

Budget Survey Report 12.16.25

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Executive Summary

UCCS Budget Process Survey – Faculty, Staff, and Student Perspectives

Report Compiled By: Robin Parent, supported by Ryan Achor and generative AI

Purpose

The Budget Process Survey was conducted to gather perspectives from faculty, staff, and students on what has worked well in past budgeting processes, what should be avoided, how trust can be strengthened, which values should guide decisions, and any additional concerns or insights. The goal was to inform a more transparent, effective, and values-aligned budgeting process at UCCS.

While faculty and staff provided the most detailed qualitative input, student responses though more limited in length and volume, which offers important insight into how budgeting decisions are experienced by those most directly affected by outcomes.

Survey Details

Respondents

Faculty: 43

Staff: 45

Student: 7

Survey Response Period = 2 weeks

Survey Analysis Methodology

Questions were analyzed using generative AI. A thorough prompt, guided by discourse analysis methods focused on theme, phrase, and clause use were used to generate each analysis. The prompt was used for each respondent category for each question. Followed by cross analysis for each question across all respondents (Cook et al. 2025; Gee, 2025). AI generated responses were then checked against the raw survey data for accuracy (Cook, et al. 2025; Nguyen & Welch, 2025). Every survey comment was first read by me (Dr. Robin Parent, VC Strategic Initiatives and Chief of Staff). I then pulled detailed and repeated phrasing from the raw data to fact-check and support the AI analysis.

Next Steps

The University Leadership Team (ULT) will meet in January to thoroughly review the survey report. We will use the data collected to draft a “What We’ll Do Next” document that will outline next steps from the survey as well as provide definitions for a “Healthy Campus” and what “Transparency” looks like based upon conversations ULT members have had with their groups and the information they have brought back to ULT to inform the drafting process.

I want to thank you again for your contributions and willingness to engage in this iterative process.

References

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Nguyen, D. C., & Welch, C. (2025). Generative Artificial Intelligence in Qualitative Data Analysis: Analyzing—Or Just Chatting? *Organizational Research Methods*, 29(1), 3-39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10944281251377154> (Original work published 2026)

Key Findings

1. Trust Depends on Transparency, Communication, and Visible Outcomes

Across all respondent groups, trust emerged as a central concern.

- Faculty and staff emphasized early, honest communication; clear explanation of decision-making; and alignment between stated values and actions.
- Students focused on transparency in how tuition and funds are used, and clear, straightforward explanations for cuts or increases.

Collectively, respondents indicated that trust erodes when decisions feel opaque or disconnected from lived experience and strengthens when processes and outcomes are understandable.

2. Across-the-Board Cuts Are Widely Viewed as Harmful

Faculty and staff strongly cautioned against across-the-board cuts, describing them as:

- Inequitable
- Damaging to high-performing and growing programs
- Demoralizing and capacity-reducing

Students did not focus on cut mechanics, but their emphasis on student-centered outcomes reinforces concerns that indiscriminate reductions risk degrading the student experience.

3. Chronic Budget Cycles Are Creating Fatigue and Anxiety

Faculty and staff repeatedly described the budgeting environment as:

- Exhausting and demoralizing
- Marked by repeated uncertainty and shifting processes

Students engaged less with process concerns, but their limited responses suggest that uncertainty matters most when it translates into reduced benefits, affordability challenges, or diminished campus experience.

4. Lack of Clear Institutional Direction Undermines Confidence

Faculty and staff expressed significant concern that budget decisions are not anchored to a clearly articulated long-term vision for UCCS.

Students did not directly reference institutional vision, but their focus on tangible benefits and clarity underscores the importance of connecting strategic direction to visible student outcomes.

5. People and Capacity Are Central to Institutional Health

Faculty and staff emphasized:

- Burnout from increased workloads
- Challenges retaining faculty and staff
- Equity and compensation concerns

Students consistently framed priorities around student-oriented benefits, reinforcing that institutional capacity and workforce sustainability directly affect the quality of education, services, and support students receive.

6. Shared Governance and Inclusion Matter—But Must Be Meaningful

Faculty and staff value shared governance but expressed concern that:

- Input is often solicited too late to shape outcomes
- Processes can feel performative rather than collaborative

Students emphasized inclusion differently—calling for input from affected groups and clarity about decisions—suggesting a shared desire across groups for authentic engagement, even if expressed in different terms.

7. Students Evaluate Budgeting by Outcomes, Not Process

A clear distinction emerged:

- **Faculty and staff** focus on process, governance, and decision logic.
- **Students** focus on outcomes: affordability, benefits, and direct impact on their experience.

This reinforces the need to translate internal budget decisions into clear, student-facing narratives and benefits.

Values Identified as Most Important

Across respondent groups, the most frequently prioritized values were:

1. **Student-Centered Focus**
2. **Fiscal Responsibility**
3. **Transparency**
4. **Retaining Faculty and Staff**
5. **Accountability**
6. **Communication**
7. **Sustainability**
8. **Shared Vision**

Additional values raised—particularly by faculty and staff—include:

- Integrity and honesty
- Shared governance (beyond transparency)
- Workforce well-being and morale
- Data-informed and long-term decision-making

Student input reinforces the importance of clarity, fairness, and student-oriented outcomes within these values.

Overall Conclusion

Taken together, the survey results show that faculty, staff, and students all recognize the seriousness of UCCS's financial challenges but experience them in different ways.

- **Faculty and staff** are seeking clarity of direction, decisive and transparent leadership, and processes that respect human capacity and institutional knowledge.
- **Students** are focused on affordability, clear communication, and tangible benefits that support their educational experience.

The strongest shared message is that budget decisions must be transparent, value-aligned, and clearly connected to outcomes—especially those affecting students. Trust will be strengthened not only by how decisions are made, but by how clearly their purpose and impact are communicated.

Survey Details

Q1: In your experience, what has worked well for budgeting processes?
(For example: collaboration, communication...)

Prompt: (Insert respondent group) were asked "In your experience, what has worked well for budgeting processes? (For example: collaboration, communication...) " Please take these responses and analyze the data for common themes using repetitive phrasing and clause use. Include in the report high-frequency themes, details for each theme, cross-cutting details, and a summary.

Faculty

Below is a qualitative thematic analysis of the faculty responses, intentionally grounded in repetitive wording, shared clauses, and patterned phrasing rather than interpretation alone. This approach surfaces what faculty most consistently *name*, *repeat*, and *contrast* when describing what has worked (or not worked) in budgeting processes.

Executive Summary (High-Frequency Themes)

Across responses, faculty repeatedly return to a small set of core ideas, often using nearly identical language:

1. **Communication** (most frequent and most emphasized)
2. **Transparency** (closely paired with communication)
3. **Collaboration & Shared Governance**
4. **Clarity of Goals, Numbers, and Process**
5. **Proactive, Data-Informed Planning**
6. **Decentralized / Department-Level Agency**
7. **Trust** (often named indirectly through its absence)

Notably, many responses are framed in negative or conditional constructions ("not much," "none," "hard to say," "there has been no process"), which itself is a meaningful pattern indicating erosion of confidence in the budgeting process.

Theme 1: Communication (Dominant, Repetitive, and Layered)

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- "communication"
- "strong communication"
- "more frequent communications"
- "regular updates"
- "kept me informed"
- "update via email"
- "communication at the departmental level"
- "messaging"

Clause patterns:

- Communication is frequently paired with frequency ("more frequent," "regular").

- Communication is framed as informational, not participatory (“updates,” “emails,” “slide decks”).
- Several responses include qualifiers:
 - “communication (although sometimes too much communication – emails)”
 - “communication ... but no decisions are made”

Interpretation grounded in language use:

Faculty are not simply asking for *more* communication; they are emphasizing predictable, meaningful, and decision-connected communication, rather than volume alone.

Theme 2: Transparency (Often Coupled with Communication)

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- “transparency”
- “as much transparency as possible”
- “being transparent about how funds are budgeted and used”
- “clarity, transparency throughout the process”
- “picture of the budget that all faculty groups agree upon”

Clause pairings:

- “communication and transparency”
- “trust and transparency”
- “clarity and transparency”

Notable pattern:

Transparency is repeatedly described as visual and shared:

- “a picture of the budget”
- “laying out mandatory and non-mandatory expense increases”
- “clarity about numbers and decisions”

This suggests faculty want shared reference points, not just explanations.

Theme 3: Collaboration & Shared Governance

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- “collaboration” (often as a single-word response)
- “collaboration and communication”
- “teamwork among colleges”
- “shared governance”
- “meaningful input”
- “feedback”

Structural pattern:

Collaboration is frequently mentioned without elaboration, implying it is a baseline expectation rather than a novel idea.

Contrasting clauses (important):

- “gets feedback but they do what they want”
- “discussions and feedback happen and no decisions are made”
- “UBAC hears the numbers; upper administration makes the decisions”

These constructions reveal frustration with performative collaboration rather than authentic shared decision-making.

Theme 4: Clarity of Goals, Numbers, and Process

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- “clear goals”
- “clarity”
- “actual clarity about numbers and decisions”
- “laying out mandatory and non-mandatory expense increases”
- “why we have the numbers we do”

Clause patterns:

- Faculty contrast *reaction* vs. *intention*:
 - “cutting budgets—these are reactions, not true goals”
- Clarity is tied to decision accountability:
 - “who, ultimately, ought to take responsibility”

This indicates that clarity is not just informational, it is about legitimacy and fairness.

Theme 5: Proactive, Data-Informed Planning

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- “proactive planning”
- “project needs”
- “historical spending trends”
- “enrollment projections”
- “scenario planning”
- “best-case and worst-case models”
- “contingency funds”

Theme 6: Department-Level Agency & Decentralization

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- “allowing each unit to decide”
- “departmental level control”
- “communication from within my college”
- “departmental data sheets”

Clause patterns:

- Agency is framed as practical and operational, not ideological.
- Faculty link unit-level control to accuracy, ownership, and realism.

Theme 7: Trust (Often Expressed Through Absence)

Indirect but repetitive phrasing:

- “trust”
- “open mind”
- “no leadership”
- “not much”
- “nothing”

- “there has been no process”
- “it’s still not even clear that a budget exists”

Cross-Cutting Insight: The Power of Repetition

The most telling finding is not just *what* faculty say, but how often they say it in the same way:

- “Communication” appears more than any other word or concept.
- “Transparency” is rarely mentioned alone—it is almost always paired.
- Negative constructions dominate when faculty feel excluded or unheard.

Bottom Line (Language-Based Conclusion)

Using faculty’s own repeated words and clauses, what has “worked well” in budgeting is consistently described as:

Clear, transparent, and frequent communication; authentic collaboration with real influence; shared clarity around numbers and goals; and proactive, data-informed planning that gives departments agency and builds trust.

Staff

Below is a language-based thematic analysis of staff responses, grounded explicitly in repetitive wording, shared clauses, and patterned sentence construction. As with the faculty analysis, this focuses on how staff describe what has worked, using their own recurring language, rather than interpreting intent beyond the text.

Executive Summary (Dominant Patterns)

Across staff responses, a tight cluster of repeatedly used words and clauses emerges. The most frequent and structurally reinforced themes are:

1. **Communication** (by far the most repeated word)
2. **Transparency** (nearly always paired with communication)
3. **Clear Structure, Process, and Timelines**
4. **Collaboration & Inclusion of Stakeholders**
5. **Leadership Visibility, Direction, and Messaging**
6. **Predictability and Planning** (Reducing Anxiety)
7. **Local Agency Within a Central Framework**
8. **Trust** (Often Named Through Contrast or Breakdown)

Staff responses tend to be more operational and process-oriented than faculty responses, with repeated attention to *how* information flows, *who* communicates, and *whether the process reduces uncertainty*.

Theme 1: Communication (Overwhelmingly Dominant)

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- “communication”
- “clear communication”
- “open communication”
- “regular updates”
- “keeping people informed”
- “one spokesperson”
- “updates via email or Q&A”

- “where the budget process is”

Clause patterns:

- Communication is linked to timeliness:
 - “real time information and updates”
 - “regular updates”
- Communication is linked to emotional impact:
 - “creates a lot of anxiety”
 - “job loss or taking on more responsibilities”
- Communication failures are framed as harmful:
 - “keeping things a secret creates more friction”
 - “extreme lack of communication”

Key linguistic insight:

Staff repeatedly describe communication not as optional, but as risk mitigation—a way to reduce fear, rumors, and instability.

Theme 2: Transparency (Almost Always Paired)

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- “transparency”
- “being transparent about the process”
- “clear, transparent communication”
- “fully honest about difficult decisions”
- “where we are financially as a whole”

Common pairings:

- “communication and transparency”
- “open dialogue, communication, and transparency”
- “transparent and include clear timelines”

Structural pattern:

Transparency is described as:

- **Process-based** (“how decisions are made”)
- **Contextual** (“what considerations go into decisions”)
- **Honest** (“negative impact on some”)

Theme 3: Clear Structure, Process, and Timelines

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- “clear guidelines”
- “structured decision-making”
- “clear timelines and expectations”
- “consistent steps”
- “tools and processes”
- “stick to a plan and do it”

Clause patterns:

- Structure is associated with calm and effectiveness:
 - “helpful projection insights”
 - “easier to communicate and collaborate”
- Lack of structure is framed as strain:

- “processes are strained and lack timeliness”

Key distinction:

Staff consistently equate a *good budgeting process* with procedural clarity, not just values or outcomes.

Theme 4: Collaboration & Stakeholder Inclusion

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- “collaboration”
- “working together”
- “engagement of stakeholders”
- “involving stakeholders early”
- “letting faculty/staff have input”
- “representation”

Clause patterns:

- Collaboration is linked to trust-building:
 - “establishing trust with all stakeholders”
- Inclusion is framed as early and ongoing, not retrospective:
 - “involving stakeholders early”
 - “prior to collaborative decision-making”

Contrast language (important):

- “not all colleges have been as transparent”
- “being told what was happening without communication or collaboration”

This highlights uneven experiences across units.

