

2024 Annual Report

October 2024

A message from the president

Yessenia Guerrero

I can't even begin to describe the amazing gift I have been given to be the 2023–24 UWSA President. What an honour it's been getting to know our campus community more intimately. I'm indebted to those who have supported me during my term, every kind word, every encouraging note. Thank you.

This month, I complete my term as the first visible minority (Latina, Mestiza) woman president of the Association. The importance of this milestone lies in the concept of representation. I hope to inspire others to go after their dreams and to be unapologetically themselves, even within systems or structures that don't always embrace us.

This year has passed with many successes. I'm proud of the accomplishments that we have made, and am excited to share some of them with you in this report.

I'd like to think that under my term I helped to make UWSA more accessible to staff and our partners on campus. At the very least, I worked to bring awareness to our association, and at the very best, I'm happy to see so many staff actively involved and working together to create a better workplace.

Our slogan is *your voice starts here*, and this year someone dialed up the volume, because we really heard you like never before! I need and am counting on you to continue to be vocal, don't be afraid to ask questions, and take hold of your position here on campus—be empowered, know your rights, and shine.

We can do this together.

Sincerely,

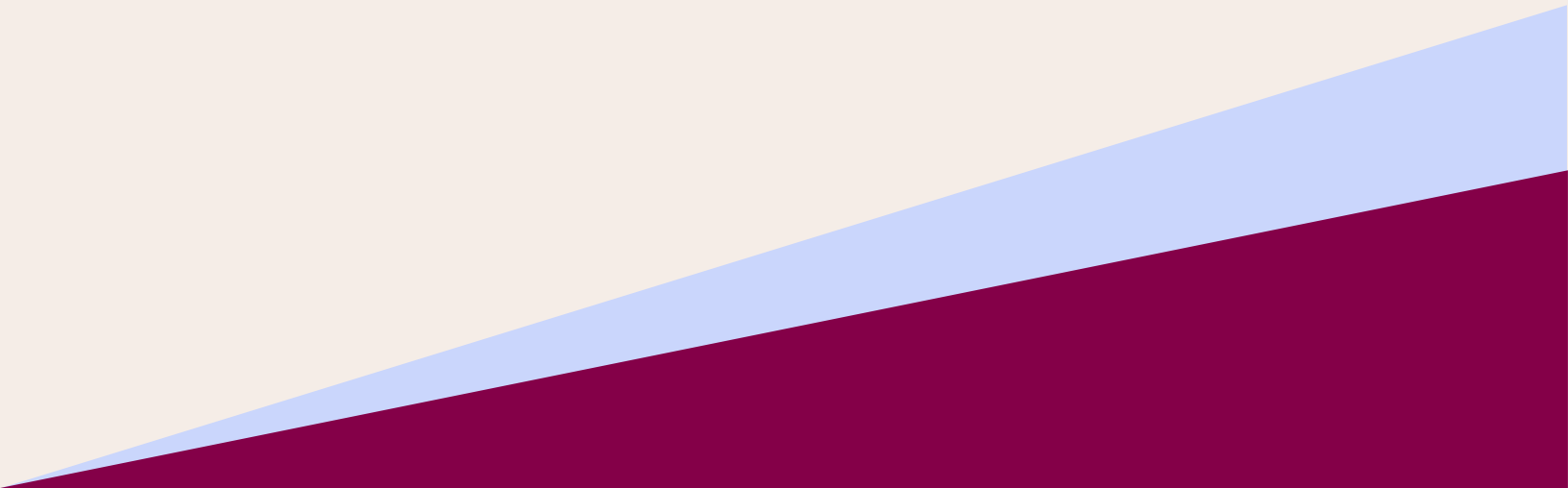
Yessenia Guerrero
2023–24 UWSA President

Read Yessenia's full final president's report at uwaterloo.ca/uwsa/blog.



Contents

A message from the president	2
Our mission	4
Meet the Operations Team	5
The year in review	6
Our membership	11
Member survey highlights	13
Our new brand	16
Priorities for 2025	17
Our volunteers and directors	18



Our mission

The UW Staff Association represents more than 3,000 staff in salary discussions and policy development, and advocates for your needs across the University.

We work with the University to cultivate a progressive work environment where staff feel safe, empowered to grow, and able to thrive.

We strive to be champions of equity, advocacy, and social justice for staff, and we value inclusion, respect, and leadership.

“There's power in large numbers of staff working together.”

—UWSA member, 2024 Member Survey

Meet the Operations Team

Lisa Habel

2024–25 President

As president, I will continue to advocate for all staff and for as much transparency as possible. Your feedback is important, so please continue to tell us what is on your minds.

Staff are the backbone of UW and your voice really does matter.



Carly Richardson

Membership and Volunteer Coord.

Carly is the first point of contact for members seeking support and works closely with volunteers to cultivate a positive UWSA community. She is passionate about mental health advocacy and has a background in volunteer and community engagement.



