



Advancement Moving Forward:
Update on the State of the Profession

**June 2023 Survey of Gift Officers, Alumni Relations Officers, and
Chief Advancement Officers**

June 27, 2023

If you have questions or comments, or suggestions for future survey topics, please contact us at
info@wash-mcg.com

BACKGROUND

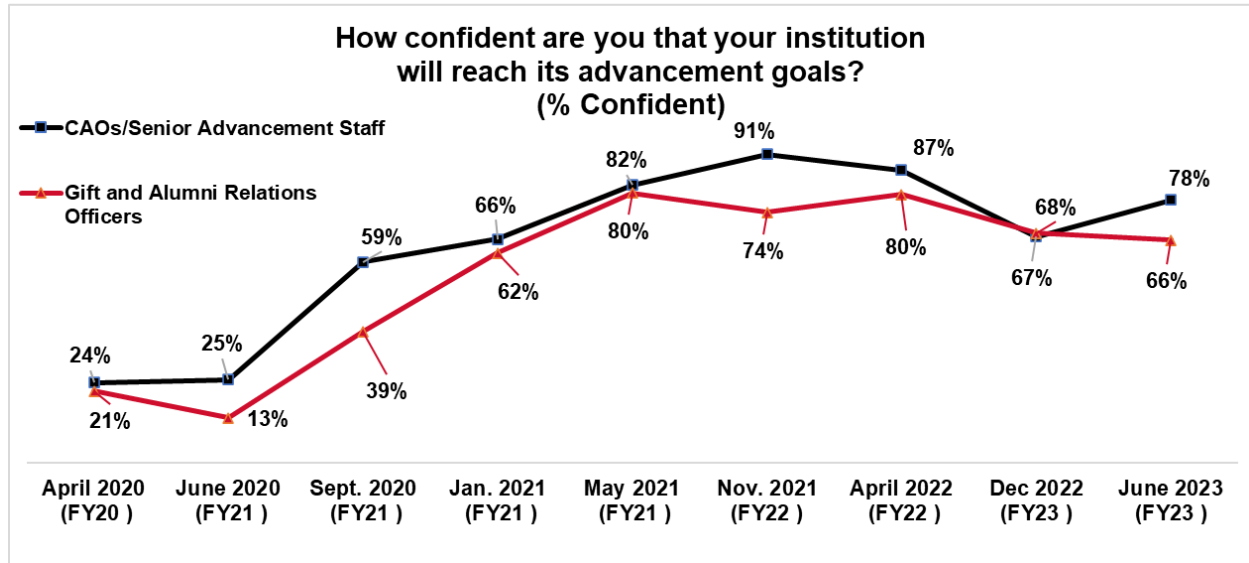
The WASHBURN & MCGOLDRICK June 2023 *Advancement Moving Forward* survey of advancement professionals is the ninth in our series on the state of the profession. This series began in April 2020 at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, we have tracked how alumni relations officers, gift officers, senior advancement staff, and chief advancement officers (CAOs) have kept the momentum of their advancement efforts moving forward through the past three+ years.

These surveys explore timely issues of importance to advancement professionals in US universities, colleges, and independent schools. The topics in each survey are suggested by CAOs and their senior staff to provide information that allows them to respond in a timely manner.

Confidence in achieving fundraising goals for each fiscal year and the use of remote, hybrid, or office work have been explored in almost every survey. Over the past year we have also addressed challenges facing advancement offices, staff turnover, fundraising priorities, the use of technology to engage donors and alumni, videoconference fatigue, and institutional responses to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) issues. Details about the methodology and a list of participating institutions can be found at the end of this report.

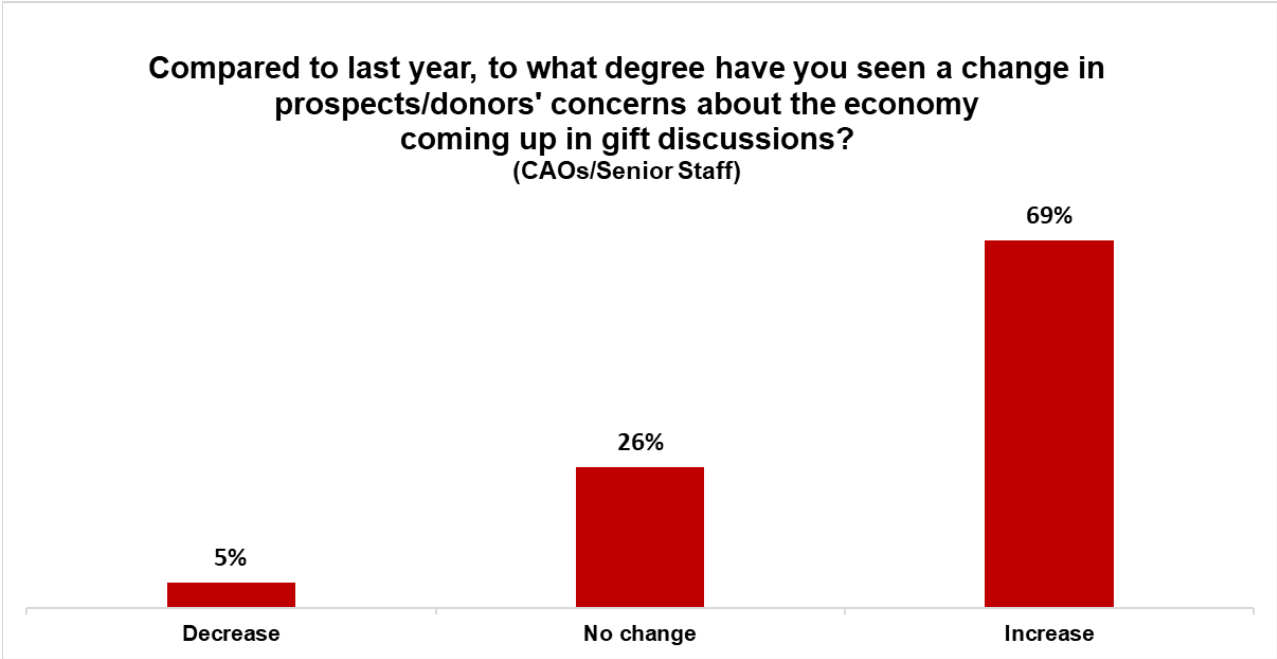
| | April 2020 | June 2020 | Sept 2020 | Jan 2021 | May 2021 | Nov 2021 | April 2022 | Dec 2022 | June 2023 |
|--|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| Confidence | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Office, hybrid, and remote work | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Staff productivity | | | | | | x | | x | |
| Staffing vacancies | | | | | | x | x | | |
| Alumni engagement | | | | | | | x | x | x |
| Using technology to engage donors | | | x | | | x | x | x | x |
| Adjusting to remote/hybrid work | x | x | | | | x | | | |
| Advancement challenges | x | | x | x | | x | x | x | x |
| Fundraising priorities | | x | x | x | x | | | | |
| Impact of the pandemic on advancement | | x | x | x | x | | | | |
| Videoconference fatigue | | | x | x | | | | | |
| DEIB | | | | | x | | | | x |