Theme 5: Leadership Visibility, Direction, and Messaging

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- “leadership communicating priorities and values”
- “clear guidance and direction from leadership”
- “one spokesperson”
- “executive leadership team has done better”
- Specific praise for named leadership presentations

Clause patterns:

- Leadership is expected to:
 - Set **parameters** (“cut process communicated”)
 - Provide **clarity** (“extremely clear and well presented”)
 - Show **presence and care** (“being present and caring”)

Staff language emphasizes coordination and coherence, not decentralization alone.

Theme 6: Predictability, Planning, and Anxiety Reduction

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- “begin planning”
- “what might be coming”
- “shared vision priorities”

- “clear understanding of financial situation”

Unique staff framing:

Staff explicitly name anxiety, job security, and workload impacts—terms largely absent from faculty responses. This positions budgeting as not just financial, but workforce and critical for morale.

Theme 7: Local Agency Within a Larger Framework

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- “passed down to colleges and departments”
- “letting divisions, departments, and units make allocation choices”
- “within a larger framework”

Clause structure:

Agency is acceptable, and welcomed, after:

- Central clarity
- Shared priorities
- Clear constraints

This mirrors a “tight–loose” governance preference.

Theme 8: Trust — Expressed Through Breakdown or Negation

Repetitive negation patterns:

- “Not sure”
- “Nothing”
- “Zero”
- “We aren’t in this situation because things worked well”
- “Extreme lack of communication”

Key linguistic signal:

As with faculty, trust is often expressed through absence, not assertion—indicating erosion rather than simple dissatisfaction.

Cross-Cutting Insight: Compression and Emphasis

Staff responses show:

- Frequent single-word answers (“communication,” “transparency”)
- Repeated triads (“collaboration, communication, transparency”)
- Operational framing over philosophical framing

This suggests staff are asking less for vision and more for execution that is clear, and consistent.

Bottom Line (Grounded in Repeated Language)

Using staff’s own repeated words and clauses, budgeting processes work best when they include: Clear, frequent, and honest communication; transparent decision logic; structured processes with timelines; visible and coordinated leadership; early and meaningful stakeholder inclusion; and local decision-making within a clearly defined institutional framework—especially in ways that reduce anxiety and build trust.

The repeated use of “nothing,” “not sure,” and “lack” signals that while some progress is recognized, staff experience remains uneven and fragile—highly dependent on communication quality and leadership clarity.

Student

Below is a language-based thematic analysis of student responses, grounded explicitly in repetitive wording, shared phrases, and clause construction. Given the small number of responses, attention is paid not only to frequency but also to compression (short phrases carrying disproportionate meaning).

Executive Summary (Dominant Patterns)

Even with limited responses, students consistently return to a small, highly concentrated set of ideas, expressed with notable brevity:

1. **Communication** (dominant and repeated)
2. **Clarity of Goals, Use, and Expectations**
3. **Prioritization and Alignment of Resources**
4. **Fairness / Neutrality in Decision-Making**
5. **Uncertainty and Limited Visibility**

Student responses are short, declarative, and outcome-focused, suggesting distance from the process but strong sensitivity to *how clearly it is explained*.

Theme 1: Communication (Most Repeated Term)

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- “communication”
- “lots of communication”
- “communication with stakeholders”

Clause patterns:

- Communication is consistently paired with clarity:
 - “clear goals and communication”
 - “communication and prioritization”
 - “lots of communication and clarity”

Key linguistic insight:

Students do not distinguish between *process* and *message*—for them, communication *is* the process.

Theme 2: Clarity of Goals, Use, and Expectations

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- “clear goals”
- “clarity on what the budget is going to be used for”
- “clear expectations”

Clause structure:

- Clarity is framed in purpose-based terms, not mechanics:
 - *what* funds are for

- *why* they are released
- *how* priorities guide decisions

Unlike faculty and staff, students do not reference governance structures or timelines—only understandability.

Theme 3: Prioritization and Alignment

Repetitive phrasing observed:

- “prioritization”
- “weighted differently”
- “guiding the proper release of funds”

Structural pattern:

Students accept that not all goals are equal, as long as:

- Priorities are visible
- Tradeoffs are explained

This reflects a fairness-through-explanation lens.

Theme 4: Fairness, Neutrality, and Trust Signals

Distinct phrasing observed:

- “viewpoint neutrality”

Though mentioned once, this phrase is high-signal:

- It implies concern about bias, ideology, or favoritism
- It frames trust as procedural fairness rather than participation

This aligns with broader student expectations of institutional neutrality.

Theme 5: Distance and Uncertainty

Repetitive negation observed:

- “not sure...”

Linguistic significance:

The ellipsis suggests:

- Limited exposure to budgeting
- Uncertainty rather than criticism
- A sense of being outside the process

Students are not expressing frustration so much as lack of access or visibility.

Bottom Line (Grounded in Student Language)

Using students’ repeated words and clause structures, budgeting processes work best when there is: Clear and frequent communication; transparent explanation of goals, priorities, and how funds are used; visible alignment between stated priorities and spending decisions; and a sense of fairness and neutrality—especially for those who are not directly involved in the process.

Cross-cutting Summary

Prompt: Please take these analyses by respondent group and create a cross-cutting summary.

Cross-Cutting Summary: What Works in Budgeting (Across Faculty, Staff, and Students)

Across all three groups, faculty, staff, and students, a strikingly consistent vocabulary emerges. Despite differences in role, proximity to budgeting, and depth of response, the same core words, pairings, and sentence structures recur. The overlap is significant and instructive.

The most repeated cross-cutting words:

Communication • Transparency • Clarity • Collaboration • Trust

These are not abstract values; they are used repeatedly as operational requirements.

1. Communication Is the Foundation (Most Universal Theme)

Repetition across all groups

- Faculty: “communication,” “regular updates,” “kept informed”
- Staff: “communication,” “clear communication,” “one spokesperson,” “updates”
- Students: “lots of communication,” “communication with stakeholders”

Shared clause patterns

- Communication is almost always paired with:
 - Clarity (“clear communication,” “clarity on what the budget is used for”)
 - Timeliness (“regular,” “real-time,” “updates”)
- Lack of communication is described with negative or absolute language:
 - “nothing,” “not much,” “extreme lack,” “not sure”

Cross-cutting insight

Across all groups, *communication is treated as the budgeting process itself*, not a supplement to it. When communication is absent or unclear, the process is perceived as broken—regardless of the underlying financial reality.

2. Transparency Means Seeing the “Why,” Not Just the Outcome

Repetitive phrasing

- “transparency”
- “transparent about how decisions are made”
- “picture of the budget”
- “what the budget is going to be used for”

Shared clause construction

- Transparency is repeatedly paired with:
 - **Decision logic** (“how decisions are made”)
 - **Use of funds** (“how funds are budgeted and used”)
 - **Honesty about tradeoffs** (“negative impact on some”)

Cross-cutting insight

Transparency is not framed as total access or instant answers. Instead, it is described as understandable reasoning—the ability to see how priorities, constraints, and decisions connect.

3. Clarity of Goals, Priorities, and Expectations Is Essential

Repetition across groups

- Faculty: “clear goals,” “clarity about numbers and decisions”
- Staff: “clear guidelines,” “clear timelines,” “clear direction”
- Students: “clear goals,” “clear expectations,” “clarity on what the budget is used for”

Shared structural pattern

- Clarity is framed as preventative, not reactive:
 - Reduces anxiety
 - Enables planning
 - Builds acceptance of difficult decisions

Cross-cutting insight

All groups accept that cuts, tradeoffs, and prioritization are sometimes necessary—but only when goals and expectations are clear in advance.

4. Collaboration and Input Must Be Meaningful, Not Performative

Repetitive phrasing

- “collaboration”
- “working together”
- “input”
- “feedback”
- “engagement of stakeholders”

Shared contrast language

- Positive: “meaningful input,” “early involvement”
- Negative: “gets feedback but does what they want,” “discussions happen and no decisions are made”

Cross-cutting insight

Across faculty and staff in particular, collaboration is expected to shape decisions, not merely respond to them. When collaboration lacks influence, trust erodes quickly.

5. Trust Is the Outcome—And Its Absence Is Loud

Common negation patterns across all groups

- “not much”
- “nothing”
- “not sure”
- “hard to say”
- “there has been no process”

Shared linguistic signal

Trust is rarely declared directly. Instead, it is implied through tone:

- Confidence → concise, positive statements
- Distrust → hesitation, negation, frustration

Cross-cutting insight

Trust is not built through reassurance alone. It emerges when communication, transparency, clarity, and collaboration are consistently enacted over time.

6. Different Roles, Different Emphases (But Same Core Needs)

While the language overlaps heavily, each group emphasizes different aspects:

- **Faculty** focus on:
 - Shared governance
 - Data-informed planning

- Strategic coherence
- **Staff** focus on:
 - Process clarity
 - Anxiety reduction
 - Leadership visibility and care
- **Students** focus on:
 - Understandability
 - Fairness and neutrality
 - Clear explanation of priorities

Unifying insight

These are not competing demands—they are layers of the same system, experienced from different distances.

Cross-Cutting Bottom Line (Using Shared Language)

Grounded in the repeated words, phrases, and clauses used across faculty, staff, and students, budgeting processes work best when they include: Clear, frequent, and honest communication; transparent explanation of goals, priorities, and decision logic; structured processes with visible timelines; meaningful collaboration that influences outcomes; and consistent leadership messaging that builds trust and reduces uncertainty—especially for those furthest from the process.

Equally important, the repeated use of “not sure,” “nothing,” and “lack” across all groups signals that visibility and consistency matter as much as the financial decisions themselves.

Q2: What are things UCCS should avoid when crafting a budget process? (For example: across the board cuts...)

Prompt: (Insert respondent group) were asked " What are things UCCS should avoid when crafting a budget process? (For example: across the board cuts...)" Please take these responses and analyze the data for common themes using repetitive phrasing and clause use. Include in the report high-frequency themes, details for each theme, cross-cutting details, and a summary.

Faculty

Below is a language-based thematic analysis of faculty responses to Survey Question 2: “What are things UCCS should avoid when crafting a budget process?” This analysis is grounded explicitly in repetitive phrasing, shared clauses, negation patterns, and emphatic constructions used by respondents themselves.

Faculty Budgeting: What UCCS Should Avoid

Cross-Thematic Analysis Based on Repetitive Language and Clause Use

High-Frequency Themes (Ranked by Linguistic Density)

1. **Across-the-Board Cuts**
2. **Top-Down, Closed, or Unilateral Decision-Making**
3. **Lack of Transparency and Communication**

4. **Non-Strategic Cuts That Undermine Mission and Growth**
5. **Poor or Misused Data**
6. **Failure to Plan for Flexibility and Contingencies**
7. **Equity Impacts and Demoralization**
8. **Speed Without Deliberation** (“Too Much, Too Fast”)

These themes recur with near-identical phrasing, often intensified through exclamation points, repetition, capitalization, and absolutes (“full-stop,” “never,” “always,” “across the board cuts!”).

Theme 1: Across-the-Board Cuts (Most Frequent, Most Emphatic)

Repetitive phrasing

- “across-the-board cuts”
- “cutting equally across colleges”
- “cuts across the board”
- “anything that impacts all departments without factoring in differences”

Clause patterns

- Across-the-board cuts are repeatedly paired with:
 - “punish”
 - “demoralize”
 - “reward underperforming programs”
 - “hurt growing programs”

Key contrasts

- “Across-the-board cuts do not work”
- “Feed your growing programs”
- “Cuts in growing or in-demand programs”

Interpretation grounded in language

Faculty do not merely dislike across-the-board cuts—they describe them as actively counterproductive, anti-performance, and anti-growth. The repetition signals a shared, deeply held conclusion, not a preference.

Theme 2: Top-Down, Closed, or Unilateral Decision-Making

Repetitive phrasing

- “top down”
- “decisions made in a vacuum”
- “closed door meetings”
- “unilateral decisions”
- “telling faculty after the fact”

Clause patterns

- Decisions are framed as problematic when:
 - Made “without feedback”
 - Presented as a “fait accompli”
 - Framed as a “process” without visible steps

High-signal language

- “Pretending decisions haven’t been made when they have”

- “Using committees only to communicate decisions down”
- “Temporary administrators making permanent decisions”

Interpretation

Faculty language emphasizes process legitimacy. The issue is not authority, it is exclusion, timing, and honesty about decision status.

Theme 3: Lack of Transparency and Communication

Repetitive phrasing

- “lack of transparency”
- “opacity”
- “smoke and mirrors”
- “hiding facts”
- “lack of information regarding budget”

Clause pairings

- Transparency is linked to:
 - Trust (“erodes trust,” “comes across as dishonest”)
 - Buy-in (“implementation harder”)
 - Accuracy (“present all the facts—good, bad, ugly”)

Interpretation

Transparency is framed as a moral and operational necessity, not a courtesy. Several responses explicitly equate opacity with dishonesty.

Theme 4: Non-Strategic Cuts That Undermine Mission and Growth

Repetitive phrasing

- “non-strategic cuts”
- “reactive”
- “short-term fixes”
- “vague goals”
- “chasing enrollment numbers”

Mission-centered clauses

- “Cuts should be strategic and keep values at the center”
- “Preserve academic programs, research, curriculum”
- “University cannot function without academic programs”

Growth-specific language

- “Stop cutting the growing college’s budgets”
- “Cutting programs that generate future revenue”
- “Cutting positions that affect growth when growth is expected”

Interpretation

Faculty repeatedly frame poor budgeting as self-defeating—undercutting the very outcomes (enrollment, revenue, reputation) leadership seeks.

Theme 5: Poor, Misused, or Exclusionary Data

Repetitive phrasing

- “bad data”
- “working with flawed data”
- “historical metrics without context”
- “assumptions”
- “denial”

Clause patterns

- Data problems are paired with:
 - Exclusion (“without bringing faculty in”)
 - Finality (“used to justify predetermined decisions”)

Interpretation

Faculty are not rejecting data—they are rejecting unexamined, decontextualized, or selectively applied data.

Theme 6: Failure to Plan for Flexibility and Contingencies

Repetitive phrasing

- “flexibility”
- “reserves”
- “contingency”
- “don’t spend everything at once”
- “unexpected needs”

Narrative signal

The extended SGA example is notable—it demonstrates:

- Emotional memory
- Practical consequences
- Desire for small, intentional reserves

Interpretation

Faculty language distinguishes planning from rigidity. They explicitly reject budgets that leave no room for opportunity or emergency.

