

# Employee Check-In Survey

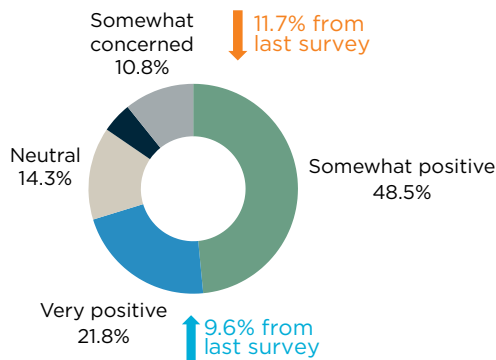
Spring 2026

In Spring 2026, Utah State University invited employees to complete a second check-in survey to gauge how the community was feeling and gather input ahead of strategic planning. Over 600 employees responded to at least one question, representing faculty and staff from Logan and statewide locations.

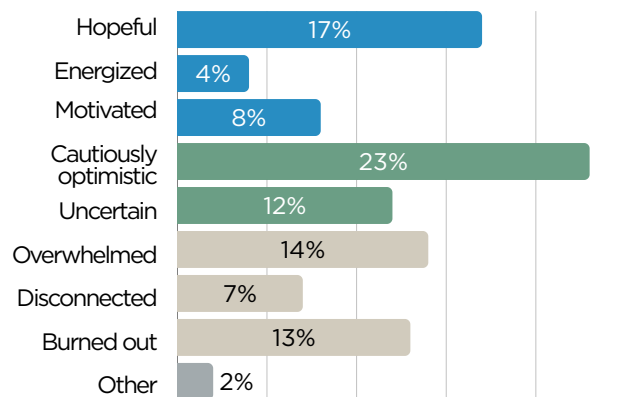
## Key Findings

- 87%** of respondents **named people as what matters most**, expressing investment in students, colleagues, or a strong sense of belonging at USU.
- 84%** of respondents **feel positive or neutral** about the current direction of USU. **↑ 17% from last survey**
- 52%** of respondents **selected at least one positive affect descriptor** (hopeful, cautiously optimistic, motivated, or energized).
- 27%** of respondents **raised compensation, understaffing, or unsustainable workload as a key concern**, concentrated among staff, who account for 72% of those mentions.

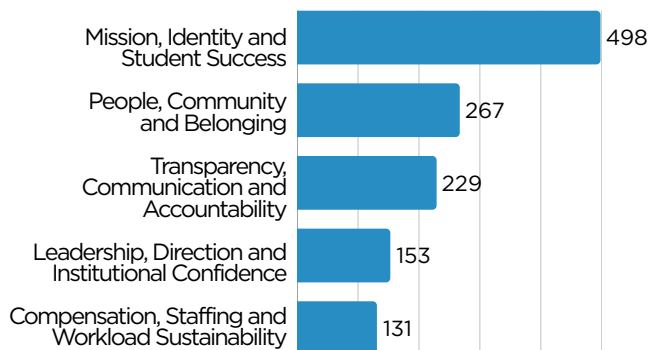
### Q1. How are you feeling overall about the current direction of USU?



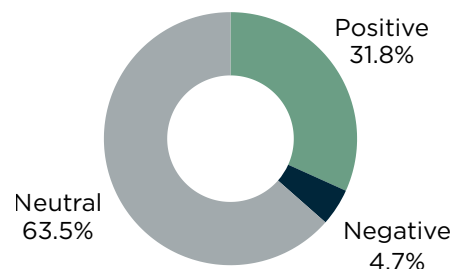
### Q2. Which of the following best describes your current feelings about how things are going at USU?



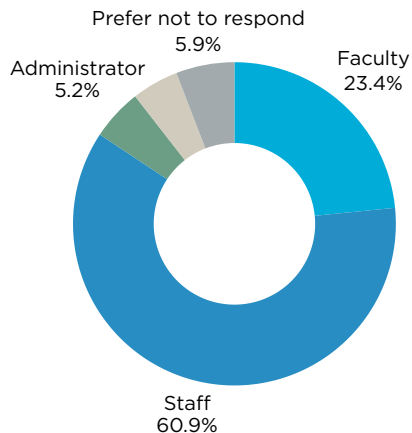
### Key themes across all open-ended responses



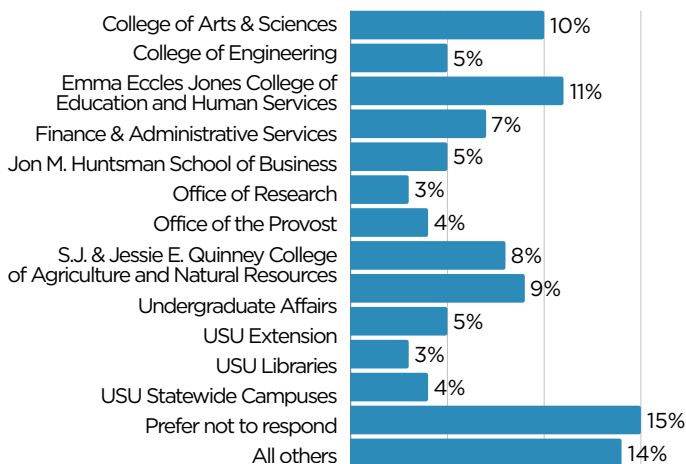
### Overall sentiment in open-ended responses