MAJOR FINDING: CONFIDENCE IN MEETING GOALS IS BELOW LEVELS LAST SEEN PRIOR TO MAY 2021






- WASHBURN & MCGOLDRICK'S June 2023 *Advancement Moving Forward* survey reveals that **confidence in achieving institutional advancement goals remains low relative to survey results over the last two years.**
- Despite a 10-point rebound among CAOs/senior staff between December 2022 and June 2023, nearly a quarter of them are not confident in meeting their goals. A third of gift/alumni relations officers are not confident.
- The decrease in confidence may be related to increasing concern among donors about the economy. As shown on page 3, two-thirds of CAOs/senior staff report seeing an increase.

MAJOR FINDING: PROSPECTS AND DONORS INCREASINGLY EXPRESS CONCERNS ABOUT THE ECONOMY





- The results of the June 2023 WASHBURN & MCGOLDRICK *Advancement Moving Forward* survey show that **a large majority (69%) of advancement leaders are noting an increase in prospects/donors' concerns about the economy compared to last year.**
- Twenty-six percent (26%) report they have not noted a change.
- Free-text comments in the survey indicate growing concern among fundraisers that uncertainty about the direction of the economy may negatively impact gift discussions.
- This question was asked only to CAOs/senior staff, who typically manage prospects with higher capacity and provide the largest share of total giving.




MAJOR FINDING: FY22-FY23 TOTAL PRIVATE SUPPORT (TPS) IS EVENLY SPLIT BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS REPORTING POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE CHANGE

| Table 1 | | |
|---|--|---|
| % of Institutions with Positive Change FY22 – FY23 | % of Institutions with No Change FY22 – FY23 | % of Institutions with Negative Change FY22 – FY23 |
|  49% |  3% |  47% |

- **Growth in total private support was uneven across institutions between FY22 and FY23.** Forty-nine percent (49%) of institutions report positive growth, while 47% report negative growth.

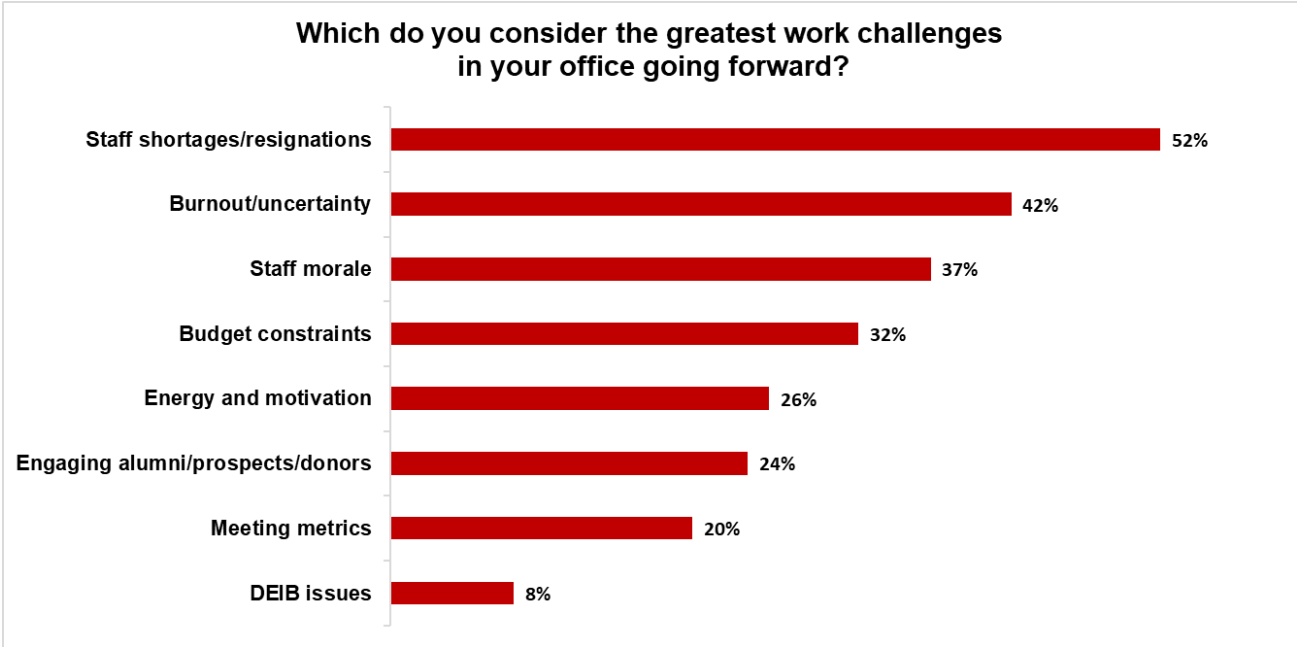
| Table 2 | |
|---|--|
| Average % Growth in Dollars FY22 – FY23 | Average Planned % Growth in Dollars FY23 – FY24 |
|  15% |  4% |

- **On average, responding institutions report 15% growth in total private support from FY 2022 to FY 2023.** Planned or budgeted growth for FY23 – FY24 averages 4%.

| Table 3 | | |
|---|---|---|
| % of Institutions with Planned Positive Change FY23 – FY24 | % of Institutions with No Planned Change FY23 – FY24 | % of Institutions with Planned Negative Change FY23 – FY24 |
|  49% |  15% |  37% |

