff (92%). Staff in communications & outreach were less likely to supervise workers, though an overwhelming (69%) majority did.

RESPONDENT SUPERVISORY LEVEL
N=452



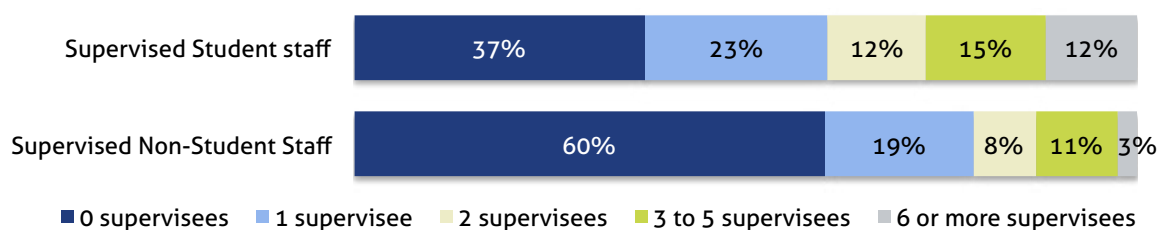
NUMBER OF STAFF SUPERVISED – BY POSITION TYPE



Number of Paid Staff Supervised

As a follow-up to the previous question, respondents were asked to enter the full-time equivalent (FTE) of the total number of paid staff who work under them directly, specifying FTE counts for non-students and students. Overall, respondents were more likely to supervise students (63%) than non-students (40%). A version of this question was asked in 2012, but was not included in the 2012 report due to data integrity issues (the survey question was revised for 2015).

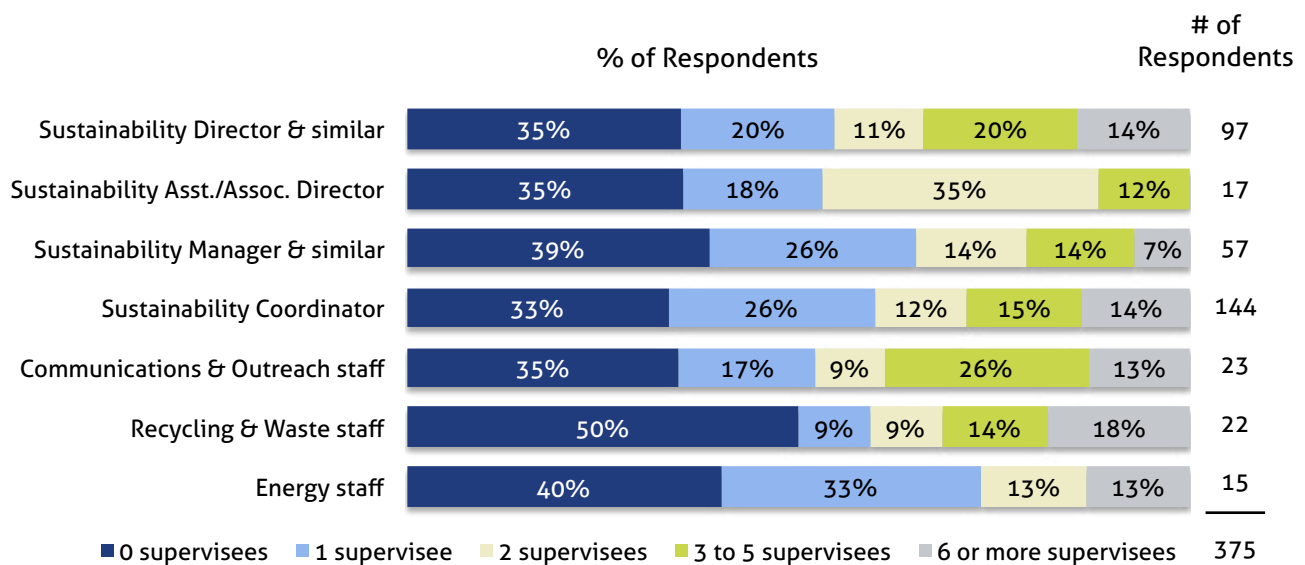
NUMBER OF PAID NON-STUDENT AND STUDENT STAFF SUPERVISED N=433