Alyssa Kuron

President-elect

Alyssa is an Industry Strategist with Co-operative Education and has worked at Waterloo since 2018, including in Engineering and the Office of Research. She's also a proud alumna of Waterloo (Honours BSc in Biology) and holds a Master's of Environmental Sciences from Guelph.



Laura McDonald

Communications Officer

Laura manages the Staff Association's communications, information, and PD events. She has a background in editing and musical theatre production as well as association communications.



Gail Spencer

Staff Advocacy Officer

Gail provides advocacy and confidential support to members in need of advice on workplace situations. Gail has been a UWSA advocate for staff for 16 years and has a master's degree in Social Work.



Hamda Farah

Communications & Events Assistant

Hamda is a fourth-year psychology major at the University of Waterloo, currently completing her third co-op term.



Yessenia Guerrero moves into the role of Past President November 1.

2023–24 in review

Strategic priorities

Last year we announced three strategic priorities to guide us over the next three years. With a lot of unexpected turnover on the Board of Directors, some projects have been put on hold, but we've still made plenty of progress!

Priority 1: Advance Governance Excellence

We created an online toolkit and training material for directors, sponsored directors to attend a Governance Bootcamp, and began a training program for the president-elect.

In response to an open letter, we disclosed that our money is solely invested within the WFCU credit union itself, used to issue loans and mortgages to WFCU members.

Priority 2: Enhance Member Experience

We surveyed members on their experience with the UWSA and in their workplace and are turning those results into action plans for our advocacy efforts, communications, and new opportunities.

This year, we struck a Contract Staff Working Group to identify ways we can better serve staff in temporary appointments.

We have responded quickly to member feedback on the discounts members want and the types of events you want to attend, including more lunchtime social events and professional development workshops.

Priority 3: Outreach for our Future

We have increased our communication and collaboration across campus, including with the Office of Indigenous Relations, EDIRO, OHD, HR, FAUW, CUPE, and Sustainable Transportation.

We've updated and expanded the Area Representatives Planning Committee, updated our branding and visual materials, and rolled out new communication initiatives to increase awareness and grow our membership.

Voter turnout was 41% this year – up from 35% in 2023 and 27% in 2022.

“Everyone benefits from a strong staff association.”

—UWSA member

2023–24 highlights

Member support

Our Member Advisory Committee, led by our full-time staff advocacy officer, Gail Spencer, provides confidential guidance and support for UWSA members navigating difficult workplace situations, whether you're looking for guidance, information, or just a listening ear.

100+
members
supported this year

“I felt supported and heard, and I appreciated updates on the process as it progressed.”

—UWSA member

85%

satisfaction rate for confidential support

124 suggestion box entries
31 people requested responses

2023–24 highlights

Events & discounts

20⁺

UWSA events

450⁺

members attended
at least one event

4 campus &
department
visits

8 social
& fun
events

5 professional development
workshops and panels

11 new discounts
introduced based on
member suggestions

4.4/5



Average **event** rating in
follow-up surveys

“The
opportunity to
meet fellow
staff members
in a social
setting was
fantastic!”

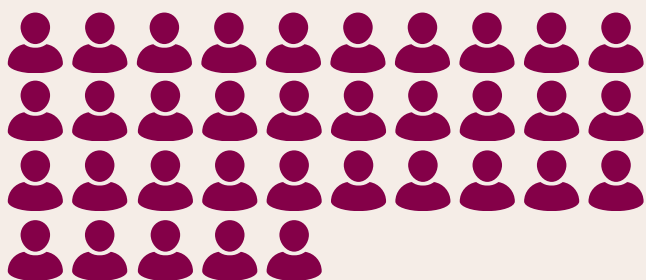
—UWSA member

2023–24 highlights

Grants & scholarships

\$ The Staff Enhancement Grant funds members' personal development projects up to \$500. We dedicated an additional **\$2,000** to the SEG in the 2024–25 budget in response to increased demand.

We approved 35 member projects...



...and received more than 100 applications.

107

That's a:

43% increase in applications over 2022–23

77% increase over the 2021–22 cycle

“For a small fee, literally the price of Netflix, I [can] be a part of a large community on campus specifically for staff, led by staff.”

—UWSA member

We funded 14 student scholarships for UWSA members, spouses, or their dependents.



2023–24 highlights

Member communication

We communicate with members through emails, blog posts, social media, the Area Representatives Council, and more.

12 blog posts
101 emails
24 news stories
5 Bulletin stories

Website and Confluence visits

We've had **18,000 visits to our website** in the past year. Top destinations are our discounts page, membership information, and the Staff Enhancement Grant application!

Our **members-only site** in Confluence has been visited hundreds of times since launching in spring, with **3,700** page views.

The site features exclusive discounts, member documents, and **event recordings**—which have been watched **170+ times** so far.



42% of departments are on the Area Representatives Council, representing **44%** of members.

Newsletters



Fun fact:
According to our member survey, familiarity with our newsletters is correlated with feeling empowered at work!

