

THE STATE OF STAFF

GW Staff Council
Fall 2024



Staff
Council

GW STAFF COUNCIL

The GW Staff Council was created in 2023, and to better understand and assess the well-being and culture of GW staff, we have developed a micro series of surveys.

Surveys have covered topics such as:

Staff Burnout
Cost of Working at GW
Additional Income

Tuition Remission
Performance/Merit
Transportation/Commute

The survey results reflect the thoughts and opinions of GW staff who responded. Those who responded will be referred to simply as “staff.” The surveys were sent via the Staff Council opt-in listserv, and the listserv population varied between 550 and 700 individuals during the survey period.



Staff
Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A majority of GW staff (56.2%) feel **drained or exhausted** after work.

One-third of GW staff have an **additional job**, with 89.1% of that group saying they need that **extra income to live**.

More than two-thirds of GW staff feel that **their office or team is understaffed**.

58% of GW staff have a daily commute to work **longer than 41 minutes**.

SURVEY BREAKDOWN:

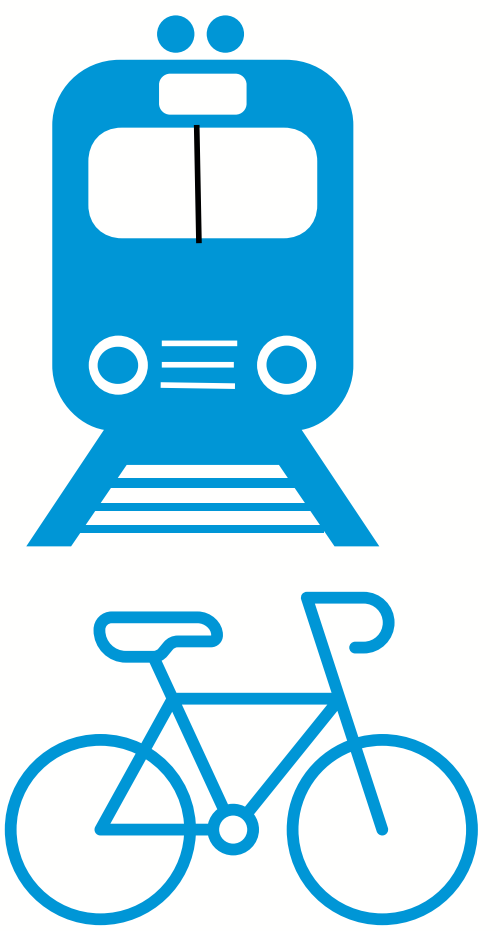
TRANSPORTATION

n = 283

58% of GW staff have a commute longer than **41 minutes** to their job.

49% of GW staff use **metro train or bus** to commute to work.

73% of GW staff use **more than one method** of transportation during their commute



84.7% of GW staff work **3 or more** days in the office.

16% of GW staff commute to work **in a car.**

SURVEY BREAKDOWN: TRANSPORTATION

“I rely on **different forms of transportation** to get to work. I take a shuttle from my neighborhood to the Metro and then Metro to Foggy Bottom. The shuttle only runs on the Federal government schedule, so if the Fed starts late, the shuttle runs late. If the shuttle isn't running, I likely can't come into work because I have almost NO experience driving in snow and would likely get in a car accident (not worth it).”