Theme 7: Equity, Morale, and Workforce Impact

Repetitive phrasing

- “inequity”
- “punishes”
- “demoralizes”
- “cuts to people”
- “reducing pay”
- “adding workload to others”

Structural pattern

- Cuts are criticized when they:
 - Fall hardest on those “working hard”
 - Perceived to protect upper administration teams
 - Increase workload without resources

Interpretation

Faculty see inequitable cuts as both ethically wrong and operationally dangerous, leading to burnout and attrition.

Theme 8: Speed Without Deliberation (“Too Much, Too Fast”)

Repetitive phrasing

- “don’t do too much too fast”
- “wholesale slaughter”
- “structural adjustment without care”

Interpretation

Faculty language reflects fear of irreversible harm, especially when rapid restructuring is paired with weak transparency or data.

Cross-Cutting Details (Patterns Across Themes)

Across all themes, faculty consistently oppose:

- **Uniformity over differentiation**
- **Opacity over explanation**
- **Reaction over strategy**
- **Speed over deliberation**
- **Cuts over reallocation**
- **Authority without accountability**

Summary:

Using faculty’s own repeated words and clause structures, UCCS should avoid budgeting processes that are: Across-the-board rather than strategic; top-down rather than collaborative; opaque rather than transparent; reactive rather than mission-driven; rigid rather than flexible; data-poor or exclusionary; inequitable in impact; and rushed without deliberation.

Faculty repeatedly signal that how decisions are made is inseparable from whether those decisions will succeed. When budgeting ignores growth, mission, equity, and trust, it is described not merely as ineffective—but as exhausting, demoralizing, and self-defeating.

Staff

Below is a language-based thematic analysis of staff responses to Survey Question 2: “What are things UCCS should avoid when crafting a budget process?” The analysis is grounded explicitly in repetitive phrasing, shared clauses, negation patterns, and emphatic constructions used by respondents themselves.

Staff Budgeting: What UCCS Should Avoid Analysis Based on Repetitive Phrasing and Clause Use

High-Frequency Themes (Ranked by Linguistic Density)

1. **Across-the-Board / One-Size-Fits-All Cuts**
2. **Lack of Communication, Transparency, and Context**
3. **Top-Down, Closed, or Exclusionary Decision-Making**

4. **Cuts That Undermine High-Performing, Mission-Critical, or Revenue-Generating Areas**
5. **Inequitable or Repeated Impacts on the Same Units or Employees**
6. **Rigid, Unstrategic, or Unrealistic Budget Actions**
7. **Personnel Cuts Without Workload or Structural Adjustments**
8. **Symbolic or Inconsistent Spending That Undermines Credibility**

These themes recur with near-identical wording, frequent negation (“avoid,” “should stop,” “don’t”), and intensifiers (“definitely,” “rarely work,” “disheartening,” “unsustainable”).

Theme 1: Across-the-Board / One-Size-Fits-All Cuts (Most Frequent)

Repetitive phrasing

- “across the board cuts”
- “unified percentage cuts”
- “one size fits all”
- “continuing unified cuts”
- “cuts across the board”

Clause patterns

- Often paired with:
 - “don’t take into account differences”
 - “disregard strategic priorities”
 - “rarely work”
 - “send the wrong signal”

Key elaborations

- “Every cut has and should be different”
- “Across-the-board cuts assume every unit contributes equally”
- “Does not consider prior adjustments”

Interpretation grounded in language

Staff consistently reject uniformity. The repetition signals a strong, shared belief that across-the-board approaches are lazy, inequitable, and strategically harmful, especially at this stage of repeated reductions.

Theme 2: Lack of Communication, Transparency, and Context

Repetitive phrasing

- “lack of transparency”
- “lack of communication”
- “unclear timelines”
- “no clear communication regarding implications”
- “closed door discussions”

Clause patterns

- Communication failures are linked to:
 - Anxiety (“talk budget fears to death”)
 - Confusion (“solid information comes late”)
 - Distrust (“erode trust,” “disheartening”)

Notable contrast

- Staff do not ask for constant messaging—rather, they criticize:
 - Long periods of silence
 - Followed by sudden urgency or fear-based discussion

Interpretation

Staff language shows that absence of context is as damaging as bad news itself. Delayed or opaque communication amplifies stress and rumors.

Theme 3: Top-Down, Closed, or Exclusionary Decision-Making

Repetitive phrasing

- “top-down approach”
- “closed door discussions”
- “making decisions without including units”
- “excluding stakeholder input”
- “decisions made without processing with faculty/staff”

Clause patterns

- Decisions are criticized when they:
 - Affect people “not in the room”
 - Are announced after the fact
 - Do not provide a “glide path”

Interpretation

Staff language emphasizes procedural fairness. Even difficult outcomes are more acceptable when people are included early and honestly.

Theme 4: Cuts That Undermine High-Performing or Mission-Critical Areas

Repetitive phrasing

- “cutting programs that are doing well”
- “don’t hinder growth”
- “mission-critical functions”
- “programs that attract and retain students”
- “R2 status at risk”

Clause patterns

- Strong growth logic:
 - “Feed what’s growing”
 - “Don’t cut income-generating areas”
 - “Reward growth, address underperformance individually”

Interpretation

Staff consistently frame poor cuts as self-defeating, undermining enrollment, research status, student experience, and future revenue.

Theme 5: Inequity and Repeated Burden on the Same Units or People

Repetitive phrasing

- “cutting from the same areas over and over”
- “disproportionately impacting”

- “competitive environment”
- “inequitable”
- “burnout”

Clause patterns

- Inequity is often paired with:
 - Growth elsewhere
 - Lack of shared sacrifice
 - Uneven autonomy between units

Interpretation

Staff language shows resentment builds when cuts feel predictable, unequal, or politically uneven, rather than principled.

Theme 6: Rigid, Unstrategic, or Unrealistic Budget Actions

Repetitive phrasing

- “anything that is not strategic”
- “making cuts without a clear strategy”
- “being unrealistic or too strict”
- “overly complex”
- “diluting the severity of the situation”

Clause contrasts

- Some staff warn against avoiding hard decisions
- Others warn against rushed or poorly reasoned decisions

Interpretation

Staff are not risk-averse; they are strategy-seeking. They want realism without chaos, decisiveness without recklessness.

Theme 7: Personnel Cuts Without Structural Adjustment

Repetitive phrasing

- “cutting personnel”
- “employee terminations”
- “laying people off”
- “adding workload without reducing expectations”

Clause patterns

- Staff repeatedly call this:
 - “unsustainable”
 - “burnout-inducing”
 - “crippling”

Interpretation

Staff view personnel cuts without workload or scope reduction as organizational failure, not efficiency.

Theme 8: Symbolic or Inconsistent Spending That Undermines Credibility

Distinctive phrasing

- “shiny objects”

- “unnecessary projects”
- “administrative hiring during cuts”

Interpretation

Though less frequent, these comments are high-signal. They indicate that visible inconsistencies in spending deeply damage trust—even when amounts are relatively small.

Cross-Cutting Details (Patterns Across Themes)

Across responses, staff repeatedly caution against:

- **Uniformity over differentiation**
- **Silence followed by urgency**
- **Cuts without context or strategy**
- **Excluding those most impacted**
- **Protecting some areas while repeatedly cutting others**
- **Personnel reductions without redesign**
- **Mixed messages between scarcity and spending**

Summary:

Using staff’s own repeated words and clause structures, UCCS should avoid budgeting processes that are: Across-the-board rather than differentiated; opaque rather than transparent; top-down rather than inclusive; unstrategic rather than mission-aligned; inequitable in impact; rigid instead of flexible; reliant on personnel cuts without redesign; and undermined by inconsistent or symbolic spending choices.

Staff repeatedly signal that how cuts are made matters as much as what is cut. When budgeting ignores growth, equity, communication, and workload reality, it is described as disheartening, anxiety-producing, and unsustainable—even by those who accept that hard decisions are necessary.

Students

Below is a language-based thematic analysis of student responses to Survey Question 2: “What are things UCCS should avoid when crafting a budget process?” This analysis is grounded explicitly in repetitive wording, shared clauses, negation, and compression, which is especially important given the small number of responses and their concise form.

Student Budgeting: What UCCS Should Avoid Analysis Based on Repetitive Phrasing and Clause Use

High-Frequency Themes (Relative to Dataset Size)

1. **Avoid Cuts That Harm the Student Experience**
2. **Avoid Decisions Not Grounded in Data**
3. **Avoid Unexplained or Unfair Cuts**
4. **Avoid Tuition Increases as a Primary Fix**
5. **Limited Visibility and Uncertainty About the Process**

While the dataset is small, students use high-signal phrasing that mirrors—but simplifies—the concerns raised by faculty and staff.

Theme 1: Avoid Cuts That Harm the Student Experience

Repetitive phrasing

- “areas that affect students”
- “engagement”

Clause structure

- Student-facing impacts are named first and without qualification.
- The phrasing is direct and value-laden rather than procedural.

Interpretation grounded in language

Students define “bad budgeting” primarily by outcomes they can feel—reduced engagement and diminished access—not by internal mechanics.

Theme 2: Avoid People-Pleasing or Politically Motivated Decisions**Distinct phrasing**

- “People-pleasing”
- “If the data does not support an effort, it should not be considered”

Clause pattern

- Clear contrast between:
 - Evidence-based decision-making
 - Decisions driven by appeasement or optics

Interpretation

Students implicitly reject budgeting that prioritizes short-term approval over long-term effectiveness. This aligns with a fairness and legitimacy lens.

Theme 3: Avoid Unexplained or Perceived Uneven Cuts**Repetitive phrasing**

- “not making cuts without an explanation”
- “ensuring things are somewhat even”

Clause structure

- Students do not demand equal cuts, but they do demand:
 - Explanation
 - Perceived fairness

Interpretation

Students are willing to accept tradeoffs if the rationale is visible. Absence of explanation is the primary concern.

Theme 4: Avoid Tuition Increases as a Default Solution**Repetitive phrasing**

- “Raising tuition to compensate”

Structural note

- This response is short but categorical.
- No qualifiers or conditions are attached.

Interpretation

Tuition increases are viewed as a last resort and a direct negative consequence of poor budgeting elsewhere.

Theme 5: Limited Visibility and Distance From the Process

Repetitive negation

- “I’m not completely sure”
- “don’t know”
- “N/A”

Linguistic signal

- Uncertainty is expressed neutrally, not angrily.
- Indicates distance from decision-making, not disengagement.

Interpretation

Students are often judging budgeting quality only by its downstream effects, reinforcing the importance of communication and explainability.

Cross-Cutting Details (Patterns Across Themes)

Across responses, students consistently emphasize:

- **Outcomes over process**
- **Fairness over participation**
- **Explanation over access**
- **Affordability over institutional convenience**

Their language is:

- Brief
- Declarative
- Impact-focused

This compression suggests students expect the institution to do the hard internal work—and then explain it clearly.

Summary:

Using students’ own repeated words and clause structures, UCCS should avoid budgeting approaches that: Reduce the quality of the student experience; prioritize people-pleasing over data-informed decisions; make cuts without clear explanation or perceived fairness; rely on tuition increases to offset structural issues; or leave students uncertain about why decisions were made.

Students may be the furthest from the budgeting table, but their language makes clear that they experience the consequences most directly. For them, a successful budget is one that protects engagement, instruction, and affordability—and explains itself clearly.

Cross-cutting Themes

Prompt: Please take these analyses by respondent group and create a cross-cutting summary.

Below is a cross-cutting synthesis of Survey Question 2 (“What should UCCS avoid when crafting a budget process?”) that integrates faculty, staff, and student analyses, grounded explicitly in repetitive phrasing, shared clauses, negation patterns, and emphatic language across all three respondent groups.

Cross-Cutting Summary: What UCCS Should Avoid in Budgeting

(Faculty • Staff • Students)

Across all respondent groups, there is remarkable convergence in both what to avoid and how concerns are expressed. Despite differences in role, proximity to budgeting, and depth of detail, the same core warnings recur, often using nearly identical phrasing.

The most repeated cross-cutting words and constructions:

Across-the-board cuts • Top-down decisions • Lack of transparency • Poor communication • Non-strategic cuts • Bad data • Inequity • Harm to students • Trust erosion

1. Across-the-Board / One-Size-Fits-All Cuts

Shared language across groups

- Faculty: “Across-the-board cuts do not work,” “punish high-performing programs”
- Staff: “Every cut should be different,” “rarely work,” “unified percentage cuts”
- Students: “Ensuring things are somewhat even,” “not cutting without explanation”

Shared clause pattern

Across-the-board cuts are repeatedly framed as:

- **Unfair**
- **Non-strategic**
- **Demoralizing**
- **Blind to differences in performance, mission, and impact**

Cross-cutting insight

All groups reject uniform cuts not because they oppose cuts—but because they see them as actively harmful, especially after years of repeated reductions. Uniformity is consistently described as easier than strategic, not wiser.

2. Top-Down, Closed, or Unilateral Decision-Making

Repetitive phrasing

- “Top-down”
- “Closed-door discussions”
- “Decisions made in a vacuum”
- “Telling people after the fact”
- “Excluding stakeholders”

Shared clause construction

Decisions are most strongly criticized when they:

- Affect people “not in the room”
- Are presented as final with no opportunity for influence
- Are framed as a “process” that is never visible

Cross-cutting insight

Across faculty and staff—and implicitly for students—process legitimacy matters. Even difficult outcomes are more acceptable when people understand how and when decisions were made.

3. Lack of Transparency, Communication, and Context

Shared language

- “Lack of transparency”
- “Opacity”
- “Smoke and mirrors”
- “No explanation”
- “Unclear timelines”
- “Don’t know / not sure”

Shared clause pattern

Lack of transparency is repeatedly linked to:

- **Distrust**
- **Anxiety**
- **Rumors**
- **Erosion of morale**

Students, in particular, frame this as cuts without explanation, while faculty and staff describe withholding or delaying information.