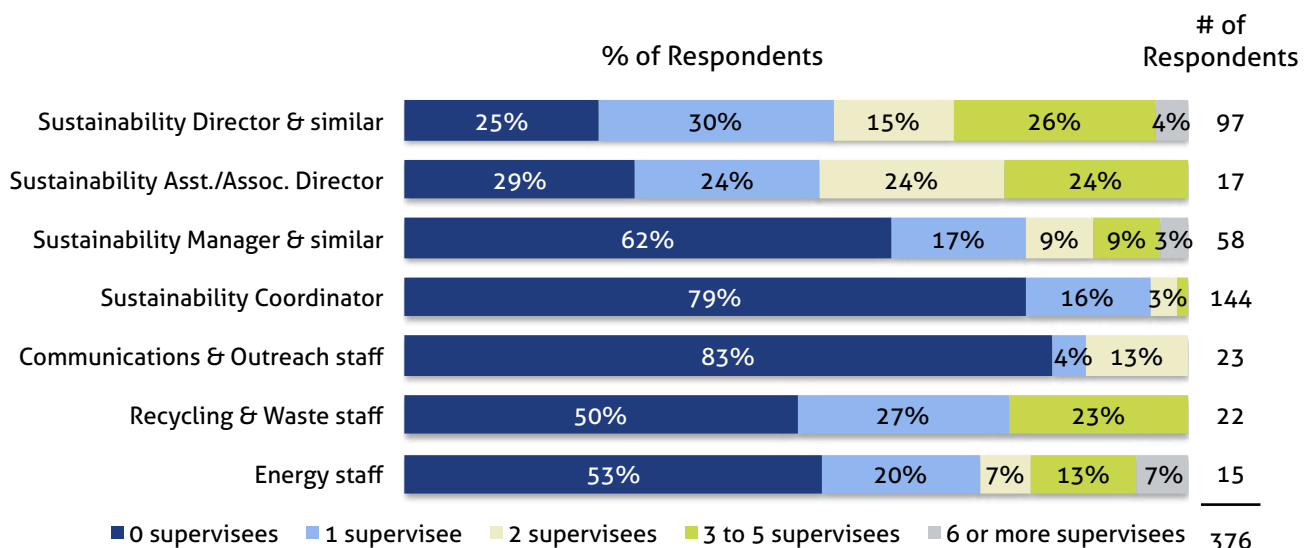
Nature Up North student intern Heron Hetzler teaches wildflower identification during a guided hike. Courtesy of St. Lawrence University in Canton, NY.

When filtering staff supervision responses by position type, results followed predictable trends for non-student supervisees but less so for student supervisees. For student supervisees, Sustainability Coordinators were most likely to supervise one or more students (67%), followed closely by Sustainability Directors and Assistant/Associate Directors and staff in communications & outreach. Recycling & waste staff were least likely to supervise one or more student workers (50%). For non-student supervisees, Sustainability Directors were most likely to supervise one or more non-student staff (75%) followed closely by Assistant/Associate Directors (71%). Communications & outreach staff, Sustainability Coordinators, and Sustainability Managers were less likely to supervise any paid non-student staff.