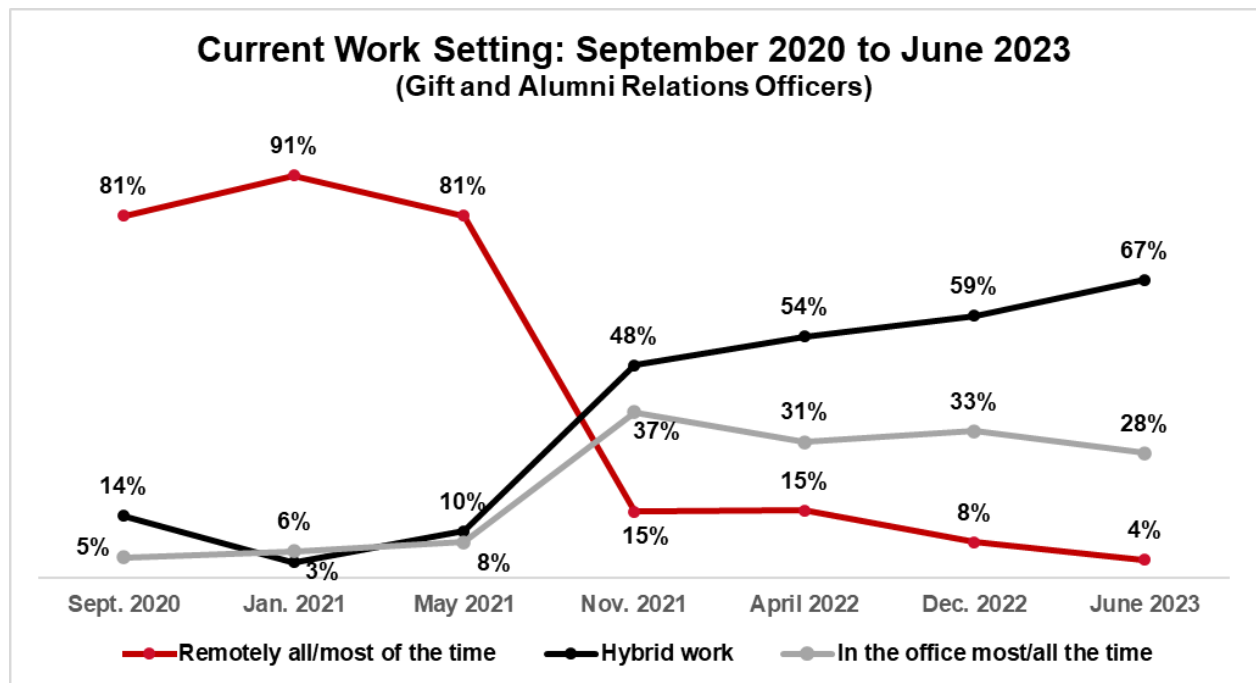
- **Half of responding institutions are planning for no change or negative change in the coming fiscal year.** Forty-nine percent (49%) of institutions have planned for positive growth, 15% have planned to remain even, and 37% have planned for a decrease in TPS.
- As shown on pages 2 and 3, this may, at least in part, reflect concerns expressed by donors about the direction of the economy.

MAJOR FINDING: RESIGNATIONS, BURNOUT, AND MORALE ARE THE LEADING CHALLENGES IN ADVANCEMENT



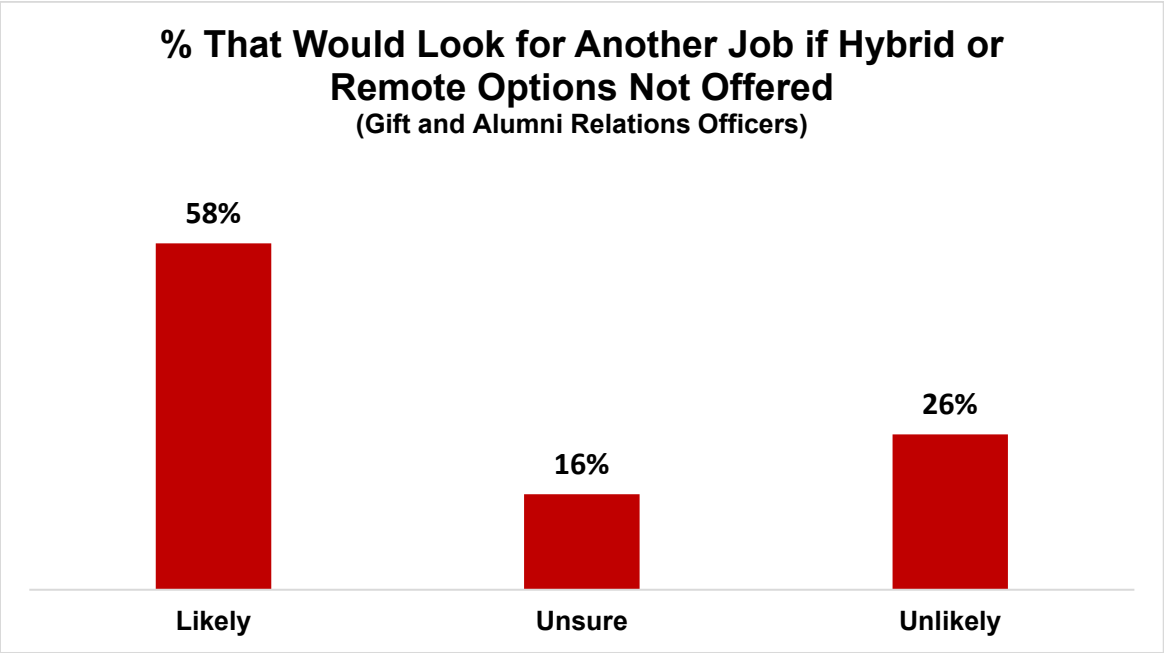
- The June 2023 WASHBURN & MCGOLDRICK *Advancement Moving Forward* survey indicates that **staffing issues remain a top concern for advancement professionals**. Respondents were asked to indicate their top work challenges going forward.
- **Currently, 52% responded that staff shortages and resignations will be a major challenge going forward**. This ranks well ahead of the seven other options. Related issues ranking second and third are burnout/uncertainty (42%) and staff morale (37%).
- **Only a quarter of respondents indicate that energy/motivation and engaging constituents are challenges going forward**. In addition, a relatively small number (20%) of respondents indicated that meeting metrics is a challenge. These three categories, taken together, suggest large majorities of advancement professionals feel motivated, and are less concerned about their ability to engage constituents or meet their metrics. Yet, at the same time, they (or their colleagues) are concerned about the effects of staff resignations, burnout, and low morale.

