



Departmental Cultures and Part-Time Faculty:

Peralta Community College District

By

**Cynthia Mahabir, Part-Time Faculty
Representative, Peralta Federation of
Teachers**

Data collected in Fall 2015

Introduction

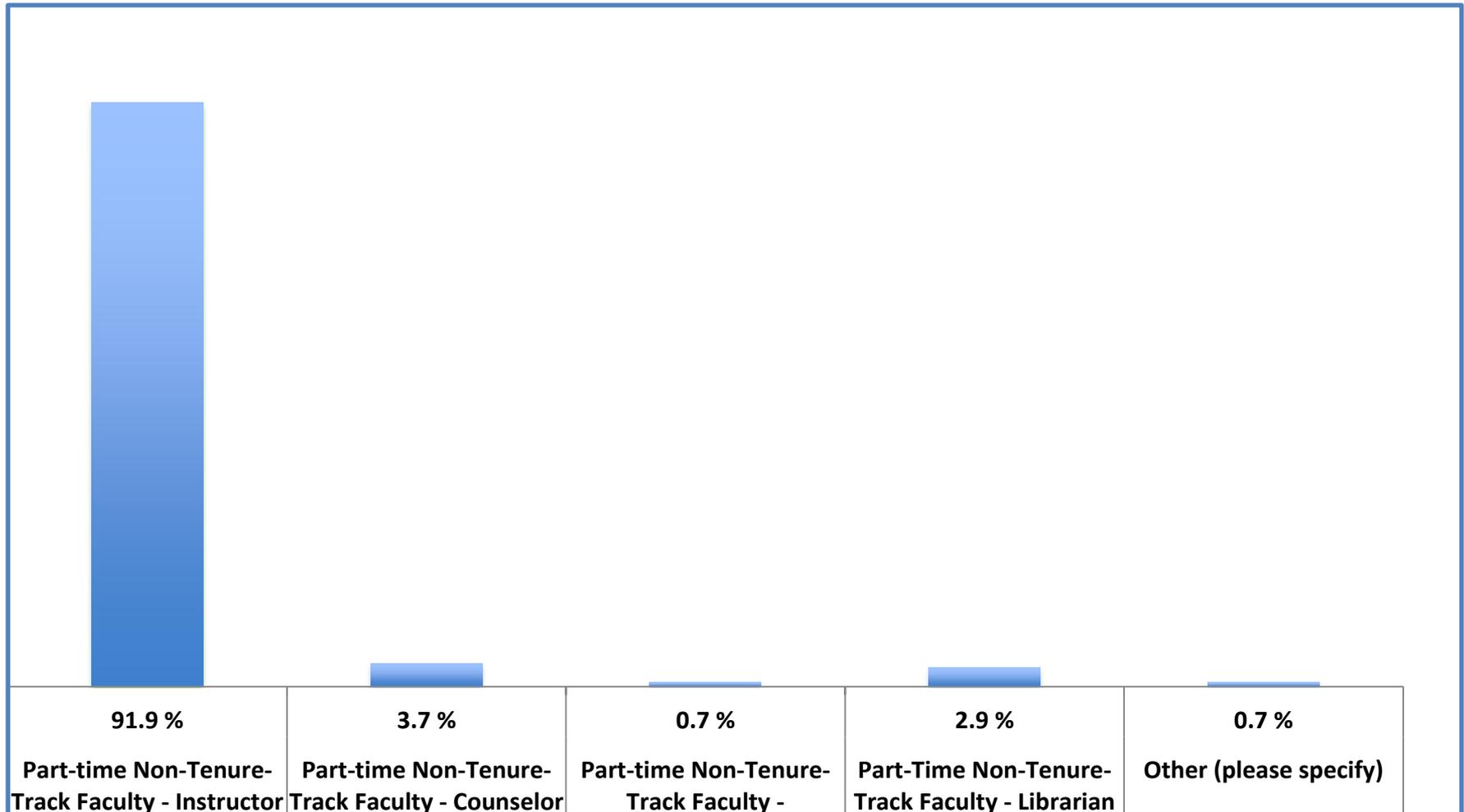
This questionnaire was designed as a self-assessment tool for non-tenure track and part-time/contingent faculty by Adrianna Kezar and her associates at the University of Southern California.

In the survey, respondents were asked to circle one answer for each survey statement that best described their experiences and perceptions of working as part-time, non-tenure-track faculty members in their primary departments in the Peralta Community College District. Their responses were given anonymously. I received 136 survey responses. For independent analysis of the survey results by readers, I have included an adapted summary of Kezar's four departmental cultures following the presentation of the data charts.



Survey Responses

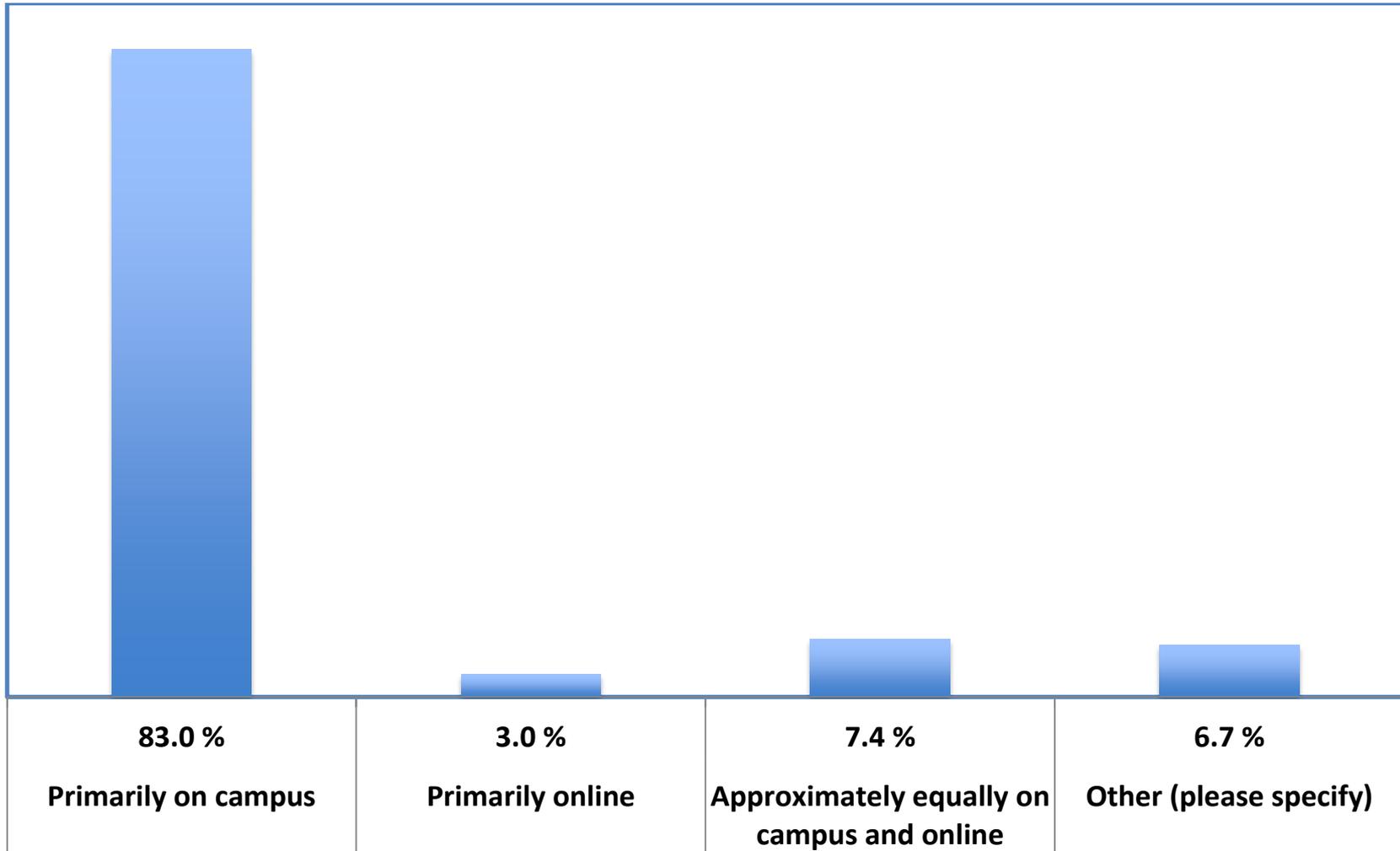
Q.1. At Peralta, I work primarily as a:



N=136 **The vast majority of the respondents were part-time, non-tenure track instructors.**



Q.2. I teach courses:

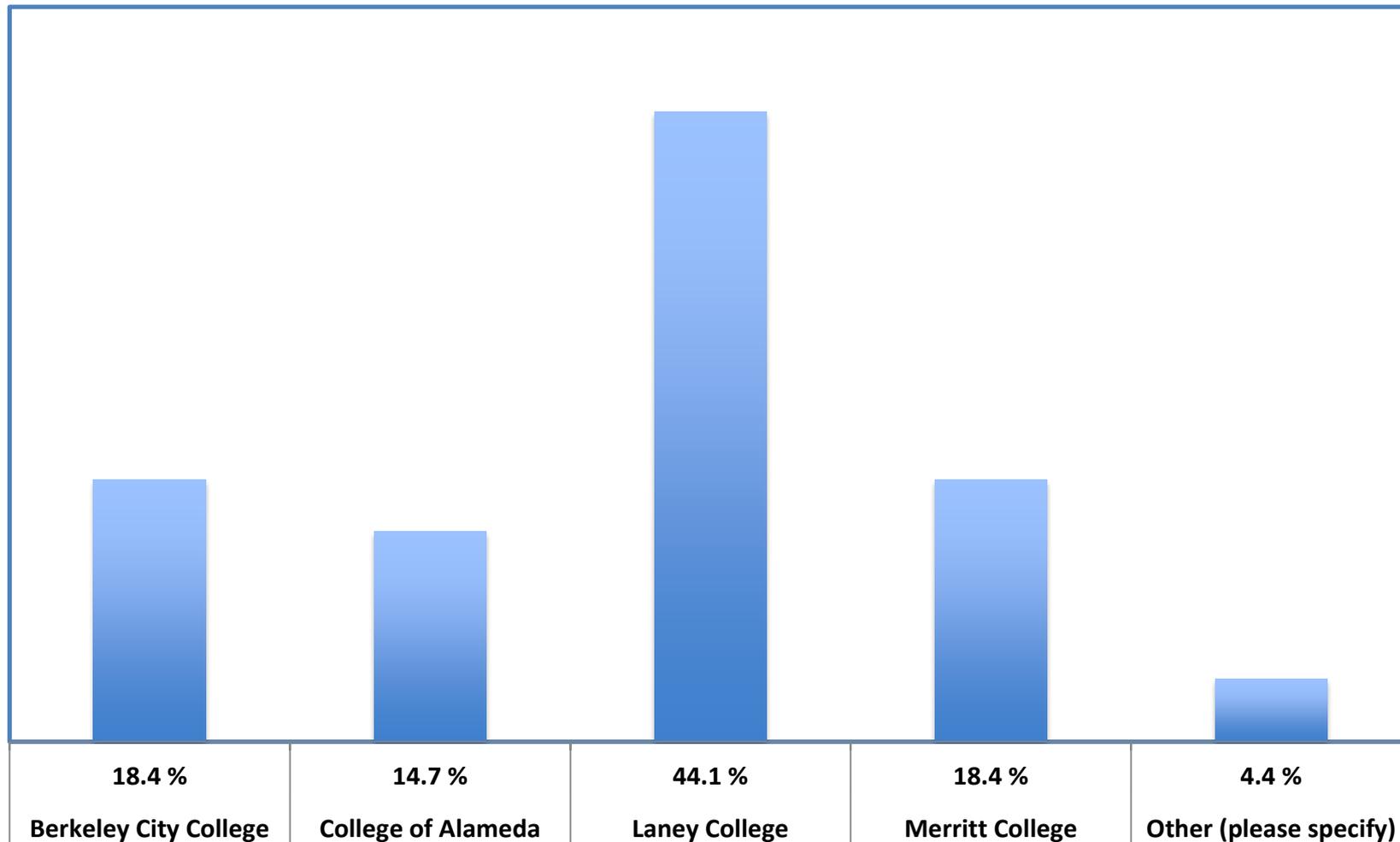


N= 135

The vast majority were teaching face-to-face classes.



Q.3. At Peralta, I work at:

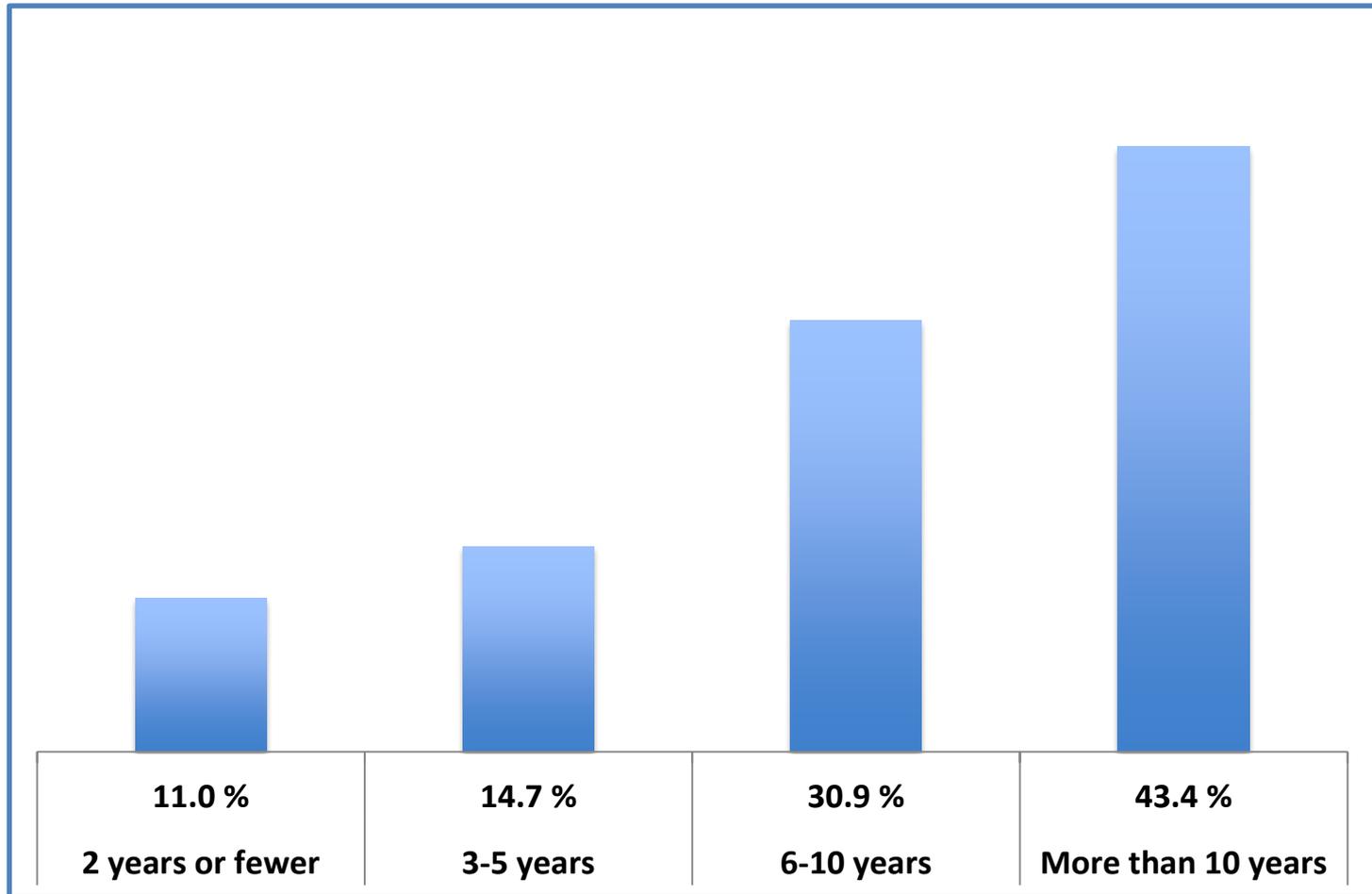


N= 136

Most of the respondents were from Laney College.



