

Spokane Community College

2011 Employee Opinion Survey

Summary of Results
From Initial Analyses



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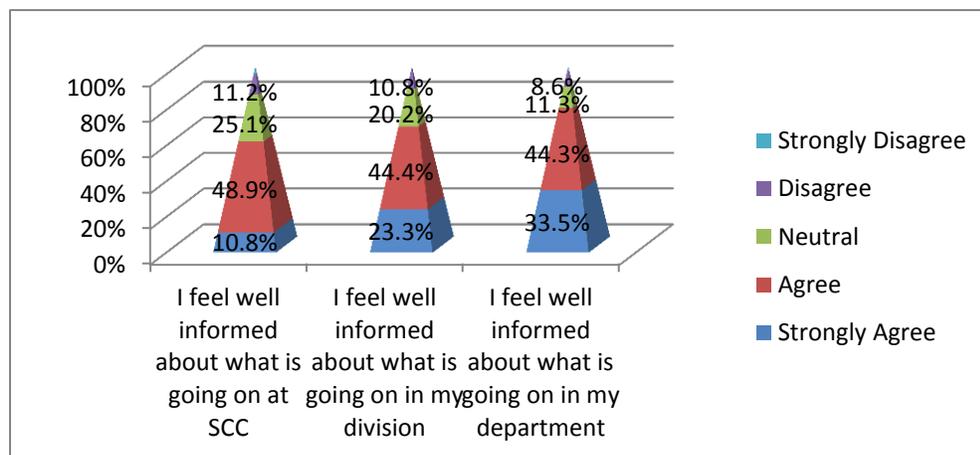
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2011 SCC EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY

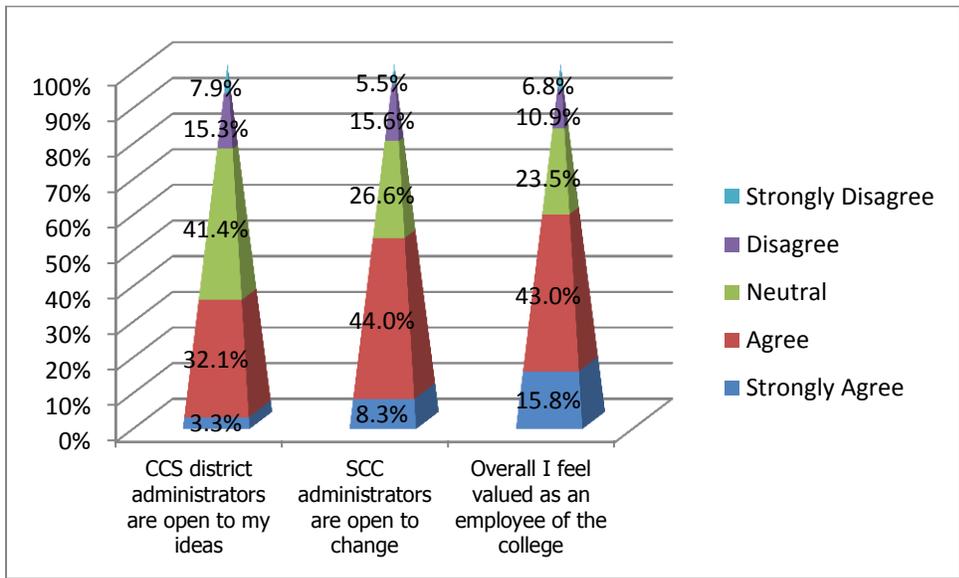
The survey was administered over the span of ten days during the 2011 Fall quarter, from September 28th through October 7. The questionnaire was created with Snap Surveys software and was made available to employees in web-based format only. The lower response rate for the 2011 survey (36.4%) as compared to the 2007 (44.6%) survey may be attributable to the 2007 survey being conducted over a longer period of time and by both web and paper administration. Employee classification, Employee status distributions (62% Full time), Sex (62% female) and ethnicity (92% white) distributions were similar for the 2011 survey and 2007 surveys. The adjunct and part-time employees were severely under-represented in the survey responses as they constituted 38% of employees but 12% of survey respondents.

Summary Results by Questionnaire Section		
<small>(1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree)</small>		
Section	Mean ¹	STD. Dev.
1) Equity and Diversity	4.10	0.853
2) SCC Campus Environment	3.68	0.990
3) Work Environment	3.65	1.106
4) Communications	3.54	0.995
5) Planning and Decision Making	3.43	1.004
6) Resources and Facilities	3.33	1.099
7) CCS District Environment	3.29	0.843

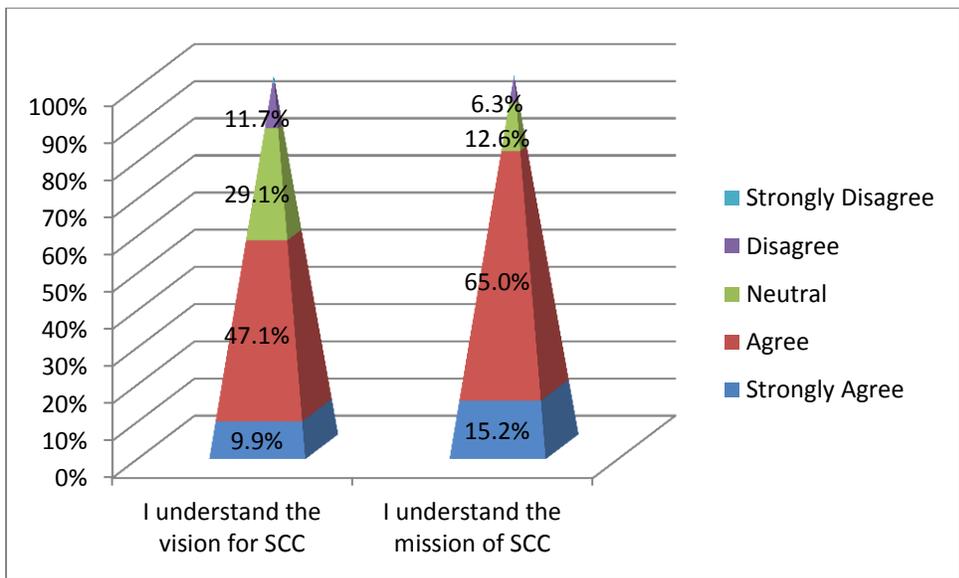
The most positive responses were to questions regarding equity and diversity. The most negative responses were to questions regarding SCC relations with the CCS district office. For individual questions a pattern emerged of responses yielding stronger agreement as the focus of the question moved away from the broader SCC community (60% agree or strongly agree) to the individual workspace (78% agree or strongly agree) e.g.



as the focus moved on the employee classification scale from District administration (35% agree or strongly agree) to the individual employee (59% agree or strongly agree)



and as the focus moved from the present (57% agree or strongly agree) to the future (80% agree or strongly agree).