MAJOR FINDING: HYBRID WORK SETTINGS HAVE BECOME THE NORM FOR GIFT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICERS



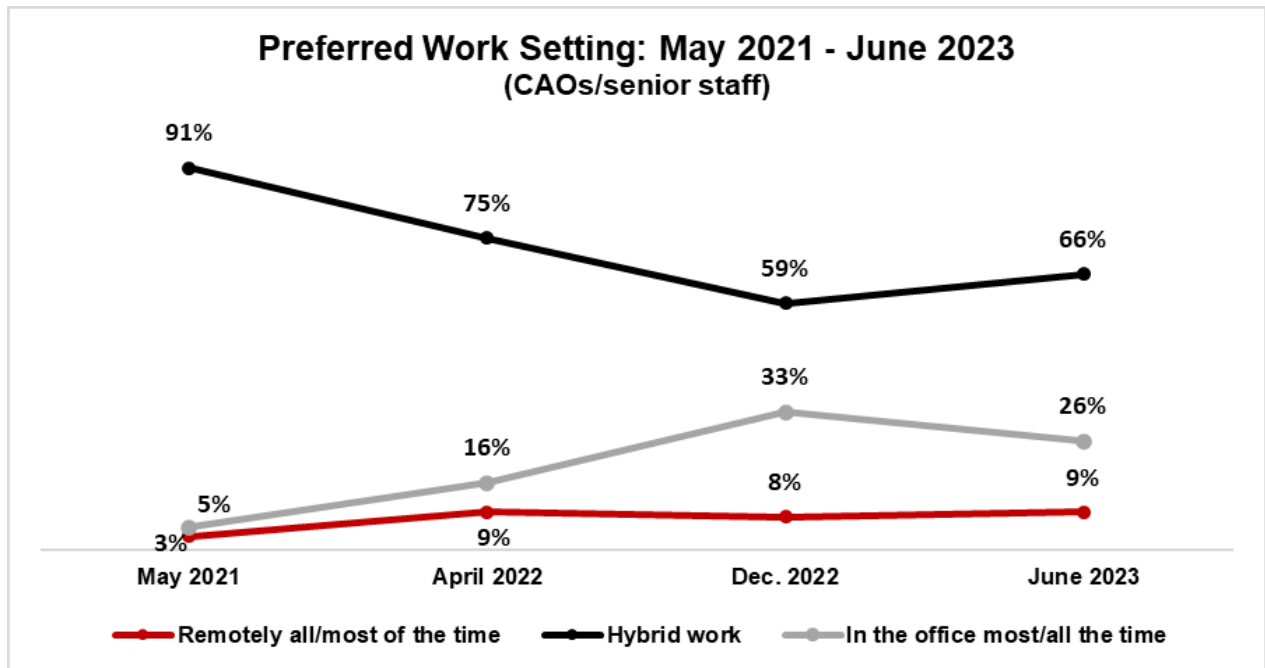
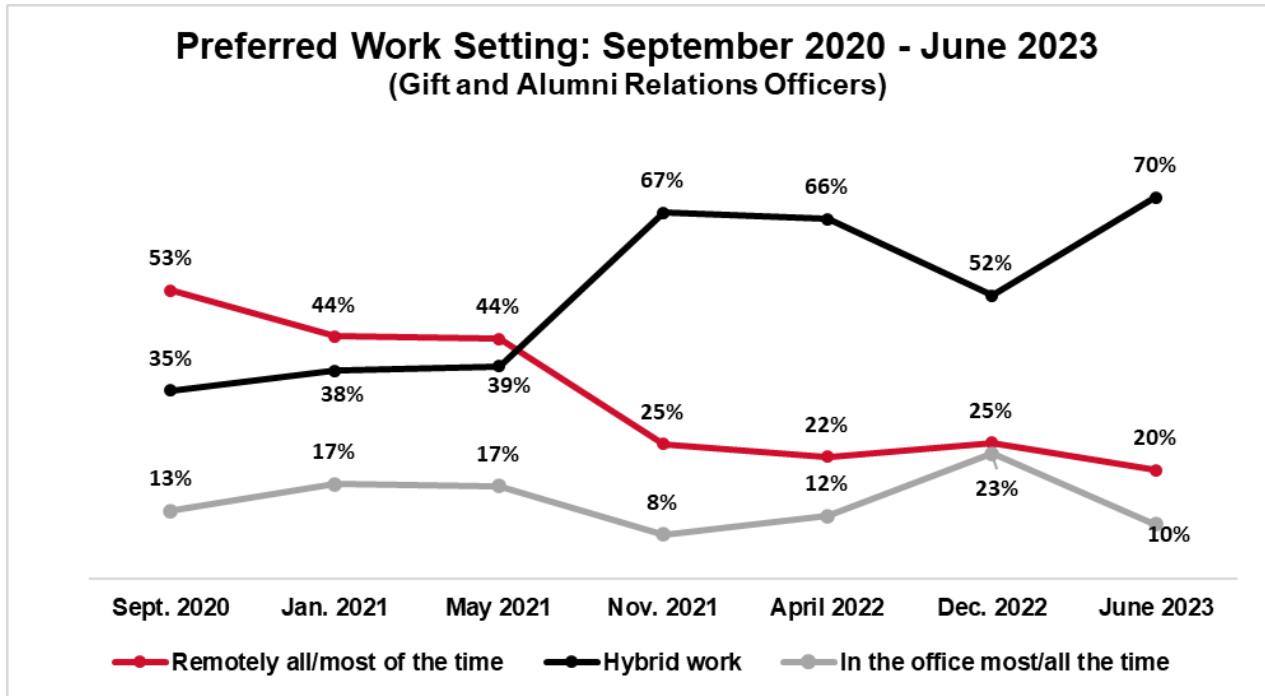
- The results of the June 2023 WASHBURN & MCGOLDRICK *Advancement Moving Forward* survey show that **67% of respondents are working a hybrid schedule**, the highest level yet recorded. It is by far the most common schedule arrangement when compared to working full-time in either the office (28%) or remotely (4%).
- **The trends for the three “modes” of work followed the path of the COVID-19 pandemic.** In pre-vaccine and mask-mandated period between September 2020 and May 2021, virtually all respondents answered they worked remotely. Between May 2021 and November 2021, as the vaccine became more widely administered and other measures reassured the public that the virus was more under control, remote work plummeted from 81% to 15% and in this survey was just 4%.
- The WASHBURN & MCGOLDRICK *Advancement Moving Forward* survey indicates **the decline in remote work is not resulting in similar increases in full-time work in the office.** While the percentage who worked remotely declined significantly from 81% to 4%, the percentage working full-time in the office has only increased from 8% to 28% over the past two years. The increase in hybrid work is outpacing returning to full-time office work. In the two years between May 2021 and June 2023, the percentage of gift/alumni relations officers working a hybrid schedule has increased 57 points from 10% to 67%.

