

Employee Check-In Survey Executive Summary

Fall 2025

In fall 2025, Utah State University invited employees to complete a brief check-in survey about how they are feeling and what support would be most helpful. Nearly 1,400 employees responded to at least one question, representing faculty and staff from Logan and statewide locations.

Key Findings

67% of respondents feel positive or neutral about the current direction of USU.

64% of responses highlight appreciation for USU's core mission, values, and people-first education.

51% of responses mention stable, supportive leadership and clearer organizational direction.

32% of responses reference workload, understaffing, job security, or higher pay as key concerns.

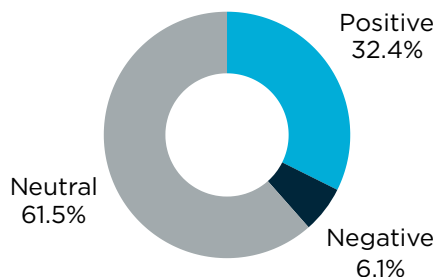
Respondents describe themselves as “cautiously optimistic” and proud of their work. They acknowledge fatigue and concern about the pace of change, yet still see the university as moving in the right direction.

Respondents care deeply about students and USU's mission, citing core values, people-first education, the Aggie community, student success, and USU's land-grant and statewide commitments as reasons they are invested in the university.

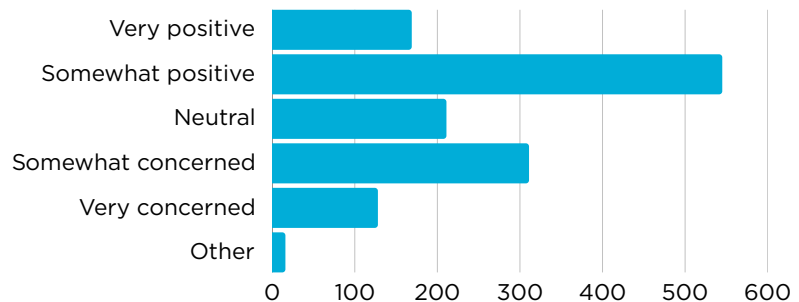
Respondents express a desire for stable, supportive leadership, clearer organizational charts, predictable decision-making, and transparent communication about budgets and major changes.

Respondents say they feel stretched and under-resourced at times and ask for more staff, sustainable workloads, and compensation that keeps pace with the cost of living and honors long-term service.

Overall sentiment in open-ended responses

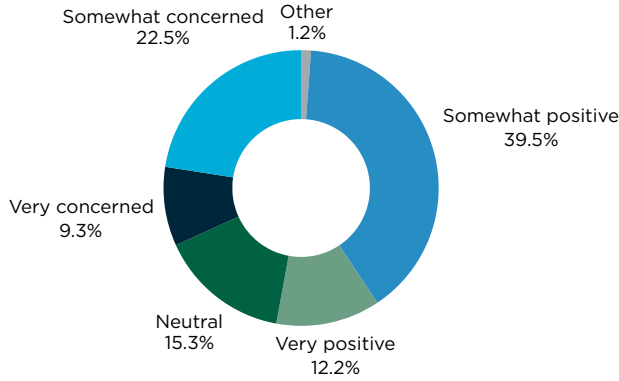


How are you feeling overall about the current direction of USU?



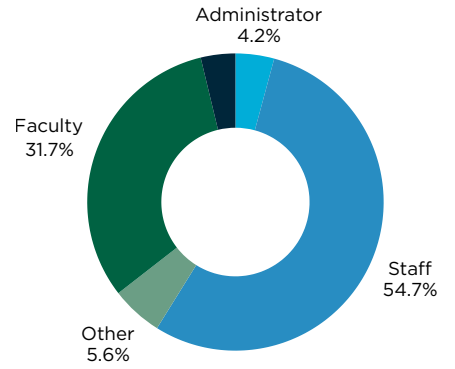
EMPLOYEE CHECK-IN SURVEY FALL 25

Q1 - How are you feeling overall about the current direction of Utah State University?