“I enjoy feeling connected to staff across campus.”

—UWSA member

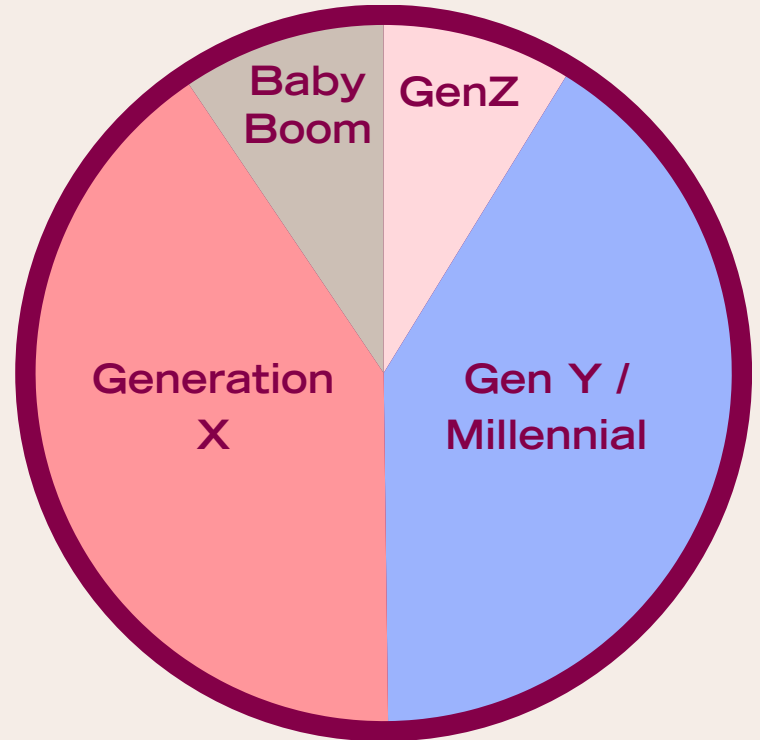
Membership snapshot

Who are our members?

Of 2,029 members, 38% work in the faculties; 9% in ancillary units (such as retail, food services, or housing), affiliated organizations (like WUSA), or research centres; and the remaining 52% work in academic support units.

300 of our members (15%) are in their first year at UW; 14% of members have been here for more than 20 years.

According to our member survey, more than 3/4 of our members are women, 20% are men, and 2% are nonbinary, Two-Spirit or another gender identity.



Survey respondents by generation.

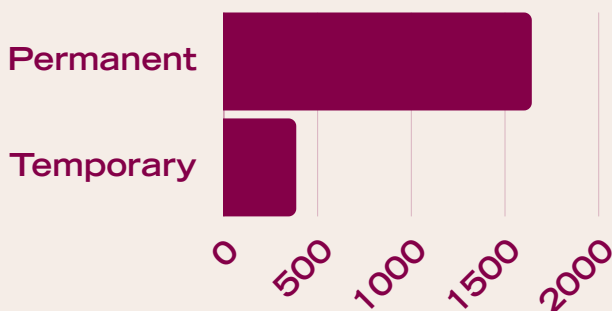
“The UWSA creates a sense of connection and collaboration with other staff members and is an important support system.”

—UWSA member

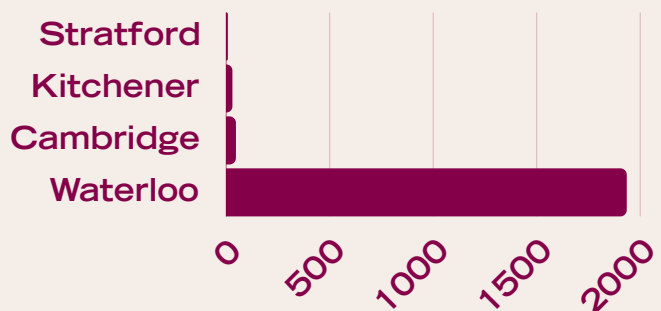
52%

More than half of surveyed members work on campus all or most of the time. 5% are full remote.