Of the 79 items on the survey, seventy-five received positive mean scores above 3.0 or neutral². Those receiving net negative mean scores were: #5k "Systematic planning is used to maintain and upgrade existing facilities" 3.00, #6c "Staffing levels in my area are adequate to meet our needs" 2.63, #4g "Resources are adequate to ensure effective evaluation and planning" 2.61 and #5h "Parking is adequate" 2.39. The lone item receiving a significantly lower mean score than the 2007 survey was item #6c, an indication that the effects of budget cuts are being felt.

About a third of the 2011 survey responses showed significantly higher mean scores than the 2007 survey. Improvement has been made in the areas of communication between Administration and employees on budget decisions, creating an atmosphere that facilitates discussion of issues and including the participation of diverse constituencies at SCC in decision making processes.

2011 Employee Opinion Survey SUMMARY OF RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

As a component of its comprehensive institutional effectiveness assessment process, Spokane Community College (SCC) periodically assesses employee opinions about, and satisfaction with, various aspects of their work environment. The assessment instrument used in 2011 was a questionnaire developed and administered by the Office of Institutional Research in 2007 order to employ a more general-purpose questionnaire that would be longitudinally applicable.

The survey consists of eight sections:

- 1) CCS District Environment
- 2) SCC Campus Environment
- 3) Communications
- 4) Planning and Decision-Making
- 5) Resources and Facilities
- 6) Work Environment
- 7) Equity and Diversity
- 8) Demographics

In addition, sections 1 through 7 provided space for comments. Sections 1 through 7 consisted of 79 items, identical to the 2007 survey save the addition of one question concerning CCS district relations. Section 11 from the 2007 Employee Opinion survey, which asked for the division or administrative unit of the employee's work area, was dropped from the 2011 survey in order to preserve confidentiality of respondents

METHODOLOGY

The survey was administered over the span of ten days during the 2011 Fall quarter, from September 28th through October 7th. The questionnaire was created with Snap Surveys software and was made available to employees in web-based format only. There was one reminder sent out via email to the SCC Everyone distribution list. Administering the survey solely by E-mail represents a logistical balance between maintaining sensitivity to employee's busy work schedules while also obtaining some semblance of representation of the overall employee population.

RESULTS

Since this was an attempt to survey the entire population of SCC employees, a look at the degree to which the survey respondents matched the overall population is in order. There were 224 surveys completed for a response rate of 36.4%. By comparison, the 2007 survey achieved a response rate of 44.6%.

The lower response rate for the 2011 survey (36.4%) as compared to the 2007 survey (44.6%) may be attributable to the 2007 survey being conducted over a longer period of time and by both web and paper administration. Employee classification distributions and ethnicity distributions were similar for the 2011 survey in comparison with the 2007 survey.

Generalizability of Results

In gathering this data the intent was to sample the entire population of SCC employees and only 36% of all employees chose to respond to the survey. These self-selecting individuals may or may not represent the opinions of the entire employee population at SCC. However, to the extent that this sample is demographically similar to the entire population and to the 2007 sample, despite differences in size, some comparisons can be made to show changes in opinions.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Employee Classification

The college is comprised of three general employee classifications: Administrative and Professional Exempt (Exempt), Classified and Hourly Staff (Staff), and Faculty. Table 1 presents the distribution of 2011 survey respondents relative to the employee population and the 2007 survey respondents. In general, the distributions were quite similar to one another, and no statistically significant differences were observed.

Table 1 **Comparison of Employee Classification Distributions**

Employee Classification	2007 Employee Population		2007 Respondents		2011 Employee population*		2011 Respondents	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Faculty	361	63.3%	156	62.2%	352	63.2%	127	58.0%
Staff	179	31.4%	73	29.1%	173	31.0%	72	32.9%
Exempt *	30	5.3%	22	8.8%	32	5.8%	20	9.1%
Total	570	100.0%	251	100.0%	557	100.0%	219	100.0%

* Uses February, 2011 CCS data.

2007 Nonresponses = 3

2011 Nonresponses = 5

Difference of Proportions not significant for any classification.

Employment Status

Two-thirds of SCC employees (excluding work-study students) work full-time. Eighty-two percent and 88% of survey respondents reported being full-time in the 2007 and 2011 surveys, respectively. The 2007 and 2011 proportions were not significantly different from one another, but the 2011 survey respondent proportions were significantly different from the population (see Table 2), with part-time employees being significantly under-represented.

Table 2. **Comparison of Employment Status Distributions**

Employment Status	2007 Employee Population		2007 Respondents		2011 Employee Population*		2011 Respondents	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Full Time	377	66.1%	207	82.1%	346	62.1%	195	87.8%
Part Time	193	33.9%	45	17.9%	211	37.9%	27	12.2%
Total	570	100.0%	252	100.0%	557	100.0%	222	100.0%

* Uses February, 2011 CCS data.

2007 Nonresponses = 3

2011 Nonresponses = 2

Difference of Proportions not significant for any classification.

Years Employed

Approximately half of the 2011 survey respondents had been employed at SCC for ten years or longer, a figure similar to the 2007 survey. Employees with less than three years of service at SCC constitute 11.5% of the 2011 respondents as compared to 25.3% of the 2007 respondents.

Table 3. **Comparison of Years-Employed Distributions**

Years Employed	2007 Respondents		2011 Respondents	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Less than 1 year	28	11.4%	8	3.7%
1 - 3 years	34	13.9%	17	7.8%
4 - 6 years	40	16.3%	48	21.9%
7 - 10 years	28	11.4%	36	16.4%
More than 10 years	115	46.9%	110	50.2%
Total	245	100.0%	219	100.0%
Nonresponses	9		5	

Sex

The 2007 survey asked respondents to indicate their sex for comparison against the employee population. The distribution of sex within the sample was not significantly different than in the population.

Table 4. **Comparison of Sex Distributions**

Sex	2007 SCC Employee Population		2007 Respondents		2011 Respondents	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Female	203	58.0%	153	61.2%	134	62.1%
Male	147	42.0%	97	38.8%	85	37.9%
Total	350	100.0%	250	100.0%	224	100.0%

Race/2007 Nonresponses = 4, 2011 Non-Responses=5
Difference of Proportions not significant by Fisher's Exact.