Q.4. I have been employed at this institution (PCCD) for:

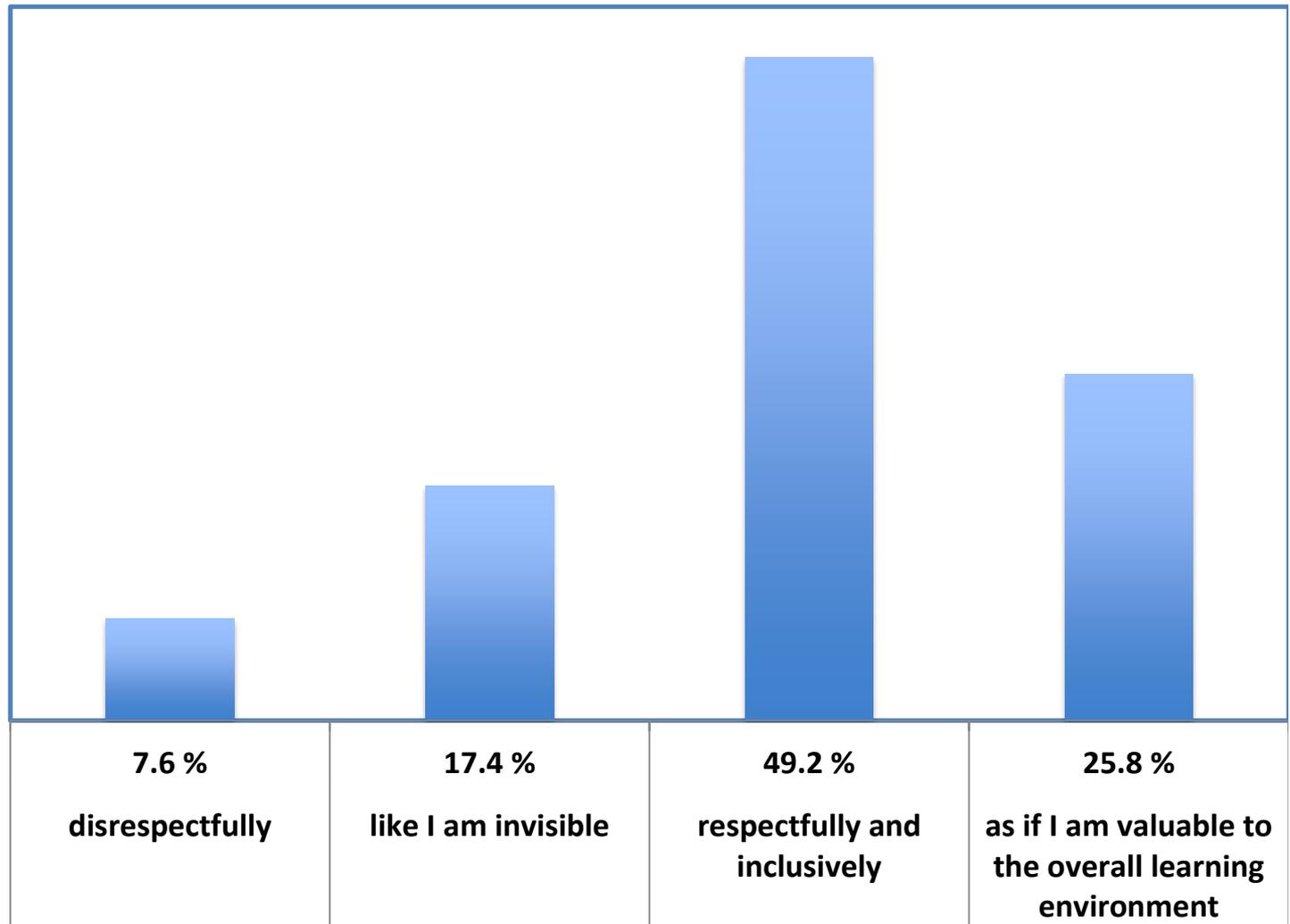


N= 136

A majority of the respondents were long-term part-time faculty.



Q.5. Tenured/Tenure-track colleagues in the department treat me:

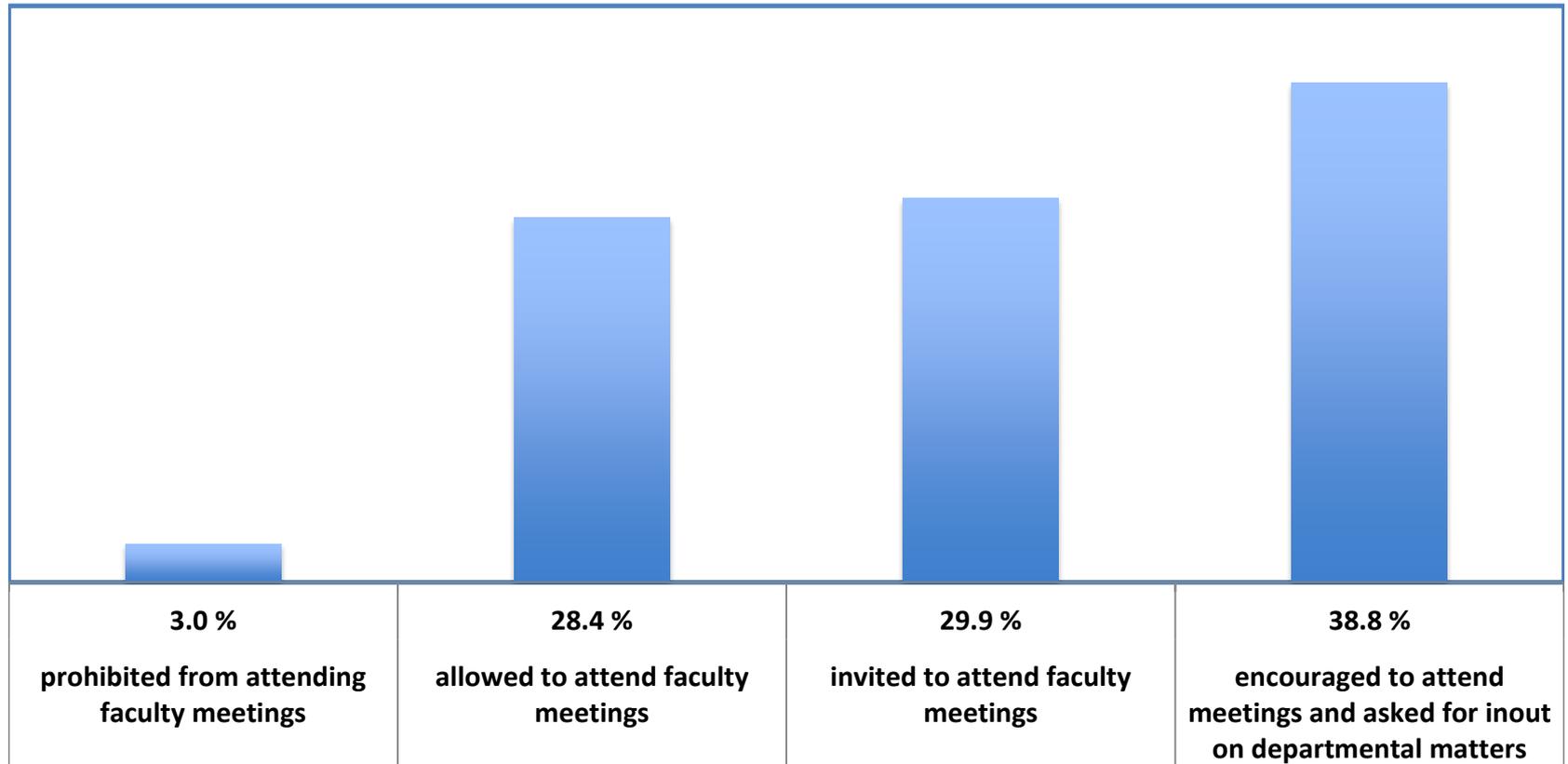


N=132

Most reported favorable treatment but a quarter reported marginalization and disrespect.



Q.6. In terms of participation in faculty meetings, I am:

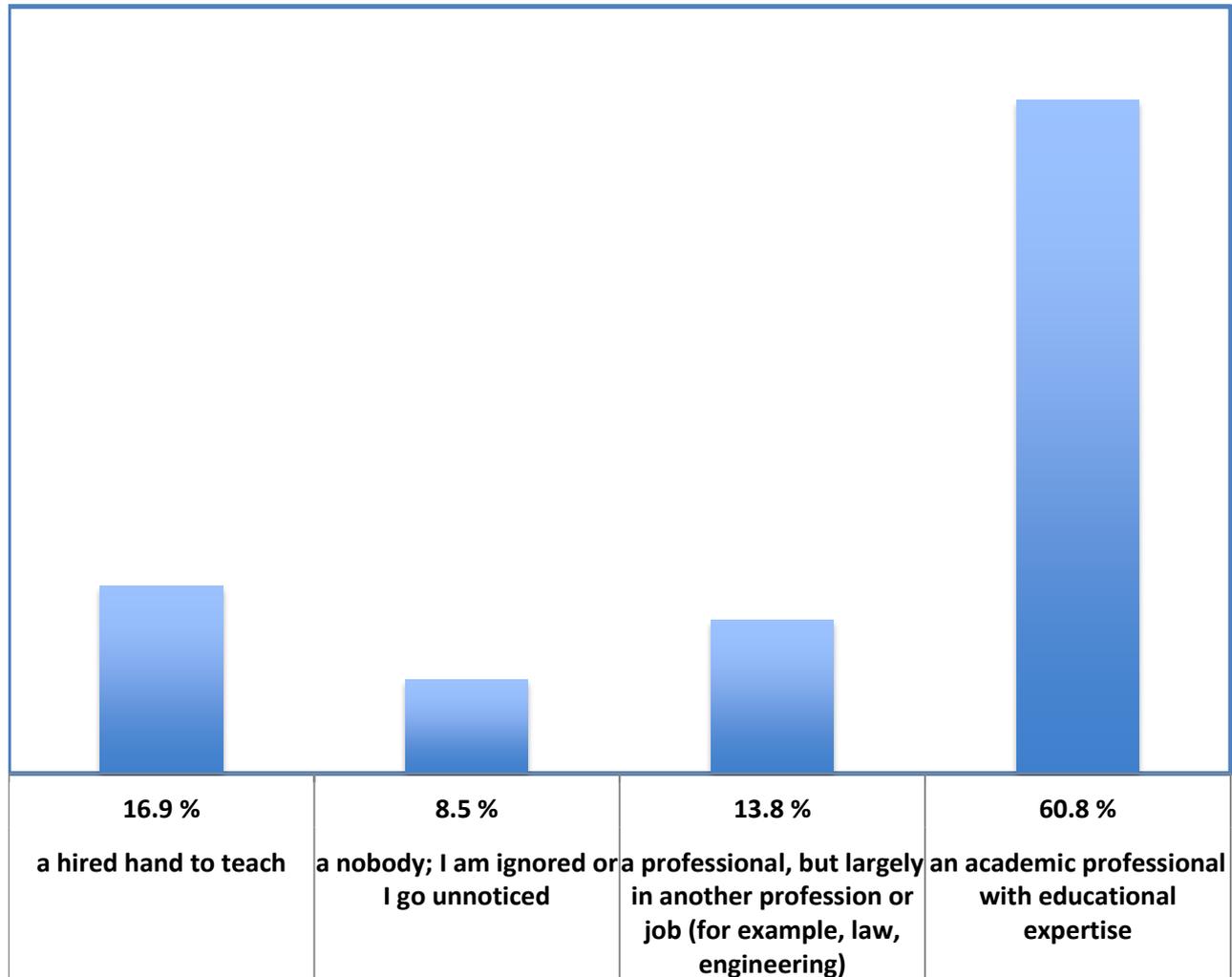


N=134

**Most were either encouraged or invited to attend meetings;
about one-third were merely allowed or blocked.**



Q.7. I am considered by my colleagues to be:

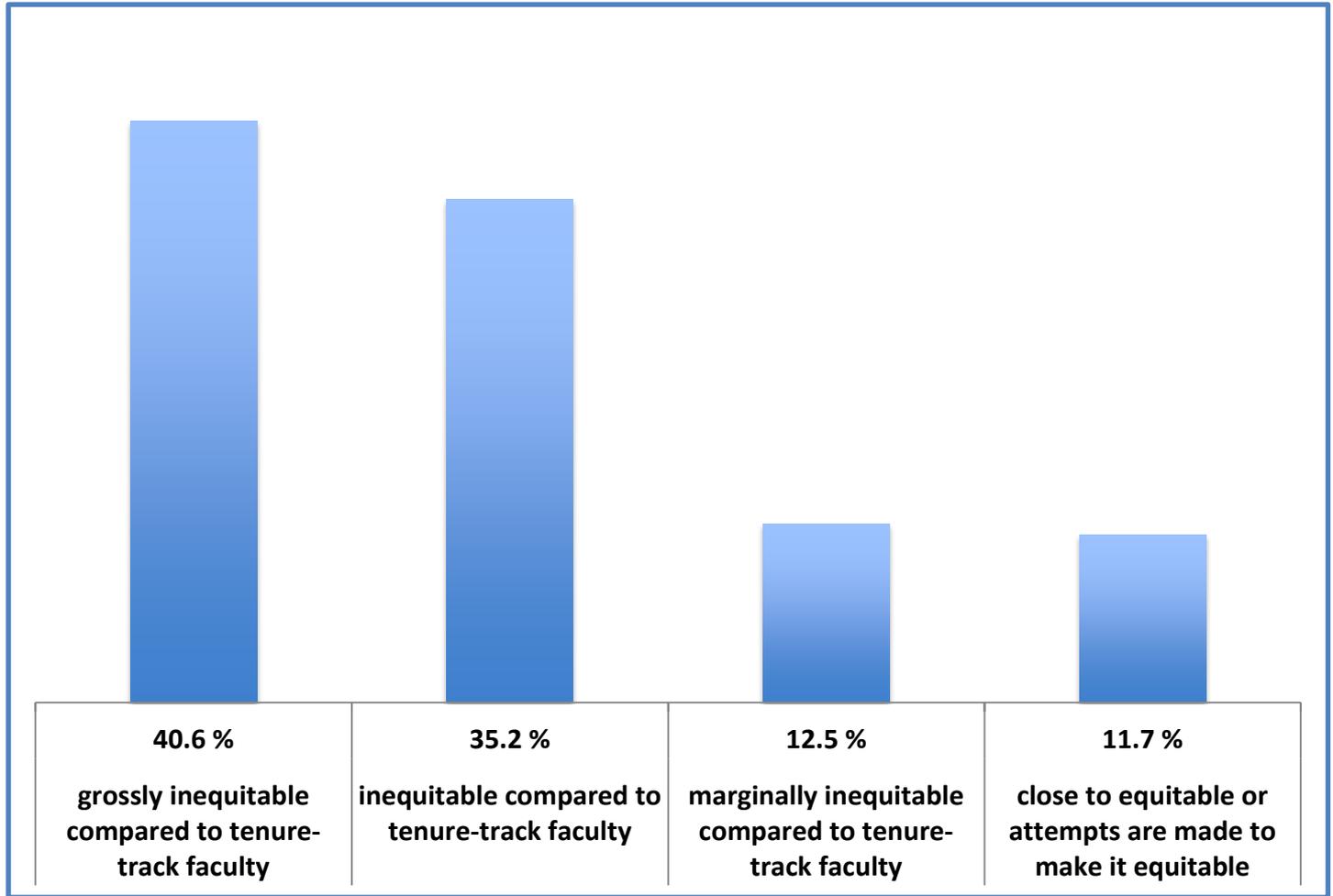


N=134

A majority (61%) reported professional recognition by colleagues but a quarter felt treated like 'nobodies' or hired hands.



Q.8. My salary and pay are:

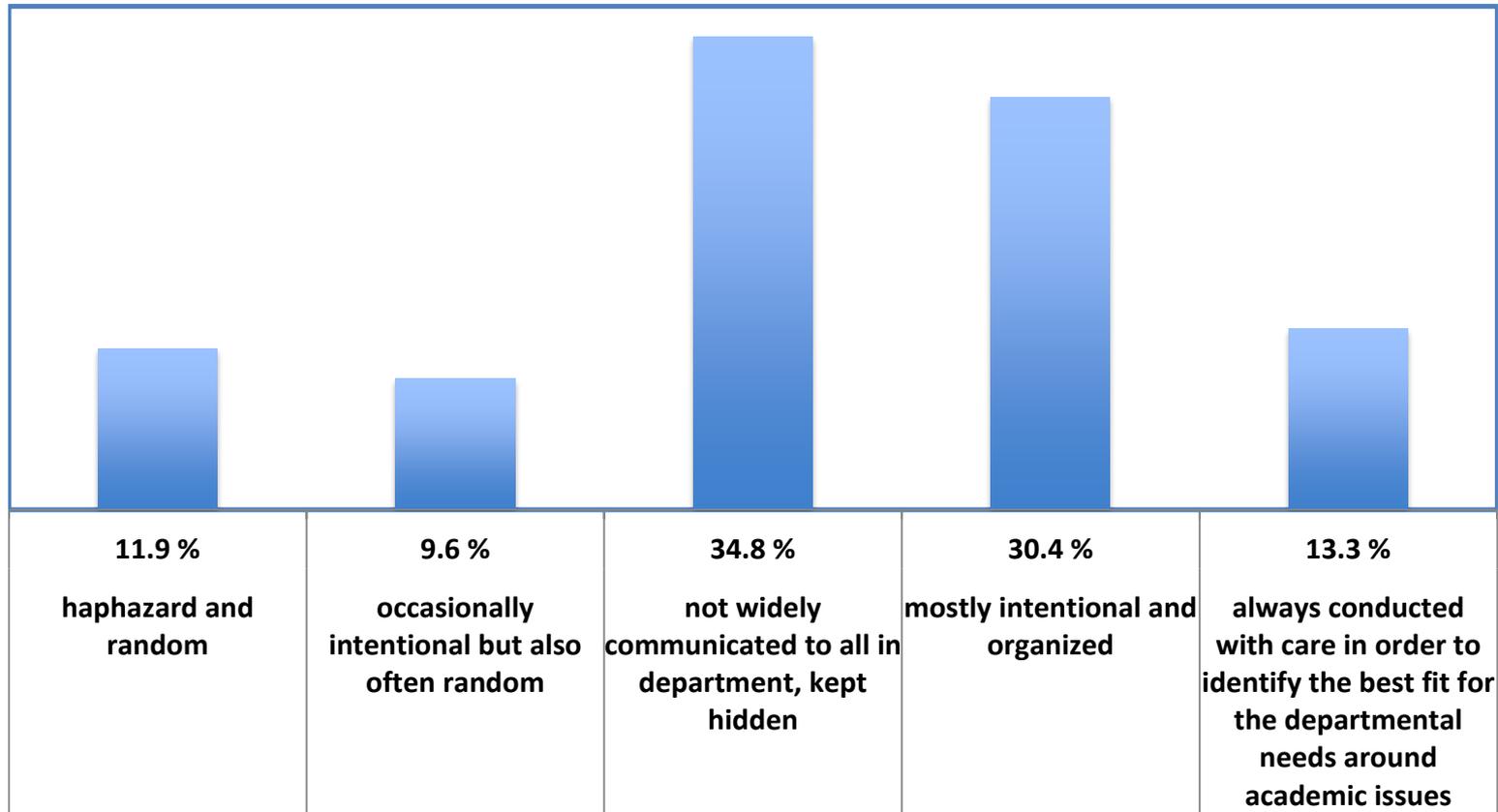


N=128

For three quarters of the respondents compensation was inequitable; for 41%, grossly so.



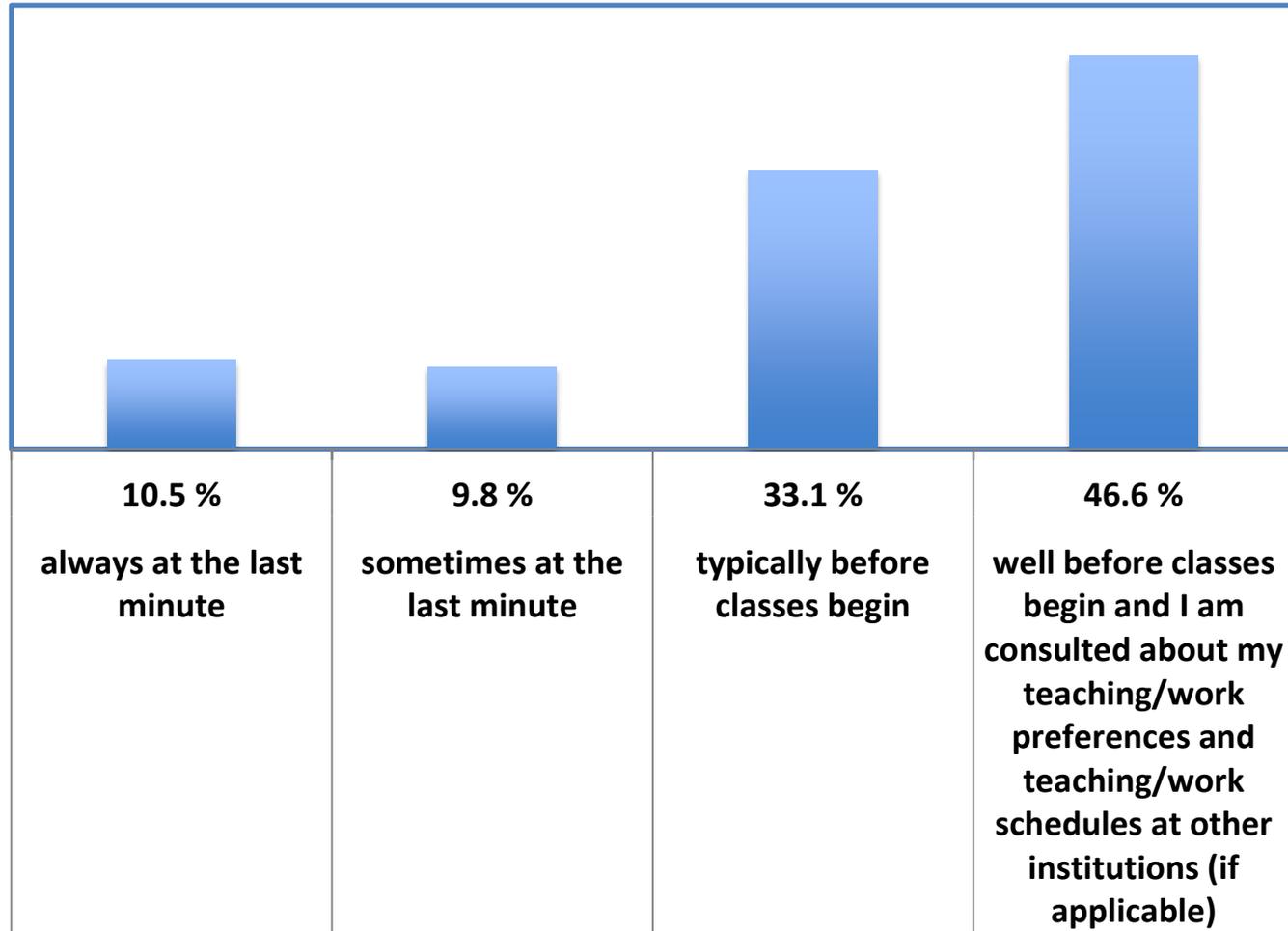
Q.9. Part-time faculty hiring practices in my department are:



N=135 Departmental hiring practices were favorable for 44% but problematic for most (56%).



**Q.10. During my time in this department,
my rehiring occurs:**

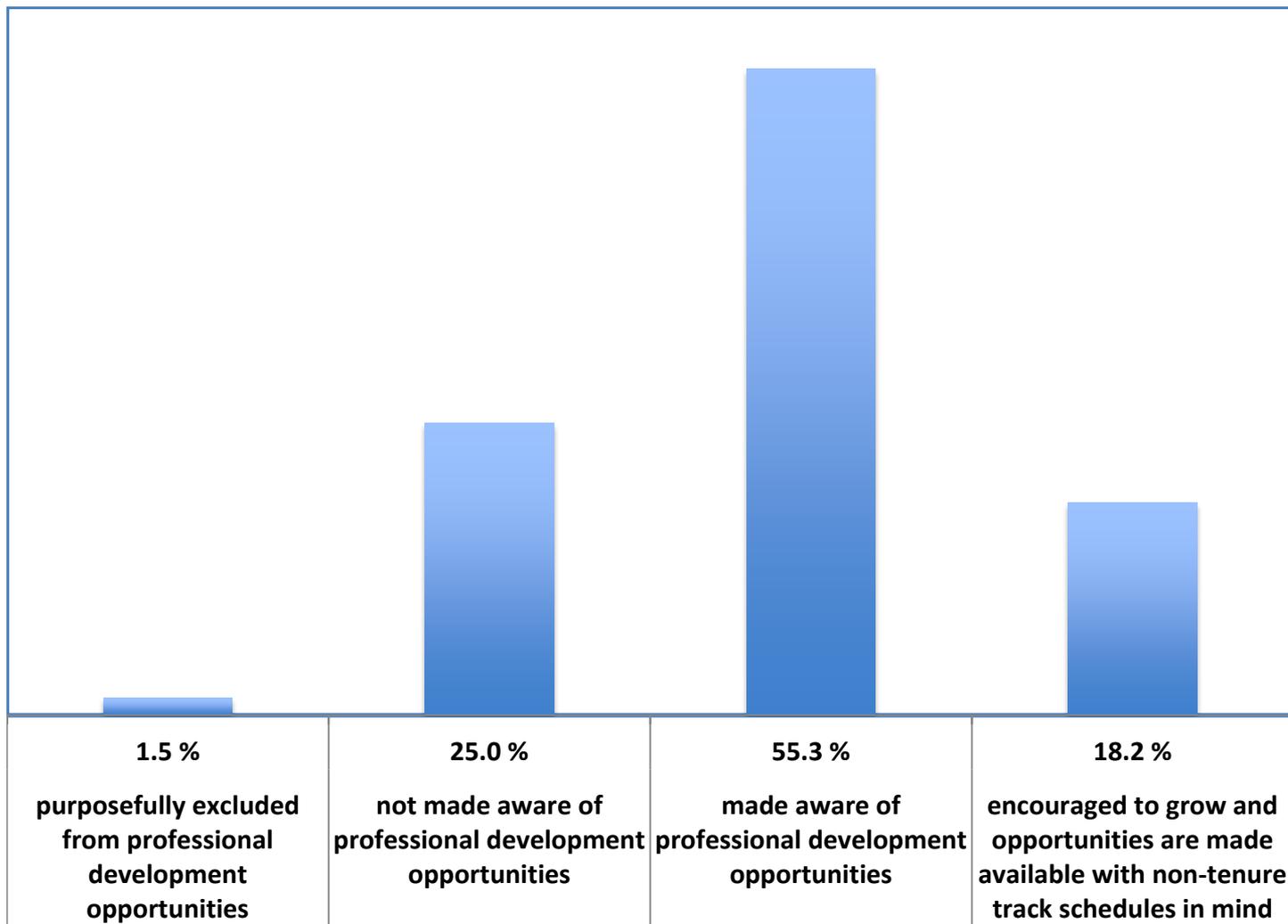


N=133

Rehiring practices were favorable for most respondents but deficient for about 20%.



