Making Gratitude a Habit: Languages of Appreciation at a School of Pharmacy

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CU Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
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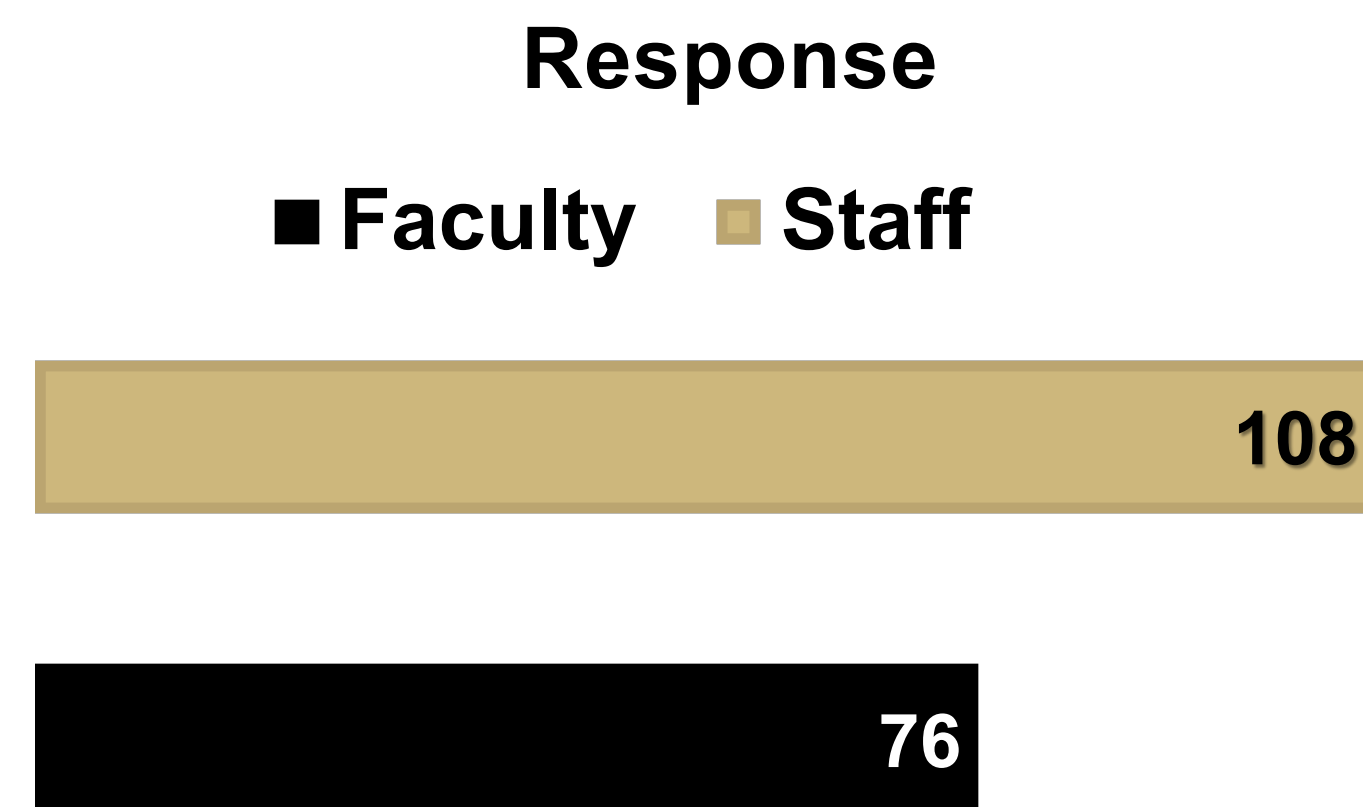ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Background

