



University of Houston 2012 Staff Morale Survey: Summary Report

**University of Houston Staff Council Staff Affairs
Subcommittee**

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In consultation with Dr. Lisa M. Penney

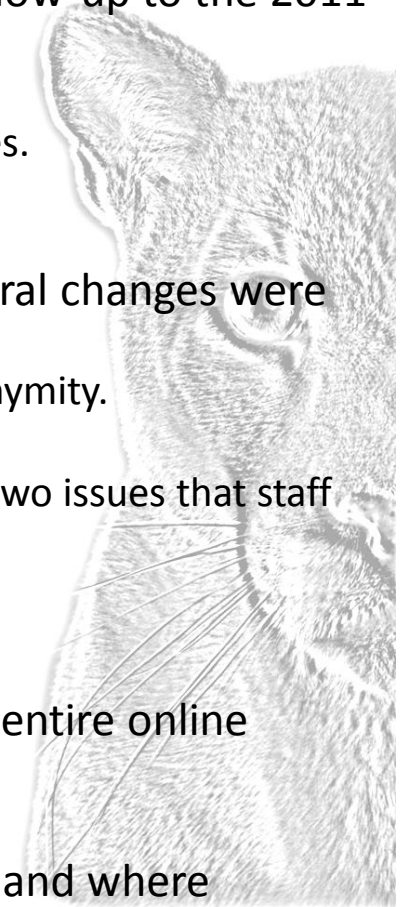
RAs: Allison Martir, Sara Brothers, Dena Rhodes, Lisa Sublett,
& Tunji Oki





Background & Methodology

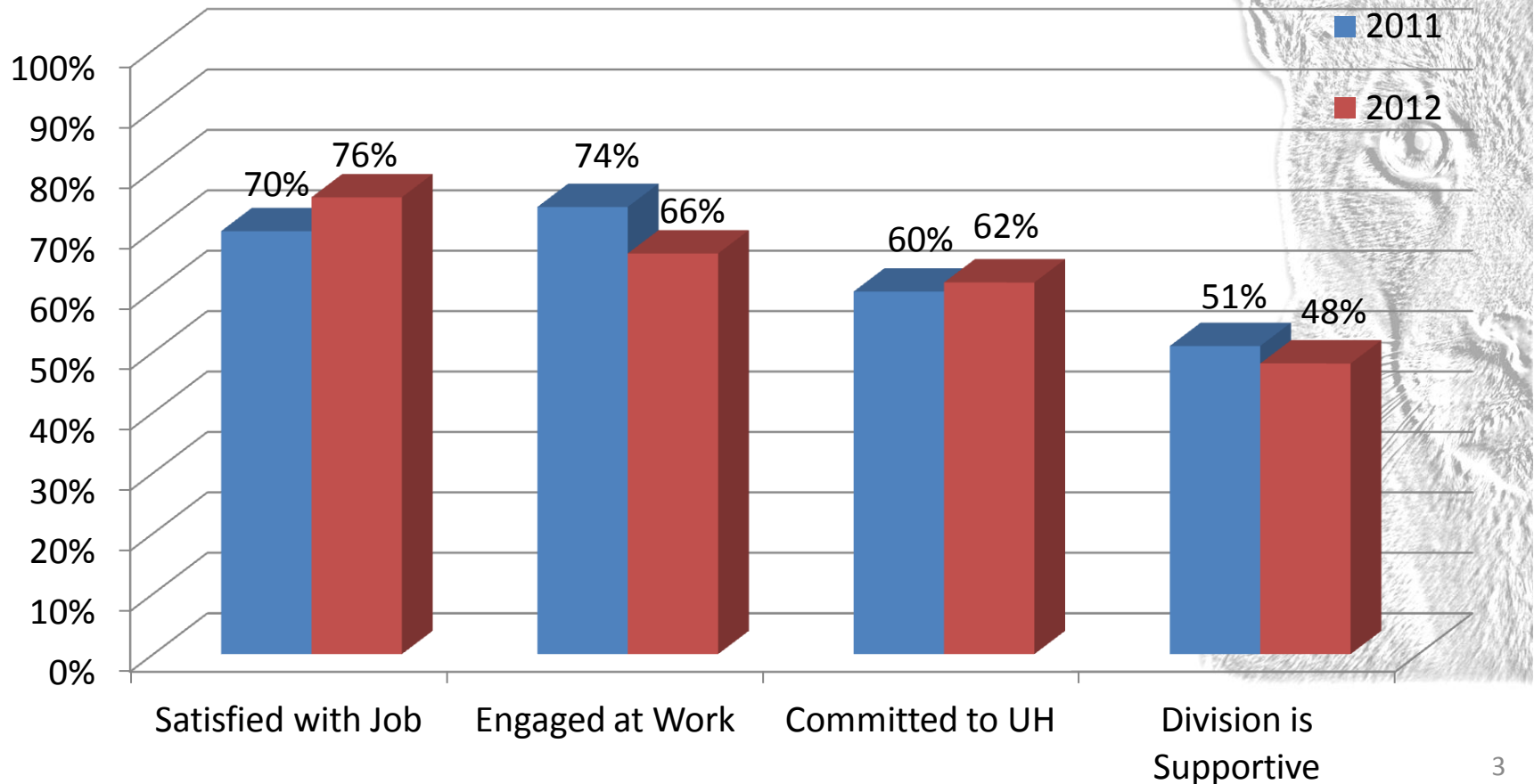
- In the summer of 2012, the UH Staff Council commissioned a follow-up to the 2011 Staff Morale Survey for Fall 2012 with the following objectives:
 1. Examine staff attitudes regarding their jobs and UH.
 2. Identify aspects of the work environment that drive staff attitudes.
 3. Examine potential consequences of staff attitudes.
- Based on the results of the 2011 Survey and staff feedback, several changes were made to the 2012 Survey.
 - Demographic questions were eliminated to better ensure staff anonymity.
 - The survey length was reduced by 42%.
 - New items were added to gather more detailed information about two issues that staff identified as important in the 2011 Survey:
 - Communication quality
 - Staff perceptions of fairness
- 1,169 staff attempted the online survey, and 932 completed the entire online survey. 63 staff completed a paper version of the survey.
- Results of the 2012 Survey are presented in the following slides, and where appropriate, displayed alongside the 2011 Survey results for comparison.