Appointment type



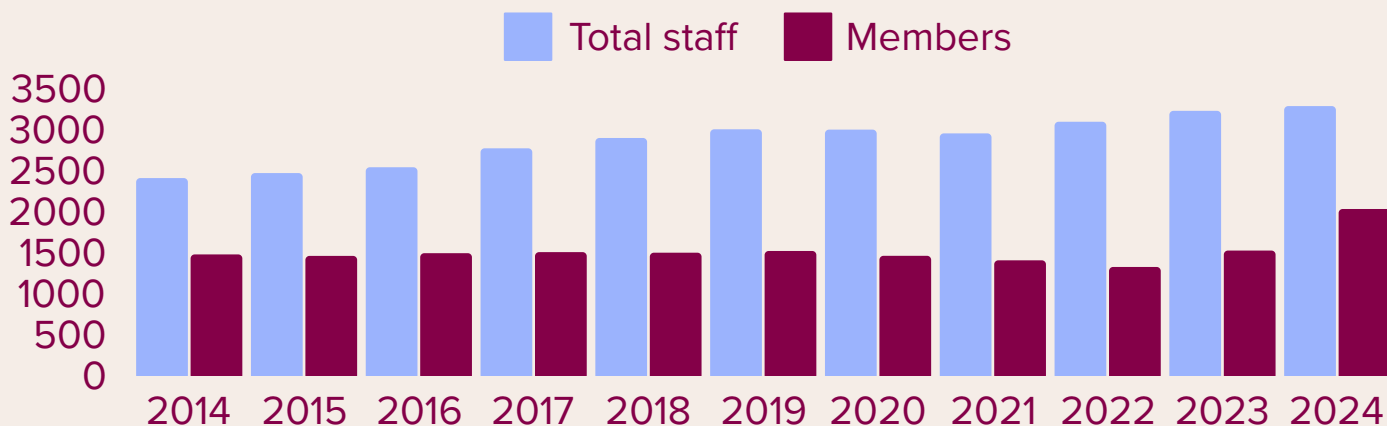
Home campus



Member data on pages 11–12 is based on our membership database unless otherwise noted.

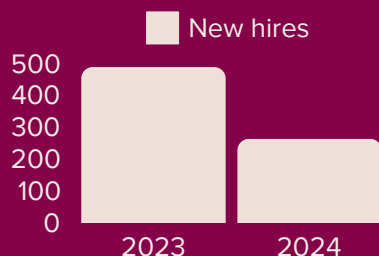
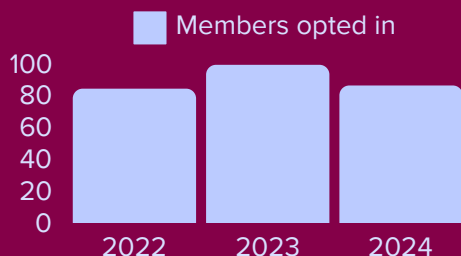
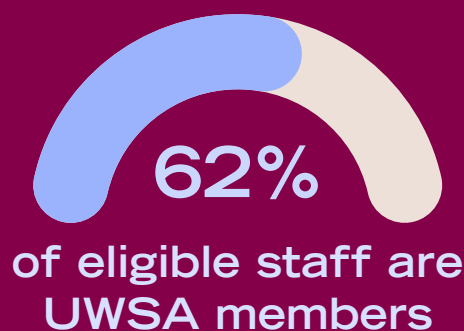
Membership trends

Membership share is up 10.5 percentage points over this time last year, with 2,209 members out of 3,284 eligible staff.



The UWSA is 82% funded by member dues.

We rely on dues to fund our advocacy work, member support, grants, and more. With the new Memorandum of Agreement (October 2022), new staff are automatically members, and our membership rate has been increasing steadily since 2022. We're also seeing pre-2022 staff continue to opt in as members.



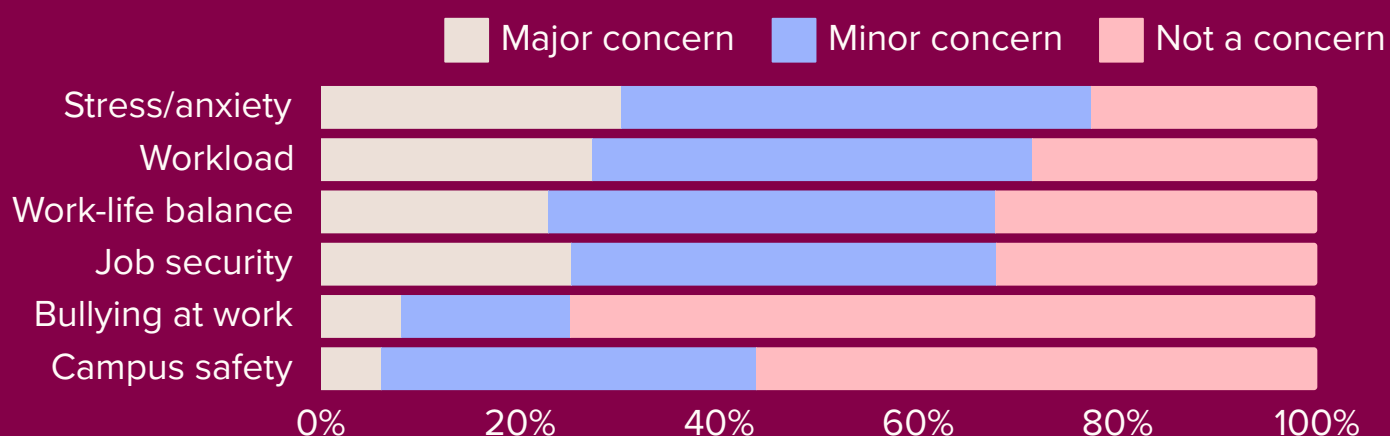
Not a member?
Join at uwaterloo.ca/uwsa/join.