MAJOR FINDING: STAFF WILL CONSIDER LEAVING THEIR JOBS IF REQUIRED TO WORK FULL-TIME IN AN OFFICE



- The results of the June 2023 WASHBURN & MCGOLDRICK *Advancement Moving Forward* survey show the **majority of gift and alumni relations officers would look for a new job if required to return to full-time office work**. These data suggest that requiring remote or hybrid staff to give up their current work setting would exacerbate the challenges of ongoing staff shortages in advancement.
- **The data shows 58% of gift and alumni relations officers would be likely to look for another job if working full-time in an office was required.** Workers who have gone to remote or hybrid schedules want to keep it that way.
- **The greatest risk is losing up to 58% of the hybrid workers who represent 67% of all gift and alumni officers.** The same risk exists for fully remote workers, though they represent just 4% of the advancement workforce.
- **Overall, these data may explain why potential staff resignations, along with current staff shortages, burnout, and morale, are critical challenges to advancement.** Advancement leadership will need to carefully evaluate this finding as they consider decisions about limiting work choices and changing what has become an expectation for many staff.

MAJOR FINDING: STAFF PREFER HYBRID WORK SETTINGS BY A WIDE MARGIN—AND SO DO CAOs/SENIOR STAFF

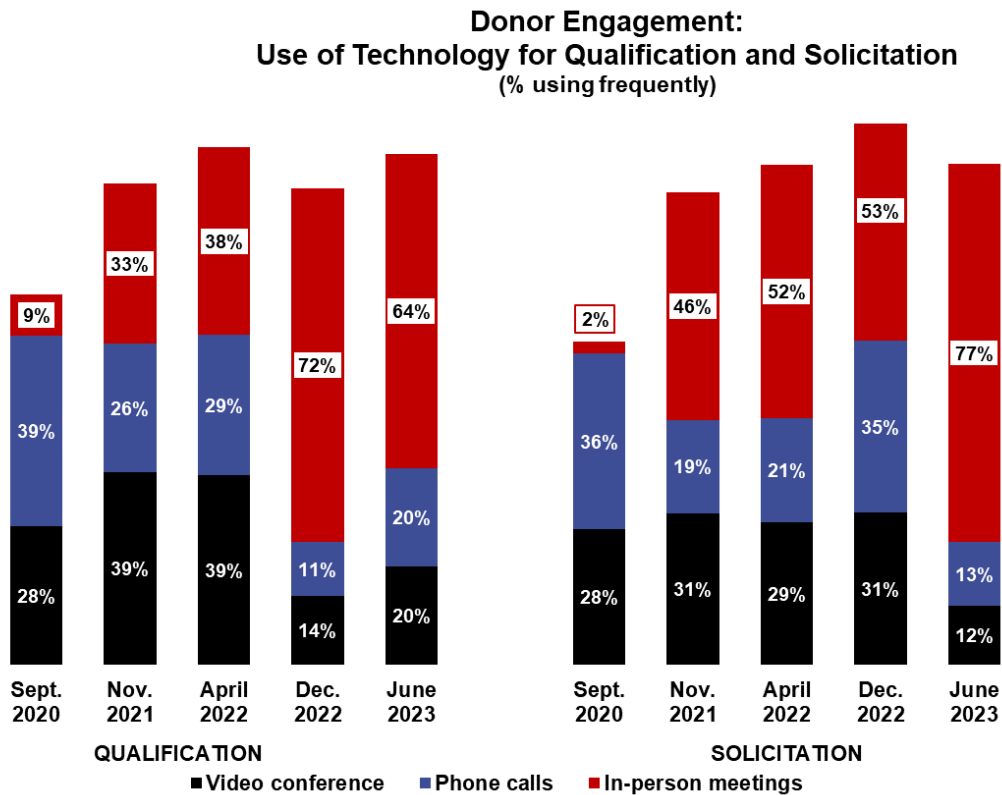


- The results of the June 2023 WASHBURN & MCGOLDRICK *Advancement Moving Forward* survey show that **more than two-thirds (70%) of gift and alumni relations officers indicate that they would prefer a hybrid work schedule.** Data collected since September 2020

indicates that interest in hybrid work schedules has increased dramatically, from 35% in September 2020 to 70% in this survey. Twenty percent (20%) would prefer to work primarily remotely, and 10% would prefer to work primarily in the office.