Q.11. In terms of professional development, I:

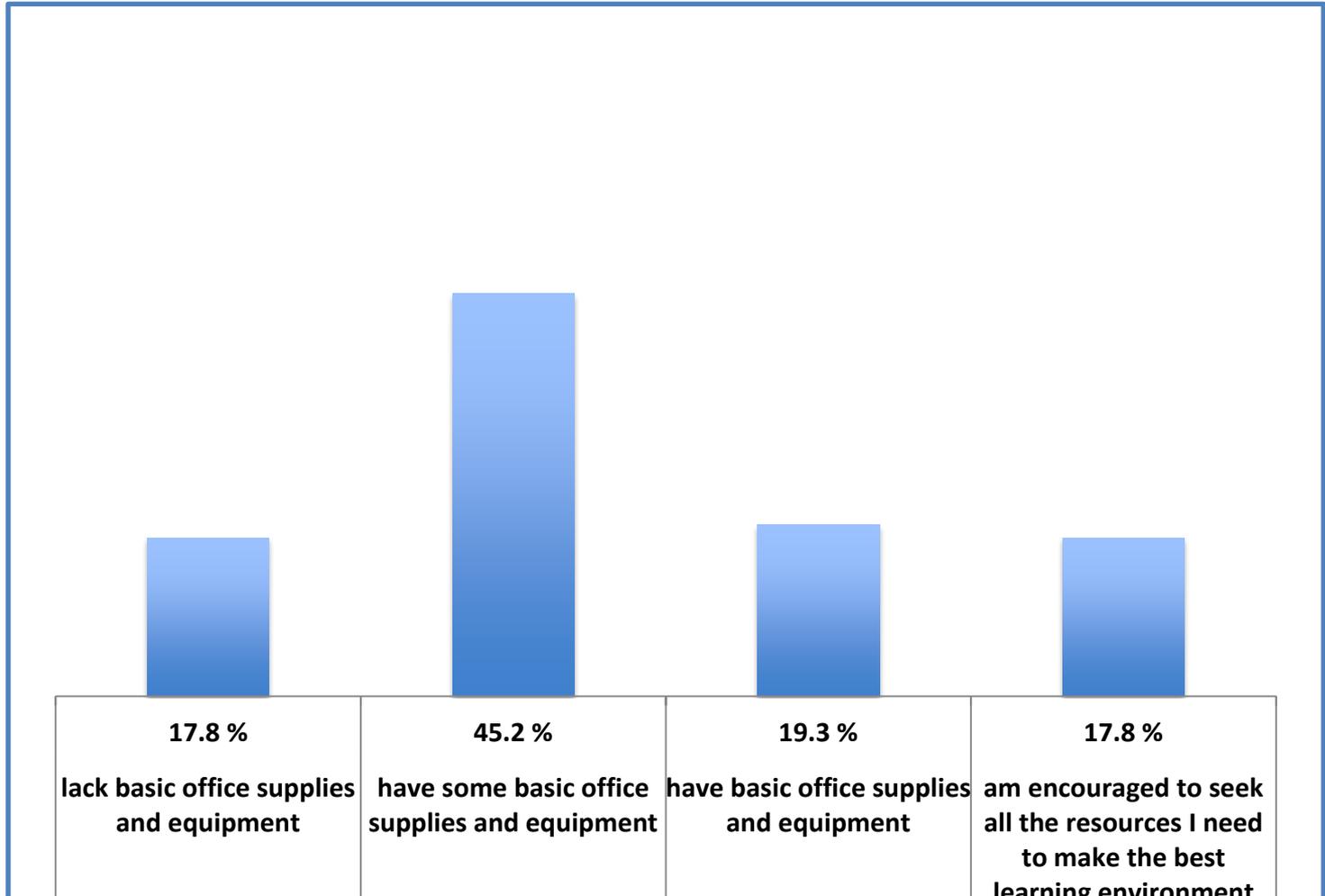


N=132

Only 18.2% found themselves actively included; a majority were 'made aware' but 27% excluded.



Q.12. In terms of resources to do my work, I:

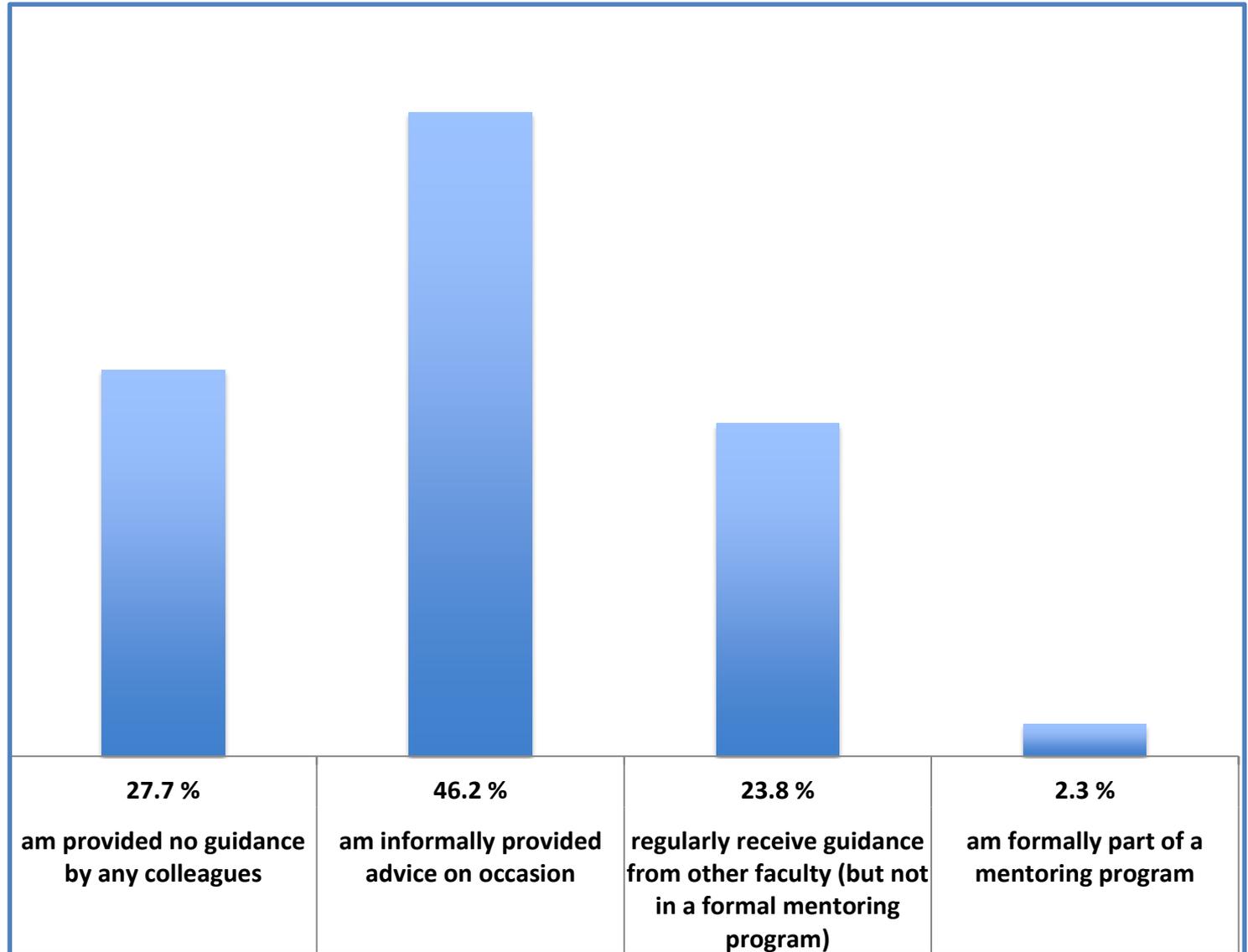


N=135

Respondents overwhelmingly reported the inadequacy of basic office supplies and equipment.



Q.13. In terms of mentoring, I:

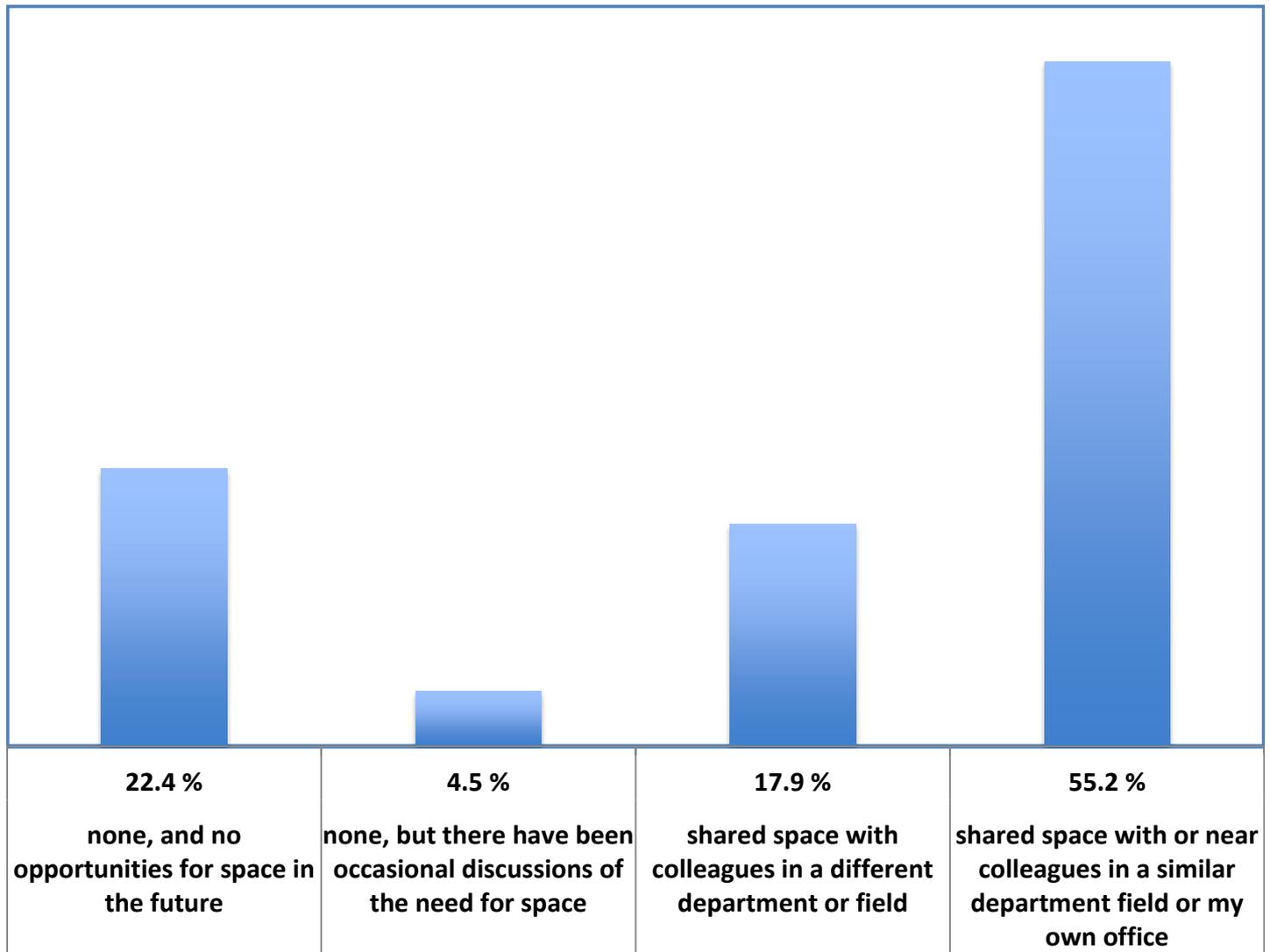


N = 130

Formal mentoring was deficient for a vast majority of the respondents (74%).



Q.14. In terms of office space, I have:

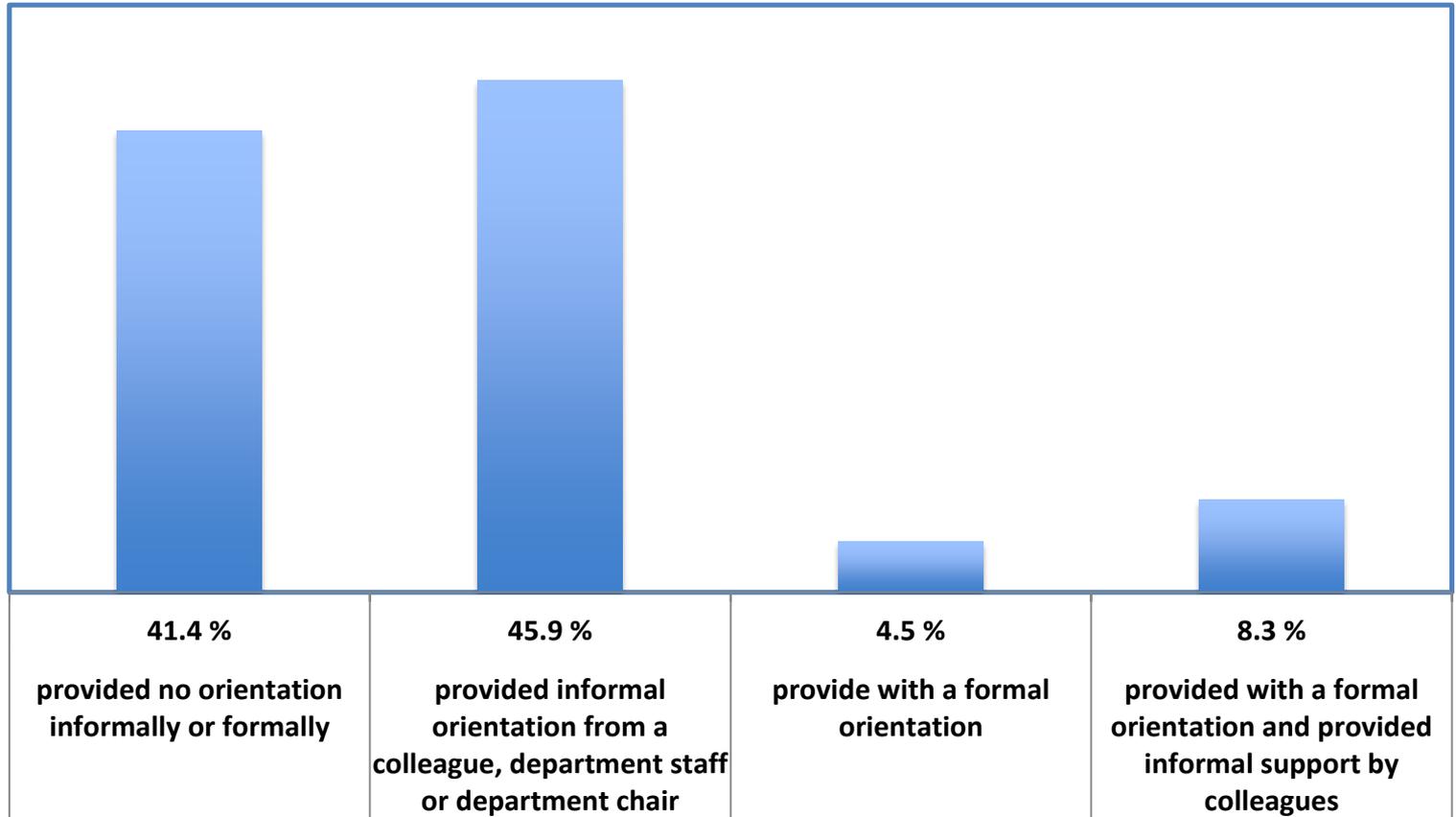


N=134

Most respondents had shared office space but 27% had none.