The 2007 survey asked respondents to indicate their race and ethnicity for comparison against the employee population. The non-white racial groups were aggregated to create one group labeled "Of-color." The distribution of these two categories among respondents was not significantly different than in the population.

Table 5. **Comparison of Ethnicity Distribution**

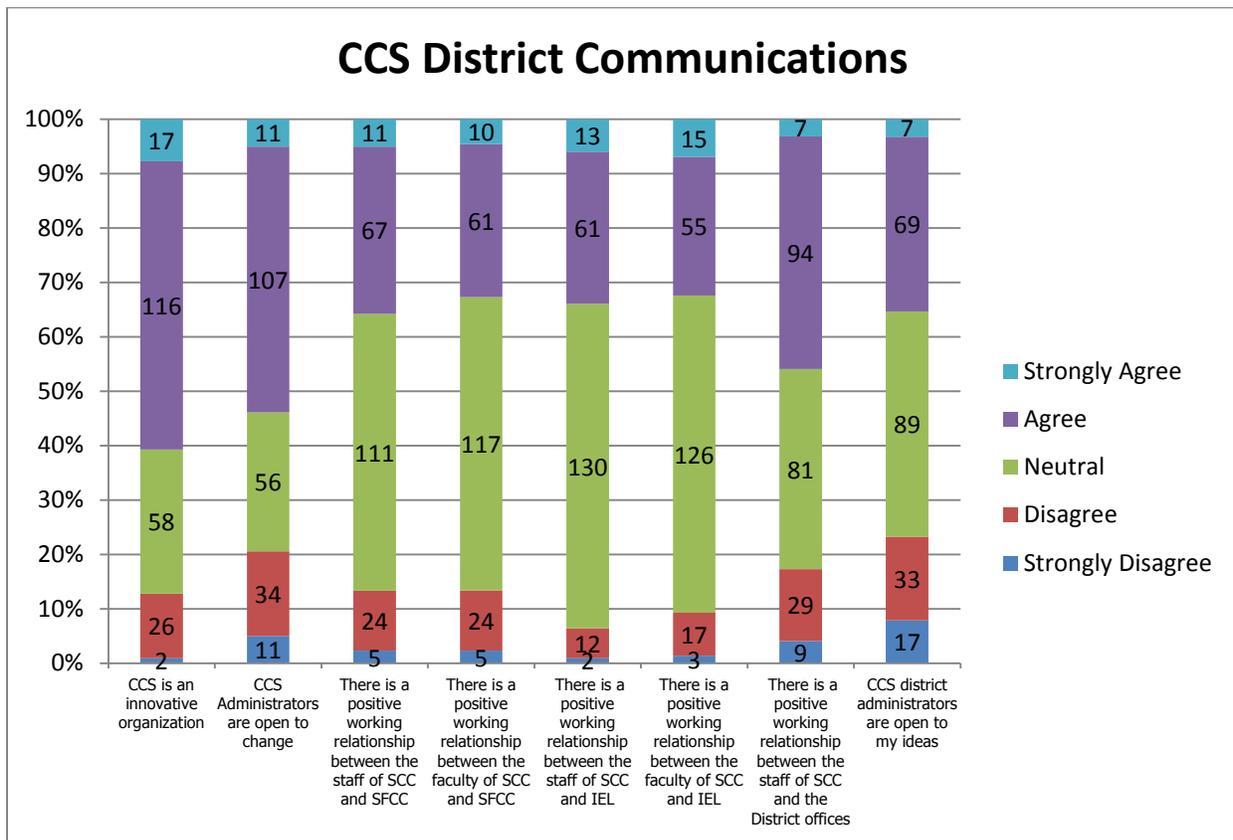
Race/Ethnicity	2007 SCC Employee Population		2007 Respondents		2011 SCC Employee Population		2011 Respondents	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Of-Color	28	8.0%	26	10.7%			19	9.2%
White	322	92.0%	217	89.3%			188	90.8%
Total	350	100.0%	243	100.0%			207	100.0%

Non-responses 2007=11, 2011=17 difference of proportions not significant by Fisher's exact