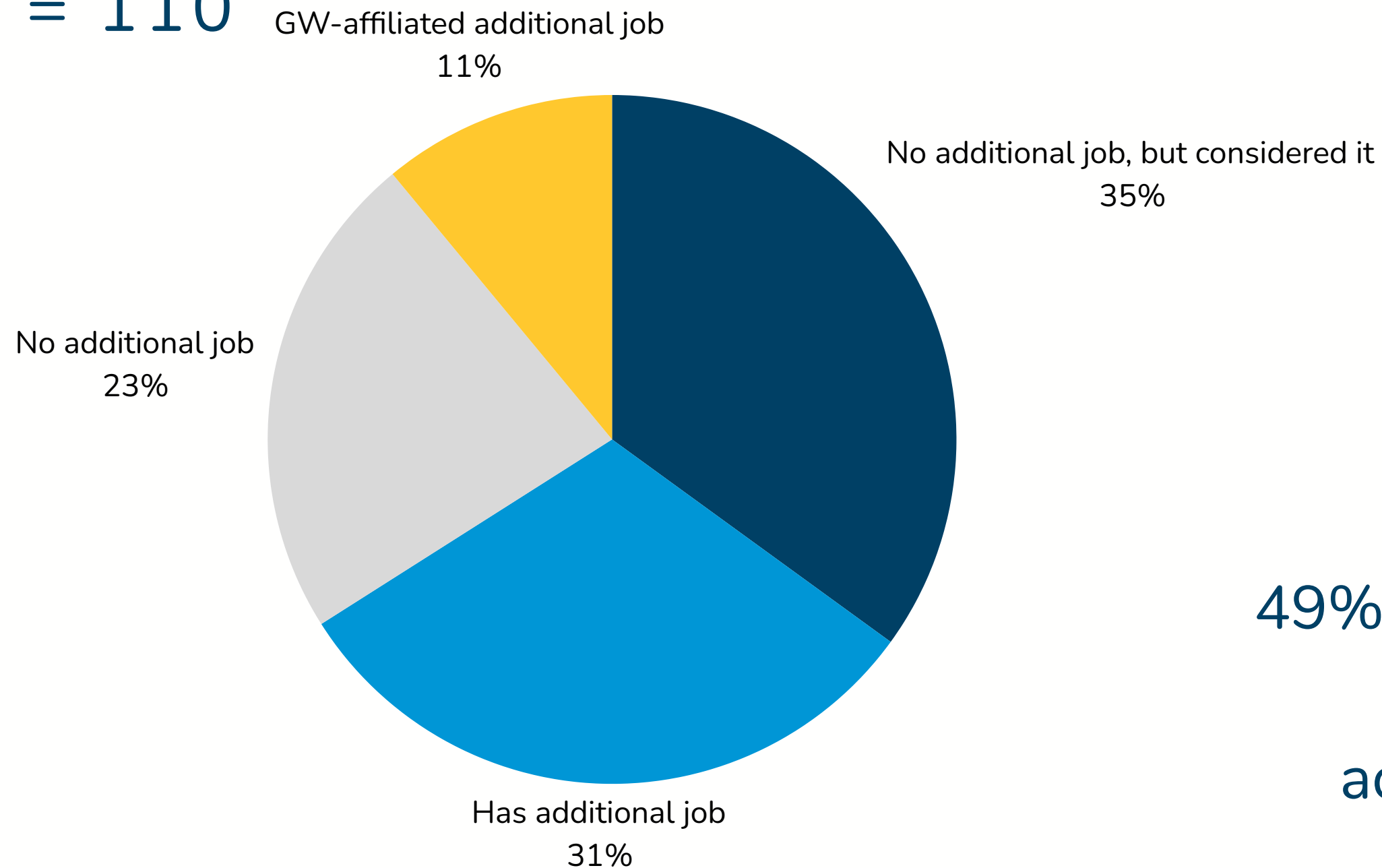
“On a normal day I spend over \$11 just to get to and from work. An extra \$5 if I have to drive to the Metro and park there. Only taking the Metro, **I spend more than \$120 per month just commuting**. I would not want to increase the number of days I come to campus because of the negative impact on my budget and life (10 hours of commute per week? No thank you.). One of my favorite things about working at GW is that it seems pretty standard for people to work 2 days from home and 3 days in the office.”

“It would be helpful if GW recognized the impact of spreading business between multiple campuses. The FB and VSTC campuses are 36 miles apart. Requiring staff to work on both campuses is tough to manage. Suspension of the VSTC shuttle over the summer continues to **impact our ability to attract and retain GW student staff** (puts a costly burden on them using the metro) as well as outside students; the training of the latter being core to our profession. Our student partners this summer, for instance, had to **limit research visits to the VSTC** given the impracticality of numerous visits.”