Member survey highlights

758 members responded (38%)

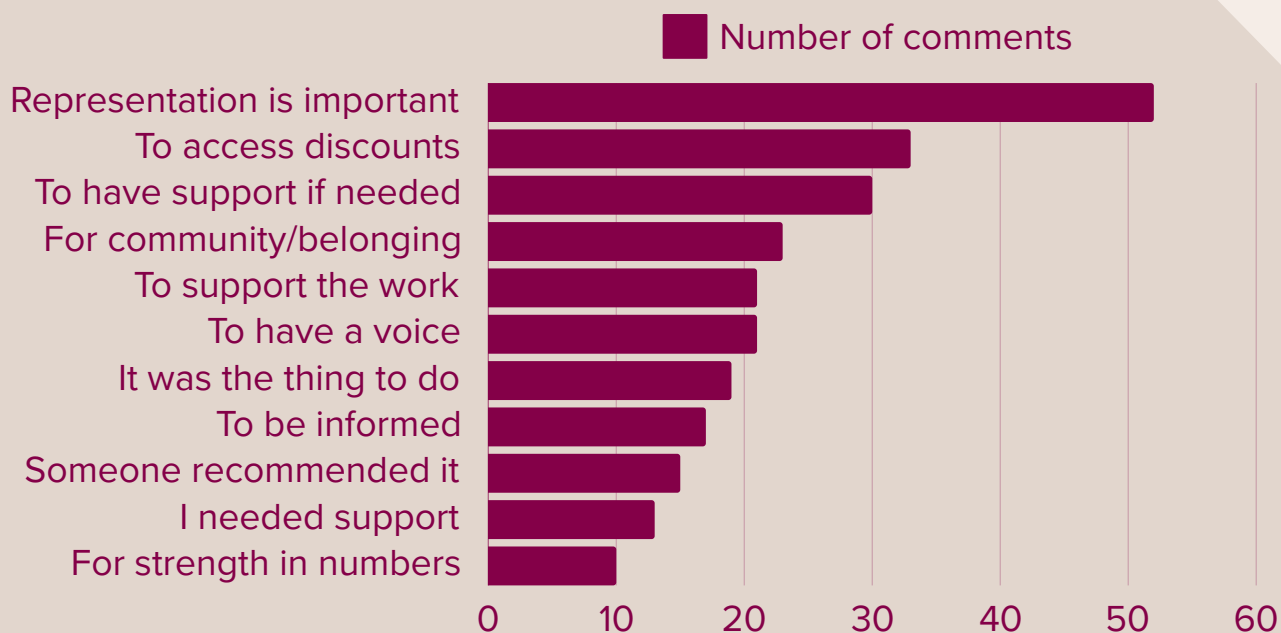
Here are just a handful of the things we've learned so far.

Member concerns



Why members joined UWSA

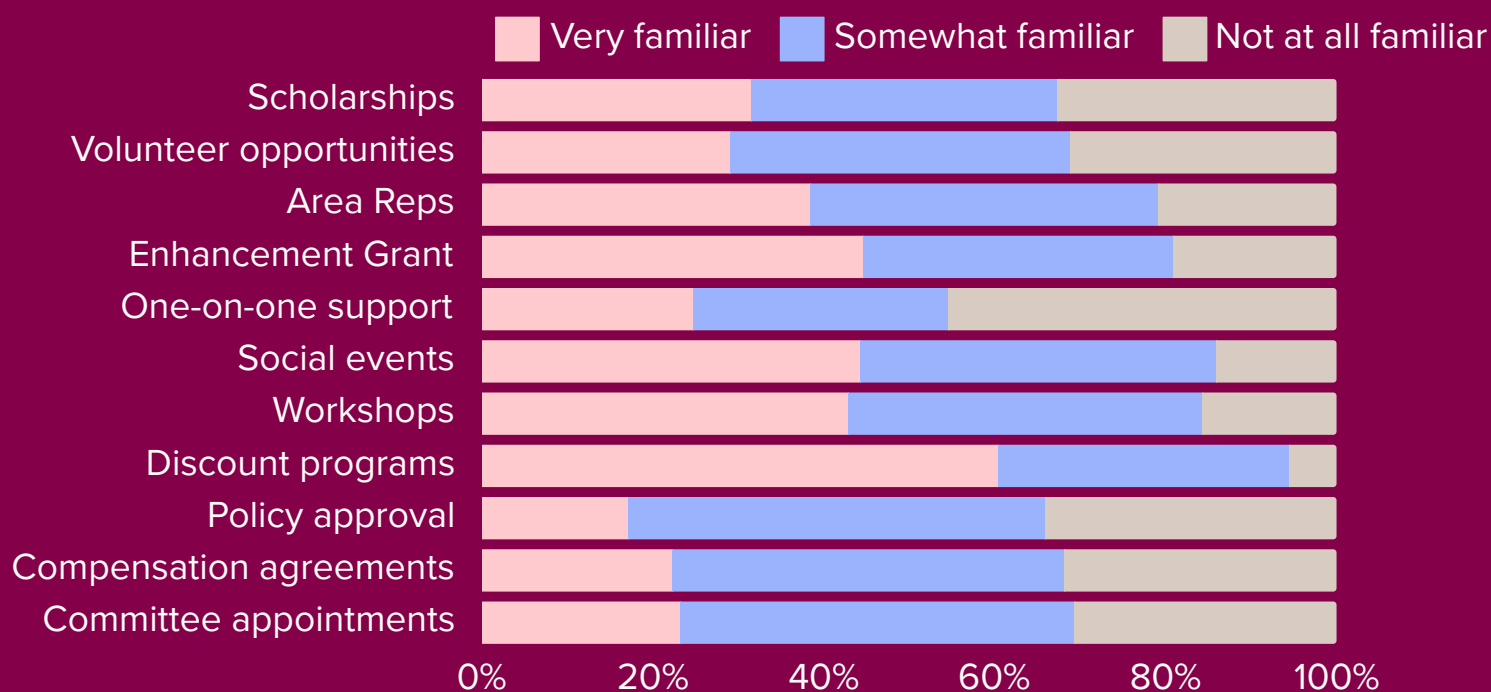
Common themes among member responses.