Q.15. In terms of orientation to the campus, I was:

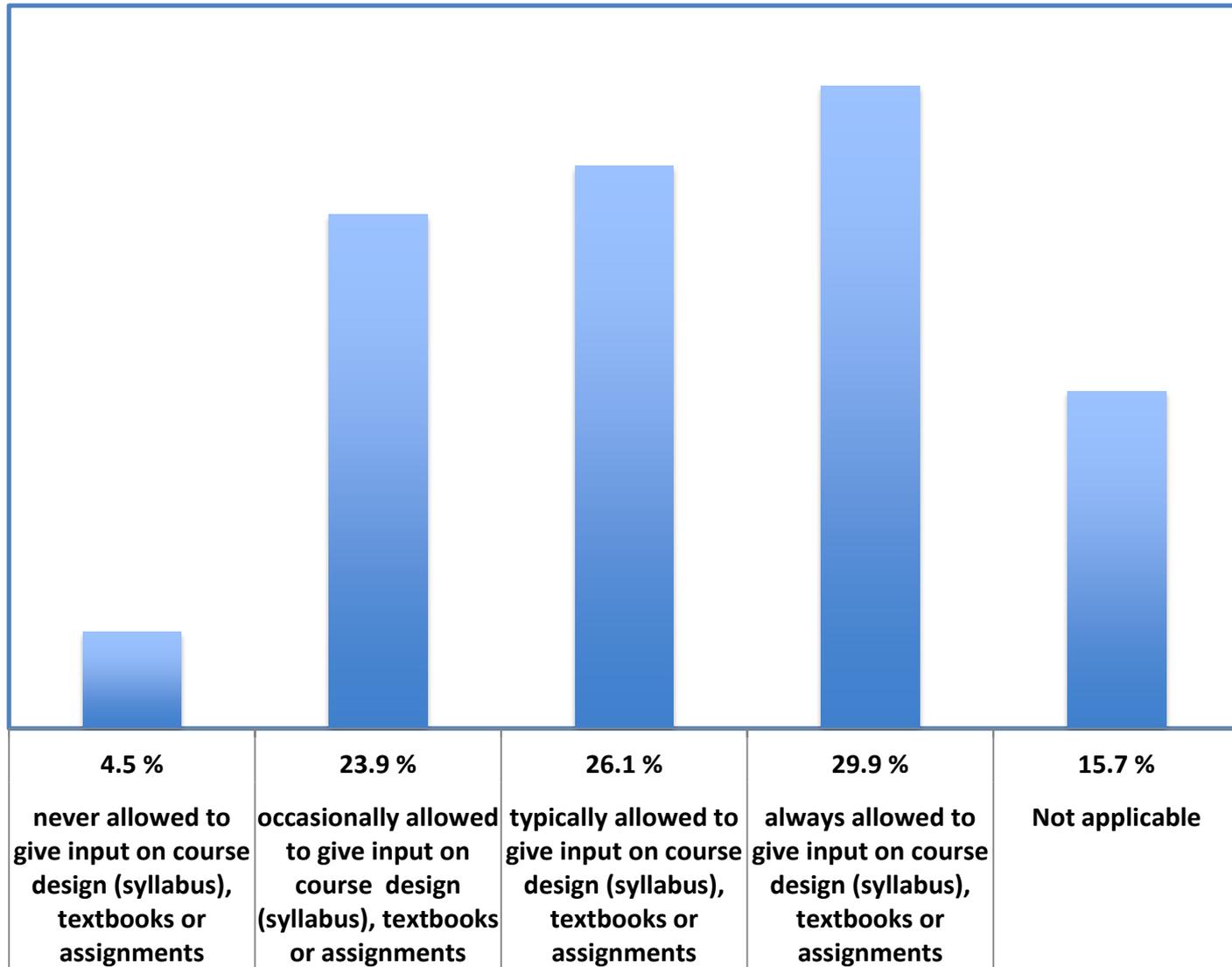


N=134

For an overwhelming majority of the respondents (87%) there was no formal orientation.



Q.16. In terms of input on curriculum, I am:



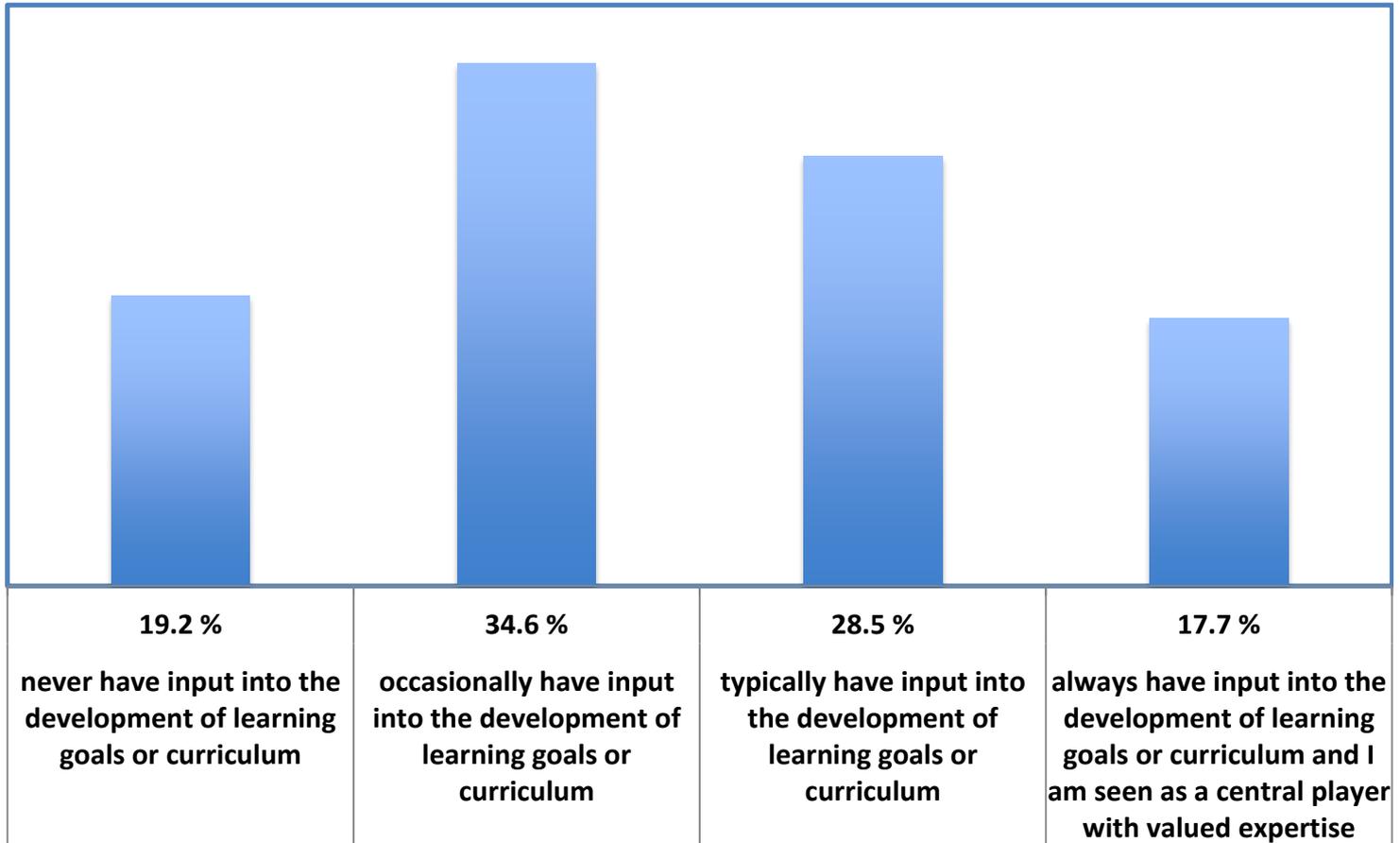
N=13

4

For 30% of the respondents curriculum input was allowed but for a majority (55%) it was variable or non-existent.



Q.17. In terms of the learning goals/curriculum of my program, I :

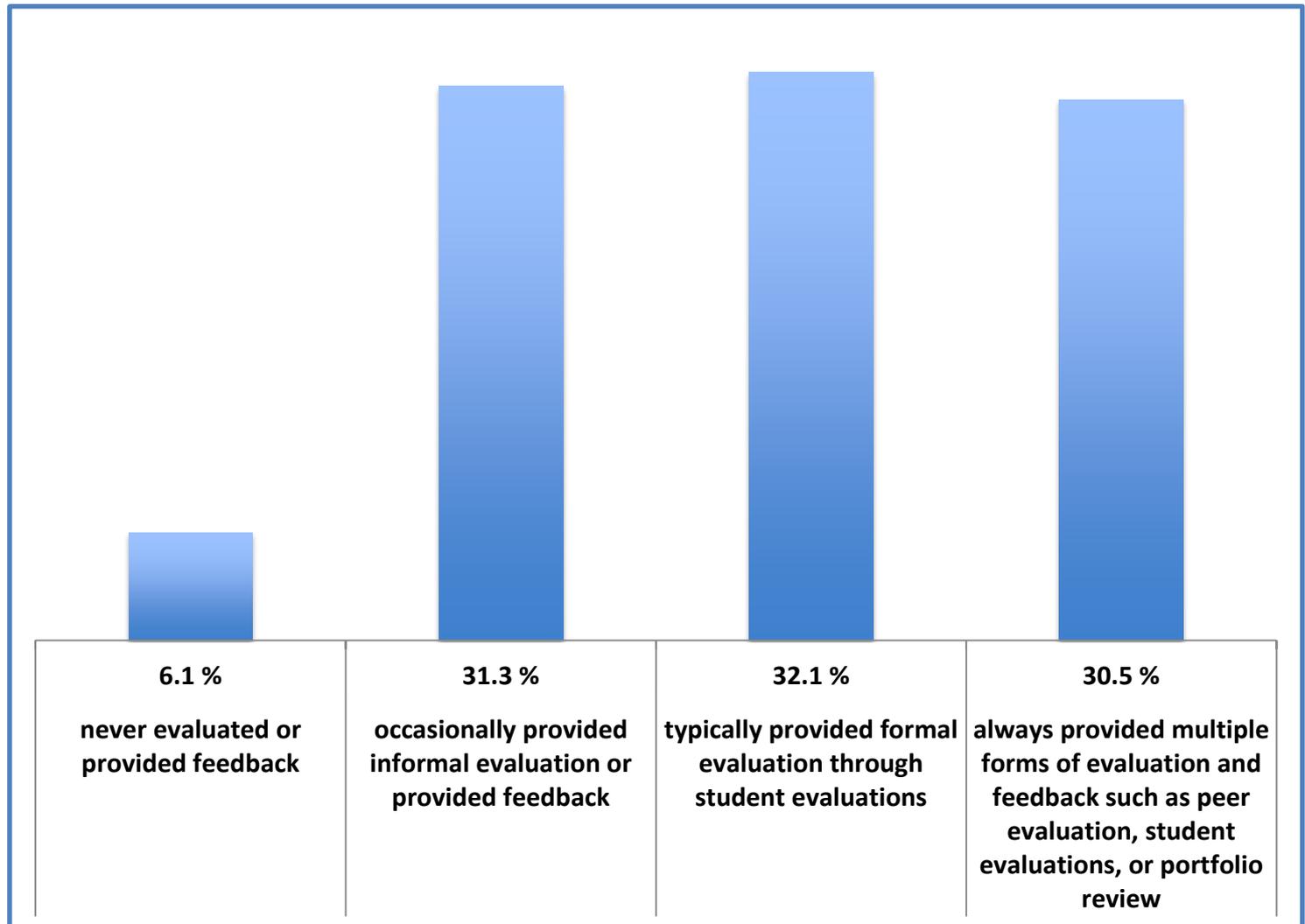


N=130

Only about 18% reported regular input on learning goals; for a majority input was variable; but for 19.2% it was non-existent.