### Which of the following best describes your role?



### Which area are you part of?



### Q3. What is contributing most to how you are feeling right now?

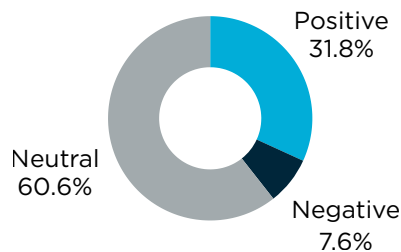
**Mission and student commitment** appear in 26 percent of responses, with respondents anchoring their feelings in care for students and the work itself regardless of overall tone.

**Leadership, direction, and institutional confidence** appear in 18 percent of responses, concentrated in Q3 more than any other question and almost entirely positive. Respondents describe renewed hope, appreciation for increased communication and transparency, and specific acknowledgment of administrative changes they see as meaningful.

**Compensation, staffing, and workload** (16.0 percent) and **people, community, and belonging** (16.2 percent) appear at nearly the same rate, with the former carrying sustained concerns about salary gaps and positions not backfilled, and the latter reflecting attachment to colleagues and the Aggie community.

**Transparency and accountability** appears in 13.8 percent, and surfaces alongside broader concerns about federal and state political uncertainty, particularly around research funding.

### Q3. Overall Sentiment



#### Positive:

Renewed confidence in institutional direction, appreciation for increased transparency and direct communication from leadership, pride in colleagues and the work itself, and a sense that USU is moving forward with greater clarity and purpose than in recent years.

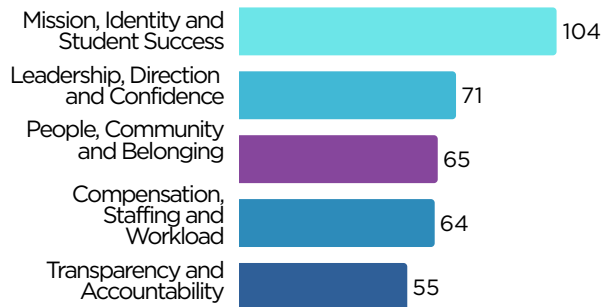
#### Negative:

Sustained exhaustion from workload and change, frustration with local leadership conditions that have not shifted, anxiety about federal funding and job security, and feelings of being undervalued at the department or college level.

#### Neutral:

Measured observation of ongoing transitions, factual descriptions of workload and uncertainty, and a watchful disposition.

### Q3. Themes and Trends



#### Q4. What's one thing you hope the university does not lose sight of.

Respondents across roles and colleges consistently responded to this question with an emphasis on students, people, and the university's identity as a mission-driven, community-connected institution.

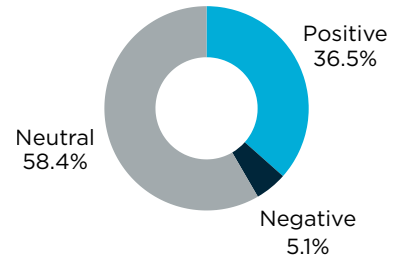
**Mission, identity, and student success** appear in 51.3 percent of responses, the defining theme of this question by a wide margin. Respondents describe students as the reason the institution exists and ask that decisions, structural or financial, be measured against that purpose. **People, community, and belonging** appear in 24.4 percent of responses, with respondents referencing colleagues, the Aggie community, and a sense of belonging they describe as central to why they remain at USU.

**Transparency and accountability** appear in 13.7 percent of responses, with respondents noting that communication has improved from previous years and asking that the improvement be sustained.

**Compensation, staffing, and workload** appear in 7.1 percent of responses, with respondents framing pay and workload as institutional risks, arguing that the student experience depends on the staff experience, and that salary stagnation, positions absorbed without backfill, and living wage gaps are conditions the university cannot afford to overlook.

**Leadership, direction, and institutional confidence** appear in 4.8 percent of responses, with respondents noting visible improvements in communication and expressing support for the current direction.

#### Q4. Overall Sentiment



##### Positive:

Pride in USU's mission and community, affirmations of belonging and institutional attachment, and hopeful calls to sustain what makes USU distinctive as a land-grant, statewide university.