Staff Attitudes

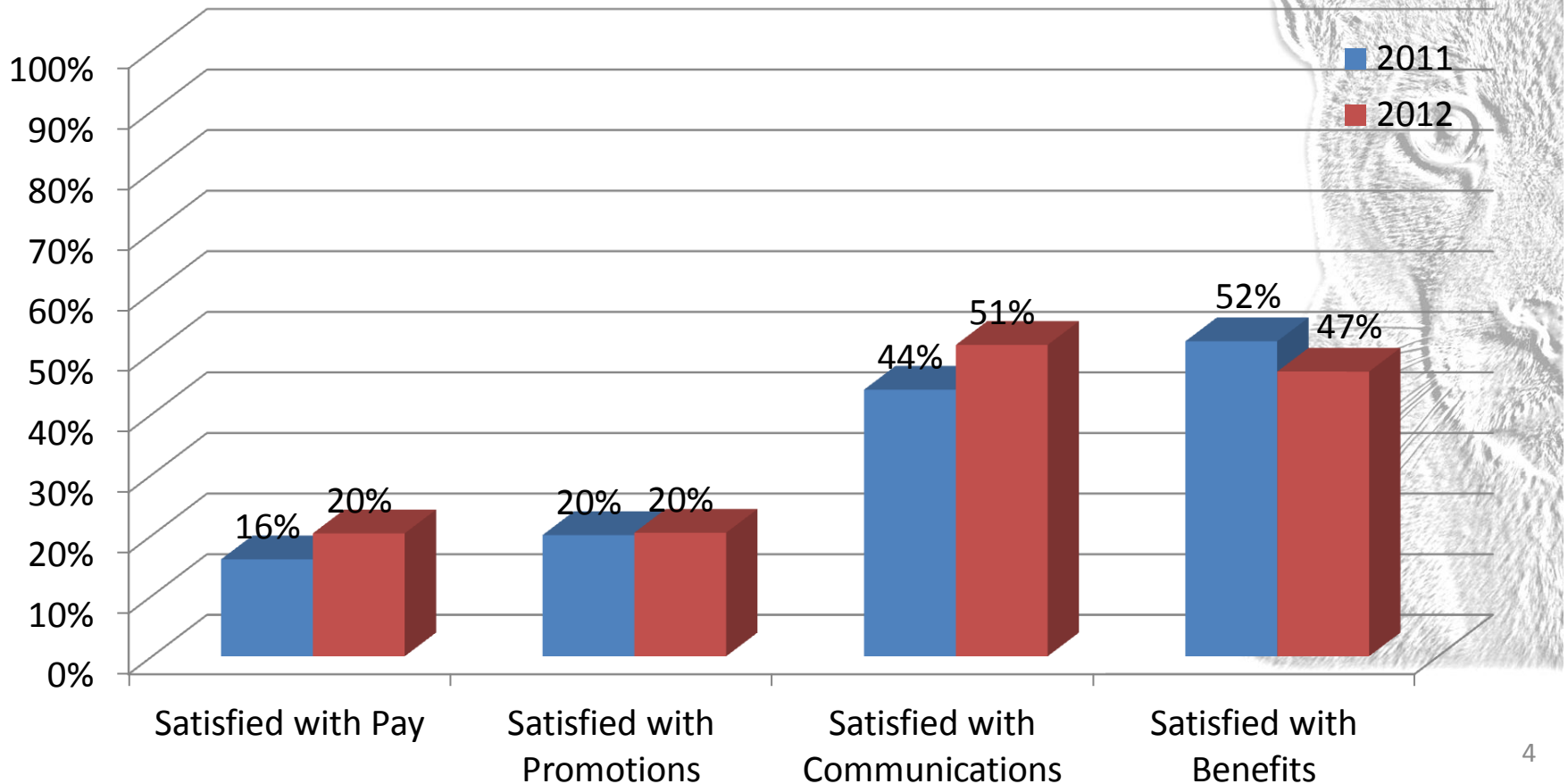
- As in the 2011 survey, staff attitudes **about their jobs** and **UH in general** were positive.