*All comments represented are from GW staff who gave their permission to share their statements. Sources will be kept anonymous.

SURVEY BREAKDOWN: ADDITIONAL INCOME

n = 110



97.3% of respondents were **full-time staff**.

89% of this group needs additional income to **live and save money**.

49% of this group spends **6 or more hours a week** on additional income ventures.

SURVEY BREAKDOWN:

ADDITIONAL INCOME

“I have been at GW for 8+ years and **for the entire time I've had to seek outside income** even though I am a full-time staff member. I do not live extravagantly. Nonetheless, to be able to live in DC/close to my workplace where my commute isn't hours (it's already 45 min to an hour each way), I have had no choice but to seek outside income. **It is exhausting to say the least.**”

“I have a second job to make up for the gaps in my salary. While I enjoy this job, working 40 hours a week at GW and then heading to another job is **not ideal for my mental health and wellbeing**. The cost of living, food, and transportation in the DMV has continued to rise, while my salary has relatively stayed the same. ”

“I have been compelled to seek additional income sources due to the inadequacy of GW pay, especially considering the high level of responsibility associated with my position. Despite my dedication and commitment to my role, **the current compensation does not meet my financial needs**. Therefore, to maintain a reasonable standard of living, I have had to pursue supplementary income opportunities in and outside of my GW employment. This situation underscores the necessity for a review and adjustment of staff salaries to better reflect the responsibilities and financial demands faced by GW staff.”

SURVEY BREAKDOWN:

n = 132



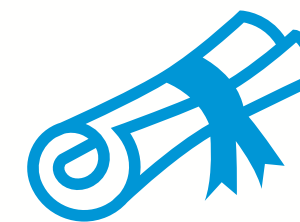
22.5% of GW staff have **costs associated with childcare.**



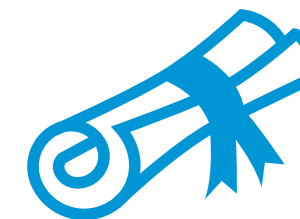
13.6% of GW staff spend more than **\$1000 a month** on childcare to perform necessary job duties.

TUITION REMISSION & COST OF WORKING AT GW

n = 118



49.2% of GW staff have never used the **tuition remission benefit.**



Lack of time and concerns about approving **tax exemption** were major barriers.

SURVEY BREAKDOWN:

TUITION REMISSION & COST OF WORKING AT GW

“Our office hosts mandatory in-person meetings for which the university does not compensate for travel or expenses.

This means our staff are on the hook for airfare, accommodations, meals, and local travel to/from accommodations and campus. **This constitutes a significant expense which usually consumes most or all of our annual merit-increase.** Per guidance from HR we are also required to use annual leave for time spent traveling for these meetings.”