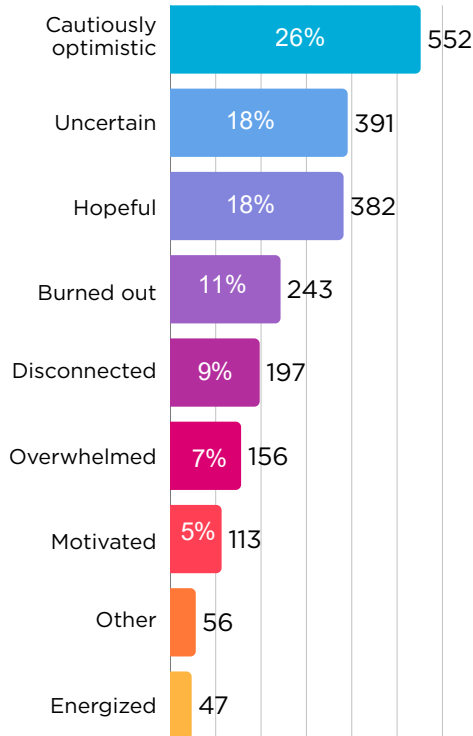
1380 Responses

Q7 - Which of the following best describes your role?



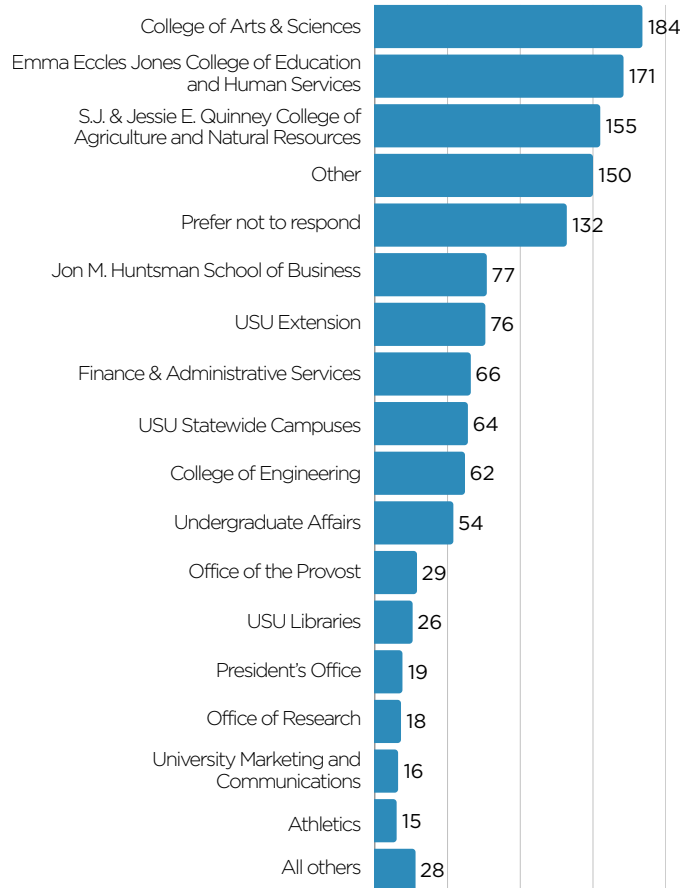
1352 Responses

Q2 - Which of the following best describes your current feelings about how things are going at USU?



1377 Responses

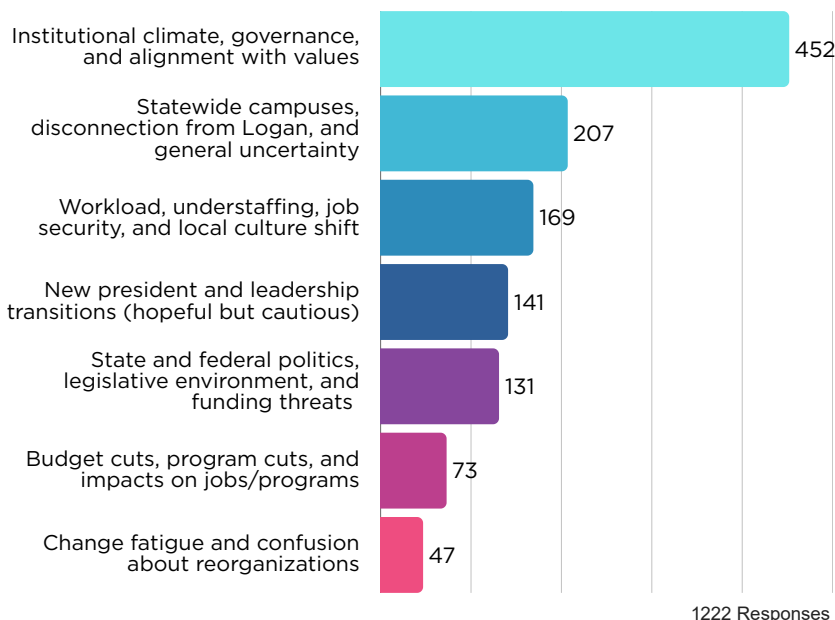
Q8 - Which division or area are you part of?