Staff Attitudes

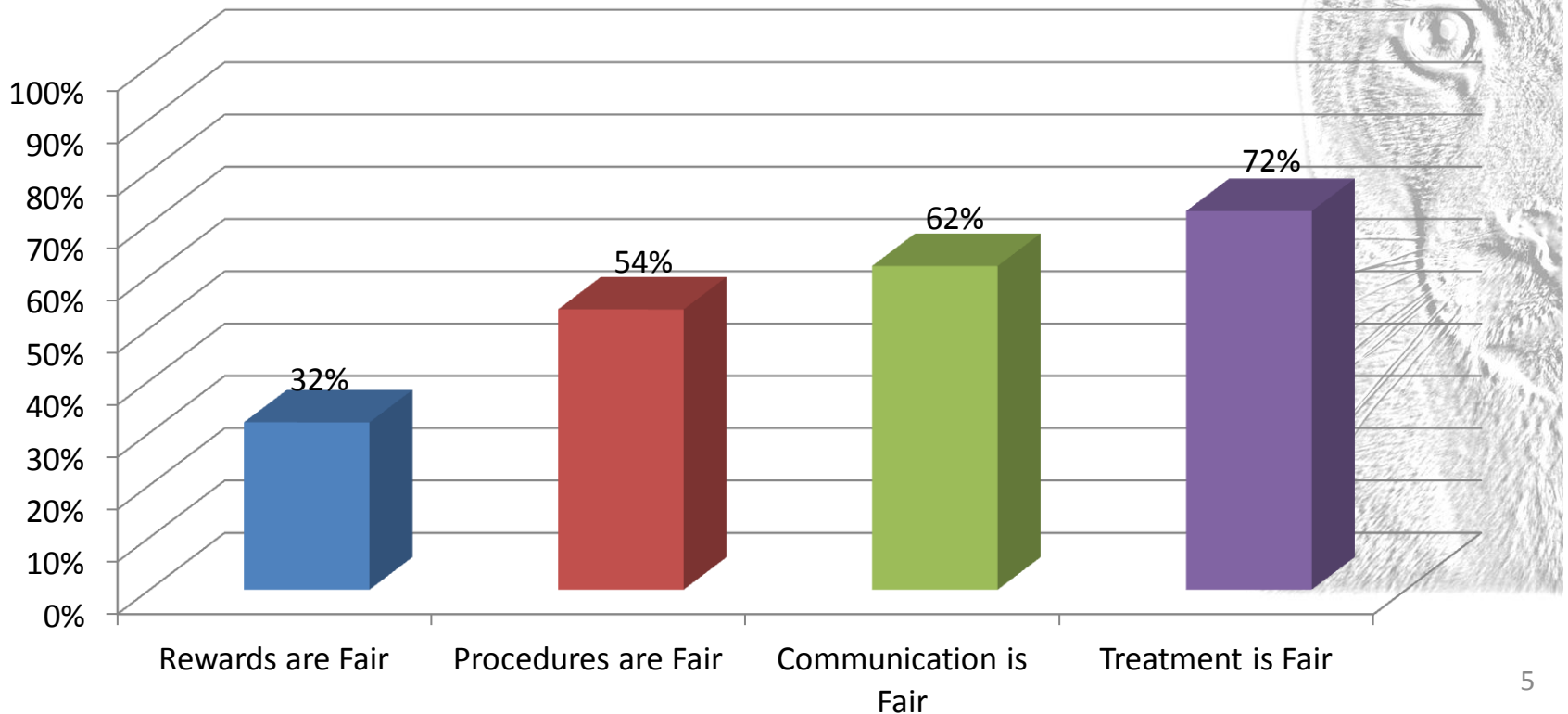
- However, staff satisfaction with **specific aspects of their jobs** was less positive.