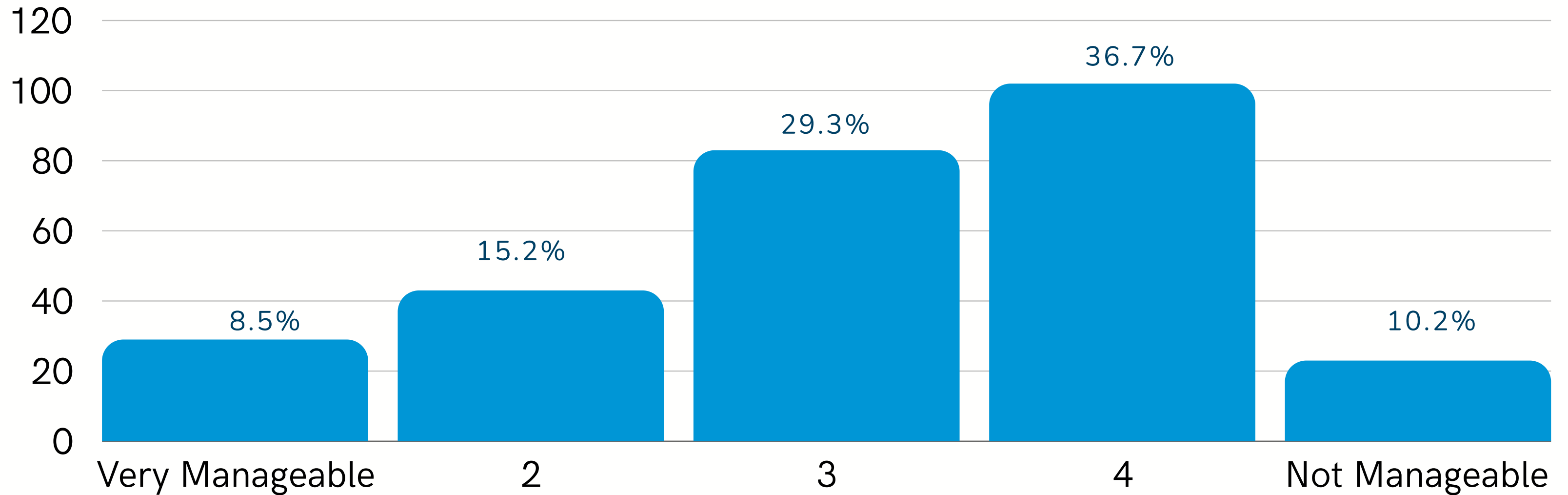
“The catch-22 is that some on-campus programs require you to be a full-time student - which means you can't be employed full-time. But without employment at GW, you don't have the tuition benefit. **You essentially have to choose whether to be employed and not pursue an area of interest, or quit your job and go into debt to be enrolled full-time in the program.** Such programs are not conducive to working adults, especially those working at GW.”

“Being required to relate courses/programs to your job means you can't just pursue something because you're interested. It seems like its a fear that if they support this person in getting a degree or certificate in something unrelated to their job that they're helping that person move on from GW - **when in reality, I think you'd be more likely to keep folks longer on account of 1) feeling supported as a person and 2) sticking around at least until they complete their program.**”

SURVEY BREAKDOWN: BURNOUT

n = 283

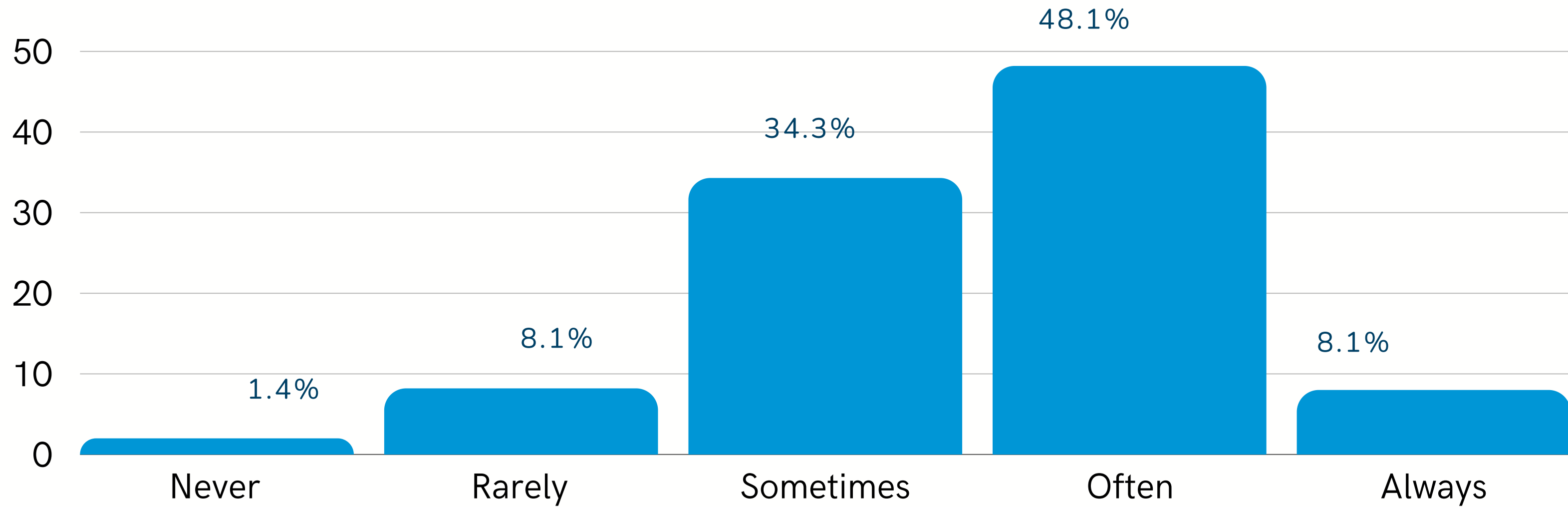
On a scale of 1 to 5, how manageable do you find your current workload?