NUMBER OF PAID STUDENT STAFF SUPERVISED - BY POSITION TYPE



NUMBER OF PAID NON-STUDENT STAFF SUPERVISED - BY POSITION TYPE

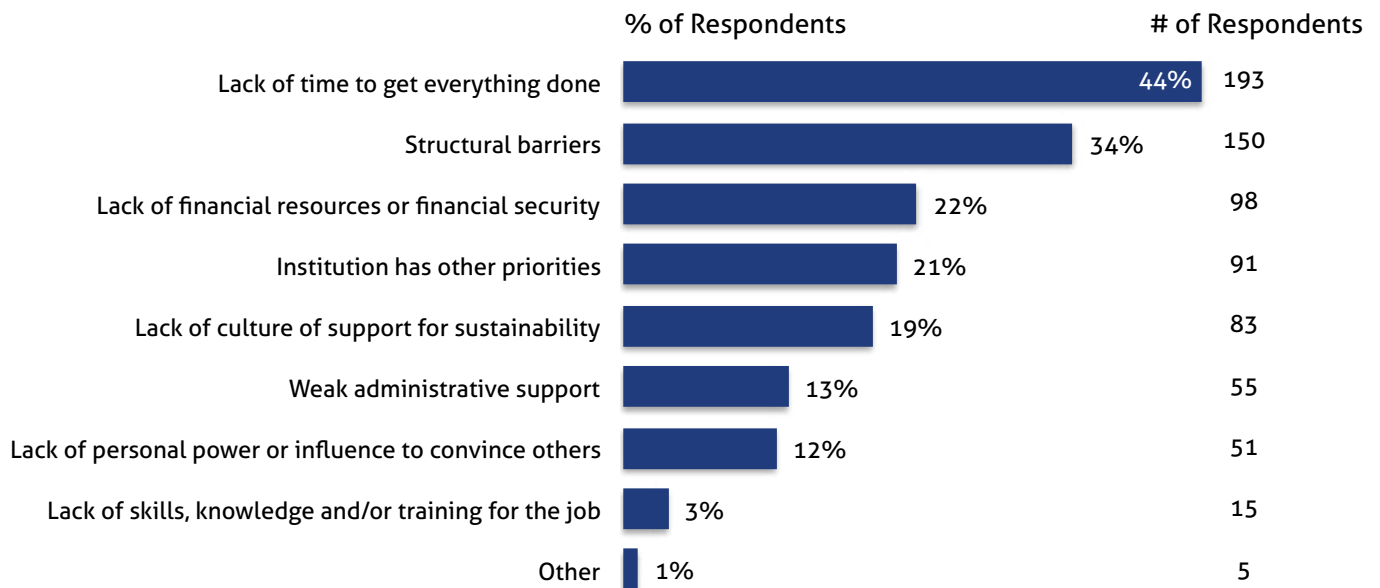


JOB SATISFACTION & CHALLENGES

Biggest Challenges

Respondents were asked to indicate the biggest challenges they face in their positions, and were allowed to select multiple options. Consistent with 2012 findings, "lack of time to get everything done" was cited by the greatest percentage of respondents as among the biggest challenges (44%), followed by "structural barriers." Results were similar by position type (not shown).

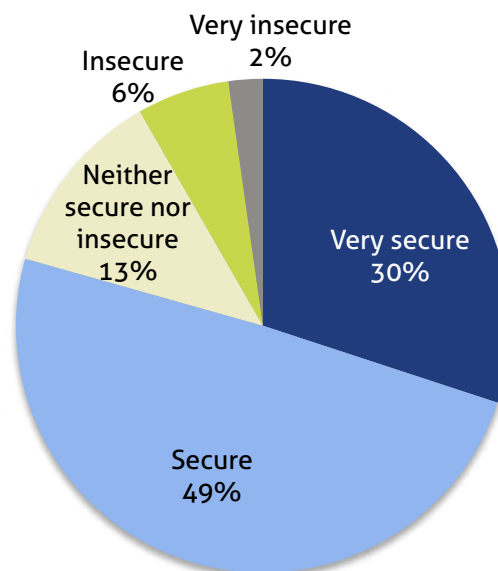
BIGGEST CHALLENGES N=439 TOTAL RESPONSES=741