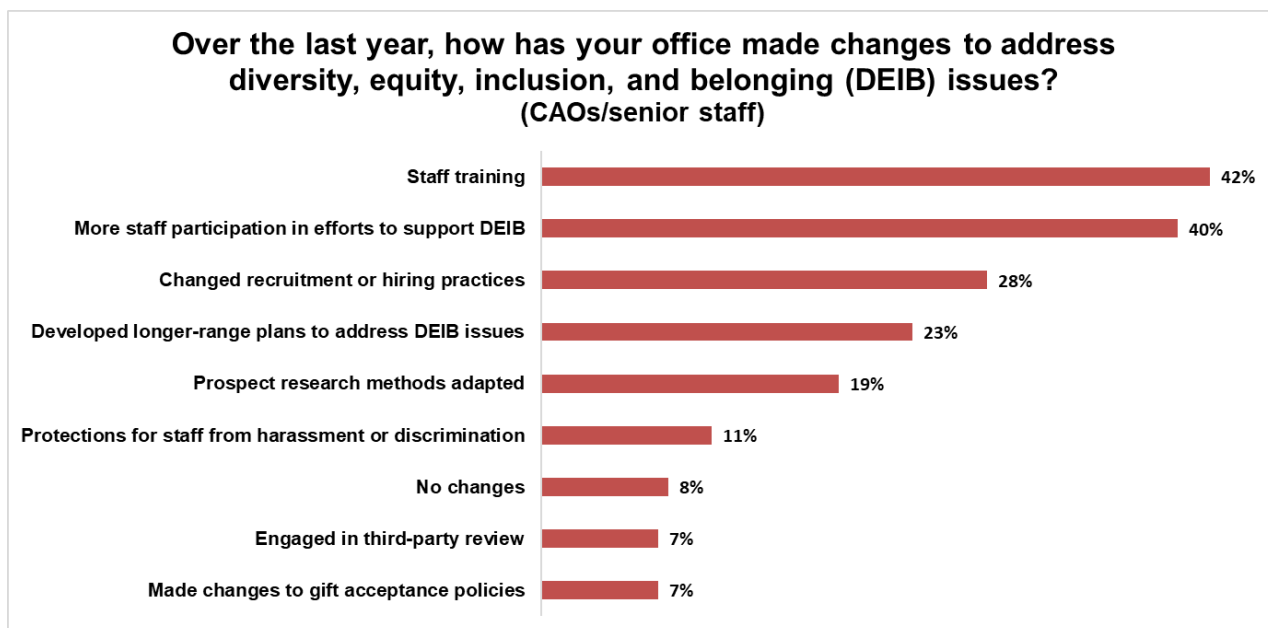
- **Two-thirds (66%) of CAOs/senior advancement staff answered that they would prefer a hybrid work schedule.**
- **There has been a fundamental shift in expectations around work locations.** The experience of working either remotely/at home or on a hybrid schedule seems to have established a new standard for work settings. Challenging that standard will present advancement leadership with a set of threats if the interest in working outside the office is unmet.

MAJOR FINDING: THE PREDOMINATE METHOD OF DONOR ENGAGEMENT IS IN-PERSON MEETINGS, THOUGH USE OF PHONE AND VIDEOCONFERENCING IS COMMON



- The results of the June 2023 WASHBURN & MCGOLDRICK *Advancement Moving Forward* survey show a **sustained return to in-person qualification (64%) and solicitation (77%) meetings**, as advancement professionals shift away from the videoconferencing and phone calls that predominated during the pandemic.
- **Since September 2020 there has been a steady return to in-person qualification and solicitation meetings and a parallel decline in the use of phone calls to engage donors.** At that time over 90% of donor engagement meetings were conducted by phone or video conferencing. Only 9% of qualification and 2% of solicitation meetings were in-person. Currently, two-thirds of qualification meetings and more than three-quarters of all solicitation meetings are in-person.
- **Videoconferencing and phone calls still have their place, however.** Forty percent (40%) of respondents frequently use those means for qualification and 25% use them frequently for solicitation.

MAJOR FINDING: MANY ADVANCEMENT OFFICES ARE DIRECTLY ADDRESSING DEIB ISSUES



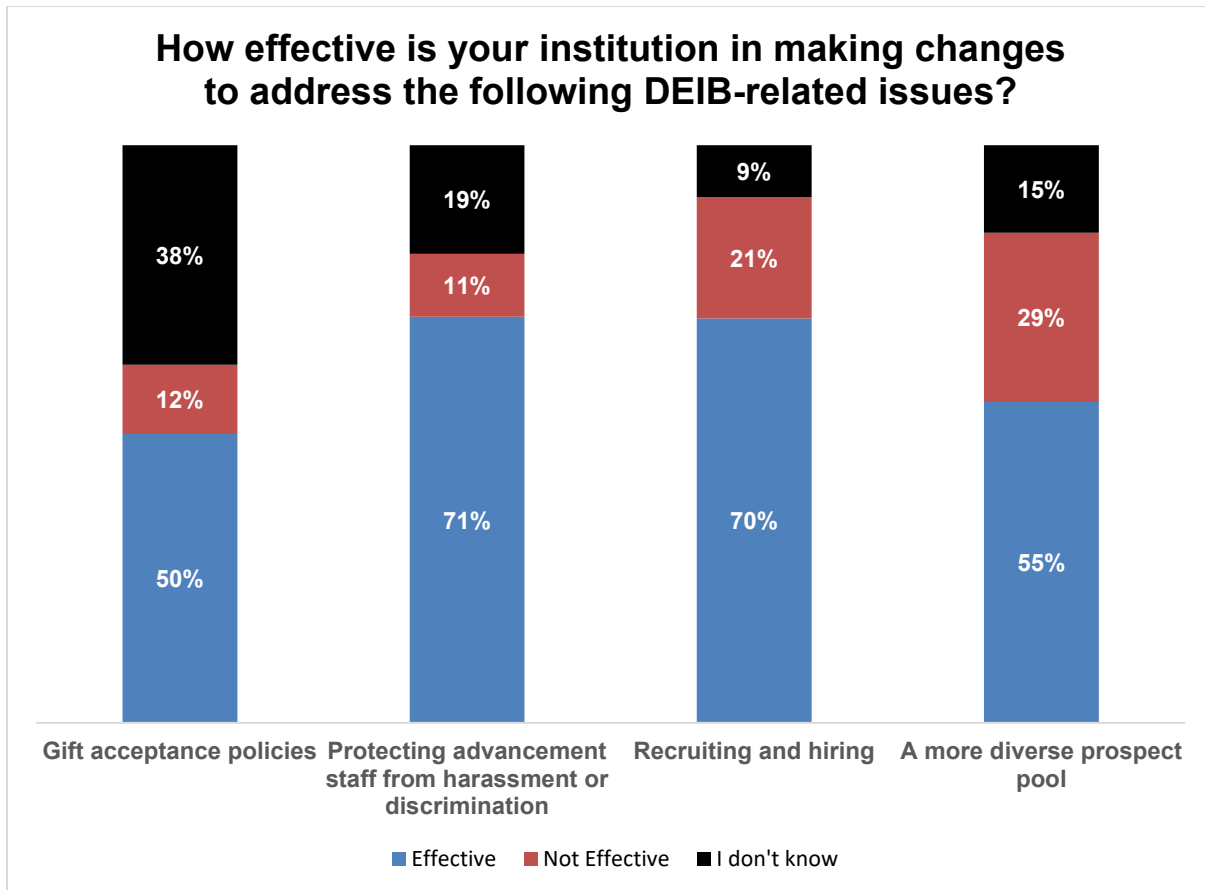
- The results of the June 2023 WASHBURN & MCGOLDRICK *Advancement Moving Forward* survey indicate that many CAOs/senior staff are overseeing specific changes in their office to address DEIB issues. Eight percent (8%) report making no changes.
- **Forty-two percent (42%) of CAOs/senior staff answered that over the last year, their office has provided training on DEIB issues. Forty percent (40%) enhanced staff participation in supporting DEIB.**
- Much smaller numbers indicate the office they lead has made changes to identify prospects from diverse backgrounds (19%), developed or enhanced protections for staff from harassment or discrimination (11%) or made changes to gift acceptance policies (7%).