Cross-cutting insight

Silence followed by urgency is more damaging than bad news delivered early. All groups equate transparency with understanding the “why,” not just hearing the outcome.

4. Non-Strategic Cuts That Undermine Mission, Growth, and Students

Repetitive phrasing

- “Non-strategic”
- “Reactive”
- “Short-term fixes”
- “Chasing enrollment”
- “People-pleasing”
- “Cutting growing or high-impact programs”

Mission-centered clauses

- Faculty: “University cannot function without academic programs”
- Staff: “Don’t hinder growth,” “protect R2 status”
- Students: “Don’t cut areas that affect students—faculty, engagement”

Cross-cutting insight

All groups warn against cuts that solve today’s spreadsheet while damaging tomorrow’s outcomes—especially student experience, enrollment, research capacity, and workforce relevance.

5. Poor, Misused, or Non-Inclusive Use of Data

Shared language

- “Bad data”

- “Flawed data”
- “Historical metrics without context”
- “If the data does not support it, it should not be considered”

Clause patterns

Data is criticized when it is:

- Used to justify predetermined decisions
- Detached from lived operational reality
- Not shared or discussed with those affected

Cross-cutting insight

Respondents are not anti-data—they are anti-data without interpretation, transparency, or participation.

6. Inequity, Repeated Burden, and Workforce Harm

Repetitive phrasing

- “Inequity”
- “Punishes”
- “Demoralizes”
- “Burnout”
- “Cutting the same areas over and over”
- “Laying people off”

Shared concern

- Personnel cuts without workload reduction
- Disproportionate impacts on certain colleges or units
- Perceived protection of upper administration

Cross-cutting insight

Cuts that feel predictable, uneven, or misaligned with effort and performance quickly become trust-destroying—regardless of fiscal necessity.

7. Symbolic or Inconsistent Spending That Undermines Credibility

High-signal phrases

- “Shiny objects”
- “Unnecessary projects”
- Administrative hiring or raises during cuts

Cross-cutting insight

Even small or symbolic spending decisions become trust flashpoints when paired with messages of scarcity. Consistency between message and behavior matters.

Cross-Cutting Bottom Line (Grounded in Shared Language)

Using the repeated words, phrases, and clause structures across faculty, staff, and students, UCCS should avoid budgeting approaches that are: Across-the-board rather than strategic; top-down rather than inclusive; opaque rather than transparent; reactive rather than mission-driven; reliant on flawed or exclusionary data; inequitable in impact; harmful to students and workforce; and inconsistent between stated scarcity and visible spending.

Across all groups, the message is consistent: Hard decisions are expected. Unclear, unfair, and untrustworthy processes are not.

Q3: Trust is a key value that has surfaced in previous conversations. How could UCCS build trust in the budgeting process?

Prompt: (Insert respondent group) were asked " Trust is a key value that has surfaced in previous conversations. How could UCCS build trust in the budgeting process?" Please take these responses and analyze the data for common themes using repetitive phrasing and clause use. Include in the report high-frequency themes, details for each theme, cross-cutting details, and a summary.

Faculty

Below is a language-based thematic analysis of faculty responses to Survey Question 3: "How could UCCS build trust in the budgeting process?" The analysis is grounded explicitly in repetitive wording, shared clauses, emphatic constructions, and negation patterns used by respondents.

High-Frequency Themes (Ranked by Linguistic Density)

1. **Transparency (by far the most dominant theme)**
2. **Honest, Early, and Frequent Communication**
3. **Authentic Shared Governance and Meaningful Input**
4. **Owning Decisions and Avoiding Performative Process**
5. **Equitable, Strategic Decision-Making (No Across-the-Board Cuts)**
6. **Leadership Credibility, Consistency, and Accountability**
7. **Clarity About Numbers, Tradeoffs, and Administrative Structure**
8. **Long-Term Vision and Stability Over Reactive Cuts**

These themes recur with near-identical phrasing, frequent capitalization, exclamation points, and directive language ("stop," "don't," "own it," "be clear").

Theme 1: Transparency (Most Frequent, Most Emphatic)

Repetitive phrasing

- "Transparency"
- "Be more transparent"
- "Transparency throughout the process"
- "Transparency in decision-making"
- "Sharing all information"
- "Actual dollars and cents"

Clause patterns

Transparency is repeatedly paired with:

- **Visibility** ("open up meetings," "share all information")
- **Process clarity** ("how decisions are made")
- **Consistency** ("in good times or bad")

Escalated language

- “Smoke and mirrors”
- “Hidden”
- “Illusion of transparency”

Interpretation grounded in language

Faculty are not asking for selective transparency; they are asking for radical, procedural transparency. The repetition suggests transparency is seen as the precondition for trust rather than one value among many.

Theme 2: Honest, Early, and Frequent Communication

Repetitive phrasing

- “Overcommunicate, not under-communicate”
- “More information shared more often”
- “Regular updates”
- “Silence breeds mistrust”
- “Explain the why and how”

Clause patterns

Communication failures are framed as:

- **Temporal** (“almost halfway through the fiscal year with little information”)
- **Emotional** (“rumors,” “fear,” “frustration”)
- **Trust-destroying** (“kept in the dark”)

Interpretation

Faculty strongly distinguish between bad news and no news—and view the latter as far worse. Silence is repeatedly framed as active harm, not neutrality.

Theme 3: Authentic Shared Governance and Meaningful Input

Repetitive phrasing

- “Allow for input”
- “Meaningfully involve faculty”
- “Shared governance”
- “Inclusion”
- “Faculty focus groups”
- “Bring deans into the circle”

Clause patterns

Input is valued when it is:

- **Early** (“before decisions are made”)
- **Influential** (“not after the decision”)
- **Respectful of time** (“not excessive meetings”)

Interpretation

Faculty language consistently rejects consultation after the fact. Trust is linked to shaping decisions, not reacting to them.

Theme 4: Owning Decisions and Avoiding Performative Process

Repetitive phrasing

- “Own decisions”
- “Don’t pretend consensus”
- “Illusion of transparency”
- “Options after a decision has already been made”
- “Tell people rather than wasting time”

Clause patterns

Performative processes are criticized as:

- **Disrespectful**
- **Time-wasting**
- **Trust-eroding**

Interpretation

Faculty would rather hear “*this decision is final*” than participate in a process designed to manufacture consent. Honesty—even when unpopular—is described as trust-building.

Theme 5: Equitable, Strategic Decision-Making (No Across-the-Board Cuts)

Repetitive phrasing

- “Stop across-the-board cuts”
- “Equitable decision making”
- “Recognize high-performing departments”
- “Punishes excellence”
- “Merit-based”

Clause patterns

Across-the-board cuts are repeatedly tied to:

- **Unfairness**
- **Lack of data**
- **Demoralization**

Interpretation

Faculty see fairness not as equal pain, but as differentiated, evidence-based decisions. Trust is lost when effort and performance appear irrelevant.

Theme 6: Leadership Credibility, Consistency, and Accountability

Repetitive phrasing

- “Very little trust in upper administration”
- “Fear of being fired”
- “Leadership instability”
- “Reactive”
- “Short-term thinking”

Clause patterns

Leadership actions that undermine trust include:

- Frequent executive turnover
- Inconsistent priorities

- Decisions that appear politically motivated

Interpretation

Trust is described as institutional, not personal. Even when individual leaders are liked, process opacity and instability override goodwill.

Theme 7: Clarity About Numbers, Tradeoffs, and Administrative Structure

Repetitive phrasing

- “Actual dollars and cents”
- “Which offices are in the red”
- “Administrative bloat”
- “AVCs”
- “Salaries and benefits”

Clause patterns

Transparency is demanded not just for academic units, but especially for administration.

Interpretation

Faculty language shows a strong expectation of shared sacrifice. Trust erodes when cuts feel asymmetrical or symbolic rather than substantive.

Theme 8: Long-Term Vision and Stability Over Reactive Cuts

Repetitive phrasing

- “Think long term”
- “Clear vision and plan”
- “Stop reactive budgeting”
- “Path to success”
- “Sustainable future”

Clause patterns

Short-term fixes are framed as:

- Destabilizing
- Evidence of weak leadership
- Signals of institutional drift

Interpretation

Faculty trust grows when budgeting reflects intentional direction, not constant crisis response.

Cross-Cutting Details (Patterns Across Themes)

Across responses, faculty repeatedly link trust to:

- **Visibility over secrecy**
- **Honesty over spin**
- **Influence over input theater**
- **Differentiation over uniformity**
- **Shared sacrifice over protected hierarchies**
- **Long-term planning over annual crisis**

Summary: Faculty’s Definition of Trust (Grounded in Their Language)

Using faculty's own repeated words and clause structures, trust in the budgeting process is built when UCCS: Operates transparently; communicates early, often, and honestly; involves faculty meaningfully before decisions are made; owns and explains decisions without performative process; makes equitable, data-informed choices; demonstrates leadership accountability and shared sacrifice; and commits to a clear, long-term strategic path rather than reactive cuts.

Equally clear in the data: Trust is not fragile—it is already fractured. Faculty repeatedly describe trust not as something that needs reassurance, but as something that requires visible, sustained behavioral change to rebuild.

Staff

Below is a language-based thematic analysis of staff responses to Survey Question 3: “How could UCCS build trust in the budgeting process?” The analysis is grounded explicitly in repetitive wording, shared clauses, emphasis patterns, and contrasts used by respondents.

High-Frequency Themes (Ranked by Linguistic Density)

1. **Transparency (dominant and repeated most often)**
2. **Clear, Regular, and Early Communication**
3. **Explanation of the “Why” Behind Decisions**
4. **Meaningful Engagement and Opportunities for Input**
5. **Predictability, No Surprises, and Process Clarity**
6. **Data-Informed, Mission-Aligned Decision-Making**
7. **Fairness, Stewardship, and Workforce Impact**
8. **Leadership Visibility and Consistency**

The word “transparency” appears so frequently, included being repeated multiple times in a single response (“Transparency. Transparency. Transparency.”), that it appears to function as a stand-in for trust itself in staff language.

Theme 1: Transparency (Most Dominant Theme)

Repetitive phrasing

- “Transparency”
- “Full transparency”
- “Be transparent”
- “More transparency”
- “Transparent across colleges/departments”

Clause patterns

Transparency is consistently paired with:

- **Specificity** (“be specific about what will drive decisions”)
- **Process visibility** (“how cuts are decided”)
- **Cross-unit comparability** (“what other colleges were offering”)

Escalation signals

- Repetition (“Transparency. Transparency. Transparency.”)
- Absolutes (“full transparency,” “at every stage”)

Interpretation grounded in language

For staff, transparency is not abstract, it means seeing the same information at the same time, across units, with no perception that details are being selectively withheld.

Theme 2: Clear, Regular, and Early Communication

Repetitive phrasing

- “Regular communication”
- “Over communicate”
- “No surprises”
- “Share issues early”
- “Signal changes promptly”
- “We haven’t had a budget update since August”

Clause patterns

Communication is framed as:

- **Temporal** (“early stages,” “before final decisions”)
- **Predictive** (“possible scenarios,” “where we are in the process”)
- **Anxiety-reducing** (“as long as we know what’s being cut as we go”)

Interpretation

Staff strongly differentiate between bad news delivered early and silence followed by urgency. The latter is repeatedly linked to fear and rumor.

Theme 3: Explaining the “Why” Behind Decisions

Repetitive phrasing

- “Explain the why”
- “Provide rationale”
- “Help people understand why”
- “Pair decisions with reasoning”
- “State constraints and tradeoffs clearly”

Clause structure

Explanation is valued when it includes:

- Constraints
- Tradeoffs
- Alternatives considered

Interpretation

Staff accept difficult decisions when they understand how leadership reasoned through them. Mandates without explanation are described as eroding trust further.

Theme 4: Meaningful Engagement and Opportunities for Input

Repetitive phrasing

- “Engage stakeholders early”
- “Opportunities for feedback”
- “Open dialogue”
- “Town halls”

- “Beyond UBAC or the most vocal”

Clause patterns

Engagement is criticized when it is:

- Too narrow
- Too late
- Symbolic rather than influential

Interpretation

Staff want engagement that is broad, early, and genuine, not limited to formal bodies or reactive forums.

Theme 5: Predictability, No Surprises, and Process Clarity

Repetitive phrasing

- “No surprises”
- “Clear guidelines”
- “Clear, actionable strategy”
- “Predictability”
- “Where in the process we are”

Clause patterns

Predictability is framed as:

- Respectful
- Trust-building
- Anxiety-reducing

Interpretation

Trust is built not by perfect outcomes, but by reliable process signals that allow people to plan.

Theme 6: Data-Informed, Mission-Aligned Decision-Making

Repetitive phrasing

- “Utilize data”
- “Supporting data”
- “Enrollment, what students need”
- “Every expense treated like an investment”
- “Align with institutional goals”

Clause patterns

Data is trusted when:

- Shared openly
- Used consistently
- Connected to mission and priorities

Interpretation

Staff see data as a credibility tool, especially when paired with acknowledgement that decisions are hard.

Theme 7: Fairness, Stewardship, and Workforce Impact

Repetitive phrasing

- “Good stewards of revenue”
- “Fear for their jobs year after year”
- “Added responsibilities”
- “Fair exit package”
- “Support those impacted”

Clause patterns

Trust is linked to:

- Humane treatment
- Acknowledgement of impact
- Avoiding perpetual crisis for staff

Interpretation

Staff trust erodes when budgeting feels like chronic instability rather than shared problem-solving.

Theme 8: Leadership Visibility and Consistency

Repetitive phrasing

- “Leadership communication”
- “More emails from the Chancellor/ELT”
- “Direct, plain language”
- “Q&A sessions”

Contrasting language

Some staff express trust in leadership already, while others describe:

- Surface-level communication
- Gaps between stated transparency and lived experience

Interpretation

Trust is strengthened when leadership is visible, accessible, and willing to answer difficult questions publicly.