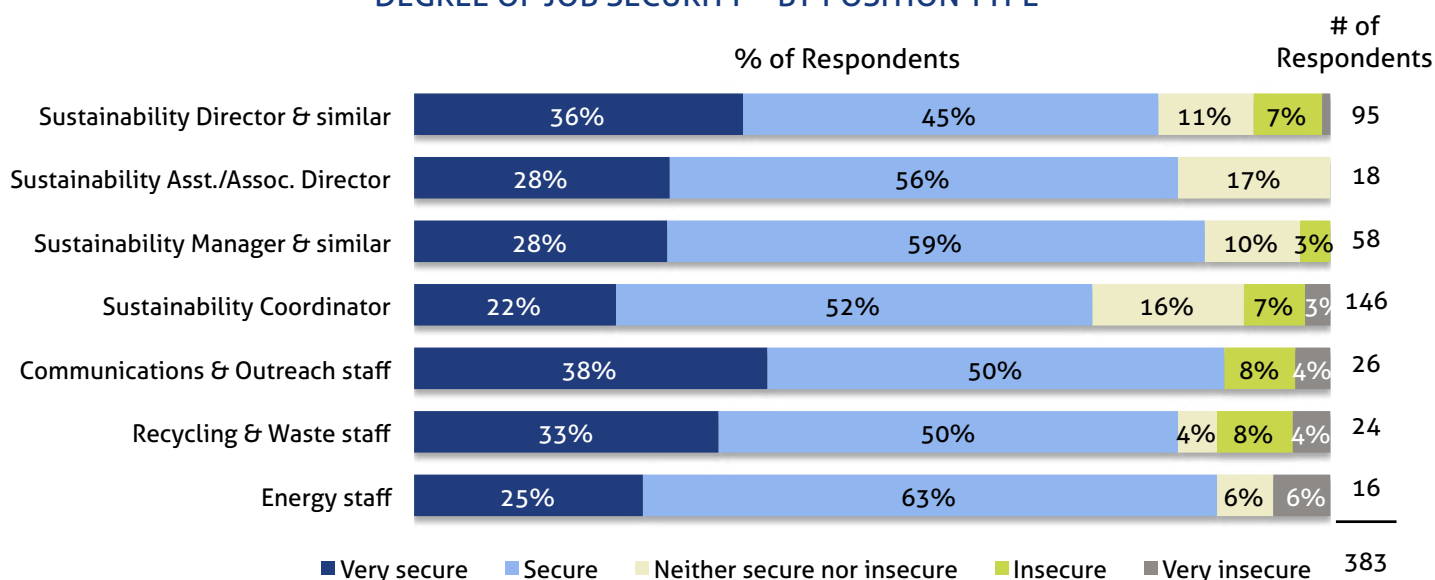
Job Security

The great majority of respondents (79%) rated their level of job security as “secure” or “very secure” (see pie chart below). This compares to a slightly higher figure (80%) for 2012. Results varied by position type. Of all position types, Sustainability Managers and staff in communications and energy had the highest percentage of respondents who said they were “secure” or “very secure”. Sustainability Coordinators had the greatest rate of insecurity, with 26 percent that are less than secure, and also had the smallest proportion that was very secure (22%). In total, ten respondents indicated they were “very insecure” in their positions (compared to seven in 2012).

DEGREE OF JOB SECURITY
N=446



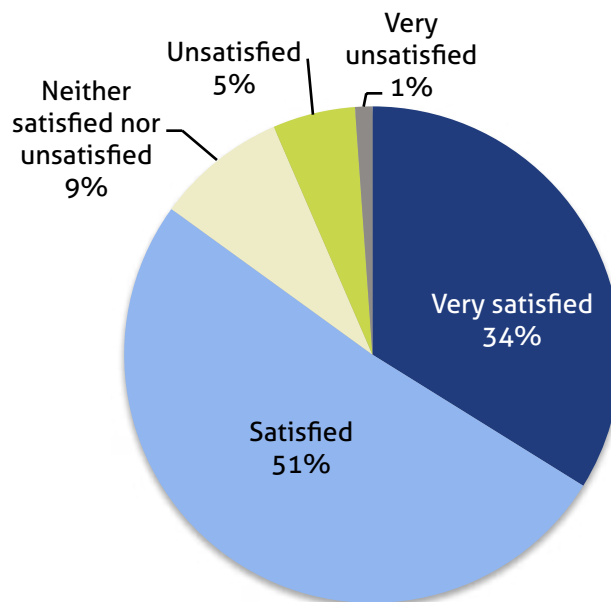
DEGREE OF JOB SECURITY – BY POSITION TYPE