MAJOR FINDING: MOST CAOs/SENIOR STAFF FEEL THEIR INSTITUTIONS ARE GIVING ADEQUATE ATTENTION TO DEIB ISSUES

| | Not enough | Adequate | Too much |
|--------------------------------------|------------|----------|----------|
| Leadership support | 10% | 83% | 7% |
| Institutional commitment | 9% | 79% | 12% |
| Acting proactively | 16% | 77% | 6% |
| Providing staff training | 20% | 73% | 7% |
| Reacting to crises | 6% | 69% | 11% |
| Tension on campus | 7% | 67% | 9% |
| Clear messaging | 29% | 66% | 2% |
| Providing financial resources | 22% | 64% | 8% |
| Tension in the community | 14% | 61% | 4% |

- The results of the June 2023 WASHBURN & MCGOLDRICK *Advancement Moving Forward* survey **show that clear majorities of advancement leaders feel their institution is giving adequate emphasis to each of 9 DEIB-related issues.**
- Eighty-three percent (83%) answered that there is adequate support from institutional leadership, 79% feel there is adequate institutional commitment, and 77% feel there is adequate emphasis on acting proactively.
- Conversely, 29% answered there has not been enough emphasis placed on clear messaging related to DEIB topics, and 22% say there has not been enough emphasis on providing financial resources.
- It should be noted that “adequate” may mean different things to different people, particularly as it relates to DEIB issues, which can be a divisive topic. For some respondents, “adequate” may equate to devoting no attention, while for others the term it may mean a minimal level of emphasis but more could be done.

MAJOR FINDING: MOST RESPONDENTS FEEL THAT THEIR INSTITUTION HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE AT MAKING CHANGES TO ADDRESS CERTAIN DEIB-RELATED ISSUES



- The results of the June 2023 WASHBURN & MCGOLDRICK *Advancement Moving Forward* survey **show that most respondents feel that their institution is effectively addressing key issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB).**
- Seventy-one percent (71%) answered that their institution has effectively made changes to protect advancement staff from **harassment or discrimination**, along with 70% who feel effective changes have been made in **recruiting and hiring**.
- Half of respondents answer that their institution has made changes effectively in **gift acceptance policies**, and 55% say their institution has effectively made changes to develop a **more diverse prospect pool**.
- While these percentages are promising, some respondents feel their institution has not been effective in making changes to address these DEIB-related issues, suggesting there is continued room for improvement.

SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES FROM FREE-TEXT COMMENTS: WHAT DO YOU FEEL WILL BE THE MOST SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE TO YOUR WORK IN FY 2024?

- The June 2023 WASHBURN & MCGOLDRICK *Advancement Moving Forward* survey asked the open-ended question, “What do you feel will be the most substantial change to your work in FY 2024?” The question received 171 responses.
- The key themes were identified and organized into the 7 categories that emerged (plus “other”), shown below.

| Theme | CAOs and Senior Staff | Officers | All Respondents |
|-----------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Staffing | 22% | 29% | 27% |
| Goals/metrics | 24% | 21% | 22% |
| Leadership | 14% | 20% | 18% |
| Managing change | 17% | 5% | 9% |
| Morale | 10% | 9% | 9% |
| Economy | 10% | 5% | 6% |
| Other | 0% | 8% | 5% |
| Budget | 3% | 4% | 4% |

SELECTED COMMENTS: WHAT DO YOU FEEL WILL BE THE MOST SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE TO YOUR WORK IN FY 2024?

- **Staffing**

“Continued staff shortages.”

“The largest change would occur if we are fully staffed next fiscal year. It would have an impact on fundraising and staff morale.”

“Hopefully we'll be successful in filling vacant positions, thereby alleviating oversized workloads on many staff, myself included.”

“Less volume due to finally being fully staffed since 3 years ago.”

“Having a full staff, FINALLY.”

“Being fully staffed and therefore more strategic and proactive, versus short-staffed and reactive.”

- **Goals/metrics**

“I anticipate more pressure to close gifts and less emphasis on following the donor's timeline. Also, there will be more emphasis on unit advancement staff urging donors to support cross-disciplinary campus programs rather than unit-specific priorities.”

“Leadership seems likely to place more pressure on us to get more results in terms of dollars, donors and visits, yet has no plans to increase our resources. So I suspect my work will become more difficult and lead to more burnout.”

“Moving to an organization with fair and well-developed metrics.”

- **Leadership**

“We will have a new President.”

“New dean, new university wide strategic plan, restructuring advancement office to align with strategic plan and prep for new campaign.”

“New Leadership structure in Advancement and unknown management styles. The most recent candidate pool has not been promising. Based on my observations, leadership in higher education need more people focused coaching on how to understand employees, motivate them and drive performance. We should take a page from the private sector to learn. As Zig Ziglar said, "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care." Sadly, this is not understood at my institution.”