Cross-Cutting Details (Patterns Across Themes)

Across staff responses, trust is repeatedly linked to:

- **Visibility over silence**
- **Explanation over mandate**
- **Early sharing over late notification**
- **Specificity over generalities**
- **Process clarity over outcome perfection**
- **Shared stewardship over enforcement**

Notably, staff often use action-oriented language (“share,” “explain,” “signal,” “invite,” “align”) rather than abstract values, which indicates a desire for concrete behavioral change.

Summary: Staff’s Definition of Trust (Grounded in Their Language)

Using staff’s own repeated words and clause structures, UCCS can build trust in the budgeting process by: Operating with full and specific transparency; communicating early, regularly, and in plain language; clearly explaining the rationale, constraints, and tradeoffs behind decisions; engaging stakeholders meaningfully before decisions are finalized; using data visibly and consistently; treating budgeting as

shared stewardship; and demonstrating care for the workforce through predictability and humane implementation.

Across responses, staff signal that trust is built less by perfection and more by honesty, predictability, and respect—especially in difficult financial moments.

Students

Below is a language-based thematic analysis of student responses to Survey Question 3: “How could UCCS build trust in the budgeting process?” As with prior analyses, this report is grounded explicitly in repetitive wording, shared clauses, and compression patterns, which are especially important given the brevity of student responses.

High-Frequency Themes (Relative to Dataset Size)

1. **Transparency as Complete Visibility**
2. **Clear Explanations for Decisions and Tradeoffs**
3. **Communication, Clarity, and Straightforwardness**
4. **Inclusion of Affected Groups**
5. **Tuition Clarity and Affordability**
6. **Desire for Stability and Reduced Second-Guessing**

Even with a small number of responses, students show strong convergence around transparency and explainability, using absolute and declarative language.

Theme 1: Transparency as Complete Visibility (Most Dominant)

Repetitive phrasing

- “Pure transparency”
- “Submit and post budgets”
- “Transparency in reasons”

Clause patterns

Transparency is framed as:

- **Public posting** (“submit and post budgets, goals, projects”)
- **Process + rationale** (“and reasoning”)

Interpretation grounded in language

Students define trust as full visibility, not summaries or assurances. The use of “pure” signals an expectation of unfiltered access, even if students may not engage with all details.

Theme 2: Clear Explanations for Decisions and Tradeoffs

Repetitive phrasing

- “reasons as to why cuts were made”
- “why things are or aren’t happening”
- “reasoning”

Clause structure

- Explanations are framed in plain cause-and-effect terms, not institutional language.

Interpretation

Students are less concerned with *who* decides and more concerned with being able to follow the logic of decisions.

Theme 3: Communication, Clarity, and Straightforwardness

Repetitive phrasing

- “lots of communication”
- “clarity”
- “being straightforward”

Clause patterns

- Communication is valued when it is:
 - Direct
 - Non-evasive
 - Free of spin

Interpretation

Students implicitly reject messaging that feels overly cautious or defensive. Trust is associated with plain-spoken explanations.

Theme 4: Inclusion of Affected Groups

Repetitive phrasing

- “ask for input”
- “multiple groups”
- “that will be affected”

Clause structure

- Inclusion is tied to impact, not representation alone.

Interpretation

Students expect those who bear consequences, especially students and student employees, to have some voice, even if they do not expect final authority.

Theme 5: Tuition Clarity and Affordability

Distinct phrasing

- “Clear tuition and where it’s going”
- “Optional tuition expenses”

Clause patterns

- Tuition is framed as:
 - A trust signal
 - A direct student-facing outcome of budgeting decisions

Interpretation

For students, tuition transparency is one of the most tangible measures of institutional honesty.

Theme 6: Desire for Stability and Reduced Second-Guessing

Distinct phrasing

- “stop questioning everything as much”

Interpretation

This response suggests that:

- Excessive debate, reversals, or visible uncertainty may undermine confidence
- Students value decisiveness paired with explanation, rather than constant reevaluation

Cross-Cutting Details (Patterns Across Themes)

Across responses, students consistently emphasize:

- **Visibility over process complexity**
- **Explanation over participation**
- **Outcomes over governance**
- **Affordability over internal tradeoffs**

Their language is:

- Direct
- Declarative
- Oriented toward what they can see and feel

This reinforces that students experience trust primarily through clear, posted information and consistent messaging, not internal deliberations.

Summary: Students’ Definition of Trust (Grounded in Their Language)

Using students’ own repeated words and clause structures, trust in the budgeting process is built when UCCS: Practices pure transparency by publicly posting budgets, goals, and reasoning; communicates clearly and straightforwardly about why decisions are made; explains cuts and investments in plain language; invites input from those affected; provides clear information about tuition and where it goes; and demonstrates decisiveness without constant second-guessing.

Students signal that trust does not require deep involvement in budgeting mechanics—but it does require visibility, honesty, and clarity about costs and choices that directly affect them.

Cross-cutting

Prompt: Please take these analyses by respondent group and create a cross-cutting summary.

Below is a cross-cutting synthesis of Survey Question 3 (“How could UCCS build trust in the budgeting process?”) integrating faculty, staff, and student responses, grounded explicitly in repetitive wording, shared clauses, emphatic language, and negation patterns across all three groups.

Cross-Cutting Summary: How UCCS Can Build Trust in Budgeting

(Faculty • Staff • Students)

Across faculty, staff, and students, there is extraordinary convergence in how trust is defined and how it is believed to be rebuilt. While the intensity and specificity vary by role, the core language is strikingly consistent.

The most repeated cross-cutting words and constructions:

Transparency • Communication • Explain the “why” • Early sharing • Input before decisions • Honesty • Clarity • Equity • No surprises

Across all groups, trust is framed not as a feeling, but as a set of observable behaviors.

1. Transparency Is the Non-Negotiable Foundation of Trust

Shared language across groups

- Faculty: “Transparency,” “smoke and mirrors,” “illusion of transparency,” “actual dollars and cents”
- Staff: “Transparency. Transparency. Transparency.”, “full transparency,” “at every stage”
- Students: “Pure transparency,” “submit and post budgets, goals, projects, and reasoning”

Shared clause patterns

Transparency is repeatedly defined as:

- **Visibility of information** (budgets, numbers, scenarios)
- **Visibility of process** (how decisions are made)
- **Visibility of rationale** (why tradeoffs occur)

Cross-cutting insight

All three groups treat transparency as the precondition for trust. Without it, no amount of consultation, reassurance, or values language is believed. Transparency is expected even when the news is bad.

2. Explaining the “Why” Matters More Than the Decision Itself

Shared language

- “Explain the why”
- “Provide rationale”
- “Reasons decisions were made”
- “Reasoning”
- “Why things are or aren’t happening”

Shared clause structure

Explanations are expected to include:

- Constraints
- Tradeoffs
- Alternatives considered
- Consequences

Cross-cutting insight

Faculty, staff, and students all signal that people can accept outcomes they don’t like, but not outcomes they don’t understand. Mandates without explanation are repeatedly described as trust-eroding.

3. Timing and Predictability Are Central to Trust

Shared language

- “Early in the process”
- “No surprises”
- “Before decisions are made”
- “Regular updates”
- “Silence breeds mistrust”

Shared pattern

Across all groups:

- **Late communication** = anxiety + rumor
- **Early communication** = respect + trust

Students emphasize *straightforwardness*, staff emphasize *predictability*, and faculty emphasize *over-communication*—but all describe the same expectation.

Cross-cutting insight

Trust is built less by perfect decisions than by predictable process signals that allow people to plan emotionally, professionally, and financially.

4. Input Must Be Early and Meaningful—Not Performative

Shared language

- “Allow for input”
- “Engage stakeholders early”
- “Ask for input from affected groups”
- “Not after decisions are made”
- “Illusion of participation”

Shared clause pattern

Engagement is rejected when it:

- Happens after outcomes are determined
- Is limited to a small group
- Is used to legitimize predetermined decisions

Cross-cutting insight

Across faculty, staff, and students, trust is not built by having a voice, but by knowing that input can shape options, narrow choices, or influence tradeoffs.

5. Honesty and Ownership Build More Trust Than Consensus-Seeking

Shared language

- “Own decisions”
- “Be honest”
- “Stop pretending consensus”
- “Being straightforward”
- “Don’t hide decisions and hope nobody notices”

Shared pattern

All groups—especially faculty and staff—express more frustration with spin than with hard truths.

Cross-cutting insight

Trust grows when leadership is willing to say:

- *This decision is difficult*
- *Here's why it was made*
- *Here's where input did and did not influence the outcome*

Students echo this with a desire for decisiveness without constant second-guessing.

6. Equity, Shared Sacrifice, and Visible Alignment Matter**Shared language**

- "Equitable decision making"
- "Fairness"
- "Administrative bloat"
- "Clear tuition and where it's going"
- "Who is impacted and how"

Shared concern

Trust erodes when:

- Cuts appear uneven or repetitive
- Administrative growth continues during austerity
- Tuition rises without explanation

Cross-cutting insight

All groups expect alignment between stated scarcity and visible choices. Trust is damaged when messages and behaviors diverge.

7. Long-Term Vision and Stability Are Trust Signals**Shared language**

- "Clear plan"
- "Path to success"
- "Sustainable"
- "Stop reactive budgeting"
- "Not questioning everything constantly"

Cross-cutting insight

Faculty and staff emphasize strategic continuity; students emphasize confidence and stability.

Together, they point to the same conclusion: perpetual crisis framing undermines trust, even when finances are genuinely constrained.

Cross-Cutting Bottom Line (Grounded in Shared Language)

Using the repeated words, phrases, and clause structures across faculty, staff, and students, trust in the budgeting process is built when UCCS: Practices full, visible transparency; communicates early, often, and in plain language; clearly explains the rationale, constraints, and tradeoffs behind decisions; engages affected groups meaningfully before decisions are finalized; owns decisions honestly without performative process; demonstrates equity and shared sacrifice; and follows a clear, long-term strategic path rather than reactive cycles.

Across all groups, one message is unmistakable: Trust is not rebuilt by reassurance. It is rebuilt by consistent, observable behavior over time.

Q4: Along with trust, there are several other important values that have been shared. Please prioritize these from most important to least.

Prompt: (Respondent Group) were asked "Along with trust, there are several other important values that have been shared. Please prioritize these from most important to least." Please take these responses and provide an overall order based upon frequency.

Faculty

Based on an aggregate frequency-weighted ranking (average position across all responses), the faculty priorities resolve into the following overall order from most important to least important. This approach reflects how often a value appears near the top of respondents' lists, not just how often it appears at all.

Overall Faculty Priority Order (Highest → Lowest)

1. **Student Centered & Focused**
Most frequently ranked in the top 1–3 positions.
Signals that faculty view student impact as the primary lens through which all budget decisions should be evaluated.
2. **Retaining Faculty & Staff**
Consistently ranked very high, often adjacent to student-centeredness.
Indicates strong belief that workforce stability is inseparable from student success and institutional quality.
3. **Transparency**
Appears extremely frequently in top-tier positions.
Reinforces earlier survey findings that transparency is foundational to trust and legitimacy.
4. **Fiscal Responsibility**
Regularly placed in the upper-middle of rankings.
Faculty value stewardship and sustainability, but not at the expense of people or students.
5. **Accountability**
Often ranked mid-list.
Seen as important, but secondary to clarity, people, and impact.
6. **Communication**
Appears slightly lower than accountability on average, likely because faculty treat it as necessary but insufficient on its own without transparency and action.
7. **Sustainability**
Commonly ranked in the lower half.
Faculty support sustainability, but prioritize *how* it is achieved and *who* bears the burden.
8. **Shared Vision**
Most frequently ranked last or near-last.

Suggests that faculty may see shared vision as aspirational or abstract unless supported by concrete actions, transparency, and people-centered decisions.

Key Interpretive Insight

Faculty priorities cluster strongly around people and impact first, with process and principles following:

Students → Faculty/Staff → Transparency → Fiscal Stewardship → Accountability → Communication → Sustainability → Shared Vision

This ordering aligns tightly with earlier qualitative findings:

- Trust is rebuilt through visible, people-centered action
- Transparency and fiscal responsibility matter most when they serve students and the workforce
- Abstract alignment (“shared vision”) carries less weight without tangible follow-through

Staff

Based on a frequency-weighted aggregation (average rank position across all staff responses), the staff priorities resolve into the following overall order from most important to least important. This reflects how often each value appears near the top of rankings, not merely how often it appears at all.

Overall Staff Priority Order (Highest → Lowest)

1. **Student Centered & Focused**
Most consistently ranked in the top 1–3 positions.
Staff clearly place student impact and experience at the center of budget decision-making, even when difficult tradeoffs are required.
2. **Fiscal Responsibility**
Appears extremely frequently in the top tier.
Staff emphasize stewardship, sustainability of resources, and realism about financial constraints as essential to credibility and trust.
3. **Transparency**
Regularly ranked near the top across responses.
Reinforces that openness about numbers, rationale, and process is foundational—not optional—for staff confidence.
4. **Retaining Faculty & Staff**
Strongly prioritized, often clustered with student-centeredness.
Staff see workforce stability as directly tied to student success, operational continuity, and morale.
5. **Accountability**
Typically ranked in the middle-upper range.
Indicates staff expect clear ownership of decisions and consequences, but not at the expense of people or transparency.
6. **Communication**
Appears slightly lower than accountability on average.
Staff appear to view communication as necessary but insufficient unless paired with transparency and action.
7. **Sustainability**
Commonly ranked in the lower half.

Valued, but often interpreted as a *result* of good decisions rather than a primary driver on its own.

8. **Shared Vision**

Most frequently ranked near the bottom.

Suggests staff see “shared vision” as aspirational unless it is backed by clear priorities, fiscal discipline, and tangible support for students and employees.

Key Interpretive Insight

Staff priorities cluster around impact and stewardship first, followed by process and principles:

Students → Fiscal Responsibility → Transparency → Workforce Stability → Accountability → Communication → Sustainability → Shared Vision

Compared to faculty:

- Staff place Fiscal Responsibility slightly higher
- Faculty place Transparency and Retaining Faculty & Staff slightly higher
- Both groups rank Shared Vision lowest, signaling skepticism of abstract framing without concrete follow-through

Students

Based on a frequency-weighted aggregation (how often each value appears near the top of students’ ranked lists, not just how often it appears), the student responses resolve into the following overall priority order from most important to least important.