Work Conditions: Fairness

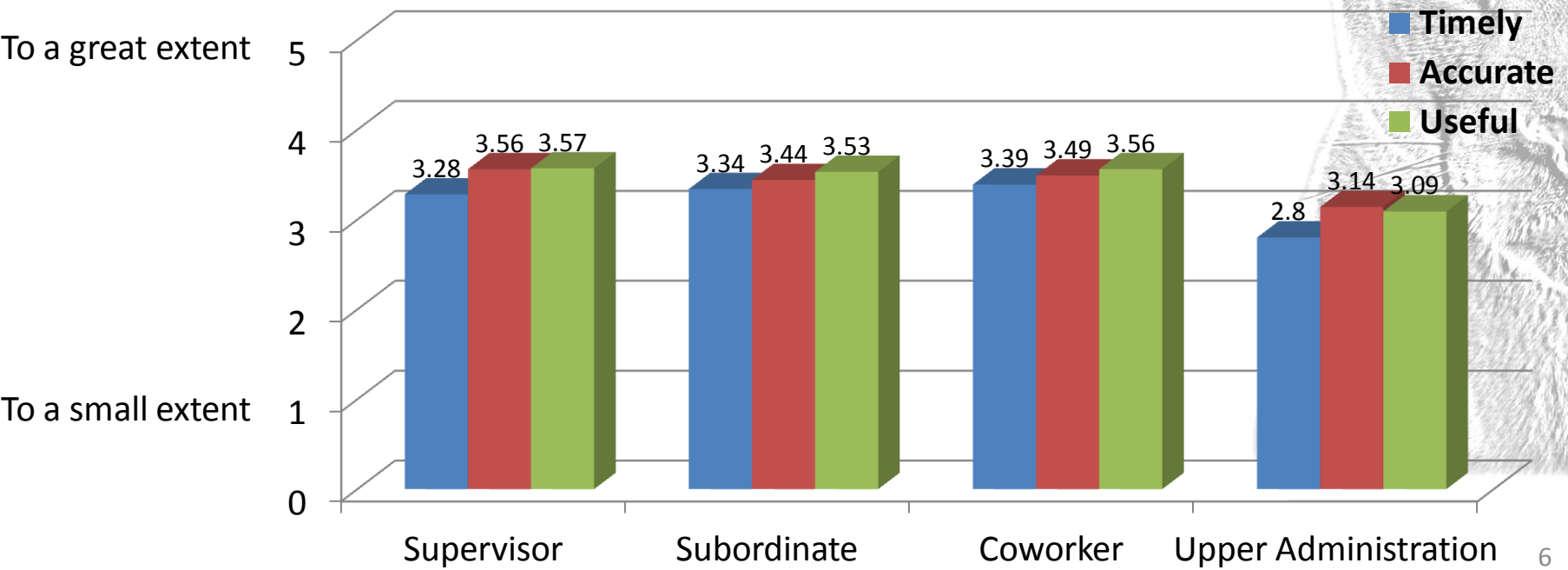
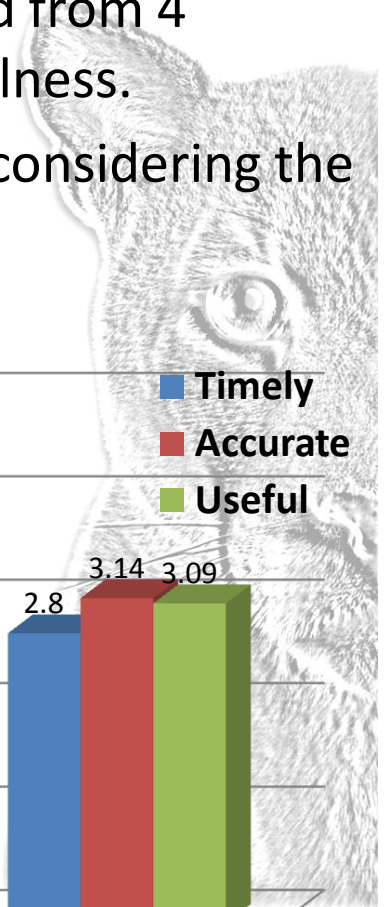
- Staff rated the perceived fairness of various aspects of their work experience.
- Results indicate that fairness perceptions were lowest when they concerned the distribution of rewards (e.g., pay & promotions).