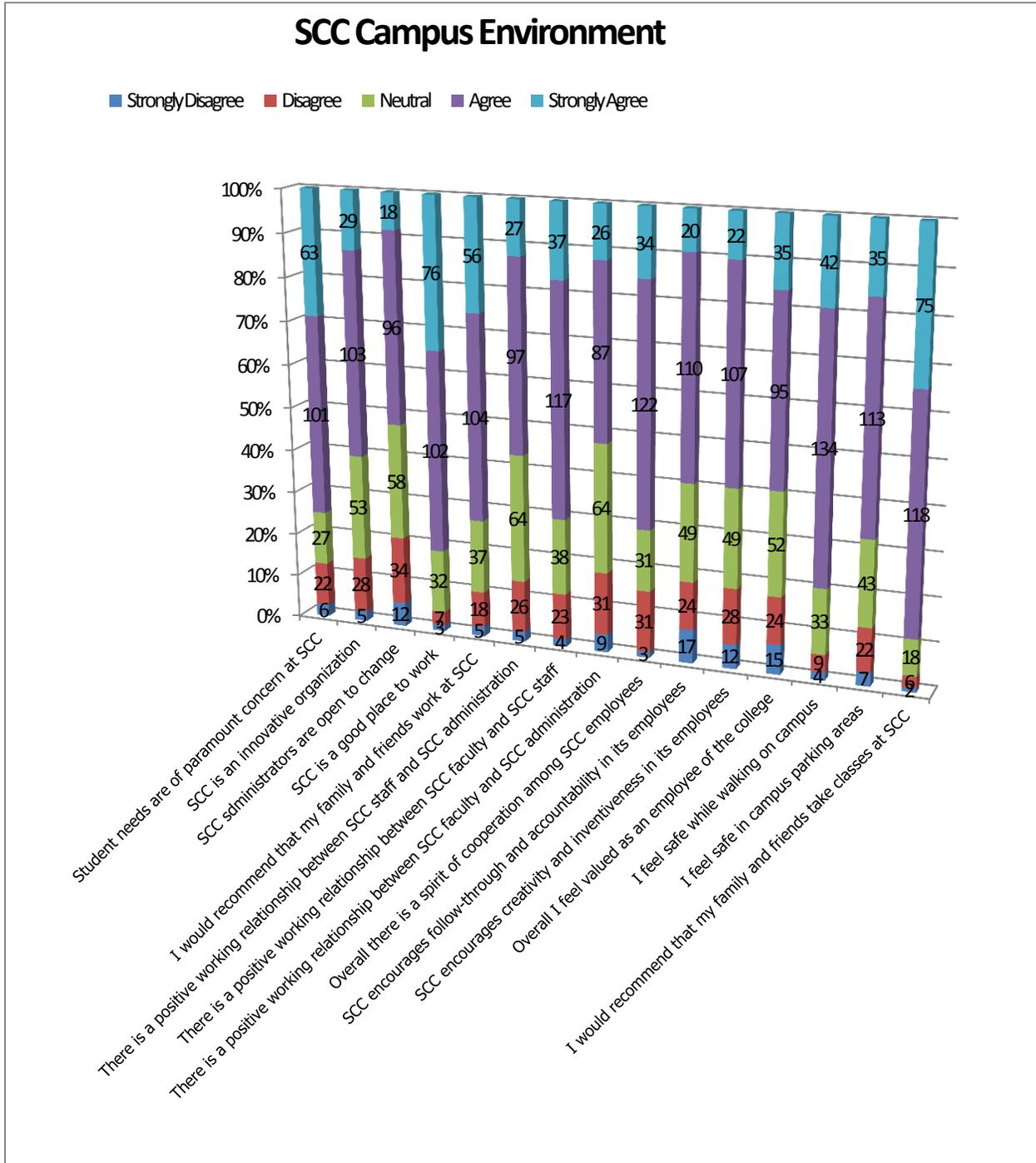
SECTION I—CCS DISTRICT ENVIRONMENT

Section 1 of the questionnaire assessed the perceptions employees had about SCC’s working relationship with other district units. Over half (61%) of respondents believe that CCS is an innovative organization, over half (54%) believe CCS administrators are open to change, and 46% feel SCC has a good working relationship with CCS staff. The larger proportion of neutral responses to the questions of relations between SCC and IEL or SFCC appears to be a function of respondents feeling inadequately informed to make a judgment and therefore responding with neutral. Items in sections I through VII are given in the form of a positive statement. Responses of Strongly Agree or 5 constitute the most affirmative possible response while the converse is true for responses of Strongly Disagree or 1. The number of respondents choosing each value is super-imposed inside of each column, e.g. for the statement “CCS is an innovative organization” 116 respondents agreed while 17 respondents strongly agreed.

Chart 1. **Ratings of CCS District Environment**



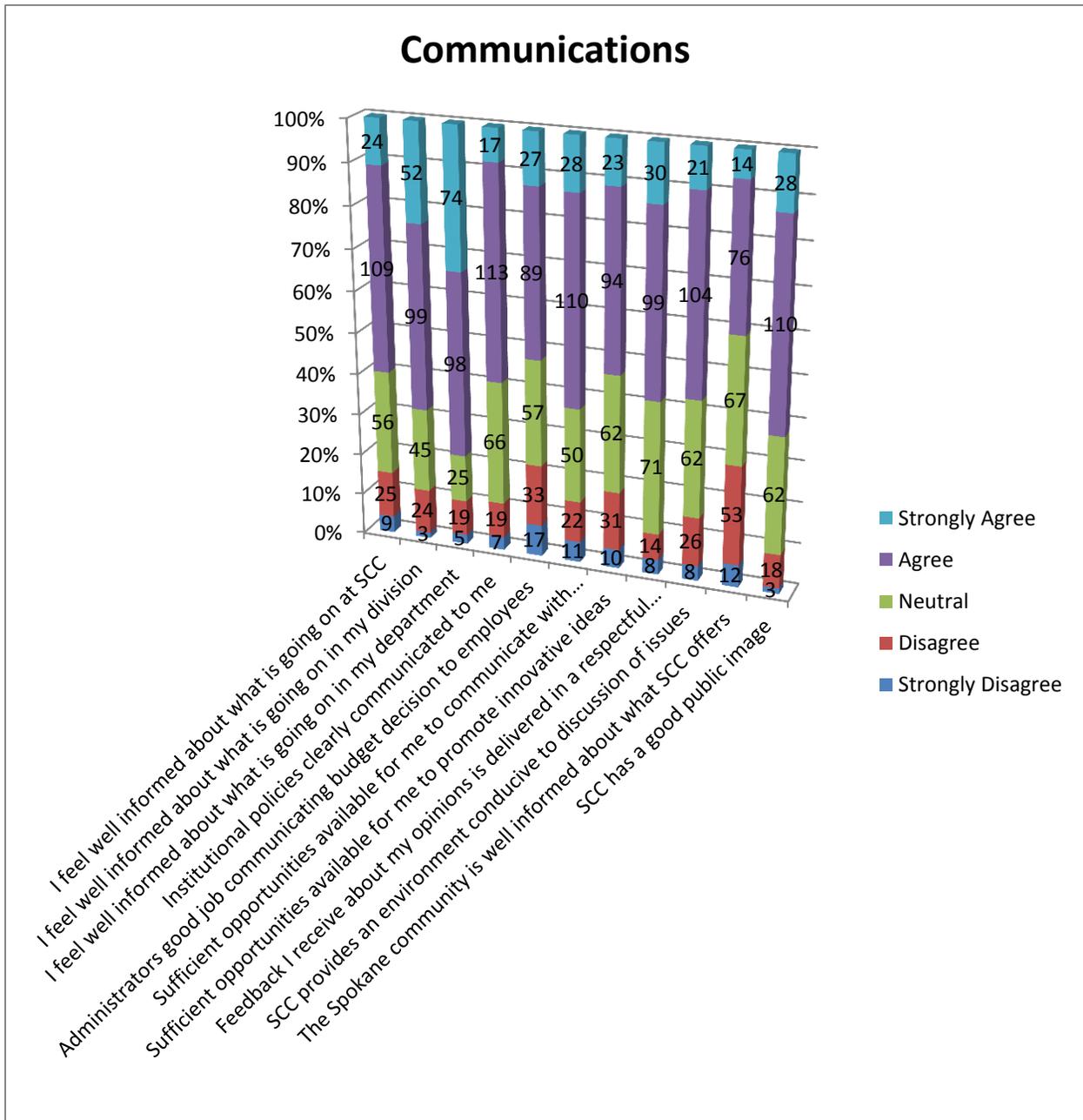
Section II—SCC Campus Environment



All statements in Section II drew mean affirmative responses with mean responses ranging from 4.18 (I would recommend that my family and friends take classes at SCC) to 3.34 (SCC administrators are open to change). Statements calling for judgments about the respondent's personal situation drew the highest mean values. These are the statements that begin with "I would..".

Questions involving Administration at SCC drew a noticeably higher number of neutral responses, again the likely result of respondents using the neutral response as don't know or no basis for judgment. The survey items which focused on groups, "employees" or "administrators" also produced the highest number of combined Strongly Disagree and Disagree responses, ranging from 21% of responses for "SCC administrators are open to change" to 15% for "Overall there is a spirit of cooperation among SCC employees".