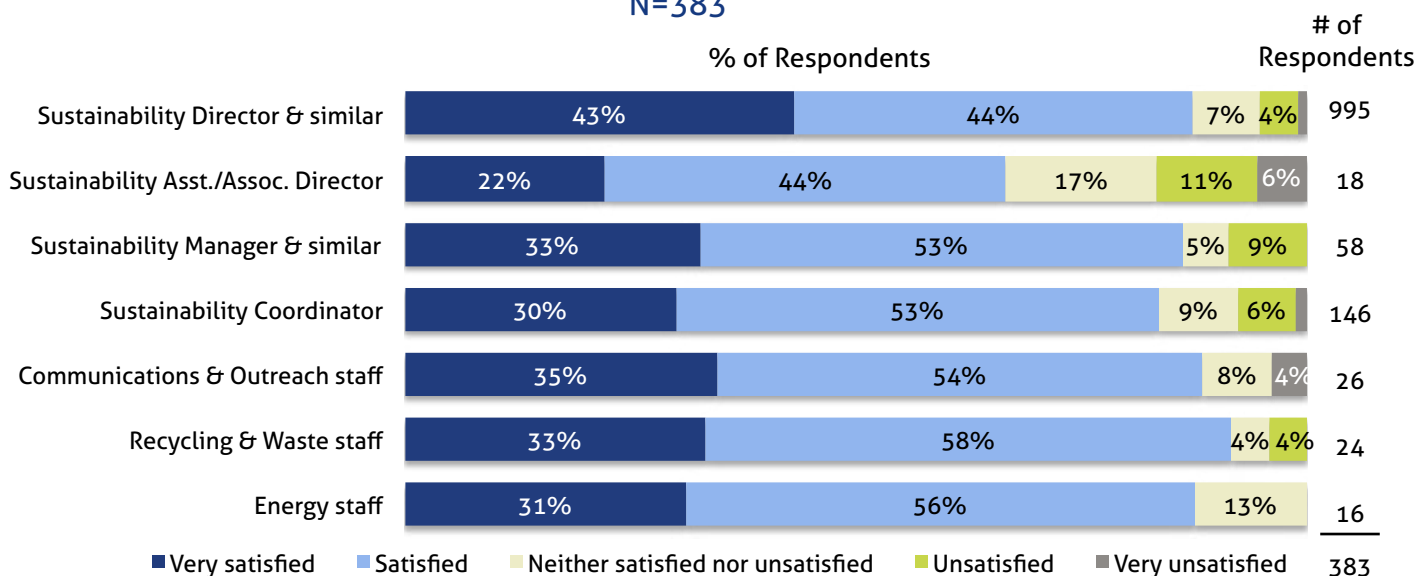
Job Satisfaction

The large majority of respondents (85%) reported being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” in their jobs (see pie chart below). This compares to a slightly lower percentage (83%) in 2012. Results varied by position type, with recycling & waste staff expressing the most job satisfaction (91%). Interestingly, recycling & waste staff had the highest rate of dissatisfaction in 2012. In 2015, Assistant and Associate Sustainability Directors had the highest rate of dissatisfaction (17%). Overall, only five respondents indicated they were “very unsatisfied” in their jobs.

DEGREE OF JOB SATISFACTION
N=446



DEGREE OF JOB SATISFACTION – BY POSITION TYPE
N=383



CONCLUSION

Results of the 2015 survey indicate that while the campus sustainability movement is still relatively new, positions and offices within the field continue to grow and evolve. Below are some of the highlights from the 2015 survey:

- Since 2012, 87 respondents indicated that they entered into new, first-time positions in campus sustainability, with a significant spike in 2012 ([page 21](#)). This demonstrates the continued growth of the campus sustainability profession since the last spike occurred in 2008.
- Respondents holding their positions for six years or more increased from 12 percent in 2012 to 23 percent in 2015, demonstrating that sustainability officers are becoming seasoned sustainability professionals in higher education ([page 22](#)).
- The number of respondents supervising paid or unpaid workers increased from 83 percent in 2012 to 88 percent in 2015, indicating increasing responsibility of sustainability professionals ([page 35](#)).
- The rate of institutions with at least one office, center or institute with "sustainability" in its name has increased from 71 percent in 2012 to 76 percent in 2015, indicating that sustainability is a growing priority in higher education ([page 26](#)).
- There is an overall trend toward slightly higher median salaries in 2015 as compared to 2012 that suggests growing experience among sustainability staff ([page 27](#)).
- The gender wage gap shrank between 2012 and 2015, with female respondents earning 93 cents to the dollar in 2015 compared to 88 cents to the dollar in 2012 ([page 30](#)).
- Funding for sustainability through student sustainability fees or green funds increased from 4 percent in 2012 to 9 percent in 2015, which is indicative of growing student interest in addressing sustainability challenges ([page 32](#)).
- Minority respondents increased from 8 percent in 2012 to 10 percent in 2015, indicating that progress has been made in diversifying the sustainability movement ([page 9](#)).
- Consistent with the growth in sustainability-focused academic programs, more sustainability officers are completing degrees in sustainability studies or science, with 91 such respondents in 2015, compared to 61 in 2012 ([page 11](#)).

We look forward to revisiting these trends in future surveys, and hope that the information provided in this report proves useful in establishing or growing sustainability offices and positions. For questions or comments about the survey or methodology, please email resources@aashe.org.



The Association for the Advancement
of Sustainability in Higher Education

About the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education:

AASHE is helping to create a brighter future of opportunity for all by advancing sustainability in higher education. By creating a diverse community engaged in sharing ideas and promising practices, AASHE provides administrators, faculty, staff and students, as well as the businesses that serve them, with: thought leadership and essential knowledge resources; outstanding opportunities for professional development; and a unique framework for demonstrating the value and competitive edge created by sustainability initiatives. For more information, visit www.aashe.org.

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