Work Conditions: Communication Quality

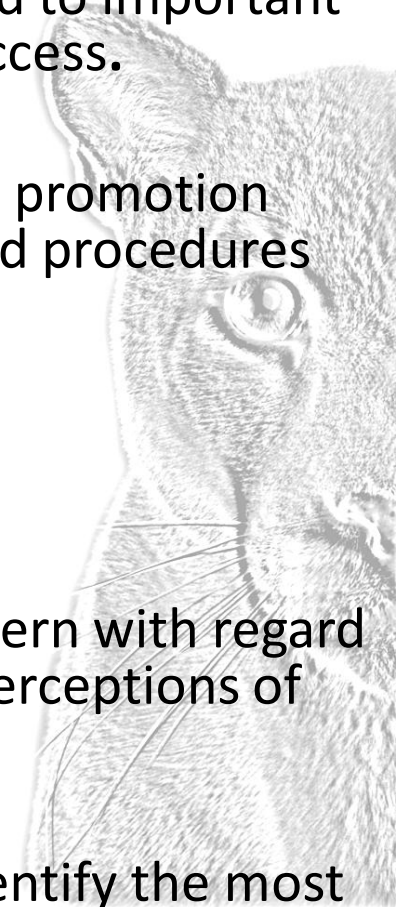
- Staff also rated the quality of communication received from 4 sources in terms of its timeliness, accuracy, and usefulness.
- Ratings of communication quality were lowest when considering the timeliness of information received from each source.





Staff Attitudes – Why are They Important?

- Staff attitudes are important because they are related to important **performance-related outcomes** that impact UH's success.
- Specifically, staff who are satisfied with their pay and promotion opportunities AND staff who believe that rewards and procedures are administered fairly:
 - Are more engaged in their work.
 - Take fewer sick days.
 - Are less likely to turn over.
- Staff attitudes were lowest and thus of greatest concern with regard to satisfaction with pay and promotions, as well as perceptions of reward fairness.
- Therefore, additional analyses were conducted to identify the most important drivers of those attitudes.



