

# Staff Merit and Performance Review Survey Results

# Staff Performance Review & Merit Survey Results

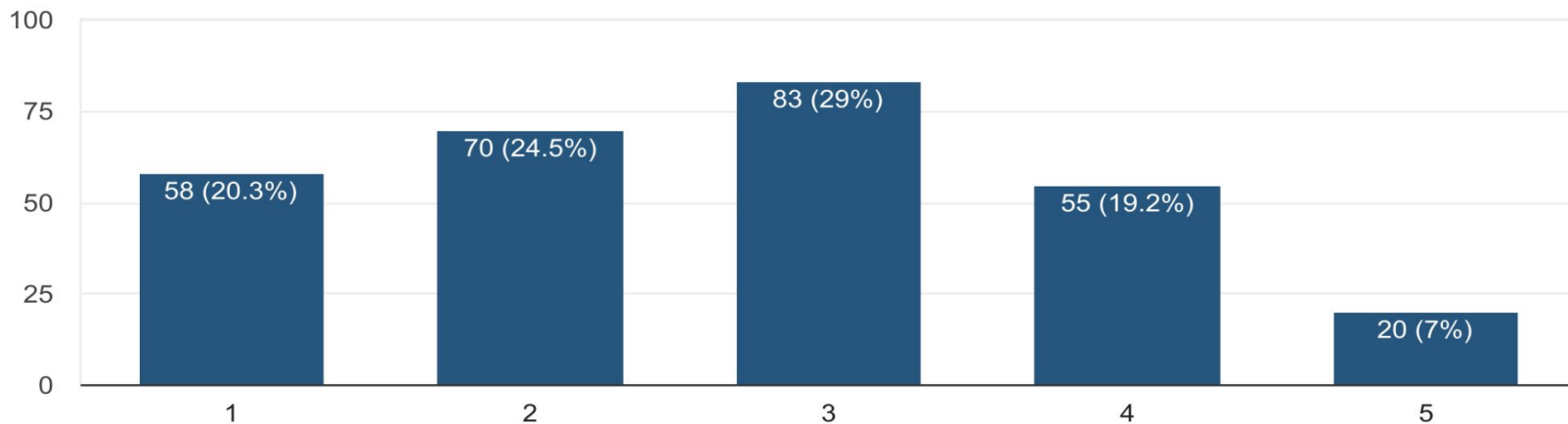
Staff were asked to rate the three statements regarding their views of the Performance Review and Merit process with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree.

The survey was sent via the Staff Council February Newsletter and social media accounts. Respondents represent over half of the newsletter distribution list and 10% of the staff population.

## The majority of staff do not feel that the current performance management system is designed to accurately reflect their or their employee's performance.

I believe the performance management rating system is designed as a tool to accurately reflect my and/or my employees' performance.