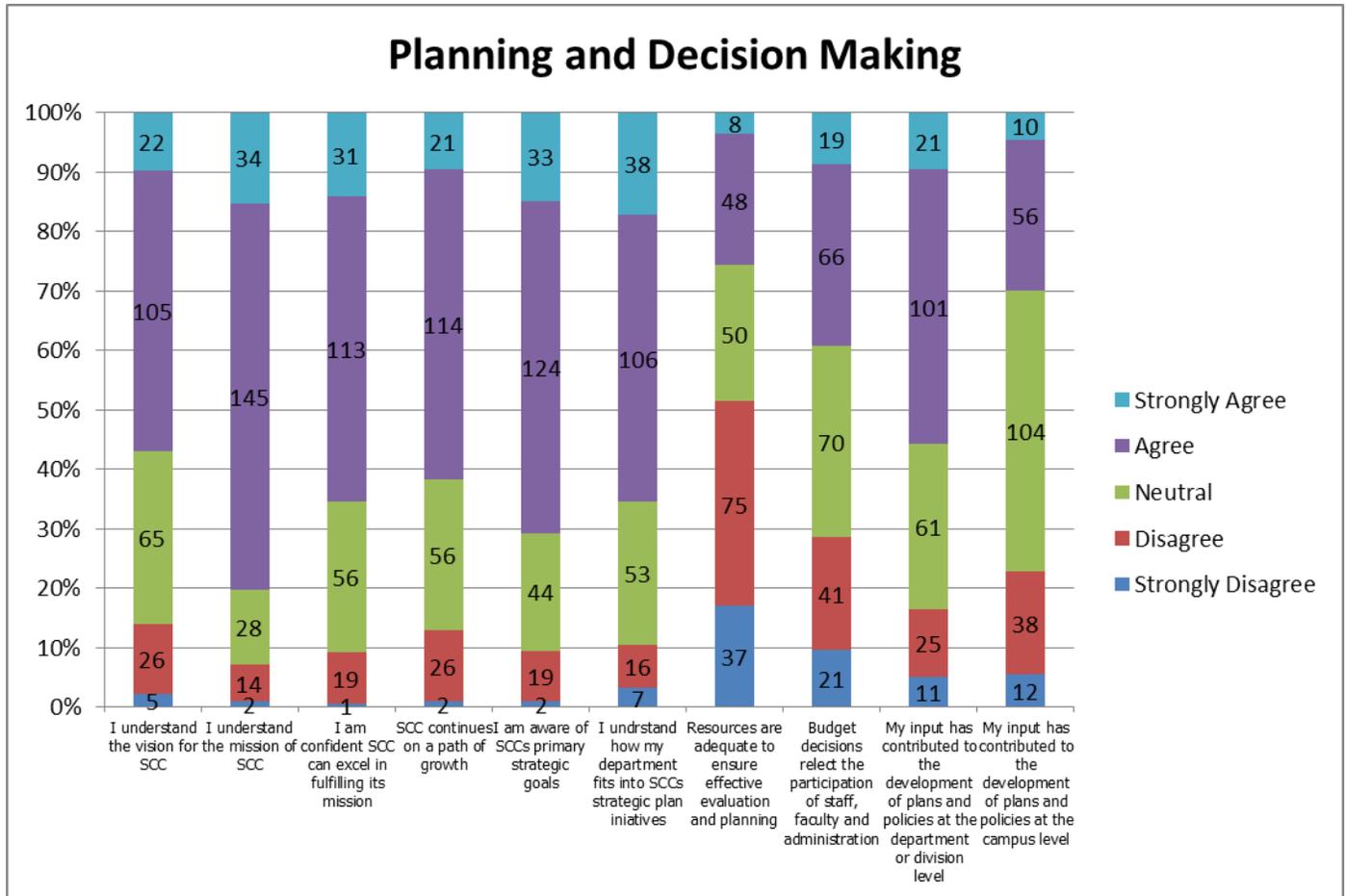
Section III—Communications



All statements in the Communications section receive mean positive responses. As in section II, "I" statements yield more respondents in agreement relative to statements with a broader, external focus. The number of neutral responses for the three "I feel well informed.."

statements rises as the focus moves from department to division to campus wide again indicating the use of the neutral response as don't know/no opinion. In that light it is interesting to note the highest number of neutral responses in this section is to the statement on feedback received on their opinion. Respondents were least likely to express an opinion on feedback to their opinions. Noteworthy is that while respondents feel that SCC has a good public image, with 62% responding agree or strongly agree, only 41% agreed that the community is well informed about what SCC has to offer.