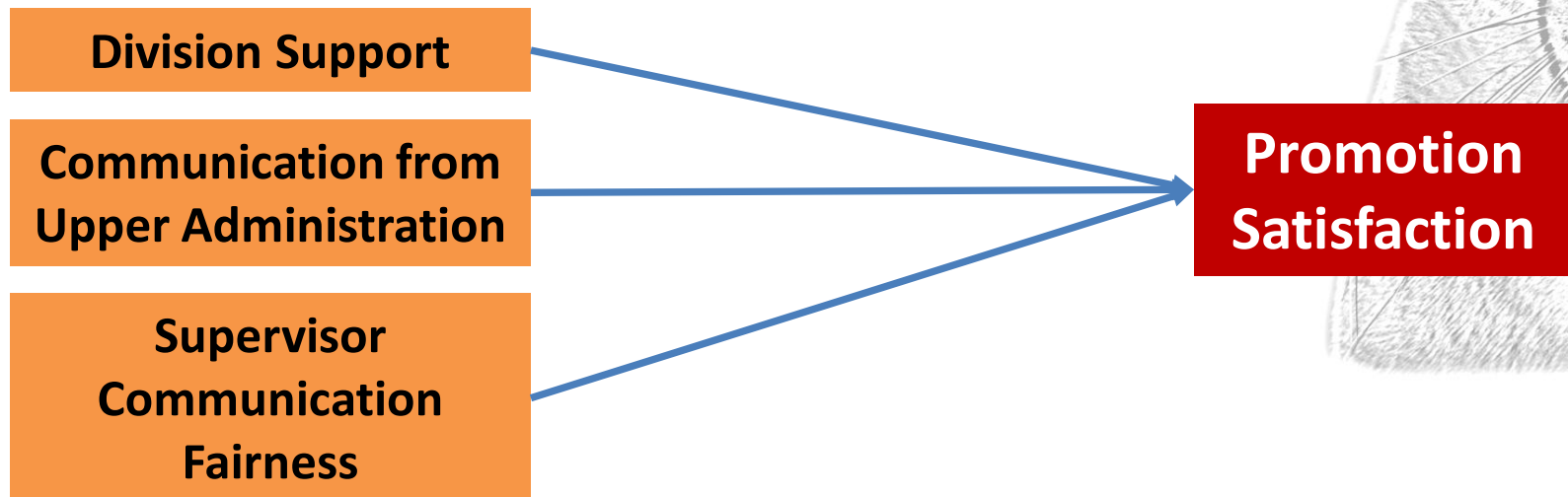
Identifying Drivers of Staff Attitudes

- Our results indicate that staff perceptions of reward fairness, and hence pay satisfaction, are primarily a function of:
 - Staff perceptions that their Division values their contribution and cares about their well-being.
 - Supervisors' use of procedures that are applied consistently, based on accurate information, and allow for staff input or voice.
 - Supervisors being candid, thorough, and reasonable in communicating decisions to employees.



Identifying Drivers of Staff Attitudes

- Similar drivers were identified for staff promotion satisfaction. Specifically, staff satisfaction with promotion opportunities appears to be driven primarily by:
 - Staff perceptions that their Division values their contribution and cares about their well-being.
 - Receipt of timely, useful, and accurate information from Upper Administration.
 - Supervisors being candid, thorough, and reasonable in communicating decisions to employees.