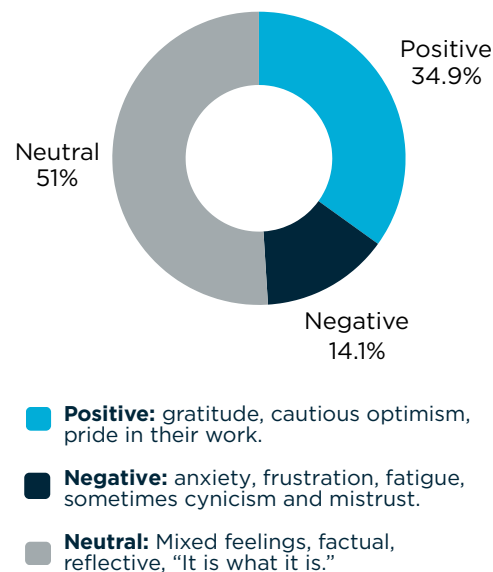
1342 Responses

Q3 - Can you share a little more about what's contributing most to how you're feeling right now?

Q3. Themes and Trends



Q3. Overall Sentiment



Q3 Themes and Trends Details

Institutional climate, governance & alignment with values

Concerns (and some praise) about how USU is being led. Mentions of policy changes, faculty rights, how decisions are made, whether the institution's actions align with stated values, and the impact of all of this on students and employees.

Statewide campuses, disconnection from Logan & general uncertainty

Statewide and extension folks feeling disconnected from main campus, worried about how decisions made in Logan land on regional campuses, plus a general "uncertain future of higher ed" vibe.

Workload, understaffing, job security & local culture shift

Expressions of being overwhelmed, understaffed, and anxious about whether positions will remain; noticing culture changes in units ("more focus on metrics and meetings, fewer people doing the actual work").

New president & leadership transitions (hopeful but cautious)

Emotional reactions to leadership turnover: relief at change, optimism about President Mortensen, mixed with fatigue after "the whirlwind of the last few years."

State & federal politics, legislative environment & funding threats

Worry about the Utah Legislature's influence on higher ed, federal funding shifts, and how political dynamics may affect research, academic freedom, and long-term stability.

Budget cuts, program cuts & impacts on jobs/programs

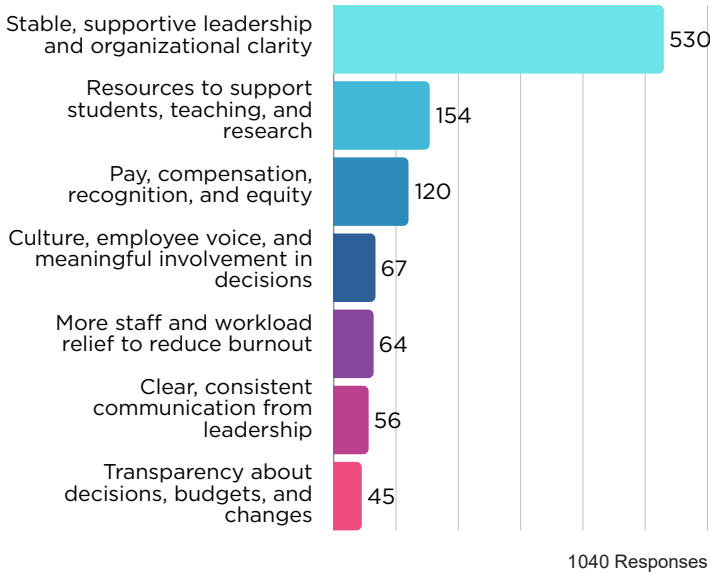
Direct references to budget cuts, program reductions, frozen positions and what those mean for employees' job security and workload.

Change fatigue & confusion about reorganizations

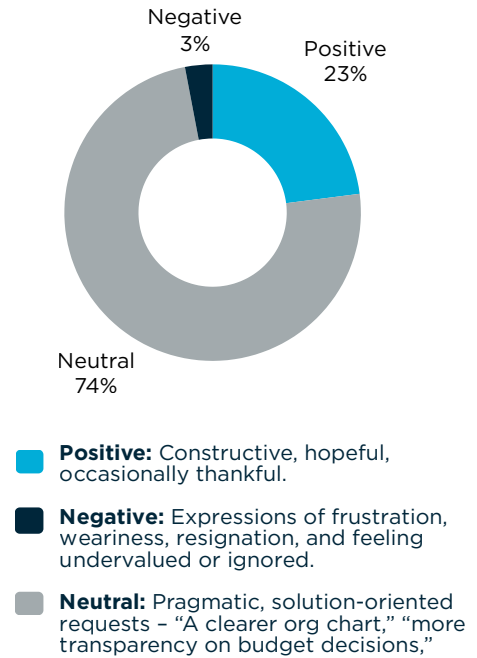
Comments about constant reorganizations, uncertainty around reporting lines, and not knowing "who's in charge" or "what vision we're following."