Member survey highlights

How aware are members of our work?

Some of our most important services are also the least well known! We'll work on that.



45%

Almost half of respondents reported being **not at all familiar** with the **confidential support** of the Members' Advisory Committee.

"The UWSA has intervened on my behalf and made a major difference in my life. I really appreciate what the UWSA does and stands for."

—UWSA member

88%

respondents satisfied with social events

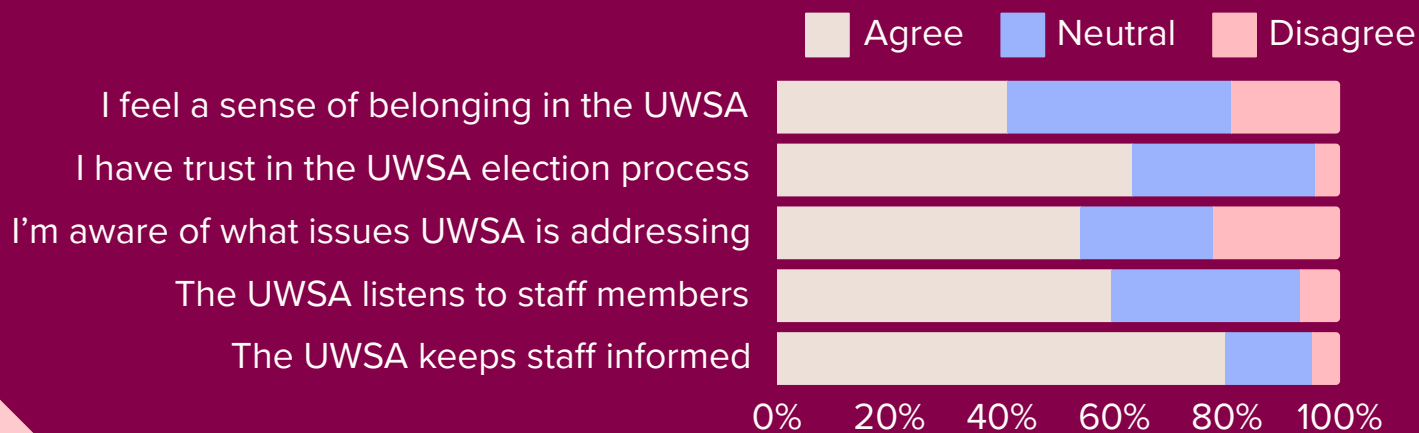
85%

satisfied with confidential support

78%

satisfied with volunteer experience

Member survey highlights



“I appreciate how informed we are and that UWSA is doing what they can to make this a better place to work for all staff.”

—UWSA member

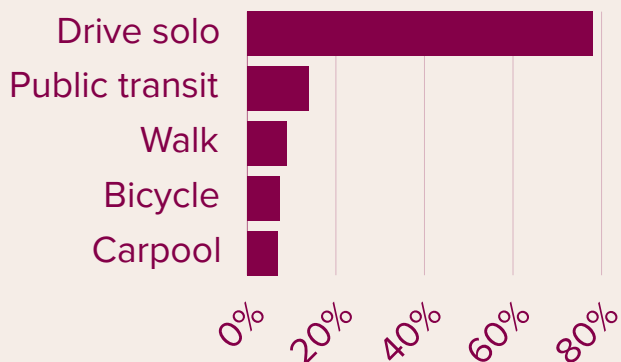
How well do we live up to our values?