Staff Attitudes by Job Category

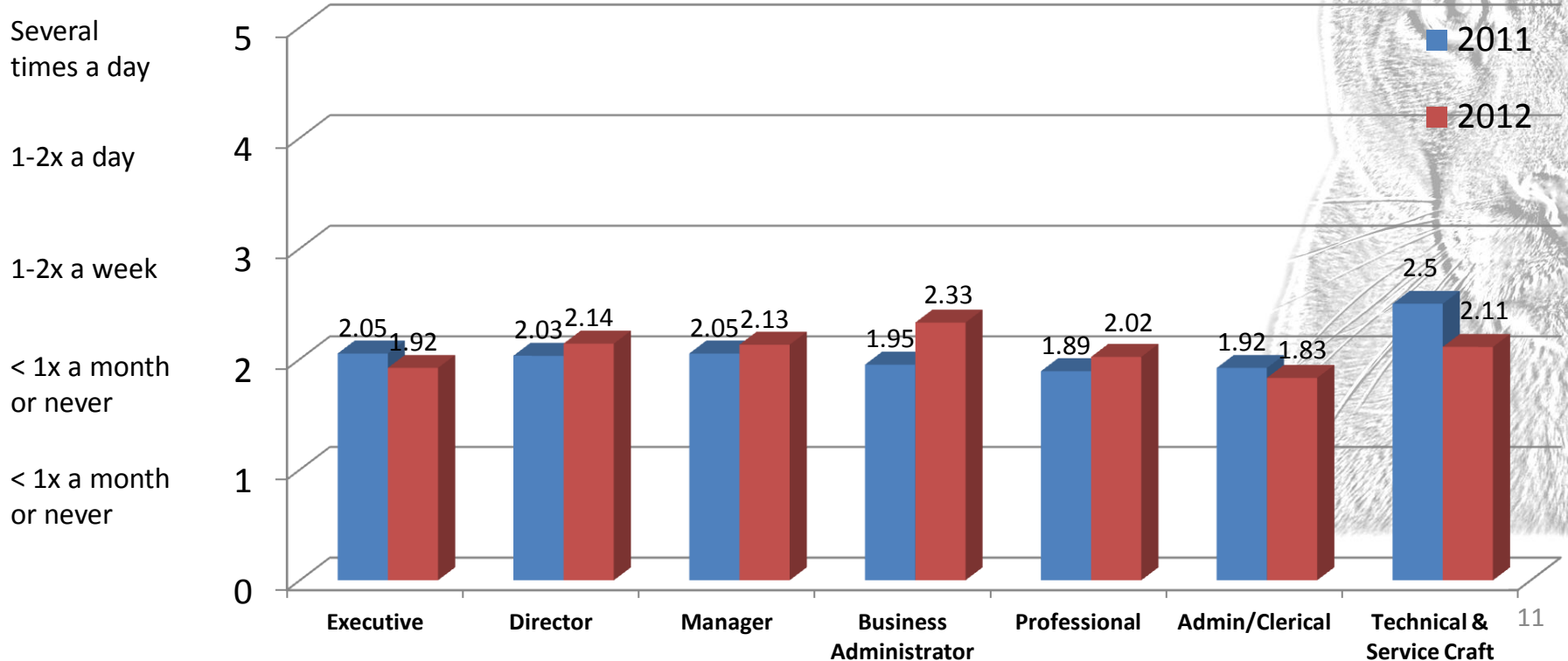
- The attitudes of staff working in different job categories were examined separately in order to determine if there were specific morale concerns shared among staff working in different roles.
- **Unlike in 2011, staff attitudes towards various aspects of their jobs did not differ greatly across job categories.**
- Notably, overall attitudes of staff working in Technical & Service Craft positions appear to have **improved** from 2011.
- The only difference found between staff in different job categories concerned the frequency that staff experience obstacles to performance (see next slide).





Frequency of Experienced Obstacles to Performance

- Staff working in Business Administrator roles found it difficult to perform their jobs due to obstacles more frequently than staff in other positions.
- The frequency of obstacles for Business Administrators was also higher in 2012 compared to 2011, whereas it was less for staff in Technical & Service Craft.





Results Summary

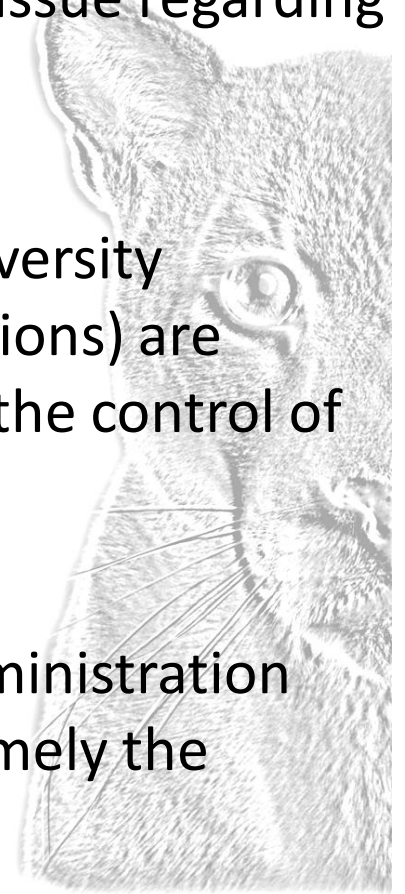
- In general, UH staff are a highly engaged workforce who enjoy their jobs, but are less satisfied with pay, promotion opportunities, and perceptions of fairness at UH.
- These attitudes are important because they are related to important performance-related outcomes including engagement, absenteeism, and turnover intentions.
- In particular, low staff satisfaction with pay and promotions appears to be driven primarily by:
 - The level of support and quality of communication received from upper administration.
 - The use of fair procedures and communication strategies by supervisors.