Q.18. In terms of evaluation, I am:

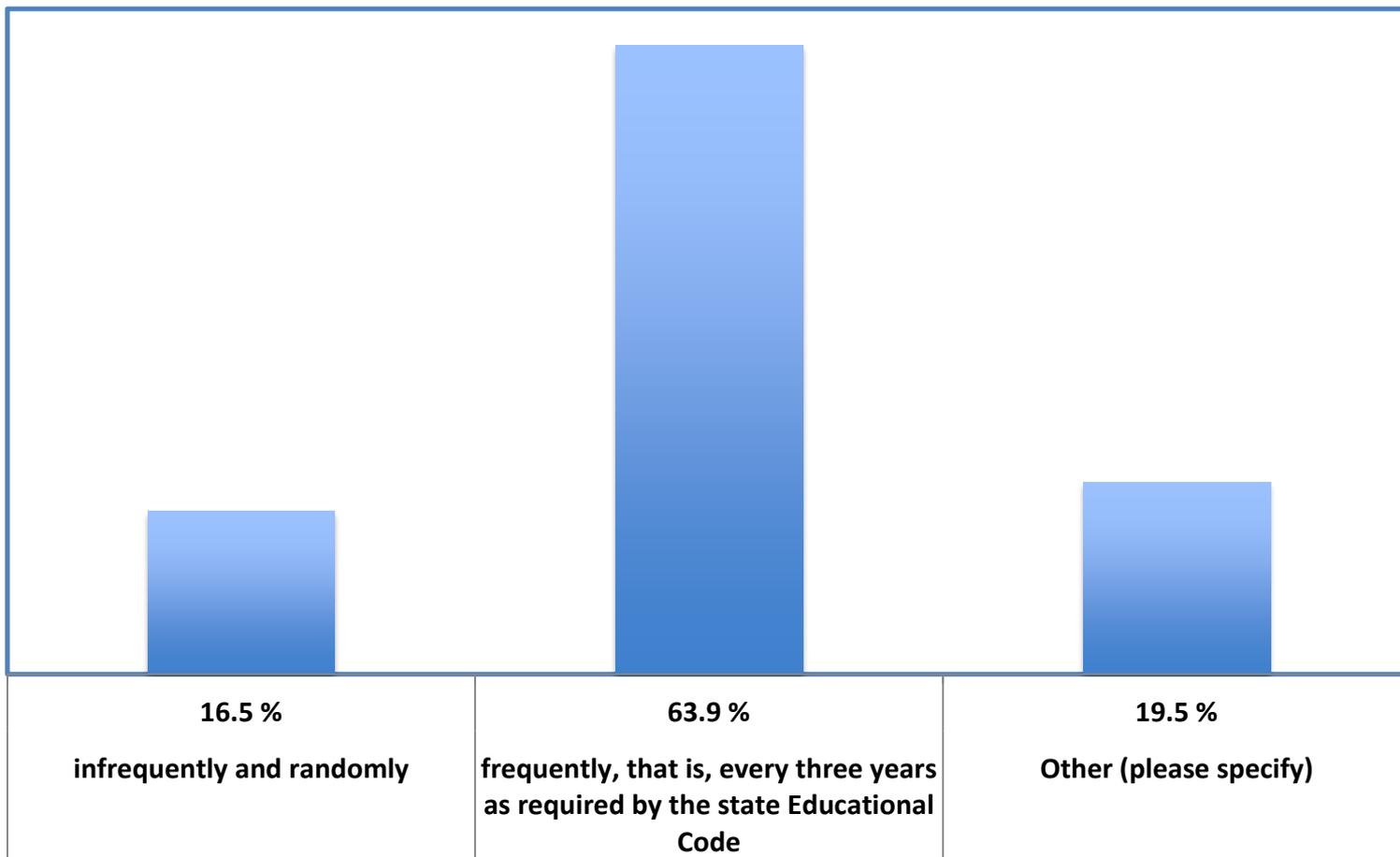


N=131

**About 31% reported full evaluations;
about a third, student evaluations; 31%, variable and informal.**



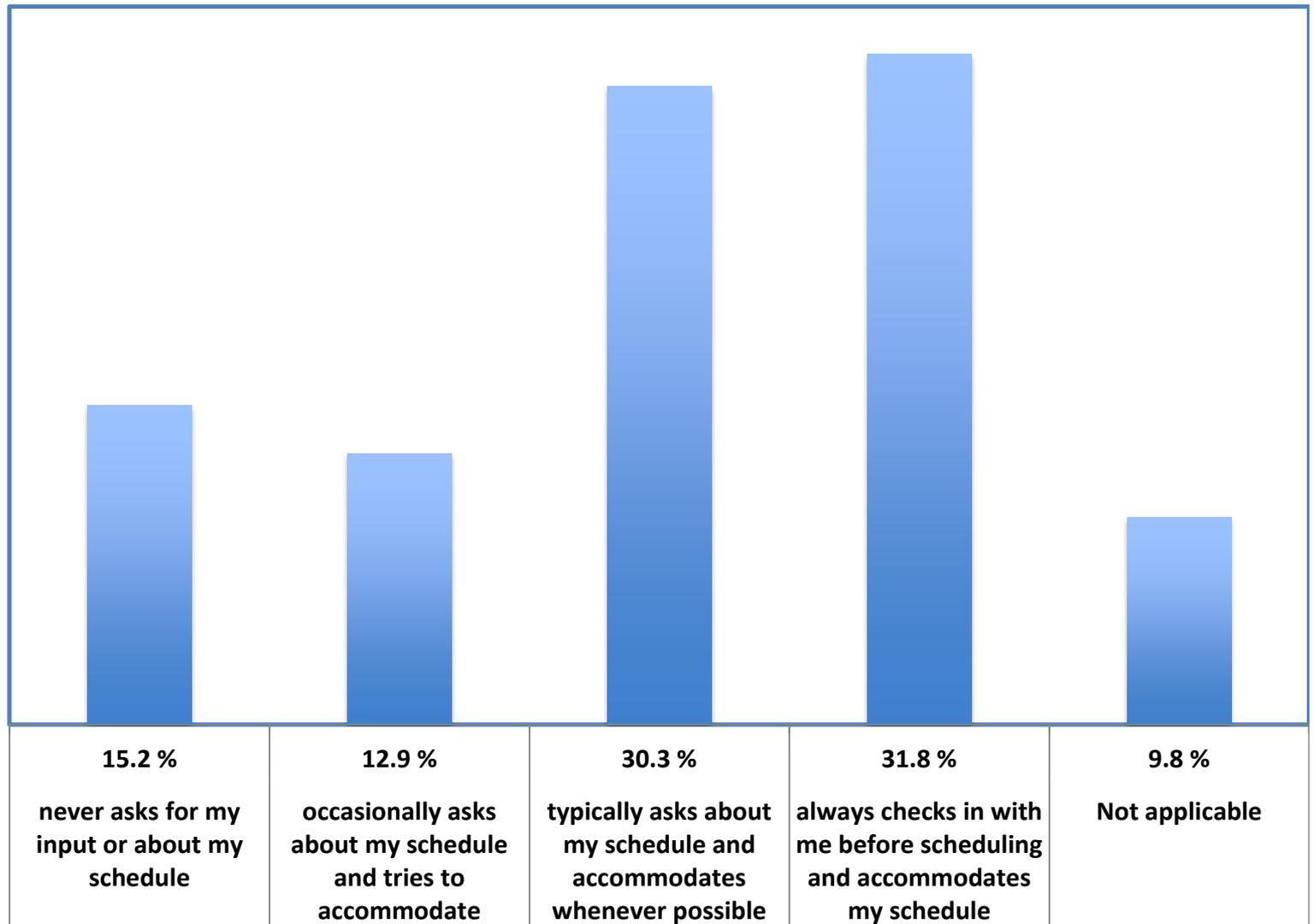
Q.19. In my department, Faculty evaluations are done:



A majority of respondents (about 64%) reported frequent faculty evaluations by departments.



Q.20. The department chair schedules me to teach courses and:

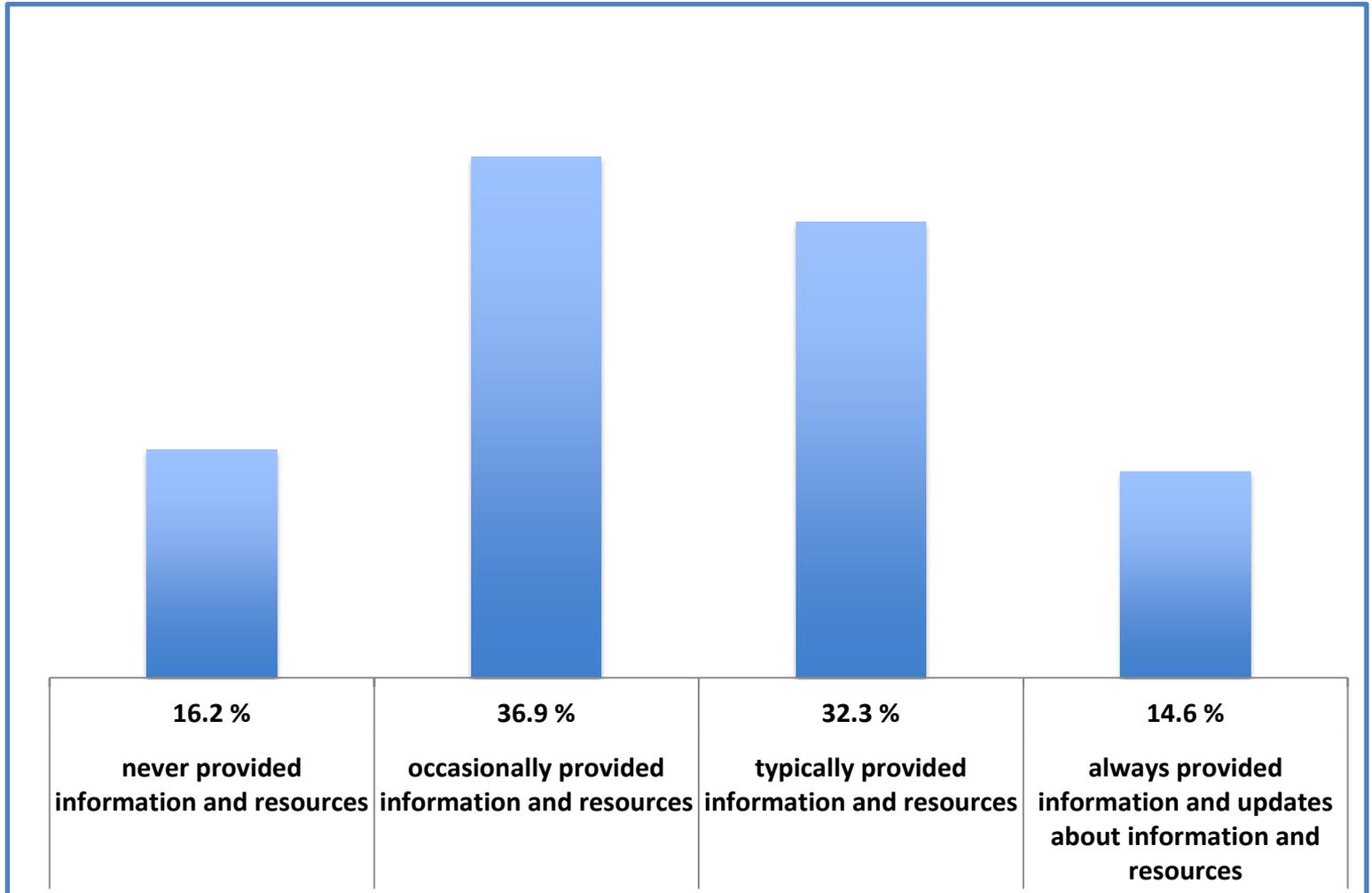


N=132

A majority (62%) reported consultation for scheduling but for a significant 28% this was problematic.



Q.21. In terms of information and campus resources (e.g. information about tutoring services, campus policies related to plagiarism, etc.), I am:

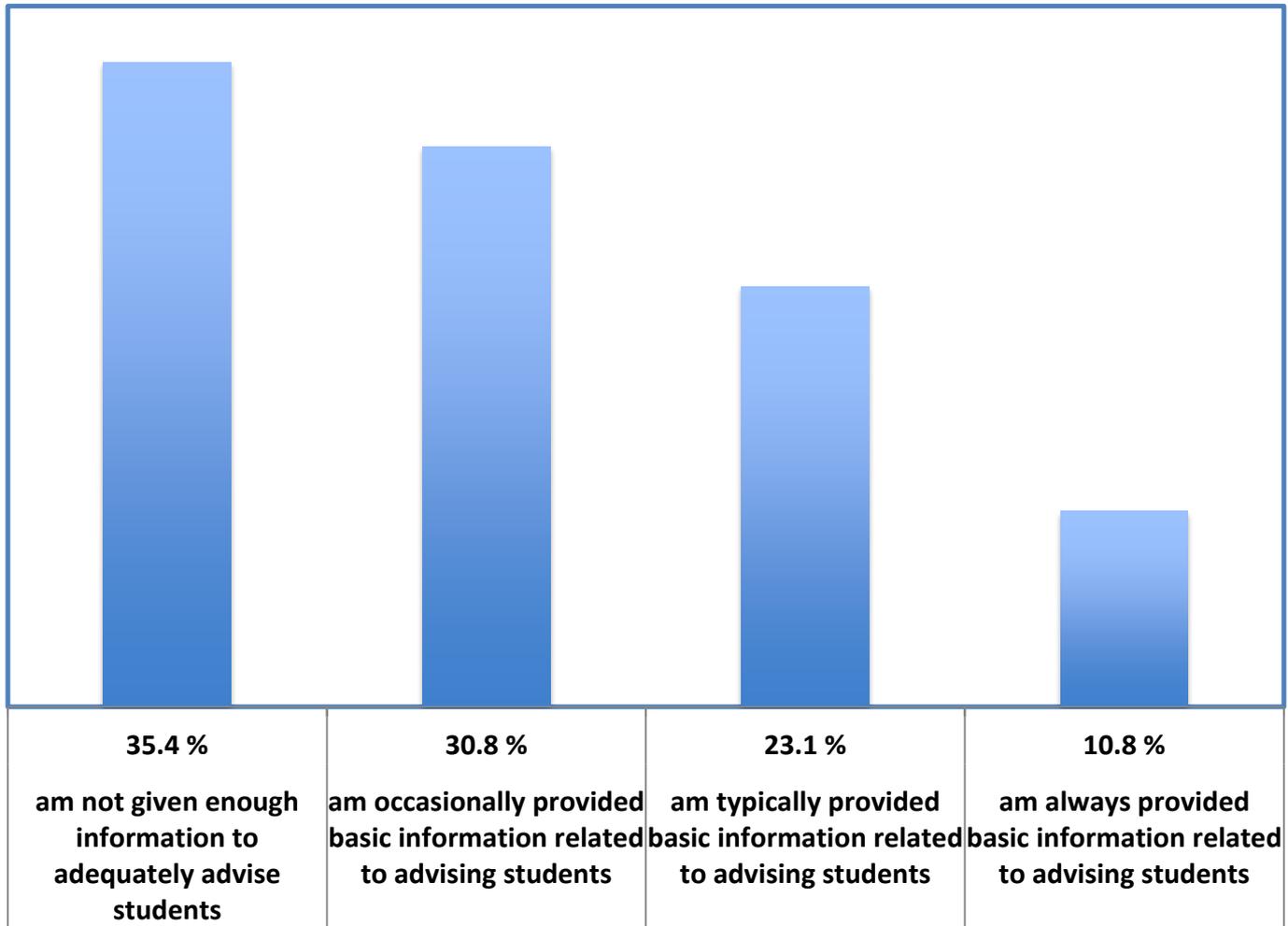


N=130

For a majority of the respondents (53%) the provision of information and resources was deficient.