While 53–65% of all respondents answered “very well” or “somewhat well” on each value, only 5–13% of disabled and BIPOC respondents agreed. Between 37% and 51% of disabled and BIPOC respondents answered “not very well” or “not well at all” on each value, compared with 3–5% among all respondents overall.

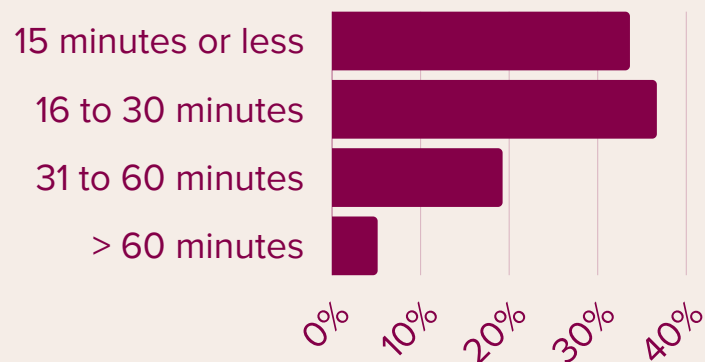
Our values: inclusion, respect, social justice, and leadership.

Respondents who have volunteered with the UWSA gave more polarized answers, with more responses at both ends of the spectrum than respondents overall.

How members commute



How long members commute



Our new brand

Based on our strategic plan and member feedback, we undertook our first brand update since 2009 and are proud to deliver a new, professionally designed visual identity for the Association.

With its signature triangle shape hinting at both a megaphone and the celebration emoji 🎉—and literally breaking through the barrier of the letter A—our new logo represents our work **amplifying staff voices, celebrating members**, and helping staff **grow and thrive**.

The new look represents our intention to be strong, celebratory, and forward-thinking in all that we do.

The logo for the University of Waterloo Staff Association (UWSA) features the letters 'UWSA' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letter 'A' is stylized with a white triangle pointing upwards and to the right, breaking through the top of the letter.

University of Waterloo Staff Association

Priorities for 2024–25

Here's what we're looking forward to over the coming year.

Priority 1: Advance Governance Excellence

The Operations Team worked this year to set up some next steps for this priority: We've made recommendations to clarify and correct the UWSA By-law and bring it in alignment with our Memorandum of Agreement with UW.

We've also done an initial assessment of where we stand on Excellence Canada certification requirements, and submitted a draft plan to the Board for improving our election process and further increasing participation in UWSA elections.

Priority 2: Enhance Member Experience

We'll be finishing our member survey analysis and making plans for implementing your feedback. We also look forward to receiving the report of the Contract Staff Working Group to see how we can better serve these members in particular.

Our new budget gives more money back to members through grants and sponsorship opportunities.

We'll be increasing our consultation and conversations with members, especially around salary and benefits, through mini surveys, town hall meetings, and drop-in sessions with the president. We're also building on the popularity of our lunchtime social events—get excited for more themed lunches!

Priority 3: Outreach for our Future

This fall, we'll be launching a new website in the WCMS 3 system.

The Area Representatives Council is working on ways to reach non-members and departments that don't currently have representatives.

And we'll continue visiting any department that invites us and growing our collaborations with other departments on campus, including the Sustainability Office.

“UWSA is important as a voice on campus for staff.”

—UWSA member

Thank you

To everyone who volunteered, attended an event, submitted feedback, voted, accessed our services, or just said hi this year: thank you. **You are the UWSA.**

Ahmad Ghavami, Joint Health & Safety Committees

Alannah Robinson, Dispute Resolution Pool

Amanda de Oliveira Fogaca, Area Reps Planning Committee

Amanda McKenzie, Copyright Advisory Committee

Andrew Urschel, Joint Health & Safety Committees

Barbara Daly, Fundraising and Social Committee

Carlie Bolton, Fundraising and Social Committee,

Chris Kleven, Joint Health & Safety Committees

Cyntia Bratan, Fundraising and Social Committee

Dana Mohapl, Appointments Committee; Staff Excellence Fund Committee

Daniel Recchia, Joint Health & Safety Committees

David Everest, Dispute Resolution Pool

David Logan, Contract Staff Working Group

Dikshant Ghimire, Contract Staff Working Group

Elizabeth Bohnert, Contract Staff Working Group

Ellen Gong, Appointments, Dean of Engineering Nominating committees

Emilea Balkham, Staff Excellence Fund Committee

Eric Jardin, Policy 57 Drafting Committee; Staff Excellence Fund Committee

Goldi Gill, Staff Relations Committee

Izabela Polowa, Area Reps Planning Committee

Izabela Rutkowski, Fundraising and Social Committee,

Jane Arnem, Fundraising and Social Committee,

Jen McCaig, Pay Cycles Working Group

Jennifer Morgan, Dispute Resolution Pool; Appointments Committee

Committee applications increased by 28% this year!