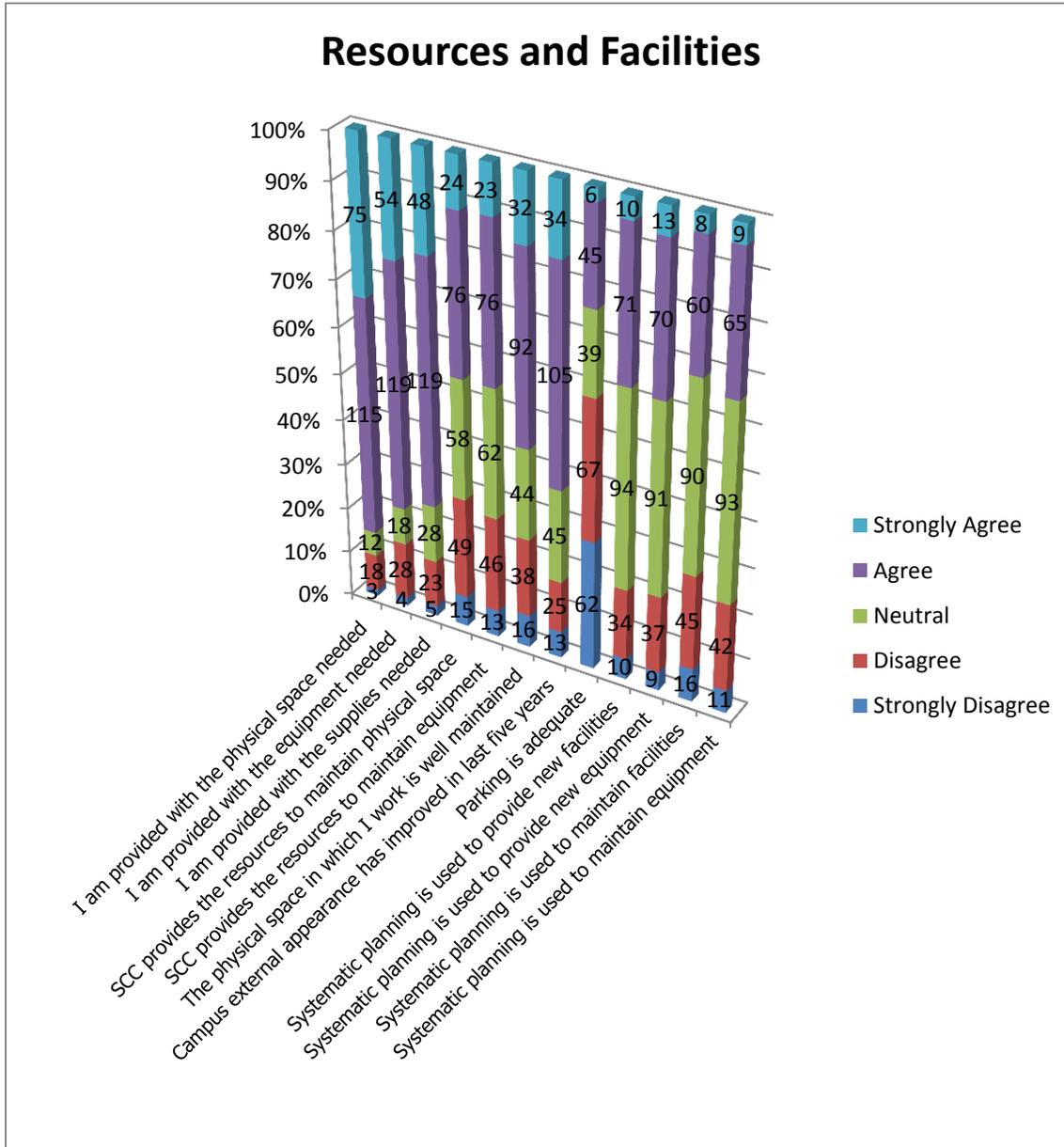
SECTION IV—PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING



Respondents to the statements in the Planning and Decision making section were confident they understand the mission of SCC and its ability to accomplish it. Eighty percent agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the mission of SCC. Seventy percent agreed or strongly agreed they understood the primary strategic goals for SCC. 65% agreed or strongly agreed that they were confident SCC can accomplish its mission.

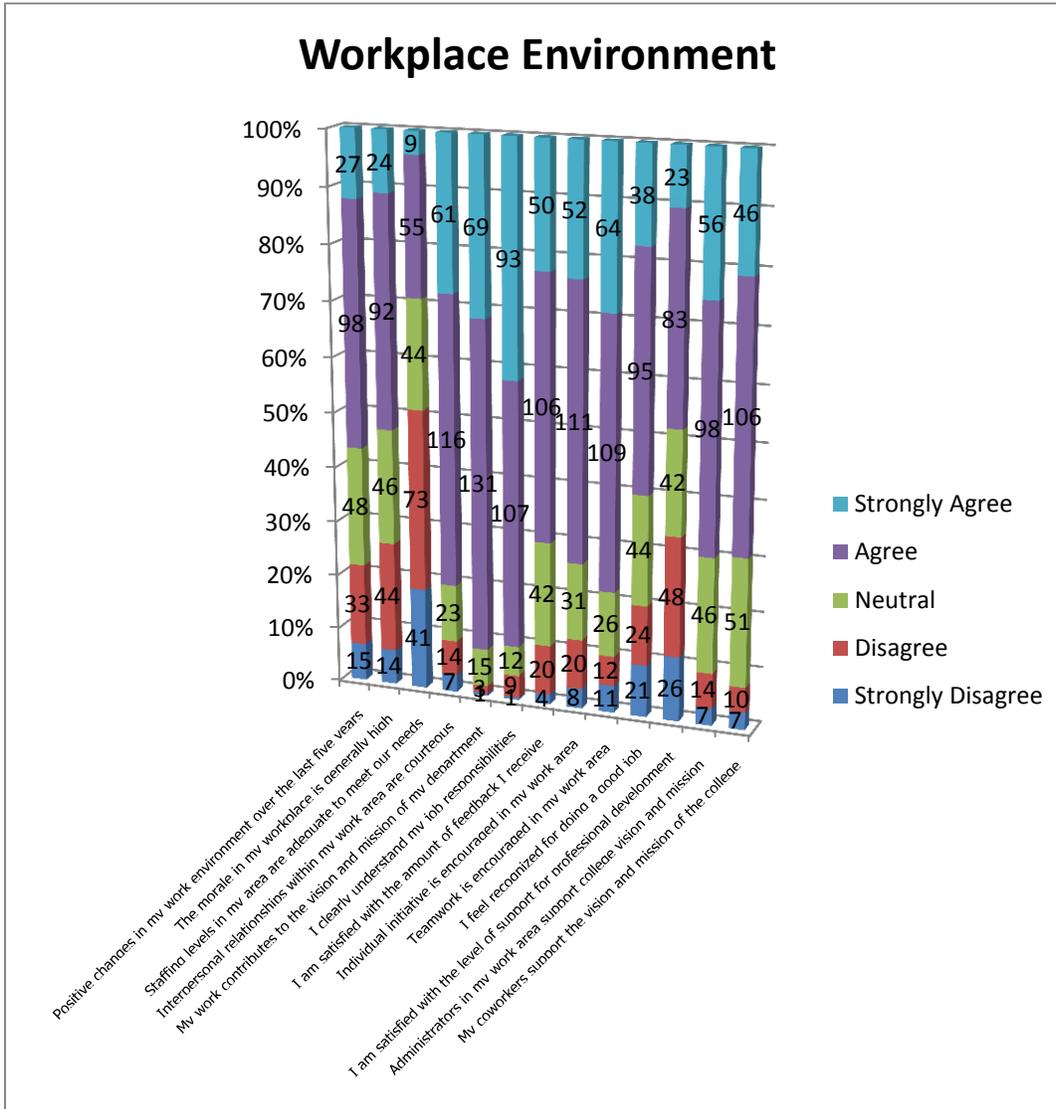
Respondents were not as positive about whether their input matters in decisions made at SCC in furtherance of fulfilling its aims. Only 39% agreed or strongly agreed that budget decisions reflected participation of faculty, staff and administration. Only 30% agreed or strongly agreed that their input contributed to the development of plans at the campus level. Last and not least, only 26% agreed or strongly agreed that resources are adequate to ensure effective planning. This was the penultimate expression of negativity among all statements, above only the low marks given to the adequacy of parking on campus.