Overall Student Priority Order (Highest → Lowest)

1. **Student Centered & Focused**

Most consistently ranked in the top 1–2 positions.

Students clearly prioritize decisions that directly protect or enhance their experience, learning, and affordability.

2. **Communication**

Frequently placed near the top.

Indicates students strongly value clear, timely, and understandable communication about decisions that affect them.

3. **Transparency**

Regularly ranked high across responses.

Reinforces that students equate trust with being able to *see* what decisions are made and *why*.

4. **Fiscal Responsibility**

Commonly placed in the upper-middle of rankings.

Students value good stewardship, particularly as it relates to tuition and fees, but not at the expense of student impact or clarity.

5. **Accountability**

Typically ranked mid-list.

Important, but secondary to communication, transparency, and student impact.

6. **Retaining Faculty & Staff**

Appears lower overall.

Still valued, but often understood indirectly—as something that matters because of its effect on students rather than as a primary value on its own.

7. **Shared Vision**

Frequently ranked in the lower half.

Suggests students see shared vision as abstract unless it clearly translates into concrete benefits.

8. **Sustainability**

Most often ranked last or near last.

Indicates students view sustainability as a long-term outcome, not a guiding value that should override present-day student needs.

Key Takeaway

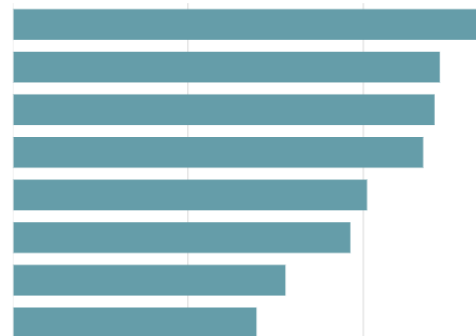
For students, priorities cluster strongly around immediacy and lived experience:

Student Impact → Communication → Transparency → Fiscal Responsibility → Accountability → Workforce Stability → Shared Vision → Sustainability

This ordering aligns closely with earlier student qualitative data: students are less focused on governance or long-term framing and far more focused on clear explanations, affordability, and visible effects on their education and campus life.

Cross-cutting

- 1 Student Centered & Focused
- 2 Fiscal Responsibility
- 3 Transparency
- 4 Retaining Faculty & Staff
- 5 Communication
- 6 Accountability
- 7 Sustainability
- 8 Shared Vision



Q5: Are there values that are missing from the list above?

Prompt: (Respondent Groups) were asked "Are there values that are missing from the list used in question 4?" Please take these responses and analyze the data for common themes using repetitive phrasing and clause use. Include in the report high-frequency themes, details for each theme, cross-cutting details, and a summary.

Faculty

Below is a language-based thematic analysis of faculty responses to Survey Question 5: "Are there values that are missing from the list used in Question 4?" As with prior analyses, this report is grounded explicitly in repetitive phrasing, shared clauses, emphasis patterns, and contrasts used by respondents

themselves. It is structured to surface what faculty believe is absent, underweighted, or mis-framed in the existing values list.

High-Frequency Themes (Based on Repetition and Emphasis)

1. **Equity, Fairness, and Social Justice**
 2. **Honesty, Integrity, and Alignment Between Words and Actions**
 3. **Faculty Well-Being, Morale, and Appreciation**
 4. **Community Engagement and Civic Responsibility**
 5. **Shared Governance and Collective Responsibility**
 6. **Long-Term Thinking vs. Crisis Mentality**
 7. **Academic Mission, Quality, and Excellence**
 8. **Action, Competence, and Follow-Through**
 9. **Concerns About the Framing of the Question Itself**
-

Theme 1: Equity, Fairness, and Social Justice (Most Explicitly Named)**Repetitive phrasing**

- “equity”
- “fairness”
- “equity and inclusion”
- “social justice”
- “not meritocracy”
- “accessibility and affordability”

Clause patterns

Equity is framed as:

- A value in its own right, not implicit in other categories
- Something that must counteract simplistic “merit” logic
- Directly connected to access, affordability, and student success

Interpretation grounded in language

Faculty repeatedly signal that equity cannot be assumed within fiscal responsibility or accountability. They want it named, centered, and protected.

Theme 2: Honesty, Integrity, and Alignment Between Words and Actions**Repetitive phrasing**

- “honesty”
- “integrity”
- “don’t say one thing and then do the other”
- “model your trust”
- “share your reasoning”

Clause patterns

Integrity is described as:

- Behavioral (“what you do”)
- Relational (“delegating beyond your circle”)
- Transparency-plus (“honesty even when uncomfortable”)

Interpretation

Faculty distinguish honesty from transparency. Transparency can show numbers; honesty requires consistency between stated values and actual decisions.

Theme 3: Faculty Well-Being, Morale, and Appreciation**Repetitive phrasing**

- “faculty well being”
- “workplace morale”
- “appreciated”
- “faculty will sacrifice financially if they feel valued”
- “strengthening campus morale”

Clause patterns

Morale is framed as:

- A strategic asset
- A condition for resilience during austerity
- Something currently at risk or depleted

Interpretation

Faculty view morale not as a “nice to have,” but as essential institutional capacity especially during budget stress.

Theme 4: Community Engagement and Civic Responsibility**Repetitive phrasing**

- “community”
- “community engagement”
- “civic involvement”
- “public/private relationships”
- “workforce needs”

Clause patterns

Community is framed as:

- Historically foundational to UCCS
- Currently weakened or neglected
- Essential to legitimacy, enrollment, and relevance

Interpretation

Faculty see community connection as both a value and a strategy that supports workforce alignment, student success, and public trust.

Theme 5: Shared Governance and Collective Responsibility**Repetitive phrasing**

- “collaborative decision-making”
- “true collaboration”
- “shared governance”
- “collective responsibility”
- “constitutive and generative shared governance”

Clause patterns

Governance is differentiated from:

- Mere “input”
- Procedural transparency without influence

Interpretation

Faculty want shared governance named explicitly as a value, not treated as an optional process step.

Theme 6: Long-Term Thinking vs. Crisis/Emergency Mindset

Repetitive phrasing

- “long-term outcomes”
- “getting away from a crisis mindset”
- “emergency mindset”
- “paralyzed as a campus”

Clause patterns

Crisis framing is described as:

- Exhausting
- Disorienting
- Preventative of strategic action

Interpretation

Faculty want a value that names stability, foresight, and intentional planning, not perpetual reaction.

Theme 7: Academic Mission, Quality, and Excellence

Repetitive phrasing

- “academic mission”
- “quality”
- “excellence”
- “research”
- “student experience”

Clause patterns

Mission is framed as:

- Primary, not derivative
- Something budgeting must *serve*, not override

Interpretation

Faculty are concerned that academic quality and research are assumed rather than explicitly protected as values.

Theme 8: Action, Competence, and Follow-Through

Repetitive phrasing

- “action”
- “competence”
- “paralyzed”
- “clear direction”

Clause patterns

This theme emerges in short, emphatic responses—often single words.

Interpretation

These compressed responses signal frustration with inertia. Faculty want a value that emphasizes decisive, capable execution.

Cross-Cutting Details (Patterns Across Themes)

Across responses, faculty consistently emphasize that missing values are:

- **Relational** (honesty, morale, trust-in-action)
- **Structural** (shared governance, collective responsibility)
- **Equity-centered** (inclusion, access, fairness)
- **Forward-looking** (long-term outcomes, stability)
- **Grounded in action** (competence, follow-through)

Notably, equity, honesty, and morale appear across multiple themes and contexts—indicating interlocking concerns, not isolated gaps.

Summary: What Faculty Believe Is Missing (Grounded in Their Language)

Using faculty's own repeated words and clause structures, the values most clearly identified as missing or insufficiently explicit in Question 4 are: Equity and inclusion; honesty and integrity in action; faculty well-being and morale; authentic shared governance and collective responsibility; community engagement and civic mission; long-term, non-crisis planning; explicit commitment to academic quality and research; and competent, decisive follow-through.

Equally important, faculty signal that values must be lived, not listed. Several responses make clear that the absence of these values is felt less in documents—and more in everyday decisions, behaviors, and priorities.

Staff

Below is a language-based thematic analysis of staff responses to Survey Question 5: “Are there values that are missing from the list used in Question 4?” As with prior questions, this analysis is grounded explicitly in repetitive wording, shared clauses, emphatic punctuation, and contrasts used by respondents themselves. It highlights what staff believe is absent, under-articulated, or mis-framed in the existing values list.

High-Frequency Themes (Based on Repetition, Emphasis, and Intensity)

1. **Honesty, Integrity, and Truth-Telling**
2. **Shared Governance, Engagement, and Empowerment**
3. **Growth, Innovation, and Future Orientation**
4. **Data-Driven and Common-Sense Decision-Making**
5. **Equity, Ethical Responsibility, and Inclusion**
6. **Compensation, Market Reality, and Workforce Sustainability**
7. **Multi-Year Thinking and Realistic Expectations**
8. **Decisive Leadership and Follow-Through**

9. Concerns About Framing and Redundancy of the Values List

Theme 1: Honesty, Integrity, and Truth-Telling (Most Explicitly Named)

Repetitive phrasing

- “Honesty”
- “Integrity”
- “Truth—even when it hurts”
- “Always default to transparency”
- “Follow open records laws”

Clause patterns

Honesty is framed as:

- Behavioral (“truth even when it hurts”)
- Legal/ethical (“open records,” “records retention”)
- Cultural (“default to transparency”)

Interpretation grounded in language

Staff distinguish honesty from transparency. Transparency can be procedural; honesty requires telling uncomfortable truths, naming constraints, and avoiding spin.

Theme 2: Shared Governance, Engagement, and Empowerment

Repetitive phrasing

- “Beyond transparency, to engagement”
- “Meaningful channels for feedback”
- “Empowerment”
- “Not chain-of-command driven”

Clause patterns

Governance is described as:

- Active, not passive
- Engagement-based, not hierarchical
- A prerequisite for trust, not a byproduct

Interpretation

Staff echo faculty sentiment: transparency without engagement is insufficient. They want governance explicitly named as a value, not assumed.

Theme 3: Growth, Innovation, and Future Orientation

Repetitive phrasing

- “Commitment to growth”
- “Innovation”
- “Creative and innovative solutions”
- “Look to the future”
- “Research”

Clause patterns

Growth is framed as:

- Necessary despite cuts
- Strategic rather than reactive
- Linked to optimism and institutional viability

Interpretation

Staff want a value that names forward momentum, not just sustainability or survival. Growth is seen as essential to morale and credibility.

Theme 4: Data-Driven and Common-Sense Decision-Making

Repetitive phrasing

- “Data driven decision-making”
- “Data driven parameters”
- “Common sense”
- “Enterprise purchase”
- “Mandating shared systems”

Clause patterns

Decision quality is framed as:

- Evidence-based
- Coordinated
- Avoiding unnecessary duplication or inefficiency

Interpretation

Staff want data paired with operational logic that is not abstract analytics disconnected from daily realities.

Theme 5: Equity, Ethical Responsibility, and Inclusion

Repetitive phrasing

- “Equity”
- “Ethical responsibility”
- “Inclusive”
- “Innovation, Research, Equity”

Clause patterns

Equity is framed as:

- A missing explicit value
- Connected to ethics and fairness
- Embedded in how decisions are made, not just outcomes

Interpretation

While less frequent than honesty or governance, equity appears as a core missing principle that staff believe should be named directly.

Theme 6: Compensation, Market Reality, and Workforce Sustainability

Repetitive phrasing

- “Market value compensation”
- “Lower wages than similar positions”
- “Explanation of budget restraints”
- “Retaining staff”

Clause patterns

Compensation is framed as:

- A value signal
- A trust indicator
- Something that requires honesty when constraints exist

Interpretation

Staff want acknowledgment that pay and market competitiveness are values-based issues, not just financial ones.

Theme 7: Multi-Year Thinking and Realistic Expectations

Repetitive phrasing

- “Multi-year decisions”
- “More than a few months”
- “Realistic expectations”

Clause patterns

Time horizon is framed as:

- A missing dimension in budgeting values
- Necessary for trust and stability

Interpretation

Staff want budgeting guided by longer-term thinking, not short-term fixes that recur annually.

Theme 8: Decisive Leadership and Follow-Through

Repetitive phrasing

- “Decisive leadership”
- “Hard decisions”
- “Empower leadership collective”
- “Necessary but hurtful”

Clause patterns

Leadership is framed as:

- Needing courage
- Needing clarity
- Needing authorization to act

Interpretation

Staff are not asking for consensus on everything; they are asking for decisive, empowered leadership grounded in shared values.

Cross-Cutting Details (Patterns Across Themes)

Across staff responses, missing values are repeatedly described as:

- **Behavioral** (honesty, decisiveness, common sense)
- **Structural** (shared governance, empowerment)
- **Forward-looking** (growth, innovation, multi-year planning)
- **Relational** (inclusion, equity, compensation fairness)

Notably, honesty/integrity and shared governance appear across multiple themes, signaling deep trust and legitimacy concerns rather than technical gaps.

Summary: What Staff Believe Is Missing (Grounded in Their Language)

Using staff's own repeated words and clause structures, the values most clearly identified as missing or insufficiently explicit in Question 4 are: Honesty and integrity (truth-telling); authentic shared governance and empowerment; commitment to growth and innovation; data-driven and common-sense decision-making; equity and ethical responsibility; attention to compensation and workforce sustainability; multi-year, realistic planning; and decisive leadership with follow-through.

Staff repeatedly signal that values must be lived through behavior and structure, not merely listed. As with faculty, the strongest message is not that the list was wrong—but that it was incomplete without explicit attention to how decisions are made, who is empowered, and whether the institution is moving forward rather than just managing decline.

Students

Below is a language-based thematic analysis of student responses to Survey Question 5: “Are there values that are missing from the list used in Question 4?” Given the brevity and limited number of responses, this analysis places particular emphasis on what is repeated, what is absent, and how students compress meaning through short phrases and negation.