John Fedy, event panelist

Katharine Zywert, Appointments Committee

Kathleen St Laurent, Policy 12 Drafting Committee

Katy Wong-Francq, Appointments Committee

Kelan Hirtle, Board of Directors

Kelli MacCulloch, Contract Staff Working Group

Kimberley Velasquez, Area Reps Planning Committee

Kumudinie Kariyapperuma, Staff Excellence Fund Committee

Lauren Byl, Sustainable Transportation Planning Group, event panelist

Lewis Fraser, Appointments Committee; Fundraising and Social Committee

Lillian Liao, Board of Directors

Lily Hua, Pension & Benefits Committee; Pension Investment Committee

Lisa Walsh, Joint Health & Safety Committees,

Marcie Parrott, Fundraising and Social Committee

Maria Tudorancea, Joint Health & Safety Committees

Maryann Sertic, Joint Health & Safety Committees

Meaghan Middleton, Dean of Math Nominating Committee

Megan Sherritt, Contract Staff Working Group

Melissa Benjamin, Fundraising and Social, Joint Health & Safety committees

Melissa Graham, Pension & Benefits Committee

Mihaela Groh, Fundraising and Social Committee

Melissa Ireland, event panelist

Nancy Sej, Appointments Committee; Fundraising and Social Committee

Natasha Poley, Contract Staff Working Group

Pamela Charbonneau, Staff Excellence Fund Committee

Patricia Owens, Pay Cycles Working Group; Staff Excellence Fund Committee

Paulina Cisneros Colin, Joint Health & Safety Committees

Ryan MacMillan, Dispute Resolution Pool

Samantha St. Amand, Dispute Resolution Pool

Samuel Vandekerckhove, Dispute Resolution Pool

Sarah Landy, Parking Advisory Committee, event panelist

Shannon Taylor, Chair, Area Reps Planning Committee

Shawn Lotte, Contract Staff Working Group

Sophia Bhatti, Contract Staff Working Group chair

Tony Ly, Appointments Committee

Vanya Gnaniah, event panelist

2024-25 Board of Directors



**Gitanjali
Shanbhag**
Chair



Bill Baer



Sara Perkins
Vice chair



**Gail
Bender**



Kathy Becker
Secretary



**Kenneth
Berry**



Kosi Ike-Orji
Treasurer



**Matthew
Grant**



**Agata
Antkiewicz**

Area Representatives

Area Representatives are members from across the University who've signed up to liaise between the UWSA leadership and staff in a given department or area.

Amanda de Oliveira Fogaca, Writing and Communication Centre

Andrea Pinos, Electrical and Computer Engineering

Andrew Urschel, Faculty of Science

Angela Rooke, Student Success Office

Audrey Kompter, Chemistry

Charles Boyle, Faculty of Engineering

Christine Gillis Bilton, Office of Research

Claire Newbigging, French Studies

Dana Hociung, Faculty of Math

Davene Palvetzian, Advancement

Dikshant Ghimire, CEMC

Edward Chrzanowski, School of Computer Science

Emma Alderman, Communication Arts

Gail Bender, School of Computer Science

Izabela Polowa, Civil and Environmental Engineering

Jane Arnem, Athletics & Recreation

Jen McCaig, Faculty of Arts

Jennifer Nicholson, School of Environment, Enterprise and Development

Jenny Conroy, English Language and Literature

Jessica Reid, School of Public Health Sciences

John Fedy, Organizational and Human Development

Junling Wu, Finance

Katie Damphouse, Centre for Teaching Excellence

Katie Schafer, School of Pharmacy

Kimberly Kuntz, Institute for Quantum Computing

Kirstie D'Aloisio, Human Resources



“Our voice is
stronger
collectively.”

—UWSA member

Kosisochukwu Ike-Orji, Department of Geography
Kristen Deckert, Faculty of Arts
Marcie Parrott, University Relations
Maris Weiss, Centre for Teaching Excellence
Melanie Scholz, Kinesiology and Health Sciences
Mersedeh Abedi, Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-racism
Monika Kitor, Centre for Extended Learning
Rachel Pridham, Advancement
Rebecca Wroe, WUSA
Robin Andrade, CEE - Work-Integrated Learning Programs
Robyn Landers, Faculty of Math
Rohem Adagbon, Institutional Analysis and Planning
Ryan Goggin, IST
Sara Perkins, FAUW
Sarah Landy, Systems Design Engineering
Shannon Taylor, CCD - Centre for Career Development
Shannon Taylor, CEE - Work-Learn Institute
Shelby Bolitsky, Campus Housing
Stefaniada Voichita, Library
Stephanie Boragina, Centre for Extended Learning
Stephanie Facca, CEE - Co-operative and Experiential Education
Stephanie Filsinger, Office of Research
Stephanie Forsyth, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs
Susan Oestreich, Provost's Office
Timothy Ireland, Library
Tracey Beirness, School of Planning
Tracey McKee, Office of the Registrar

Don't see your department?
Sign up today! uwaterloo.ca/uwsa/area-reps

**your
voice
starts
here**