Q.22. In terms of advising, I:

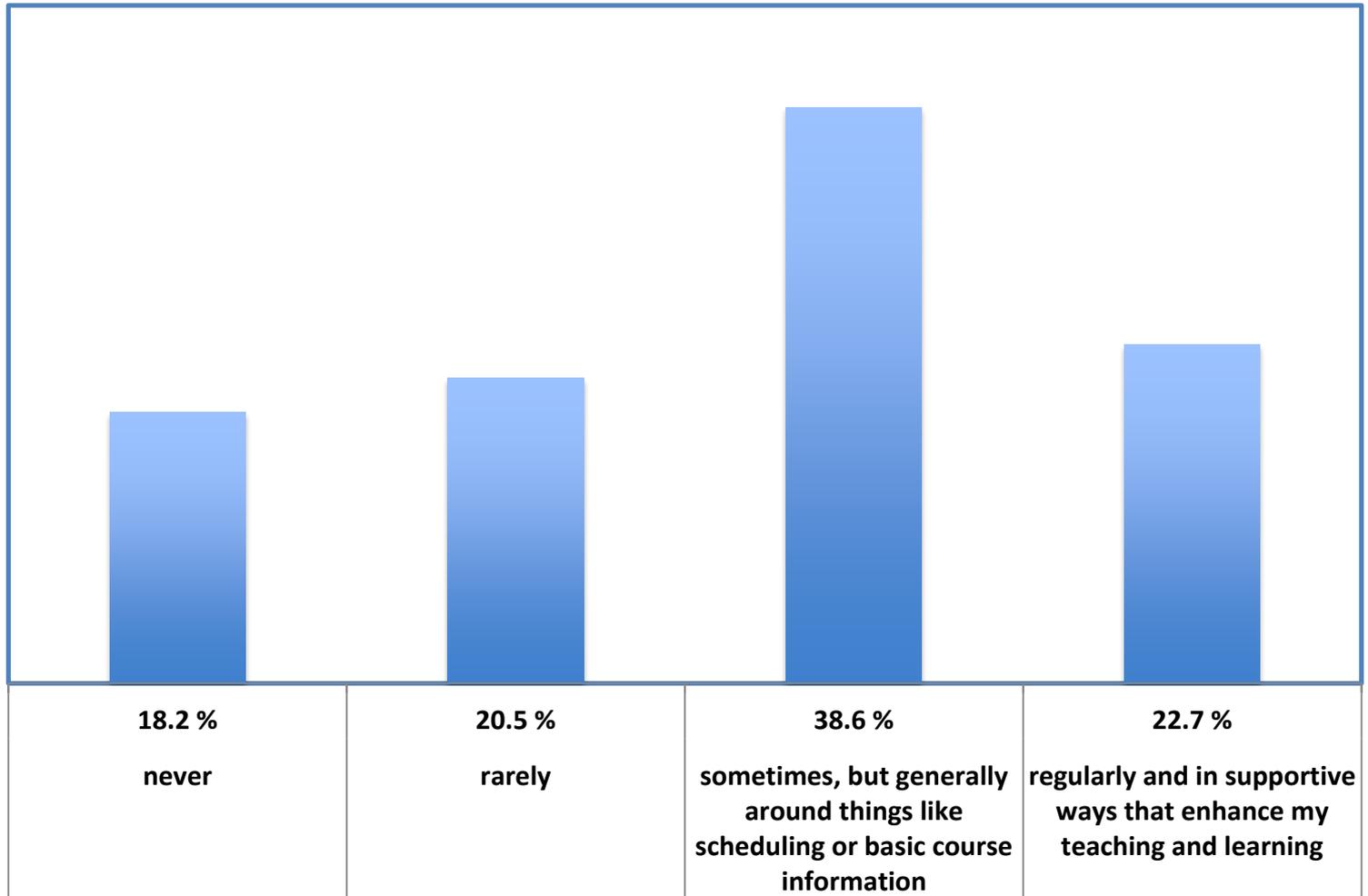


N=130

**For a significant number of respondents (62%)
the provision of student advising information was deficient.**



Q.23. My tenure-track colleagues communicate with me about teaching:

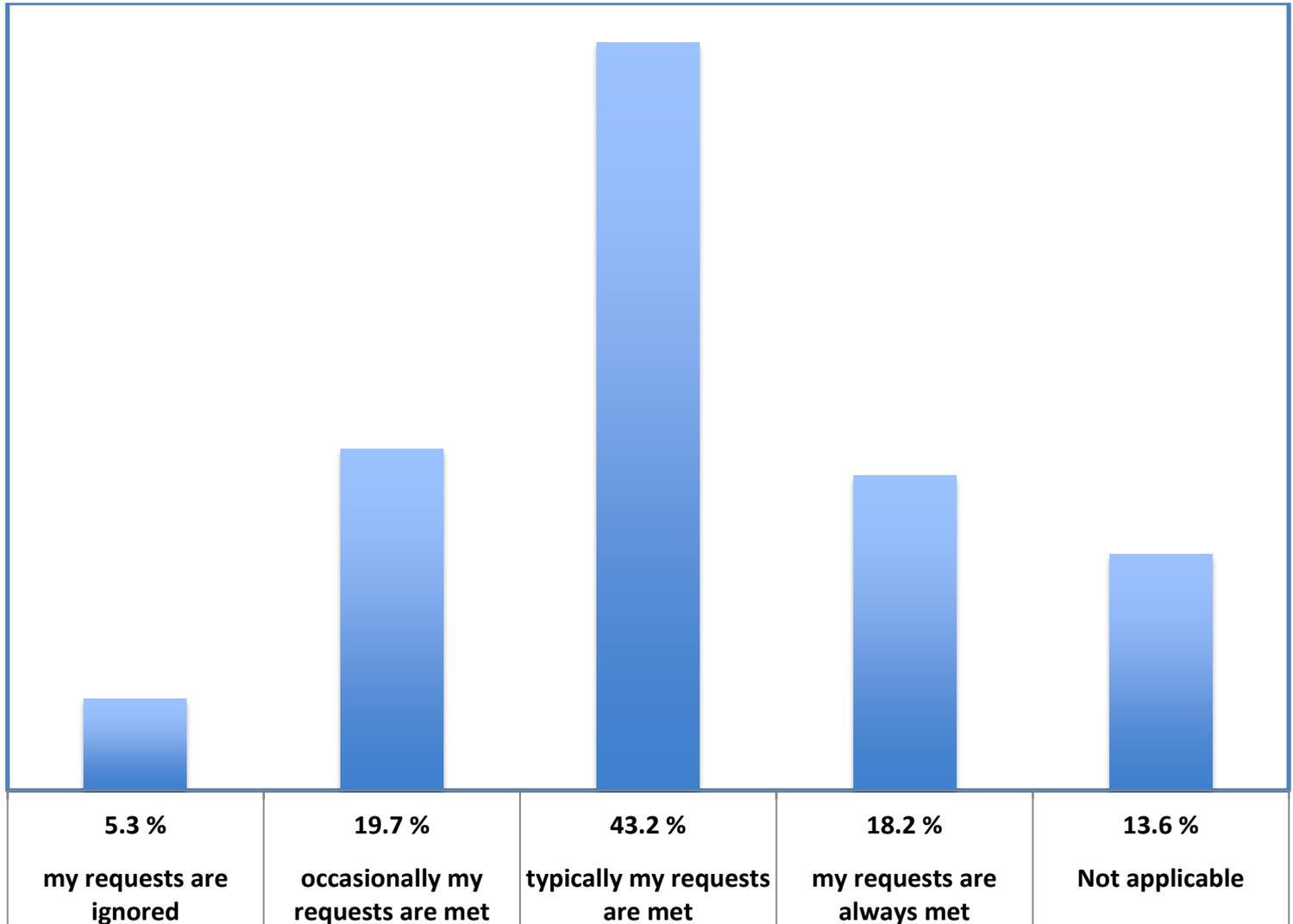


N=132

For a vast majority (77.3%) this was deficient; for a significant 18.2% it was non-existent.



Q.24. When I need departmental staff support for teaching (e.g. getting Blackboard site activated, IT technical help):

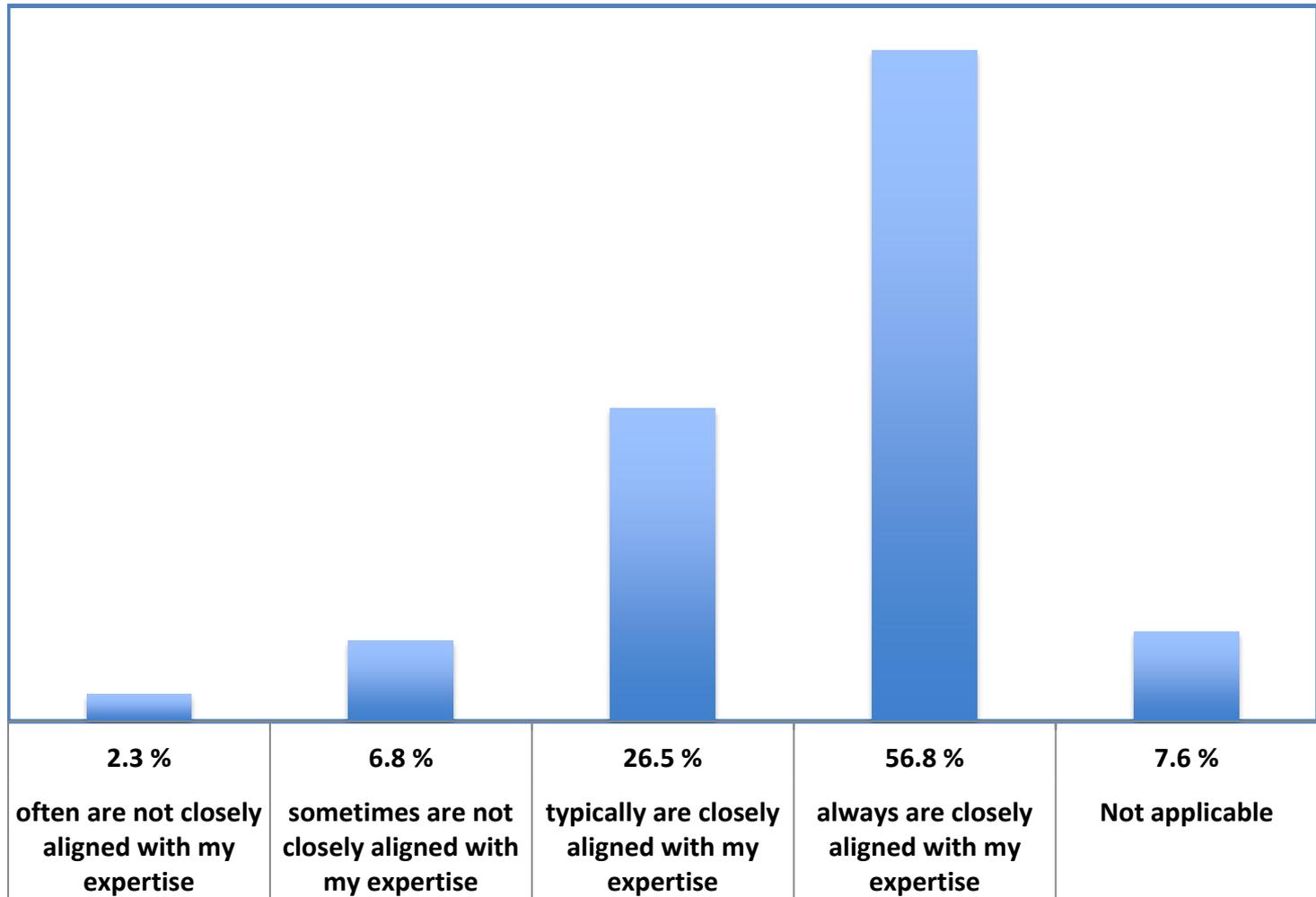


N=132

For most of the respondents, departmental staff support was generally met but for 25% it was deficient.