Section V—Resources and Facilities



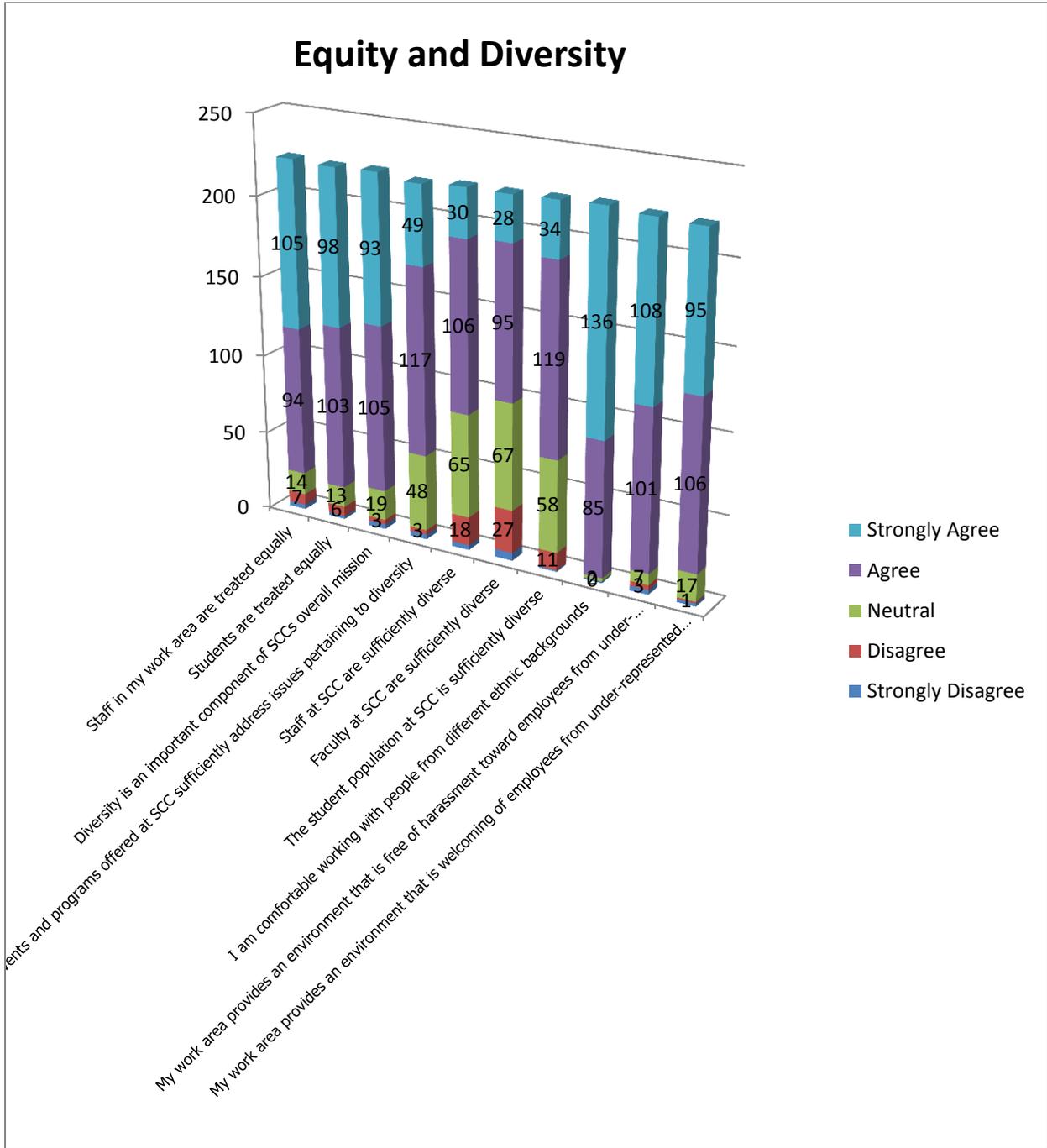
Responses to statements in the Resources and Facilities section seemed to fall in one of three groups. “I” statements received from 56% agreement or strong agreement (The physical space in which I work is well maintained) to 85% agreement or strong agreement (I am provided with the physical space needed to perform my job). The two statements on SCC providing adequate resources had only 45% agree or strongly agree. The four statements concerning the SCC planning process had between 31% agree or strongly agree (Systematic planning is used to maintain and upgrade existing equipment) and 38% agree or strongly agree (Systematic planning is used to provide new equipment). The responses to the statements on planning had more neutral responses than disagreement. Between 41 to 43% of the responses to the planning statements were neutral, suggesting the plurality of respondents were suspending judgment on the SCC planning process until they felt better informed about it.

Section VI—SCC Work environment



Respondents understand their work assignments and believe they are valuable. 90% agree or strongly agree they understand their job responsibilities while 91% agree or strongly agree their work "...contributes to the vision and mission of my division or department". 70% were satisfied with the amount of feedback they received on their work performance. 59% agreed or strongly agreed that they are recognized for doing a good job. 48% agreed or strongly agreed that there is sufficient level of support for workplace development while the least amount of support went to the survey item "Staffing levels in my area are adequate to meet our needs" with 29% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.

SECTION VII—SCC EQUITY AND DIVERSITY



Respondents agreed strongly with all statements in the section on Equity and Diversity. The top five statements in mean response values were all from the Equity and Diversity section. The only hint of disagreement came from the statements "Staff at SCC are sufficiently diverse" and "Faculty at SCC are sufficiently diverse" where 10 and 14% respectively expressed disagreement or strong disagreement.

Comparison of Results to 2007 Survey

The 2011 Employee Opinion Survey was nearly identical to the 2007 Employee Opinion Survey, in order to facilitate comparison between the two. Seventy-eight of the seventy-nine statements used in the 2011 survey were used in the 2007 Survey. Of the 78 statements, 53 had no statistically significant difference in mean value.

The net difference between the 2007 and 2011 surveys on statements that did show statistically significant difference was nearly all in a positive direction. The following statements showed difference in mean scores significant at $p > .01$

I understand the mission of SCC (what the college is supposed to be doing now).
I am provided with the physical space needed to perform my job.
I am aware of SCC's primary strategic goals.
I understand how my department fits into SCC's strategic plan initiatives.
Staff at SCC are sufficiently diverse.
SCC has a good public image.
The student population at SCC is sufficiently diverse.
I understand the vision for SCC (where the college is headed in the future).
There is a positive working relationship between the staff of SCC and IEL.
Diversity is an important component of SCC's overall mission.
There is a positive working relationship between the faculty of SCC and IEL.
Staff in my work area are treated equally, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or age.