Q4. What additional support would be most helpful to you right now?

Q4 Themes and Trends



Q4 Overall Sentiment



Q4 Themes and Trends Details

Stable, supportive leadership & organizational clarity

Asking for clear direction, consistent leadership at college/unit levels, stability in org charts, and decisions that are transparent and predictable (especially around budgets, staffing and strategy).

Resources to support students, teaching & research

Requests for more TAs, advising support, mental-health resources for students, research funding, and workload support so faculty/staff can actually meet student needs.

Pay, compensation, recognition & equity

Expressed need for "higher pay," cost-of-living concerns, wanting raises/bonuses, better equity between positions and units, and more recognition for those who've been with the institution for a long time.

Culture, employee voice & meaningful involvement in decisions

Emphasis on being listened to, engaging employees in discussions before decisions are finalized, and fostering a culture where front-line voices matter.

More staff and workload relief to reduce burnout

Pleas for additional hires, cross-training and backup coverage so people can take leave, reduce burnout and keep student services functioning.

Clear, consistent communication from leadership

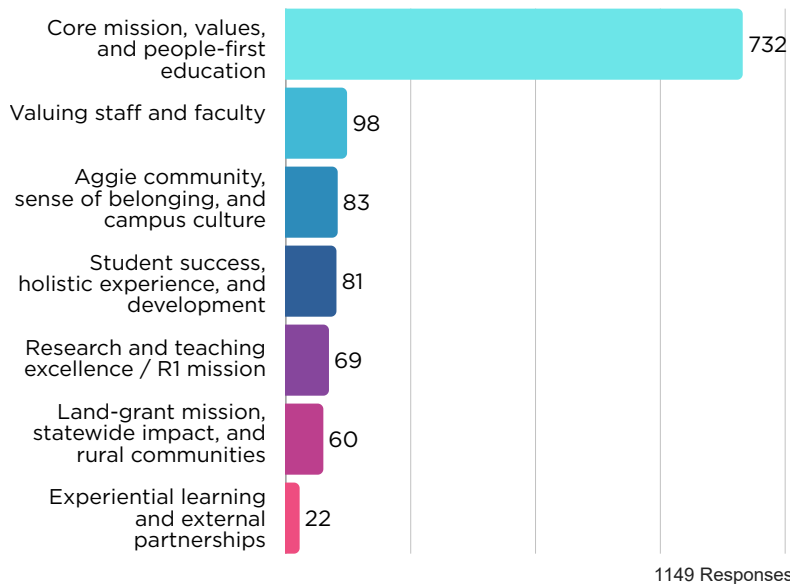
Desire for more frequent, concise, coordinated communication from Logan and from AVPs/deans, with clearer explanations of processes and changes.

Transparency about decisions, budgets & changes

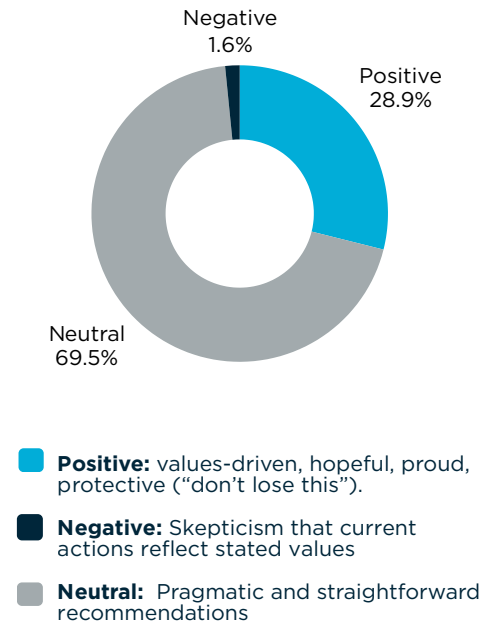
Specifically focused on why decisions are made, how budgets are set, and what's coming next. Strong need for fewer surprises.

Q5. As we prepare to move forward as a university community, what's one thing you hope we don't lose sight of?