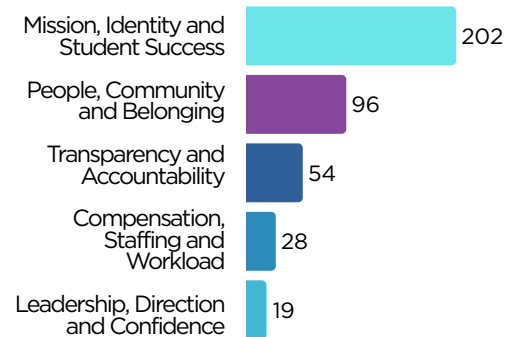
##### Negative:

Concern that stated values are not reflected in resource decisions, skepticism about equity between employee groups, and pointed observations about staff being deprioritized in institutional planning.

##### Neutral:

Constructive recommendations, structural asks, and direct descriptions of what the university should protect. Responses in this category are substantive but carry no strong affective charge in either direction.

#### Q4. Themes and Trends



**Q5. We are about to launch strategic plan working groups around our four strategic plan goals (see below). What would make you confident that this strategic planning process is meaningful?**

New to the spring survey, Q5 was introduced ahead of USU’s strategic planning working groups. Responses are constructive and forward-looking, with employees describing in specific terms what conditions would make this process credible and meaningful.

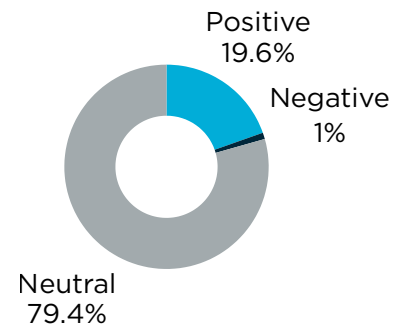
**Mission, identity, and student success** appear in 40.5 percent of responses, with respondents connecting the four strategic pillars directly to USU’s core purpose. Statewide Impact and Student Success and Value are the most frequently named pillars.

**Transparency, communication, and accountability** appear in 24.3 percent of responses, with respondents asking for named owners, public progress reporting, measurable outcomes, and inclusive working group composition. A subset of responses cites past planning cycles that did not produce visible change or had a non-inclusive process.

**People, community, and belonging** appear in 19.9 percent of responses, with respondents asking that the plan reflect USU’s people-centered identity and not reduce institutional priorities to metrics alone.

**Leadership, direction, and institutional confidence** appears in 4.4 percent of responses, with respondents citing confidence in the current administration’s commitment to engagement as a reason to trust the process. **Compensation, staffing, and workload** appear in 2.7 percent of responses, with respondents asking that staff capacity be factored into the plan rather than assumed.

**Q5. Overall Sentiment**



**Positive:** Enthusiasm for the four strategic goals, appreciation for the administration’s demonstrated commitment to engagement and transparency, and confidence that USU has the people and mission to execute on these priorities.

**Negative:** Dismissal of the process as predetermined and non-inclusive, along with deep skepticism rooted in repeated experience with planning cycles that produced no change.

**Neutral:** Procedural asks, structural recommendations, and named conditions for confidence.

**Q5. Themes and Trends**



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

This question carries the highest share of positive responses in the survey at 38.8 percent. Respondents frequently express genuine appreciation for institutional progress while also raising specific, constructive asks for what comes next.

**Mission, identity, and student success** appear in 27.9 percent of responses, with respondents expressing investment in USU's purpose and potential alongside other feedback.

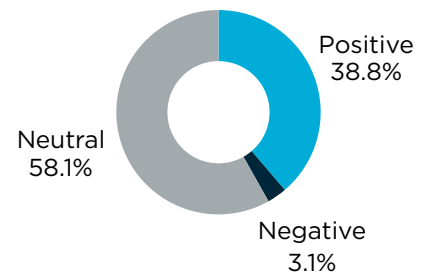
**Leadership, direction, and institutional confidence** appear in 19.4 percent of responses and are almost entirely positive, with respondents naming specific actions as evidence that the institutional climate has changed, including increased communication, reductions in administrative overhead, and visible engagement with students.

**Transparency and accountability** appear in 18.6 percent of responses, frequently as an acknowledgment of recent improvement alongside a request to sustain it.

**People, community, and belonging** appear in 18.2 percent of responses, including in responses that also raise workload or frustration.

**Compensation, staffing, and workload** appear in 8.5 percent of responses and carry some of the most specific asks in the dataset, including comparisons to peer institutions and requests for a defined timeline on salary review.

## Q6. Overall Sentiment



### Positive:

Direct and personal expressions of gratitude for President Mortensen and the new administration, renewed institutional pride, specific appreciation for communication improvements and visible leadership engagement, and encouragement for the work ahead.

### Negative:

Named concerns about specific individuals in remaining leadership, grief over department changes, frustration with compliance culture, and skepticism that survey feedback will produce visible change.

### Neutral:

Specific constructive asks, observations about campus operations, and measured assessments of current conditions.

## Q6. Themes and Trends