High-Frequency Themes (Relative to Dataset Size)

1. **Perceived Completeness of the Existing Values List**
2. **Desire for Guiding Principles / Direction**
3. **Growth as a Forward-Looking Value**

Theme 1: Perceived Completeness of the Existing Values List (Most Common)

Repetitive phrasing

- “No”
- “I don’t think so”
- “N/A”

Interpretation grounded in language

Students largely signal that nothing obvious feels missing from the values list. The brevity suggests either:

- General agreement with the list, or
- Lower salience of abstract values compared to outcomes and actions

Theme 2: Desire for Guiding Principles / Direction

Distinct phrasing

- “Guiding principles”

Interpretation

Students appear less concerned with *what* the values are than with how they guide decisions.

Theme 3: Growth as a Forward-Looking Value

Distinct phrasing

- “Growth”

Interpretation

Although only mentioned once, “growth” aligns with:

- Student interest in institutional momentum

Summary: Students’ View on “Missing Values” (Grounded in Their Language)

Using students’ own phrasing and response patterns, the dominant message is: Most students do not perceive clear gaps in the listed values, or do not strongly engage with values framing at this level. When additional values are named, they emphasize direction (“guiding principles”) and forward momentum (“growth”), rather than new ethical or procedural categories.

Cross-cutting

Prompt: Please take these analyses by respondent group and create a cross-cutting summary.

Below is a cross-cutting synthesis of Survey Question 5 (“Are there values missing from the list used in Question 4?”), integrating faculty, staff, and student responses and grounded explicitly in repetitive phrasing, emphasis, negation, and clause patterns across all three groups.

Cross-Cutting Summary: Missing or Under-Articulated Values

(Faculty • Staff • Students)

Across respondent groups, the dominant message is not simply that values are missing, but that some values are insufficiently explicit, operationalized, or lived. The intensity and specificity of responses vary by role, but several clear cross-cutting themes emerge.

1. Integrity, Honesty, and Alignment Between Words and Actions

(Strong for faculty and staff; implicit for students)

Shared language patterns

- Faculty: “honesty,” “integrity,” “don’t say one thing and then do the other”
- Staff: “truth—even when it hurts,” “integrity,” “follow open records laws”
- Students: no direct naming, but emphasis on “guiding principles” implies consistency

Cross-cutting insight

Transparency alone is not enough. Across employees especially, trust depends on ethical coherence—decisions, behaviors, and messaging aligning with stated values. Students appear to assume integrity unless contradicted by outcomes.

2. Shared Governance, Engagement, and Collective Responsibility

(Very strong for faculty and staff; low salience for students)

Shared language patterns

- Faculty: “collaborative decision-making,” “true shared governance,” “collective responsibility”

- Staff: “SHARED GOVERNANCE (!),” “beyond transparency to engagement,” “empowerment”
- Students: largely absent

Cross-cutting insight

Faculty and staff see shared governance as a missing value, not just a process. Students, by contrast, are outcome-oriented and less focused on governance structures. This suggests governance should be explicitly valued internally, while student-facing communications emphasize results.

3. Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice

(Strong for faculty; present for staff; minimal for students)

Shared language patterns

- Faculty: “equity,” “fairness,” “social justice,” “not meritocracy”
- Staff: “equity,” “ethical responsibility,” “inclusive”
- Students: not named

Cross-cutting insight

Equity is repeatedly identified by employees as a missing or underweighted value that cannot be assumed within other categories. Students may experience equity more through affordability and access than through abstract language.

4. Faculty/Staff Well-Being, Morale, and Workforce Sustainability

(Strong for faculty and staff; indirect for students)

Shared language patterns

- Faculty: “faculty well-being,” “workplace morale,” “appreciation”
- Staff: “market value compensation,” “retaining staff,” “realistic expectations”
- Students: workforce stability mentioned indirectly

Cross-cutting insight

Employees see morale and well-being as institutional capacity, not a secondary concern. Students care insofar as workforce stability affects their experience, suggesting this value should be named internally and translated externally.

5. Long-Term Thinking vs. Crisis Orientation

(Strong for faculty and staff; implicit for students)

Shared language patterns

- Faculty: “long-term outcomes,” “getting away from a crisis mindset”
- Staff: “multi-year decisions,” “realistic expectations”
- Students: desire for “guiding principles” and stability

Cross-cutting insight

All groups react negatively to perpetual emergency framing. Employees articulate this explicitly; students experience it as uncertainty. A value that names stability, foresight, and intentional planning resonates across roles.

6. Action, Competence, and Decisive Leadership

(Strong for faculty and staff; implicit for students)

Shared language patterns

- Faculty: “action,” “competence,” “paralyzed”

- Staff: “decisive leadership,” “hard decisions”
- Students: preference for clarity and less second-guessing

Cross-cutting insight

There is a shared impatience with inertia. Trust is strengthened by capable, values-aligned action, even when decisions are difficult.

7. Growth, Innovation, and Forward Momentum **(Moderate for staff; light but present for faculty and students)**

Shared language patterns

- Faculty: “research,” “excellence,” “quality”
- Staff: “growth,” “innovation,” “future”
- Students: “growth”

Cross-cutting insight

Growth is not universally named, but when it appears, it signals a desire for hope, momentum, and institutional confidence—especially important in a budget-constrained environment.

Cross-Cutting Bottom Line

Across faculty, staff, and students, Survey Question 5 reveals that:

- Employees want missing values, especially equity, integrity, shared governance, morale, and long-term thinking.
- Students are less concerned with expanding the list and more concerned with whether values function as clear guiding principles that lead to visible outcomes.
- All groups agree, either explicitly or implicitly, that values must be lived, not listed.

Integrated Summary Statement

Using the shared language and emphasis across groups: The campus community does not simply want more values; it wants clearer commitments to integrity, equity, shared responsibility, workforce well-being, long-term thinking, decisive action, and growth that is demonstrated consistently through how decisions are made and communicated. Students, in particular, judge values by whether they provide clear direction and produce tangible outcomes.

Connection to Q4: Based upon the response in question 5 regarding missing values, how would this alter the overall response to question 4?

Below is a reframed interpretation of Survey Question 4 (prioritized values) in light of Survey Question 5 (missing values). The goal is not to replace the Q4 rankings, but to correct, contextualize, and operationalize them based on what respondents told you was *absent, implicit, or mis-framed*.

How Question 5 Alters the Interpretation of Question 4

Executive Summary (One-paragraph version)

Survey Question 5 clarifies that respondents did not reject the values in Question 4 but viewed them as incomplete without explicit attention to integrity, equity, shared governance, workforce well-being, long-term thinking, and decisive action. As a result, the Q4 rankings should be interpreted not as a final hierarchy of standalone values, but as a set of outcome priorities that require additional “enabling

values” to be credible and executable. In short: *Question 4 tells us what matters most; Question 5 tells us what must be present for those values to be trusted.*

1. Question 4 Values Remain Valid—but Are Insufficient Alone

Across faculty, staff, and students, Question 5 responses repeatedly say some version of:

- “The list is good, but...”
- “Nothing missing, if these are lived”
- “Transparency without engagement isn’t enough”
- “Students first—but you need X to make that real”

Key shift:

Question 4 values are necessary but not sufficient. Question 5 shows that respondents interpret the Q4 list as aspirational outcomes, not guarantees of behavior.

2. Question 5 Adds “Enabling Values” That Change How Q4 Should Be Read

Question 5 surfaces a consistent set of missing or under-articulated values that function as conditions for trust. These do not replace Q4 values; they modify how they must be enacted.

A. Transparency → Transparency + Integrity + Honesty

Q4 framing:

Transparency ranks very high.

Q5 correction:

Faculty and staff repeatedly distinguish:

- Transparency ≠ honesty
- Transparency ≠ integrity
- Transparency ≠ alignment between words and actions

Revised interpretation:

Transparency in Q4 should be understood as ethical transparency:

- Truth-telling
- Consistency
- Owning decisions
- Following records laws
- Saying hard things plainly

Without integrity and honesty, transparency is viewed as performative.

B. Communication → Communication + Engagement + Shared Governance

Q4 framing:

Communication ranks high, especially for staff and students.

Q5 correction:

Faculty and staff explicitly say:

- Communication without engagement is insufficient
- Transparency without shared governance is hollow
- Input ≠ influence

Revised interpretation:

Communication in Q4 must be read as bidirectional and participatory, supported by:

- Shared governance
- Empowerment
- Collective responsibility
- Meaningful channels for feedback

Otherwise, communication is seen as top-down messaging.

C. Student Centered & Focused → Student-Centered + Equity + Workforce Stability

Q4 framing:

Student-centeredness is the top value across all groups.

Q5 correction:

Faculty and staff add:

- Equity, inclusion, and access must be explicit
- Faculty/staff well-being is inseparable from student success
- Market compensation, morale, and stability matter

Revised interpretation:

Student-centeredness in Q4 should be read as student success through equity and capacity, not student-first rhetoric alone. Students benefit when the institution is equitable, staffed, and stable.

D. Fiscal Responsibility & Sustainability → Long-Term, Non-Crisis Stewardship

Q4 framing:

Fiscal responsibility ranks mid-high; sustainability ranks lower.

Q5 correction:

Faculty and staff emphasize:

- Long-term outcomes
- Multi-year planning
- Getting out of crisis/emergency mode
- Growth, not just survival

Revised interpretation:

Fiscal responsibility in Q4 must be understood as forward-looking stewardship, not annual retrenchment. Repeated short-term cuts undermine trust, morale, and credibility—even if fiscally “responsible.”

E. Shared Vision → Action, Competence, and Follow-Through

Q4 framing:

Shared vision ranks lowest across groups.

Q5 explanation (not contradiction):

Respondents do not reject vision—they reject vision without action.

Missing values named:

- Competence
- Action
- Decisive leadership
- Common sense
- Follow-through

Revised interpretation:

Shared vision is not absent, it is earned through behavior, not messaging. Vision rises in importance only when people see it enacted consistently.

3. Revised Conceptual Model: How Q4 and Q5 Fit Together

Question 4 = What We Value (Outcomes)

- Student Centered & Focused
- Transparency

- Communication
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Accountability
- Retaining Faculty & Staff
- Sustainability
- Shared Vision

Question 5 = What Makes Those Values Real (Enablers)

- Integrity & honesty
- Equity & inclusion
- Shared governance & empowerment
- Faculty/staff well-being & morale
- Long-term, multi-year thinking
- Decisive, competent action
- Growth & innovation

Q6: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Prompt: (Respondent Groups) were asked "Is there anything else you'd like to share?" Please take these responses and analyze the data for common themes using repetitive phrasing and clause use. Include in the report high-frequency themes, details for each theme, cross-cutting details, and a summary.

Faculty

Below is a language-based thematic analysis of faculty responses to Survey Question 6: "Is there anything else you'd like to share?" As with earlier analyses, this report is grounded explicitly in repetitive phrasing, shared clause structures, emphatic language, and negation patterns, and is designed to surface what faculty chose to say when not constrained by a prompt—often the most diagnostic data in a survey.

High-Frequency Themes (Based on Repetition, Intensity, and Length)

1. **Crisis Framing, Morale Collapse, and Leadership Distrust**
 2. **Opacity, Fear, and Erosion of Trust**
 3. **Exhaustion with Perpetual Budget Cuts and Process Chaos**
 4. **Lack of Clear Vision or Direction for the Institution**
 5. **Administrative Bloat vs. Academic Core**
 6. **Equity, Compensation, and Faculty Working Conditions**
 7. **Enrollment, Revenue Generation, and Growth Strategy**
 8. **Desire for Meaningful Shared Governance and Inclusion**
 9. **Communication Failures and Timing Insensitivity**
 10. **Willingness to Make Hard Decisions—If They Are Strategic and Fair**
-

Theme 1: Crisis Framing, Morale Collapse, and Leadership Distrust (Most emotionally charged and repeated theme)

Repetitive phrasing

- "Morale is in the toilet"
- "People are leaving"

- “Enrollment is tanking”
- “We are in a crisis”
- “Downward cycle”
- “Demoralizing”
- “Won’t be able to recover for decades”

Clause patterns

Faculty consistently link:

- Morale decline → leadership decisions
- Enrollment decline → lack of strategy
- Crisis → insufficient leadership response

Interpretation

Faculty are not debating *whether* there is a crisis—they are asserting that leadership has failed to respond with the seriousness, transparency, and decisiveness the moment requires.

Theme 2: Opacity, Fear, and Erosion of Trust

Repetitive phrasing

- “Afraid to reveal the plan”
- “Unwillingness to be open”
- “Encouraging leaders to delete official communication”
- “Votes of no confidence”
- “Erodes trust”

Clause patterns

Opacity is framed as:

- Intentional, not accidental
- Producing fear and silence
- Leading to governance breakdown

Interpretation

Faculty perceive withholding information as a choice, not a constraint—and one that actively undermines institutional legitimacy.

Theme 3: Exhaustion with Perpetual Budget Cuts and Process Chaos

Repetitive phrasing

- “Every year”
- “Exhausting”
- “Constantly”
- “Typical chaos”
- “Another urgent survey”

Clause patterns

Budgeting is described as:

- Cyclical
- Reactive
- Emotionally draining
- Poorly timed

Interpretation

Faculty fatigue is not about *a single cut*, but about the absence of a stable, predictable, long-term framework.

Theme 4: Lack of Clear Vision or Direction

Repetitive phrasing

- “What is the vision?”
- “No evidence of creativity or vision”
- “Charter a path”
- “What will UCCS look like?”
- “R2 community college?”

Clause patterns

Faculty ask repeated identity questions, signaling:

- Strategic ambiguity
- Mission drift
- Conflicting signals from leadership

Interpretation

Without a clear institutional direction, faculty interpret budget decisions as arbitrary, incoherent, or misaligned.

Theme 5: Administrative Bloat vs. Academic Core

Repetitive phrasing

- “Administrative bloat”
- “Hiring admins”
- “Vanity projects”
- “Doesn’t add up”
- “Those of us who teach”

Clause patterns

Faculty contrast:

- Growth in administration
- Cuts to teaching, programs, and staff

Interpretation

This perceived imbalance is one of the strongest drivers of resentment and mistrust, repeatedly framed as a violation of stated values.