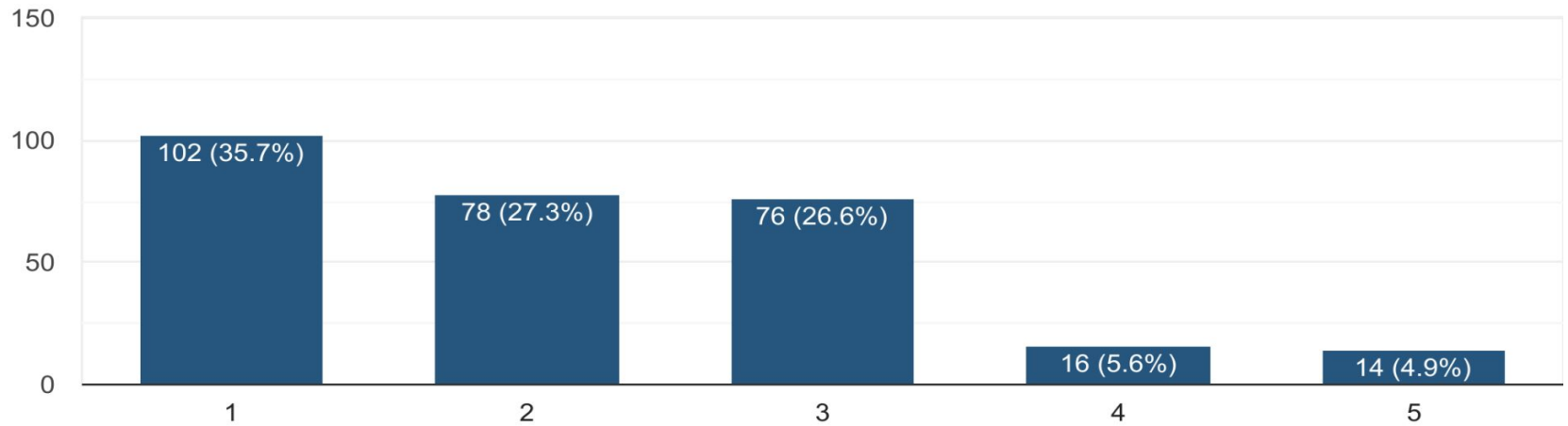
286 responses



## The majority of staff do not feel that merit increases are equitably applied to all staff at GW.

Merit increases are equitably applied to all staff at the university regardless of the department, school, and/or division where they work.

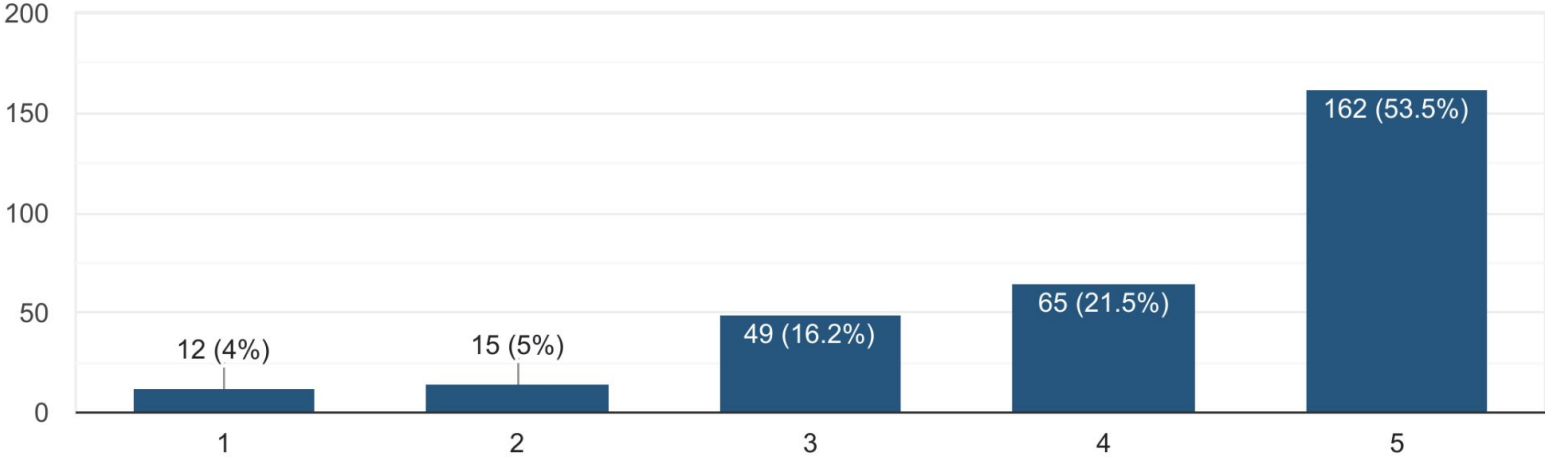
286 responses



# The majority of staff would support moving away from performance based merit increases.

I would support GW moving from annual merit increases based on performance ratings to a yearly standard cost of living adjustment for all GW staff.