Q5 Themes and Trends



Q5 Overall Sentiment



Q5 Themes and Trends Details

Core mission, values & people-first education

Keeping education and students at the center; remembering the role of higher ed in society; staying true to USU’s values; ensuring that people (students, staff, faculty) stay the focus rather than politics or pure financial logic.

Valuing staff & faculty

Requests to not forget staff, protect faculty self-determination, maintain commitments, and support the people who make the institution run.

Aggie community, sense of belonging & campus culture

Protecting the “Aggie family” feel, traditions, small-campus community, and the welcoming culture that makes USU feel special.

Student success, holistic experience & development

A focus on student success broadly defined: academic outcomes plus experiences, opportunities, and development beyond the classroom.

Research & teaching excellence / R1 mission

Maintaining USU’s R1 status, supporting research and high-quality teaching, and avoiding tradeoffs that might weaken academic excellence.

Land-grant mission, statewide impact & rural communities

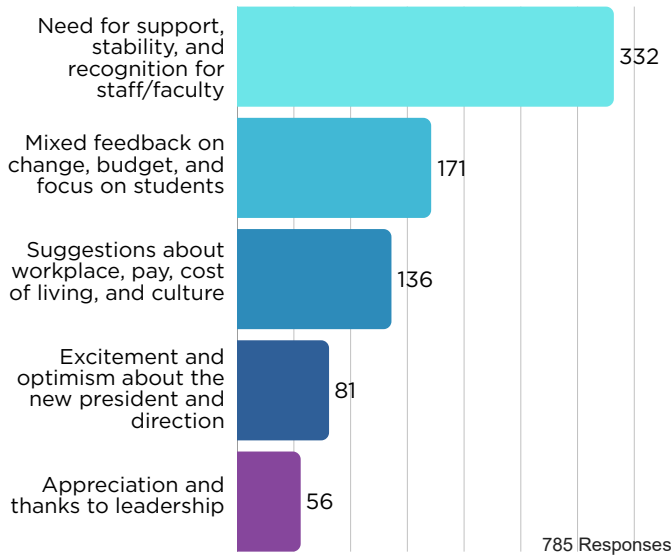
Strong emphasis on the land-grant mission: serving rural Utah, statewide campuses, and making sure “all Utahns” continue to benefit from USU’s work.

Experiential learning & external partnerships

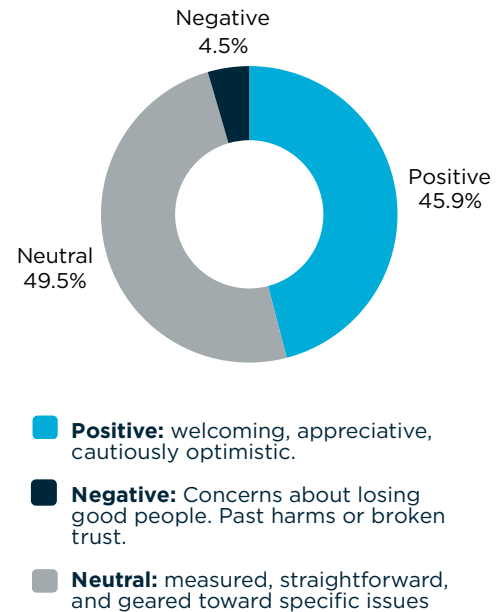
Mentions of experiential education, internships, community partnerships, and real-world learning opportunities that connect students with broader communities and employers.

Q6. Is there anything else you'd like to share with university leadership at this time?

Q6 Themes and Trends



Q6 Overall Sentiment



Q6 Themes and Trends Details

Support, stability & recognition for staff/faculty

Messages about needing stable leadership, more support for staff and faculty (particularly those “in the trenches”), and appreciation/recognition for employees who keep things running despite cuts and uncertainty.

Mixed feedback on change, budget & focus on students

Candid reflections on the “uphill battle” ahead: worries about past decisions, hope that the new leadership will keep students at the center, and requests to continue open, candid dialogue.

Suggestions about workplace, pay, cost of living & culture

Comments about making USU a great place to work: addressing Cache Valley cost of living, considering things like four-day workweeks or flexible arrangements, tackling underperforming units, and strengthening everyday culture.

Excitement & optimism about the new president and direction

“I’m excited to see what the new presidency has to offer,” “good luck,” “we support you”—hope that Mortensen will bring clarity, sustainability and positive change. “Welcome,” “congratulations,” “we’re excited you’re here” messages, often paired with hopes that past missteps won’t repeat.

Appreciation & thanks to leadership

Straightforward “thank you for listening,” “thanks for your leadership,” and appreciation for starting with listening and outreach.