SURVEY BREAKDOWN: BURNOUT

n = 283

How often do you feel exhausted or drained after work?

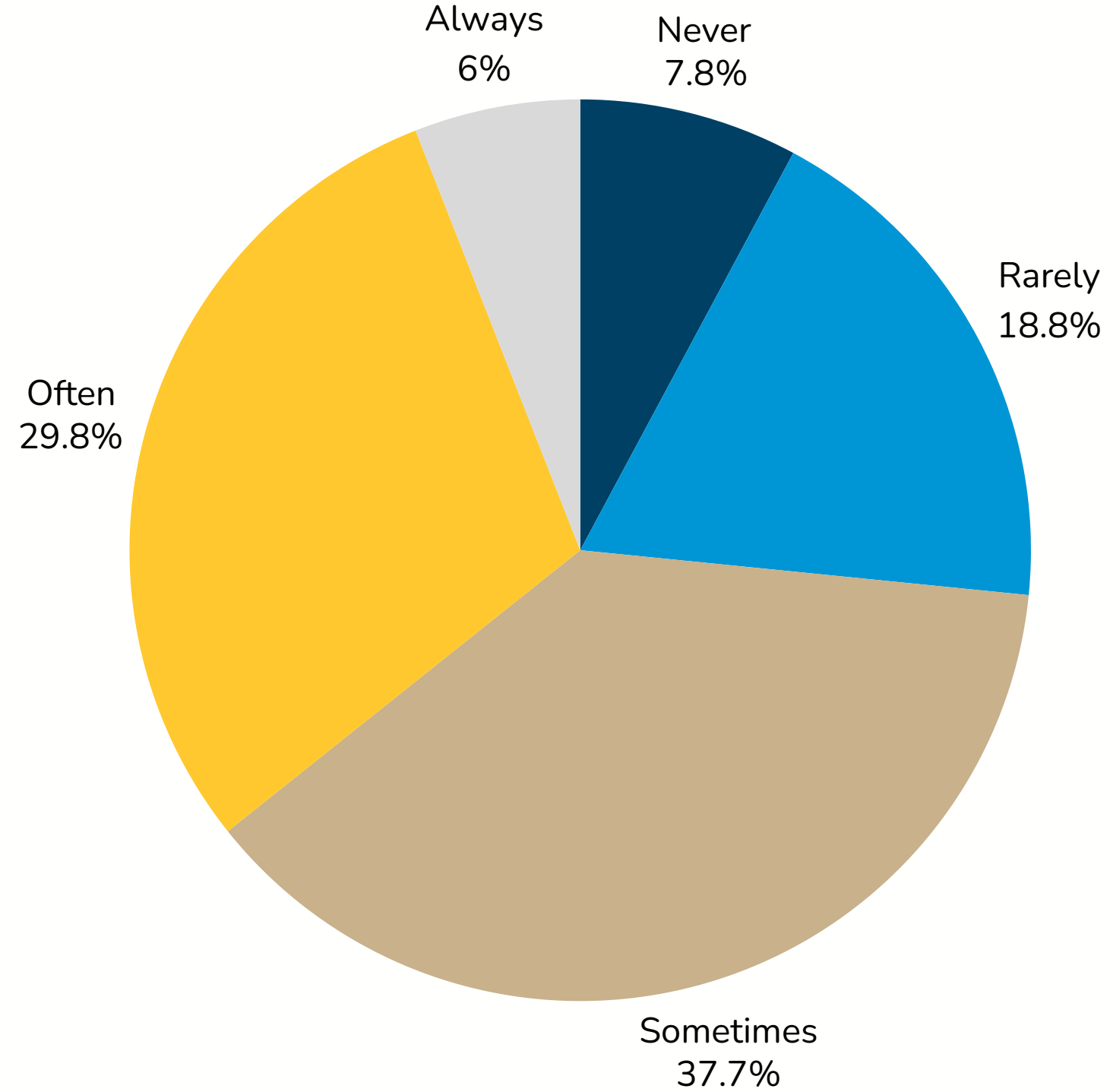


SURVEY BREAKDOWN:

BURNOUT

n = 283

How frequently do you have feelings of negativity or cynicism related to your job?



SURVEY BREAKDOWN: BURNOUT

"There's office politics that make me feel like I just don't matter. I've embarrassingly expressed to leadership my financial struggles due to continuing inflation and tremendous rising costs in rent/transportation and requested to get more work from home time to lessen the burden and stress but was denied. There are people in my office that have special schedules because they have children. **I feel unseen at GW as a single income staff member,** facing the economy's increasing costs alone. It's hard for me to understand why my struggles do not matter. While staff with partners and children stress about their upcoming family events, **I'm worried about not having enough money to buy food at the end of the month and that's sadly how disconnected I feel from my peers at GW.** I wish everyone's life circumstances could equally be taken seriously and not just those with families. I want to believe leadership would grant more flexibility if they had the freedom from those above them to do so."

SURVEY BREAKDOWN: BURNOUT

“The **expectations placed upon us are not achievable** with the staffing and resources we are provided with. Instead, we are consistently expected to far surpass the 40 hour work week or 8/9 hour work day to ensure everything is completed. This **additional time is not acknowledged, incentivized or compensated. When time off is finally used, it is not respected by others** and is accompanied by overwhelming stress and pressure to catch up as quickly as possible upon return.”

“While I love my job, the workload seems to grow every year, and staffing gets tighter and tighter. **Those who are the best performers get the honor of taking on more work.**”