303 responses



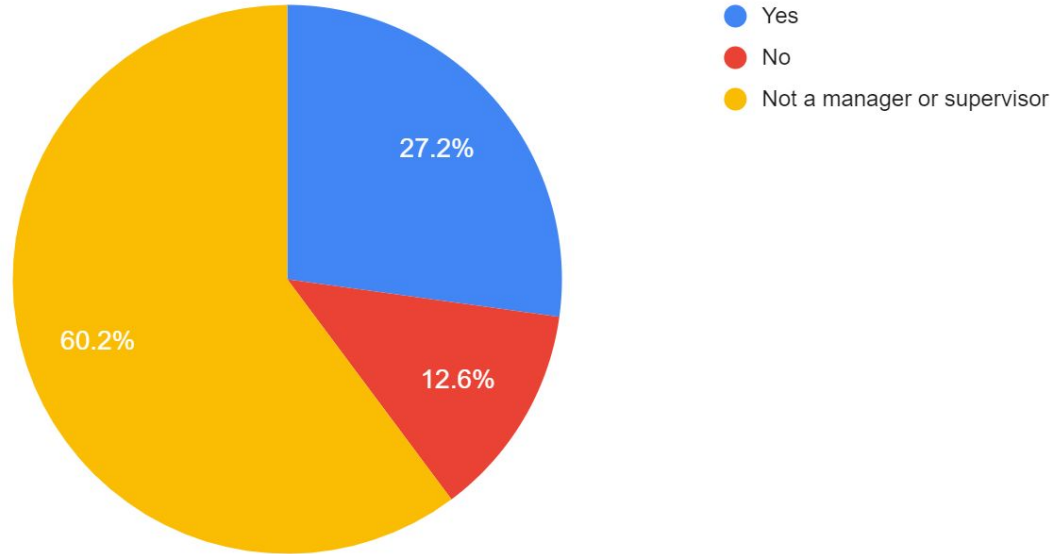
# Staff Performance Review & Merit Survey, Part II Results

Staff were asked to answer 4-5 questions regarding their views of the Performance Review and Merit process.

The survey was sent via the Staff Council March Newsletter and social media accounts. Respondents represent approximately half of the newsletter distribution list and 8% of the staff population.

## 68% of managers who responded have felt actively discouraged by their leadership from giving “Exceeds Expectations” to their employee(s).

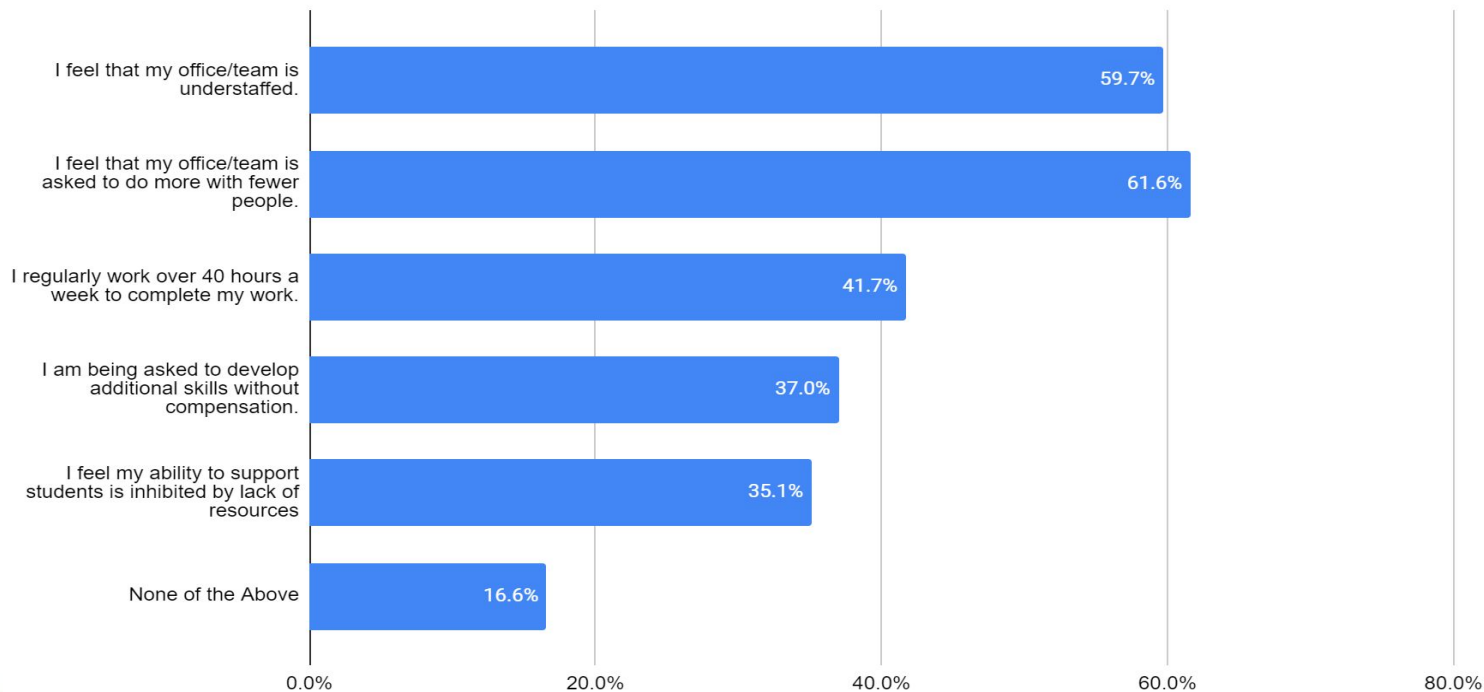
If you are a manager or supervisor, have you ever felt actively discouraged by your leadership from giving "Exceeds Expectations" to your employees who meet the performance standards for that ra...