- **Managing change**

“Change will remain constant and our institution is not prepared to create proactive plans and ideas rather than simply always responding. In part because our campus is tired. In particular, leadership changes but also external forces.”

“Challenges to higher education, especially in the media with a presidential election cycle. Managing the message about the institution and its path forward with population decreases in the Northeast.”

- **Morale**

“Team burnout.”

“Positive changes - I continue to be empowered to work at higher levels of the institution.”

“We have a new VP of Advancement that started in October 2022. The office morale and work environment has improved immensely. I feel this will only continue in the next fiscal year along with implementing the college's strategic plan.”

- **Economy**

“The impact market volatility will have on campaign gift asks.”

“Building a new pipeline while the economy is facing high inflation and uncertainty of rebound timing. It will be more difficult to secure major gifts with my current pool as housing, transportation and food costs continue to rise.”

“Response to potential economic crisis, donors wanting to wait and see.”

- **Budget**

“Budget restraints to implement strategic plan for campaign.”

“Continuing to raise more money with the same or less resources.”

“Expectations are not decreasing, but the budget to work with has.”

METHODOLOGY

- The **June 2023** survey was sent on May 22, 2023 to 2,775 CAOs, vice presidents for advancement, AVPs, directors of development, gift officers (school/center-based, central, and regional) and alumni relations officers at universities, colleges, museums, and independent schools throughout the US. The survey closed on June 11, 2023.
- The survey took four minutes to complete, with an 83% completion rate. This includes responses to open-ended questions.
- **Responses to the June 2023 survey were received from 348** individuals (150 CAOs/senior advancement staff and 198 gift/alumni relations officers), **representing 121 institutions**. Responses were received from 7 independent schools, 5 HBCUs, and 6 HSIs.
- **Margin of error:** While response rates are frequently cited as a measure of a survey's "success," the margin of error is the more important statistic. **It is a measure of the accuracy of the results.** The margin of error for the June 2023 survey is +/- 4.9% at 95% confidence level. This suggests that we are 95% certain that results of this *Advancement Moving Forward* survey are within 4.9% of the results we would have observed if we had responses from all 4,414 individuals who were sent the survey. An acceptable margin of error used by most surveys is typically between 4% and 8% at the 95% confidence level.
- The **December 2022** survey had 423 respondents representing 126 institutions (margin of error +/- 4.4% at 95% confidence level).
- The **April 2022** survey had 491 respondents representing 133 institutions (margin of error +/- 4.1% at 95% confidence level).
- The **November 2021** survey had 455 respondents representing 119 institutions (margin of error +/- 4.1% at 95% confidence level).
- The **April 2021** survey had 461 respondents representing 103 institutions (margin of error +/- 4.0% at 95% confidence level).
- The **January 2021** survey had 506 respondents representing 84 institutions (margin of error +/- 3.6% at 95% confidence level).
- The **September 2020** survey had 430 respondents representing 59 institutions (margin of error +/- 3.7% at 95% confidence level).
- The **June 2020** survey had 386 respondents representing 53 institutions (margin of error +/- 3.9% at a 95% confidence level).
- The **April 2020** survey had 416 respondents representing 48 institutions (margin of error +/- 3.7% at 95% confidence level).

Results of all the surveys are available at <https://www.wash-mcg.com/>.

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Amherst College | Georgetown University |
| Appalachian State University | Gettysburg College |
| Arizona State University | Governor's Academy * |
| Bates College | Grinnell College |
| Berea College | Hamilton College |
| Binghamton University | Haverford College |
| Bowdoin College | Illinois Institute of Technology |
| Brewster Academy * | Kalamazoo College |
| Bucknell University | Kenyon College |
| Carleton College | Kingswood Oxford |
| Carnegie Mellon University | Knox College |
| Carroll University | Lafayette College |
| Claremont McKenna College | Loyola University - Maryland |
| Colgate University | Lycoming College |
| College of the Holy Cross | Macalester College |
| College of Wooster | Marist College |
| Colorado College | Middlebury College |
| Davidson College | Miss Porter's School* |
| Denison University | Morehouse College |
| Depauw University | Mount Holyoke College |
| Dickinson College | Muhlenberg College |
| Elon University | North Carolina Central University |
| Fairfield Prep* | North Carolina School of Science and Math |
| Fairfield University | North Carolina State University |
| Florida International University | Northwest Indian College |
| Fordham University | Oberlin College and Conservatory |
| Franklin & Marshall College | Occidental College |
| Frostburg | Ohio University |
| Furman University | Ohio Wesleyan University |
| George Fox University | |

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|------------------------------------|---|
| Olympic College | Trinity University (TX) |
| Philander Smith College | Union College |
| Potsdam University (SUNY) | University of Maryland - Baltimore County |
| Providence College | University of Buffalo |
| Rollins College | University of California Santa Barbara |
| Rosemont College | University of Central Florida |
| Scripps College | University of Chicago Booth School of Business |
| Siena College | University of Houston |
| Skidmore College | University of Maryland - College Park |
| Smith College | University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science |
| Smithsonian Institutions^ | University of Missouri System |
| South Baylor University | University of New Hampshire |
| Southwestern University | University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill |
| Springfield College (MA) | University of North Carolina - Charlotte |
| St Catherine University | University of Pittsburgh |
| St. John Fisher College | University of Rhode Island |
| St Cloud State University | University of Richmond |
| St Lawrence University | Vanderbilt University |
| Stonehill College | Vassar College |
| Suffolk University | Virginia Museum of Fine Arts^ |
| Swarthmore College | Virginia State University |
| Syracuse University | Virginia Tech University |
| Texas Christian University | Wake Forest University |
| Texas Lutheran University | Washington and Lee University |
| Texas Tech University | Washington University - Saint Louis |
| The Catholic University of America | Wesleyan University |
| The Hotchkiss School * | Wheaton College (MA) |
| Towson University | Whitman College |
| Trinity College (CT) | William and Mary |
| | Williams College |
| | Winston-Salem State University |
| | Woodberry Forest School * |

* *Independent school*
^*Museum*