Respondents to the 2011 survey indicate stronger awareness of SCC's mission and their role in it, perceived improvement in SCC's attainment of its diversity goals and improvement in some working relationships over conditions in 2007.

The next series of statements had significantly higher mean scores in 2011 with significance at $p > .05$. The significance levels are here presented more in order to indicate the degree of difference between the 2007 and 2011 surveys. They can best be thought of as $p > .05$ indicating different and $P > .01$ as indicating very different, akin to the difference between agree and strongly agree on the section items Likert scale.

Administrators do a good job of communicating budget resource allocation decision to employees.
I feel safe while walking on campus.
My input has contributed to the development of plans and policies at the department/division level. *
Faculty at SCC are sufficiently diverse.
Budget decisions reflect the participation of staff, faculty and administration. *
My work area provides an environment that is welcoming of employees from under-represented groups.
My input has contributed to the development of plans and policies at the campus level. *
My work contributes to the vision and mission of my division/department.
Overall, SCC provides an environment conducive to the open discussion of issues.

Improvement has been made in the areas of communication between Administration and employees on budget decisions, creating an atmosphere that facilitates discussion of issues and including the participation of diverse constituencies at SCC in decision making processes. Employees indicate higher levels of agreement in the 2011 survey that their work is valuable than the 2007 survey. While the absolute levels of satisfaction on the issues of communication and planning have room for improvement, they are overall better than they were in 2007. Given all this good news it is here necessary to introduce the one sour note found in the comparison of the 2011 survey to the 2007 survey. Agreement with this statement "Staffing levels in my area are adequate to meet our needs" plunged from 2007 to 2011 and had the largest difference between 2007 and 2011 mean scores of any survey item. The response to this item is the strongest indicator that employees have moved from feeling they are being asked to do more with less to being asked to do the impossible with the inadequate.

The 2011 Employee Survey was presented to respondents in the form of seven sections of statements. But did respondents mentally group the survey statements in the same categories? Using a data reduction tool (principal components analysis with varimax rotation), the mental mapping used by respondents emerges. In order of the mental map magnitude, the factors are:

- 1) Planning and communications
- 2) SCC Campus environment
- 3) Work Environment
- 4) Resources and Support
- 5) Equity and diversity in the work area
- 6) Relationships with Administration at CCS/SCC
- 7) Working relationships between SCC/IEL/CCS/SFCC
- 8) Equity and diversity in the campus and broader community
- 9) Safety and facilities

The combined factors accounted for 62% of the variance with the first factor (12.7%) being about four times the magnitude of the last factor (3.3%). The first four factors account for three times the variance explained by the last five factors. As the focus moves away from the SCC campus internal matters and away from the respondents personal interactions, the importance of the survey categories and items diminishes. All survey sections are not weighted equally in the mental maps of the respondents. Equity and Diversity is parsed by respondents into two categories, equity within the respondents work area and personal sphere of interaction and equity in a broader and more distant sense.

CONCLUSIONS

The 2007 and 2011 survey samples failed to statistically represent the entire CCS employee population, with part-time employees being severely underrepresented. Two out of five CCS employees worked part-time in 2007, but only twelve percent of survey respondents worked part-time. The failure of the survey to adequately capture responses from adjunct faculty and part time employees severely weakens the generalizability of the survey to this group. It is possible that as the prison warden said in Cool Hand Luke "What we have here is a failure to communicate". Adjunct faculty and part-time employees may not have their own telephone, email and office space on campus. They may not have gotten the message about the survey. It is also possible that the disproportionately low response rate from part-time employees reflects their disinterest rather than dysfunctional communication.

Overall, where statistically significant differences were observed from 2007 to 2011, the changes were positive with the exception of the issue of adequate staffing. Respondents saw significant improvement in campus communication and efforts to involve them in decision making processes. Diversity was valued more highly in 2011 even as respondents faulted SCC for falling short of achieving desired goals in this area, a finding which mirrors the 2007 Employee Opinion Survey findings. Signs of the reduction of resources available to SCC over the last four years are evident in survey responses yet employee satisfaction with their personal work situation remains at least on par with the levels reported in the 2007 Employee Opinion Survey. This satisfaction diminishes as the focus of the survey item moves from the here and now towards the future, from the personal workspace to campus wide, district wide and community interactions.

Footnotes

1) Section means are calculated by summing the point value for all responses in each section using Strongly Disagree=1 point, 2 points for Disagree, 3 for Neutral, 4 for Agree, 5 for Strongly Agree and dividing by (the number of items*the number of items with a response).

2) By the act of calculating means from Likert scale data the author stands revealed as in agreement with those who consider that Likert scale data can be treated as discrete points on a continuous interval scale. The following article (Norman 2010) expresses the author's viewpoint.

<http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/18751725/1039265037/name/Likert%2Bscscales.%2Blevels%2Bof%2Bmeasurement%2Band%2Bthe%2B%25E2%2580%2598%25E2%2580%2598laws%25E2%2580%2599%25E2%2580%2599.pdf>

As Norman says, his article is not likely to settle the debate on this issue .

From http://www.creative-wisdom.com/teaching/WBI/parametric_test.shtml

“The issue regarding the appropriateness of ordinal-scaled data in parametric tests was unsettled even in the eyes of Stevens (1951), the inventor of the four levels of measurement: "As a matter of fact, most of the scales used widely and effectively by psychologists are ordinal scales ... there can be involved a kind of pragmatic sanction: in numerous instances it leads to fruitful results." (p.26) Based on the central limit theorem and Monte Carlo simulations, Baker, Hardyck, and Petrinovich (1966) and Borgatta and Bohrnstedt (1980) argued that for typical data, worrying about whether scales are ordinal or interval doesn't matter.

Another argument against not using interval-based statistical techniques for ordinal data was suggested by Tukey (1986). In Tukey's view, this was a historically unfounded overreaction. In physics before precise measurements were introduced, many physical measurements were only approximately interval scales. For example, temperature measurement was based on liquid-in-glass thermometers. But it is unreasonable not to use a t-test to compare two groups of such temperatures. Tukey argued that researchers painted themselves into a corner on such matters because we were too obsessed with "sanctification" by precision and certainty. If our p-values or confidence intervals are to be sacred, they must be exact. In the practical world, when data values are transformed (e.g. transforming y to sqrt(y), or logy), the p values resulted from different expressions of data would change. Thus, ordinal-scaled data should not be banned from entering the realm of parametric tests. For a review of the debate concerning ordinal- and interval- scaled data, please consult Velleman and Wilkinson (1993).”