“The **university as a whole either needs to hire more staff or commit more firmly to using technology to be more efficient.** Current outdated, inefficient practices require a lot of people to maintain them. If we could embrace technology to share data and improve collaboration, we could be much more productive as a community.”

SURVEY BREAKDOWN: BURNOUT

“Generally speaking, I like my job and find it to be stable and enjoyable. However, there are two aspects of my job that contribute to workplace stress:

- There is currently no way for employees to provide confidential feedback on their managers, and to my knowledge, our HR department has never sought feedback on management. Poor management significantly contributes to staff burnout, and **better management is difficult to achieve without honest employee feedback.**
- When employees excel at their jobs, complete their yearly performance goals, and receive positive feedback from their managers and other stakeholders only to receive yearly salary increases that are so small they do not keep pace with inflation or even qualify as cost-of-living increases, that obviously causes stress and contributes to burnout because **employees simply do not feel valued or appreciated.**”

SURVEY BREAKDOWN: PERFORMANCE & MERIT

n = 303/218

26.1% of GW staff felt **discouraged** from giving an employee exceeds expectations, even if they felt they deserved it.

60.6% of GW staff feel that their office or team is **understaffed**.



40.8% of GW staff work more than **40 hours a week**.

62.4% of GW staff **do not believe merit is applied equitably** across the university.

SURVEY BREAKDOWN: PERFORMANCE & MERIT

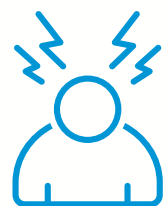
If staff were to leave GW, it would be because...



Current salary is not sufficient (67.6%)



Opportunities for professional growth elsewhere (51.9%)



Excess stress at work (37.5%)



More remote flexibility needed (34.7%)