# The majority of staff who responded indicate that they are understaffed and are asked to do more with fewer people. 41.7% regularly work more than 40 hours a week.

Which of these situations applies to you? Select all that apply

211 responses

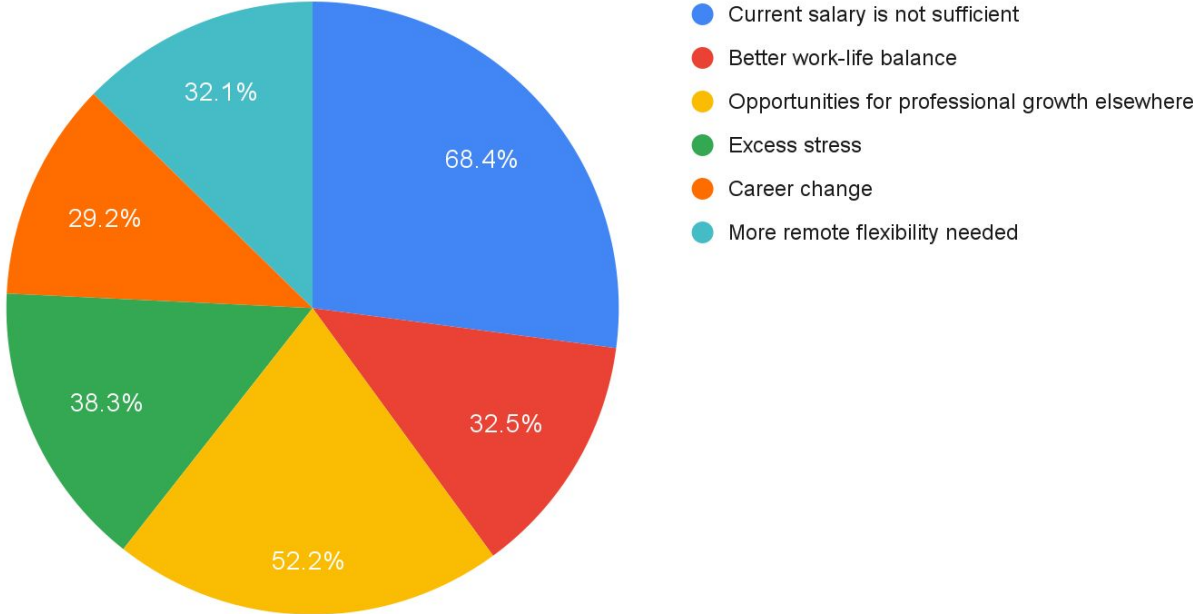




# The majority of staff who responded stated they would leave GW for a better salary and opportunity for professional growth.