Theme 6: Equity, Compensation, and Faculty Working Conditions

Repetitive phrasing

- “Not a living wage”
- “Second and third job”
- “Deplorable equity”
- “Losing adjuncts”

Clause patterns

Compensation is framed as:

- An equity issue
- A retention issue
- A quality-of-education issue

Interpretation

Faculty see pay, workload, and status disparities as structural problems undermining both morale and student success.

Theme 7: Enrollment, Revenue Generation, and Growth Strategy

Repetitive phrasing

- “Nothing works without enrollment growth”
- “Stop doing what’s not working”
- “Learn from other campuses”
- “Revenue generation”
- “Advertising, customer service”

Clause patterns

Faculty want:

- Proactive investment
- Comparative analysis
- Participation in revenue ideas—not just cuts

Interpretation

Faculty are not resistant to hard choices—they are frustrated by a one-sided focus on cuts rather than growth.

Theme 8: Desire for Meaningful Shared Governance and Inclusion

Repetitive phrasing

- “Trust is a two-way street”
- “Genuine shared governance”
- “Faculty involvement”

Clause patterns

Shared governance is framed as:

- Underdeveloped
- Performative
- Essential for legitimacy

Interpretation

Faculty want to co-create solutions, not simply be consulted after decisions are shaped.

Theme 9: Communication Failures and Timing Insensitivity

Repetitive phrasing

- “Finals week”
- “Urgent call”
- “Vague survey”
- “Weekly updates during Trump”
- “Be more open”

Clause patterns

Communication is criticized for:

- Poor timing
- Lack of specificity
- Inconsistency with past crises

Interpretation

Faculty expect crisis-level communication for a crisis-level moment.

Theme 10: Willingness to Make Hard Decisions—If Strategic and Fair

Repetitive phrasing

- “Hard decisions”
- “Full-throttle measures”
- “Not half-steps”
- “Focus on growth areas”
- “Reduce non-viable programs”

Interpretation

Contrary to stereotypes, faculty do not oppose tough action. They oppose:

- Unclear criteria
- Inequitable impact
- Lack of transparency

Cross-Cutting Details (Patterns Across Themes)

Across responses, faculty repeatedly emphasize:

- **Leadership credibility over messaging**
- **Action over process**
- **Equity over rhetoric**
- **Long-term strategy over annual panic**
- **Academic core over administrative expansion**

Notably, many responses are lengthy, detailed, and emotionally charged, indicating high engagement but deep frustration.

Summary: What Faculty Are Saying

Using faculty’s own repeated language and clause structures, Survey Question 6 reveals that: Faculty believe UCCS is in a prolonged crisis marked by declining morale, enrollment challenges, leadership opacity, and strategic drift. They are exhausted by recurring budget cuts without a clear long-term vision, deeply concerned about administrative growth amid academic austerity, and alarmed by inequities in compensation and workload. While trust is badly damaged, faculty express willingness to make hard, strategic decisions if leadership is honest, transparent, equitable, and genuinely collaborative.

Equally important, Q6 shows that faculty are not disengaged, they care, and because they believe the institution can do better than the status quo.

Staff

Below is a language-based thematic analysis of staff responses to Survey Question 6: “Is there anything else you’d like to share?” As with prior questions, this analysis is grounded explicitly in repetitive wording, shared clause structures, emphasis, and contrasts surfacing what staff chose to raise when given open space.

High-Frequency Themes (Based on Repetition, Emphasis, and Spread)

1. **Stress, Burnout, and Workforce Capacity**
2. **Desire for Decisive, Timely Action (End the Prolonged Uncertainty)**
3. **Cross-Unit Impacts and Systems Thinking**
4. **Concerns About Shared Governance Effectiveness (Especially UBAC)**
5. **Need for Better Communication and “Trickle-Down” Clarity**
6. **Fiscal Discipline, Ethical Reallocation, and Accountability**
7. **Operational Complexity and Process Inefficiency**
8. **Morale and Emotional Climate**
9. **Appreciation for Being Asked / Mixed Confidence in Leadership**

A notable portion of responses are short (“No,” “N/A,” “Thank you”), but the longer responses cluster tightly around capacity, process, governance, and fatigue, giving them outsized interpretive weight.

Theme 1: Stress, Burnout, and Workforce Capacity (Most consistently repeated concern)

Repetitive phrasing

- “Wear multiple hats”
- “Burnout”
- “Spread thin”
- “One person missing can have unexpected impacts”
- “Limited staff resources”

Clause patterns

Cuts and vacancies are framed as:

- Creating cascading effects across units
- Reducing ability to improve processes
- Undermining student-centered services

Interpretation

Staff view capacity as fragile. Even small reductions are described as having outsized operational and human impact, especially in a small campus environment.

Theme 2: Desire for Decisive, Timely Action (End the prolonged budget limbo)

Repetitive phrasing

- “Year over year, budget cuts loom”
- “It’s stressful”
- “Rip the band aid off”
- “More time to make decisions”

- “Better than drawing it out”

Clause patterns

Staff express dual tensions:

- Need *more time* for complex decisions
- Need *less prolonged uncertainty* overall

Interpretation

Staff are not asking for rushed decisions—but for clear timelines and closure, rather than indefinite cycles of anxiety.

Theme 3: Cross-Unit Impacts and Systems Thinking

Repetitive phrasing

- “Be mindful how that cut may impact other units”
- “Unexpected impacts”
- “Small campus”
- “Unfunded mandates”

Clause patterns

Decisions are criticized when they:

- Treat units as isolated
- Ignore dependencies
- Shift workload invisibly

Interpretation

Staff want budgeting approached as a system, not a collection of silos. Cuts in one area are repeatedly described as reappearing as strain elsewhere.

Theme 4: Concerns About Shared Governance Effectiveness (Especially UBAC)

Repetitive phrasing

- “Shared governance doesn’t equal shared understanding”
- “UBAC has far too much influence”
- “Not financially savvy”
- “We are being silenced”
- “Re-imagine shared governance”

Clause patterns

Governance concerns focus on:

- Imbalance of voices
- Limited discussion time
- Process inhibiting forward progress

Interpretation

Unlike faculty (who often call for *more* shared governance), staff raise concerns about how governance bodies function, questioning representativeness, expertise balance, and process design.

Theme 5: Communication Gaps and the Need for Trickle-Down Clarity

Repetitive phrasing

- “Trickle down communication”
- “Out of the loop”
- “Scared for what is brewing”
- “Longer Q&A”
- “Open chat again”

Clause patterns

Communication breakdowns are framed as:

- Structural (not reaching middle management)
- Anxiety-producing
- Correctable with format changes

Interpretation

Staff want predictable, two-way communication, especially to supervisors and frontline leaders who must translate decisions into action.

Theme 6: Fiscal Discipline, Ethical Reallocation, and Accountability

Repetitive phrasing

- “Stop spending more than we make”
- “Ethical reallocation model”
- “Historical allocations”
- “Accountability”
- “Evaluate programs more often”

Clause patterns

Fiscal responsibility is framed as:

- Requiring redistribution, not just cuts
- Incompatible with maintaining declining programs unchanged
- Linked to fairness and credibility

Interpretation

Staff show strong appetite for accountability, including program review and reallocation especially when framed as ethical and mission aligned.

Theme 7: Operational Complexity and Process Inefficiency

Repetitive phrasing

- “Increasingly complex and inefficient”
- “Limited staff resources”
- “Adopt best practices”
- “Enterprise purchase”
- “Streamline operations”

Clause patterns

Process inefficiency is linked to:

- Staff overload
- Fragmented systems
- Avoidable cost and time waste

Interpretation

Staff want operational simplification as a budget strategy, not just personnel reductions.

Theme 8: Morale and Emotional Climate

Repetitive phrasing

- “Nobody is happy”
- “Scared”
- “Stressful”
- “Demoralizing”

Clause patterns

Morale is described as:

- Universally low
- Long-standing
- Worsening under uncertainty

Interpretation

Calls for a morale survey suggest staff feel unheard emotionally, not just procedurally.

Theme 9: Appreciation for Being Asked / Mixed Confidence in Leadership

Repetitive phrasing

- “Thank you for asking”
- “Appreciated”
- “Courage to make cuts”

Clause patterns

Positive comments often:

- Acknowledge difficulty of leadership role
- Sit alongside critical feedback

Interpretation

Staff responses show conditional goodwill, appreciation for engagement, paired with concern about execution and follow-through.

Cross-Cutting Details (Patterns Across Themes)

Across responses, staff consistently emphasize:

- **Capacity and people as limiting factors**
- **Need for systems thinking**
- **Desire for decisive but humane action**
- **Process clarity over perfection**
- **Governance reform, not abandonment**
- **Communication as an operational necessity, not a courtesy**

Notably, staff are less focused on institutional vision language than faculty, and more focused on whether the campus can function day-to-day under current strain.

Summary: What Staff Are Saying

Using staff's own repeated language and clause structures, Survey Question 6 reveals that: Staff are experiencing sustained stress, burnout, and uncertainty driven by repeated budget cycles, limited capacity, and unclear timelines. They want decisive, ethical action grounded in systems-thinking where cross-unit impacts, operational efficiency, and workforce sustainability are taken seriously. While they value shared governance, many express concern about how it currently functions, particularly the balance of voices and effectiveness of bodies like UBAC. Trust and morale depend on clearer communication, better process design, and visible accountability paired with recognition of the human limits of a small, stretched campus.

Importantly, staff are not resistant to change or cuts, they are asking for clarity, fairness, and functional processes that allow them to do their jobs well without constant fear or exhaustion.

Students

- n=1 response, therefore not enough data to create an integrated response.

Cross-cutting

Prompt: Please take the analyses by faculty and staff respondent groups and create a cross-cutting summary.

Below is a cross-cutting synthesis of Survey Question 6 that integrates faculty and staff responses only (students excluded due to insufficient data), grounded explicitly in repetitive phrasing, shared clause structures, and emphatic language across both groups.

Cross-Cutting Summary

Survey Question 6 – “Is there anything else you’d like to share?”

(Faculty and Staff Responses Only)

Overarching Finding

When given unrestricted space, faculty and staff independently converge on the same core message: UCCS is experiencing prolonged institutional strain marked by low morale, capacity exhaustion, and eroding trust that is driven not only by budget constraints, but by opaque decision-making, unclear strategic direction, and recurring cycles of uncertainty without closure.

Despite differences in tone and emphasis, both groups describe the same underlying conditions, using highly similar language.

Shared High-Frequency Themes (Faculty + Staff)

1. Chronic Strain, Fatigue, and Morale Decline

Shared phrasing across groups

- “Exhausting”
- “Stressful”
- “Burnout”
- “Demoralizing”
- “People are leaving”

- “Nobody is happy”

Shared clause structure

- Repeated cycles of cuts → fatigue → loss of capacity → declining morale

Cross-cutting insight

Both faculty and staff describe long-term depletion, not a temporary downturn. The issue is framed as unsustainable, with risk of irreversible talent loss.

2. Desire for Decisive Action—Not Endless Process

Shared phrasing

- “Rip the band-aid off”
- “Hard decisions”
- “Full-throttle measures”
- “Not half-steps”
- “Stop drawing it out”

Shared clause structure

- Prolonged uncertainty is worse than difficult outcomes

Cross-cutting insight

Neither group is asking leadership to avoid tough choices. Instead, they are asking for:

- Clear timelines
- Finality
- Strategic coherence

3. Lack of Clear Institutional Direction or Vision

Shared phrasing

- “What is the vision?”
- “No clear direction”
- “Charter a path”
- “Where is this going?”

Shared clause structure

- Budget decisions feel arbitrary in the absence of an articulated future state

Cross-cutting insight

Without a visible 3 to 5-year institutional direction, budgeting is perceived as reactive, inconsistent, and destabilizing.

4. Opacity and Erosion of Trust

Shared phrasing

- “Not being open”
- “Out of the loop”
- “Afraid to reveal the plan”
- “Silenced”
- “Erodes trust”

Shared clause structure

- Withholding information → fear → rumor → distrust

Cross-cutting insight

Trust is framed as behavioral, not rhetorical. Transparency failures, real or perceived, are repeatedly linked to declining morale and legitimacy.

5. Administrative Growth vs. Academic and Operational Core**Shared phrasing**

- “Administrative bloat”
- “Doesn’t add up”
- “Hiring admins”
- “Those of us doing the work”

Shared clause structure

- Growth at the top paired with cuts at the front lines

Cross-cutting insight

This perceived imbalance is one of the strongest emotional triggers across responses and a major credibility issue for leadership.

6. Capacity Constraints and Cross-Unit Impacts**Shared phrasing**

- “Wearing multiple hats”
- “Spread thin”
- “One person missing has impacts”
- “Unfunded mandates”

Shared clause structure

- Cuts create hidden downstream effects across the system

Cross-cutting insight

Both groups emphasize that small-campus dynamics magnify impact, making siloed decisions particularly damaging.

7. Concerns About Shared Governance Functionality**Shared phrasing**

- “Illusion of participation”
- “Shared governance doesn’t equal shared understanding”
- “Re-imagine shared governance”
- “Used to communicate decisions, not shape them”

Shared clause structure

- Input is solicited after decisions are effectively made

Cross-cutting insight

Faculty and staff are not rejecting shared governance but are calling for reform, clarity of role, and more meaningful influence earlier in the process.

8. Willingness to Engage in Growth and Revenue Solutions

Shared phrasing

- “Revenue generation”
- “Enrollment growth”
- “Stop doing what isn’t working”
- “Learn from other campuses”

Shared clause structure

- Faculty and staff want to help solve the problem not just absorb cuts

Cross-cutting insight

There is latent capacity for innovation and partnership if leadership broadens engagement beyond reductions.

Cross-Cutting Summary Statement

Synthesizing language, tone, and repetition across faculty and staff responses: Faculty and staff describe a campus under sustained strain, where repeated budget cycles, unclear direction, and opaque processes have eroded trust and morale. Both groups express readiness for difficult, strategic decisions but only if those decisions are transparent, equitable, timely, and grounded in a clear institutional vision. The greatest risks identified are continued uncertainty, perceived administrative imbalance, and loss of human capacity essential to the university’s mission.