Recommendations

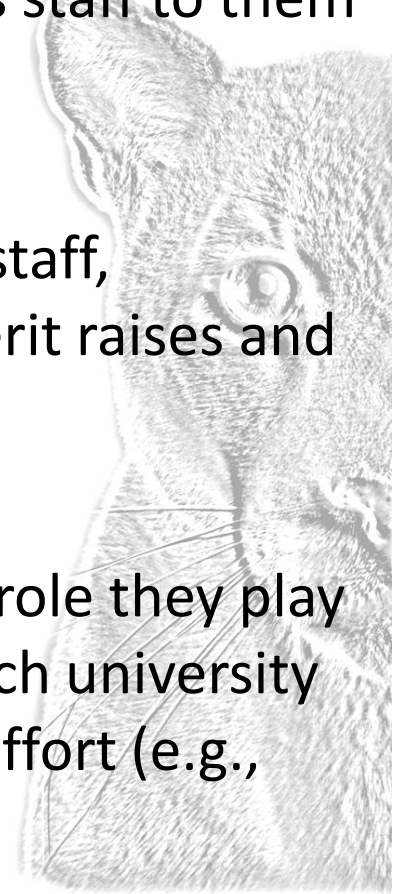
- Together, these results suggest that the primary issue regarding staff morale is one of **feeling underappreciated**.
- The primary mechanisms through which the University demonstrates appreciation (i.e., pay and promotions) are frequently constrained by forces largely outside the control of supervisors and upper administration.
- Thus, we suggest that supervisors and upper administration focus on factors that are within their control, namely the quality and nature of communication to staff.





Recommendations for Upper Administration

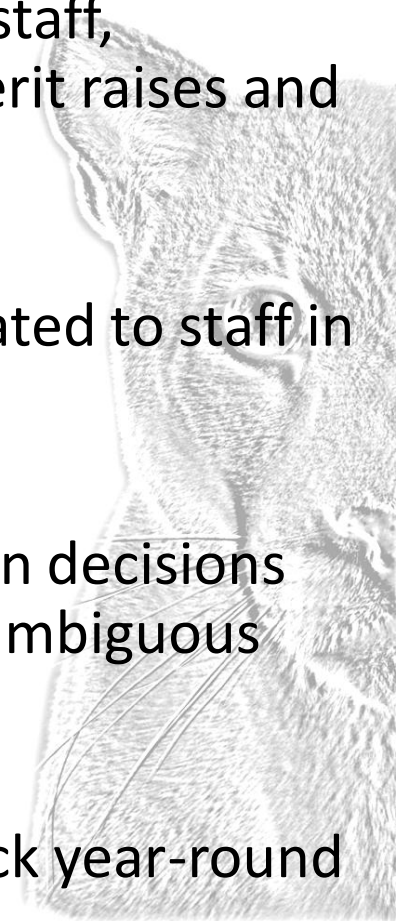
- Communicate important information that affects staff to them in a **clear** and **timely** manner.
- Be open and candid in **all** communications with staff, *particularly* with information that pertains to merit raises and promotion opportunities.
- Have a “conversation” with staff regarding what role they play in helping UH solidify its status as a Tier 1 research university and how staff can become a bigger part of that effort (e.g., “Tier 1 Staff”).





Recommendations for Supervisors (all levels)

- Be open and candid in **all** communications with staff, *particularly* with information that pertains to merit raises and promotion opportunities.
- Performance expectations should be communicated to staff in clear, unambiguous terms.
- Procedures and standards for pay and promotion decisions should be explained thoroughly and in clear, unambiguous terms.
- Provide staff with accurate performance feedback year-round so that they know where they stand.





Recommendations for Supervisors (all levels)

- Demonstrate concern for staff well-being and appreciation for their contributions to the University community by:
 - Providing support for and nominating staff for the Staff Excellence Awards
 - Using the Cougar Cudos program
 - Providing verbal praise or saying “thank you”
 - Developing your own informal rewards system (e.g., Staff of the Month)
 - Acknowledging the obstacles that staff face in their jobs, and when possible take action to remove obstacles and provide assistance and other resources (equipment, tools) needed by staff.