If you were to leave GW, what would your primary reasons be?

209 Responses



### Other reasons provided:

- Concern about higher ed as an industry
- Professional respect, lack of collegial civility, team culture
- Poor departmental/office leadership, lack of accountability
- Not enough room for growth
- Feeling that my area and work isn't a priority within the organization
- Chronically understaffed and underfunded
- Tired of the answer of "NO" when it comes to change or additional resources
- Relocation
- Retirement
- Alignment of personal values
- Health reasons
- Not open to new ideas, gatekeepers

# Question: Which of these annual compensation increase approaches appeals to you? Rank them in order of preference.

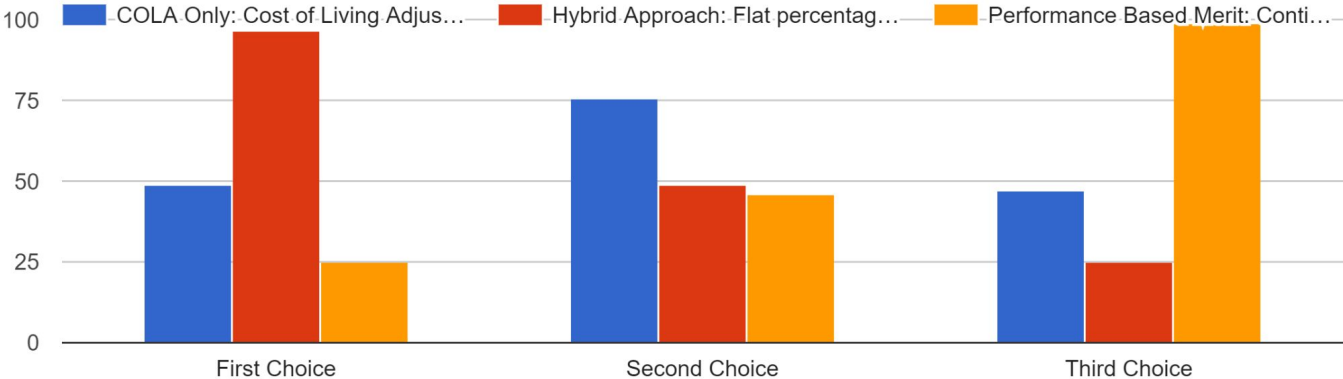
**Option 1 (Blue)** - COLA Only: Cost of Living Adjustment (% increase would likely change year to year and be location based)

**Option 2 (Red)** - Hybrid Approach: Flat percentage increase year to year for all staff, with departments receiving a pool of money to be used as bonuses for top performers (according to specific guidelines)

**Option 3 (Yellow)** - Performance Based Merit: Continue with the current system (performance review process establishing merit increases)

## Results: Staff Ranking

- 1st - Hybrid Approach
- 2nd - Cost of Living Only
- 3rd - Performance Based Merit (current approach)



## Selection of Comments of 300+ Submitted

*Used at the permission of the staff member*

“Not only is my ability to support students hindered due to lack of resources and understaffing, but supporting faculty, meeting inter- and intra-departmental deadlines, and morale are eroded as well. I feel like we're always in crisis management mode — not productive or conducive to excellence at all.”

“A member of leadership in my department stated something to the effect of - if you are exceeding expectations, you shouldn't be here anymore. I got the sense that the 'exceeds expectations' rating should rarely be given out - though given how short-staffed we are, basically everyone on our team is exceeding expectations.”