Q.25. I am scheduled to teach courses that:

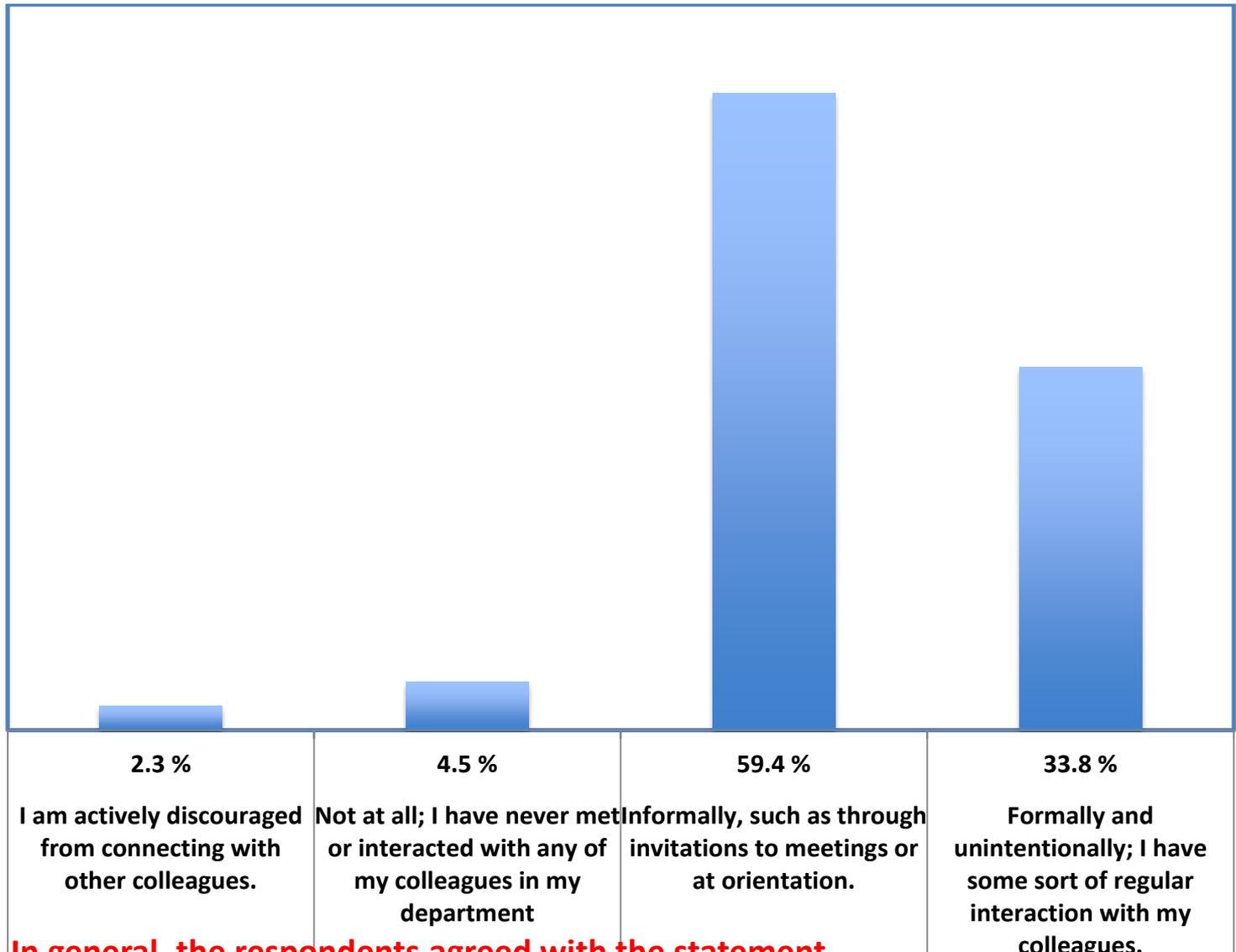


N=132

For the vast majority of respondents (83.3%) assigned courses corresponded with their expertise.



Q.26 My department encourages communication and interaction with other colleagues in my department:

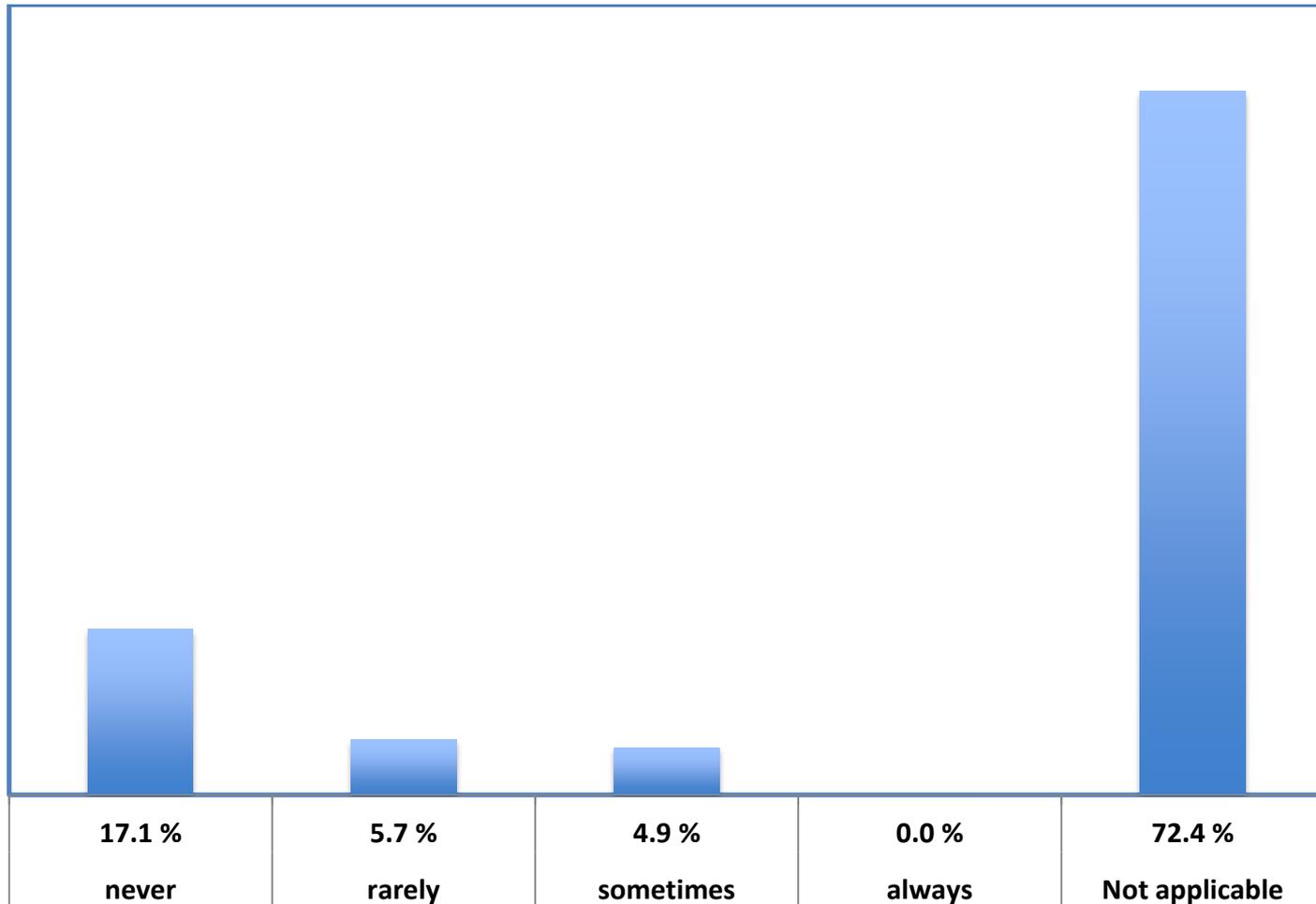


N=133

In general, the respondents agreed with the statement but the majority (59.4%) said the interaction was informal.



Q. 27. Experiences of online faculty- There are options for meetings and service requirements that are virtual (e.g. through Skype, conference calls):

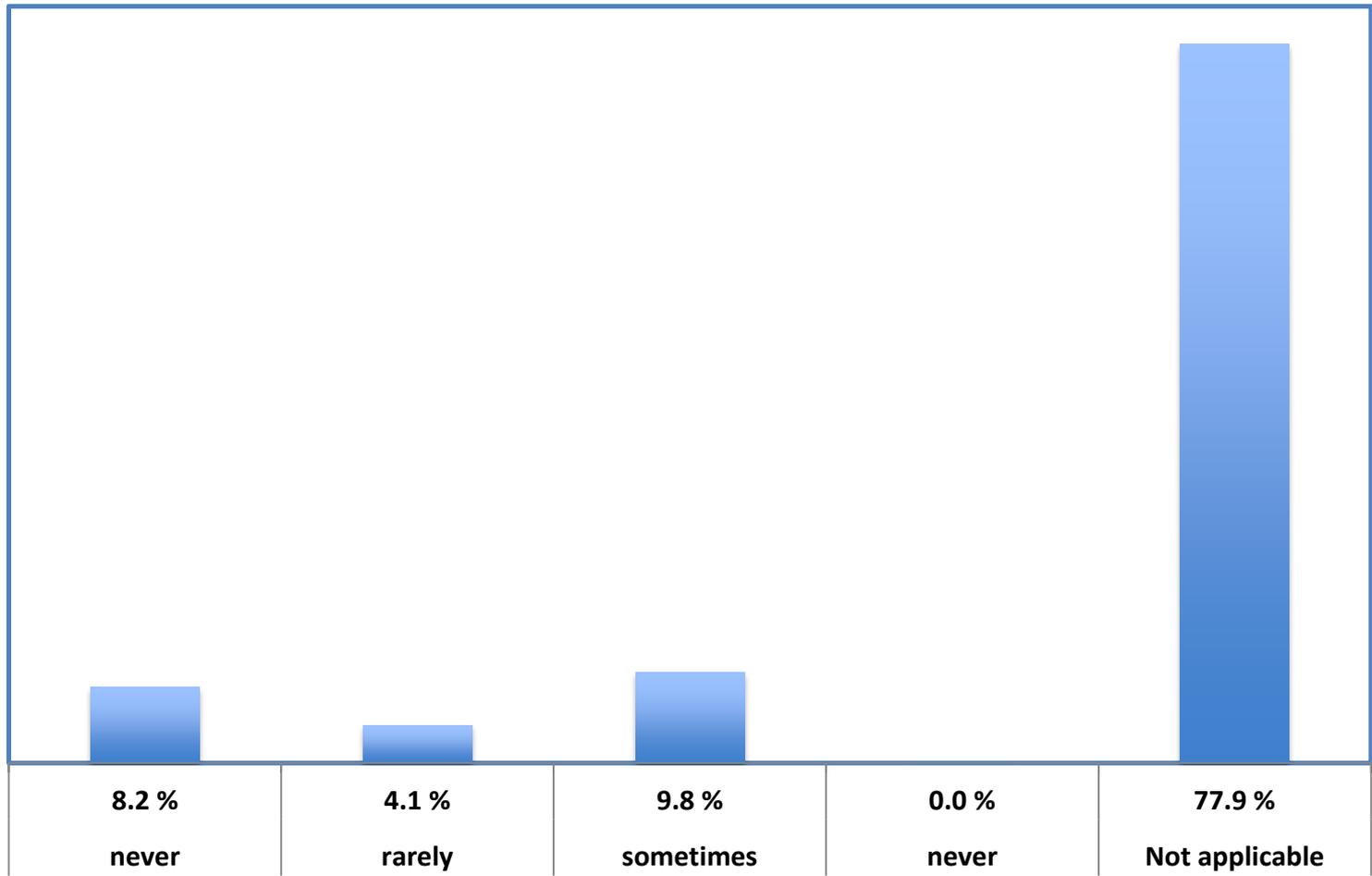


N=123

Online faculty respondents reported mostly non-occurrence of virtual meetings and service support.



**Q. 28. Experiences of online faculty –
There is support for online teaching
if issues emerge with the technology or curriculum:**



N=122

All the online respondents reported gaps in technical support.

Profiles of Four Departmental Cultures for Analysis of the Data and Cultural Change towards Equity for Part-Time Faculty (adapted from Kezar)

Learning Culture

- PTF (part-time, non-tenure track faculty) perceive a positive atmosphere of respect and inclusion; treated as professional equals by FTF (full-time, tenured or tenure track faculty) counterparts.
- Policies and practices to support PTF's role in creating a positive and effective learning environment.
- PTF invited and encouraged to attend faculty meetings and events; given opportunities to participate in on-campus and off-campus professional development activities.
- Department chairs actively work to promote equity in salary and benefits for PTF.
- Hiring is thoughtful and intentional to select faculty with teaching and professional expertise. Hiring happens well in advance of the beginning of the semester and happens rarely as turnover is low in the learning culture.
- Scheduling is done collaboratively to ensure that PTF are well-prepared to teach their courses and to minimize scheduling conflicts.
- For PTF office space is shared with colleagues who teach similar courses, allowing for collaboration and discussion around teaching and learning.
- PTF receive formal orientation to the campus, as well as formal and informal mentoring, evaluations, and feedback.
- Supplies are proactively acquired by the department chair.
- PTF are always given input in decisions about syllabuses, textbooks, and curricula, as well as opportunities for campus governance or departmental leadership roles.

Inclusive Culture

- PTF perceive that they are respected and included by their departmental colleagues.
- They are typically invited to attend faculty meetings and events and are included in on-campus professional activities.
- PTF are acknowledged as professionals, though often in another profession (e.g. lawyer, business entrepreneur, etc.).
- Department chairs make attempts to achieve equity in the salaries of PTF and FTF.
- PTF hiring typically occurs intentionally to select people with the best expertise for a particular course, scheduling of courses occurs in advance of the beginning of the semester and typically included PTF input.
- PTF typically have shared office space on campus and basic materials and equipment to do their jobs.
- PTF generally have a formal or informal orientation to campus policies and are sometimes given input into their course syllabuses or textbooks. Yet the policies and practice are not created in ways that reflect PTF's contributions to the learning environment. There is no formal link or understanding of how certain practices negatively affect -- or could positively affect -- student learning.

Neutral or Invisible Culture

- PTF perceive no respect or inclusion from FTF counterparts; while there is no active disrespect PTF are typically ignored or treated as temporary teachers or mechanisms for content delivery.
- PTF are typically not included in faculty meetings or professional development.
- PTF hiring is generally random and last-minute, though occasionally some intentionality may occur around hiring someone with specific subject matter expertise.
- Pay for PTF is generally inequitable and PTF preferences are typically not taken into account when scheduling courses.
- PTF may have some basic office supplies and equipment and access to some type of office space that allows them to perform their basic teaching function. However, it is unlikely that they receive orientation to campus policies, mentoring from other faculty, formal evaluations, or significant input into course syllabuses, textbooks, or curricula.

Destructive Culture

- PTF perceive disrespect and hostility from their FTF counterparts.
- PTF are actively excluded from departmental meetings and professional development activities, and their role is not perceived as a professional one.
- PTF hiring is haphazard, random, and last-minute, with little attention given to matching faculty with courses in their area of expertise or to managing their schedules if they teach at other institutions.
- Once hired, PTF salary and benefits are grossly inequitable.
- PTF are not given the resources they need to succeed, such as orientation to the campus, mentoring by other faculty, office space or supplies, advance access to syllabuses, curricula, or learning goals, or information to correctly advise students.

Finally, here are a few questions for thought and action.

- Which of the four cultures would faculty members in your department wish to have?
- Which of the four cultures do faculty members in your department think characterizes the department at this time? Maybe it's a mix – some features of one (e.g. inclusive) and some of another (e.g. neutral).
- Depending on faculty assessment of the current departmental culture, what efforts can be taken by the department to move to a more desirable status?

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Adrianna Kezar, University of Southern California, for sharing the survey questionnaire and to the Peralta part-time faculty members who generously provided the responses in this survey.



Cynthia Mahabir, Part-Time Faculty Representative
Peralta Federation of Teachers
April 2016