“I can think of multiple occasions where I was instructed to downgrade an employee's rating. This is not a recent phenomenon, it's been the case since I started in a GW management role nearly 20 years ago. It's extremely demoralizing for an employee who does great work to never be rated higher than "meets expectations" because the division needs to meet a specific curve/quota/budget. I say this based on employee feedback and also my own personal rating fluctuations over the years. I'm honestly not looking forward to having to have the same "you're doing great work, but ..." conversations with the team again this year. It's the worst part of my job.”

**Comments Continued**

“It is pretty demoralizing for many of us who have consistently/continuously performed at the highest levels at high visibility institutions that are important and well-respected, and earned well-deserved evaluations that are definitely above 'satisfactory' and sometimes higher than 'exceeds' expectations/excellent/outstanding/etc., some for many years - only to find that at GW this same high-level performance earns us a rating system/policy that is truncated and broken at all levels with no relation whatsoever to the individual's performance. Moreover, it is tied to our livelihood (the merit increases). This fills most GW employees with defeat. Most GW employees are high achievers, who will rise to the top with GW if the system was not broken. It leads to the inefficient model of most departments having revolving doors where employees will leave because of these factors, and the burden on the department and remaining high achievers is inflated, they struggle due to large chunks of their energy/time/efficiency being expended on the exhausting task of filling those vacant positions only to have to do it all over again, just a short time later. What presents like the mandatory 'achieves' rating across the board is unfair and does not represent the truth, especially in this day and age, a 'winning' narrative is so easily achieved for the same type of performance and the very task of evaluating oneself becomes a source of unnecessary added stress, and it takes us away from actually doing our jobs that we are being evaluated for! Evaluations are a must for any institution, when they are hindering and a burden, they defeat the purpose of putting them in place, and the employees' sense of pride in their work falls, and ultimately the institution suffers.”

**Comments Continued**

From an HR Business Partner email to a Supervisor: “This is not a comment on your articulation of their productivity; the college leadership knows that as a supervisor, you have a reference point that reflects the department's standards of excellence. However, they seek standards that reflect college-wide standards of excellence in performance management. Looking at things from the college perspective, [your employee] did a wonderful job this year, just not enough to warrant a rating of Expected Expectations. If anything, we think you should raise your standards by rating employees in a way that reflects the perfection described in the definition of Exceeds Expectations is rarely achieved in our work.”

“I have been asked to strongly reconsider my justifications and recommendations, stating that if an employee regularly receives exceeds expectations then the employee should be in a higher level position. After submitting additional justifications and asking to have conversations with my leadership [about] position expansion I was told there wasn't approval.”

“On the topic of the merit increases, the inclusion of self-evaluation as a factor in pay increases defeats the purpose of it to begin with. A self-evaluation is only effective if it has zero factor in one's compensation. The moment they tied it to the process, everyone is encouraged to show themselves in the best light in order to hopefully sway the hearts and minds of their superiors and HR in order to get the best pay increase. These really need to be decoupled in order for the self-evaluation to serve any meaningful purpose.”

**Comments Continued**

“I had an employee who I strongly felt rated exceeds, but because they were at the top of their salary range due to seniority and could not get a merit increase I was encouraged to rate them Achieves instead.”

“I’ve worked at GW for 9 years, am an Assistant Director, and struggle to make ends meet financially. I have recently taken on a part-time job to help fill in the gaps. I don’t imagine that I will be at GW much longer because the pay is just not sufficient.”

“A rating of Exceeds Expectations for one of my employees was changed without my consent. I was informed after the fact.”

“I started my position in March 2023, when the new performance cycle was beginning. I have been in my current position for a little over a year, plus a couple extra months as a temp in the same position. GW will not count my temp time performing the same job duties as time served toward the performance review period. So, now I have to wait over TWO YEARS for a raise due to an arbitrary cutoff point, but someone who started two months prior to me (potentially at the same time as I started temping) will receive a raise this year. HR advises that managers should consider higher salaries for offers to make up for the gap – but we should be allowed to negotiate higher salaries REGARDLESS of this and still get raises when our skills and experience have earned them. It’s insulting that I have to sit through the entire performance evaluation process this year, knowing that HR has already deemed me unworthy of receiving a merit increase.”