➢ 79% of employees quit due to lack of appreciation from manager/supervisor or colleagues.[1]
➢ Research shows that genuine and individualized appreciation in the workplace:
  • Boosts retention
  • Leads to a positive and supportive work environment
➢ In the general workforce, 46% of people choose Words of Affirmation as their primary language of appreciation, 26% choose Quality Time, 21% choose Acts of Service and 7% choose Tangible Gifts.
➢ The purpose of this survey was to identify the primary appreciation language of employees at the University of Colorado Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (CUSSPPS).
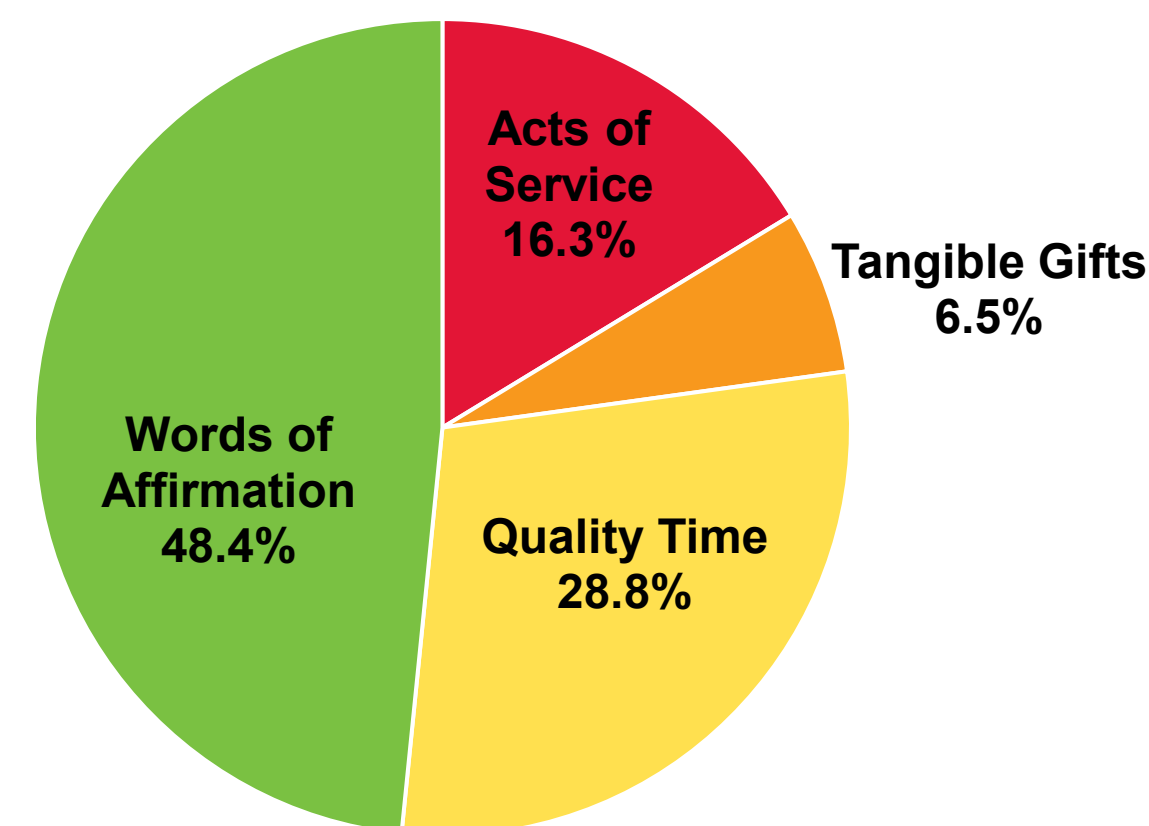
Methods

➢ A 30-question survey developed to determine the primary language of appreciation in the workplace was sent to full-time CUSSPPS faculty and staff (general and research). n= 241
➢ The survey was adapted from the book The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace.[2]
➢ The languages of appreciation include Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Acts of Service, and Tangible Gifts. Physical touch was not included as a category.
➢ Data was collected for quality improvement purposes.

Results

➢ A total of 184 faculty and staff responded to the Languages of Appreciation survey
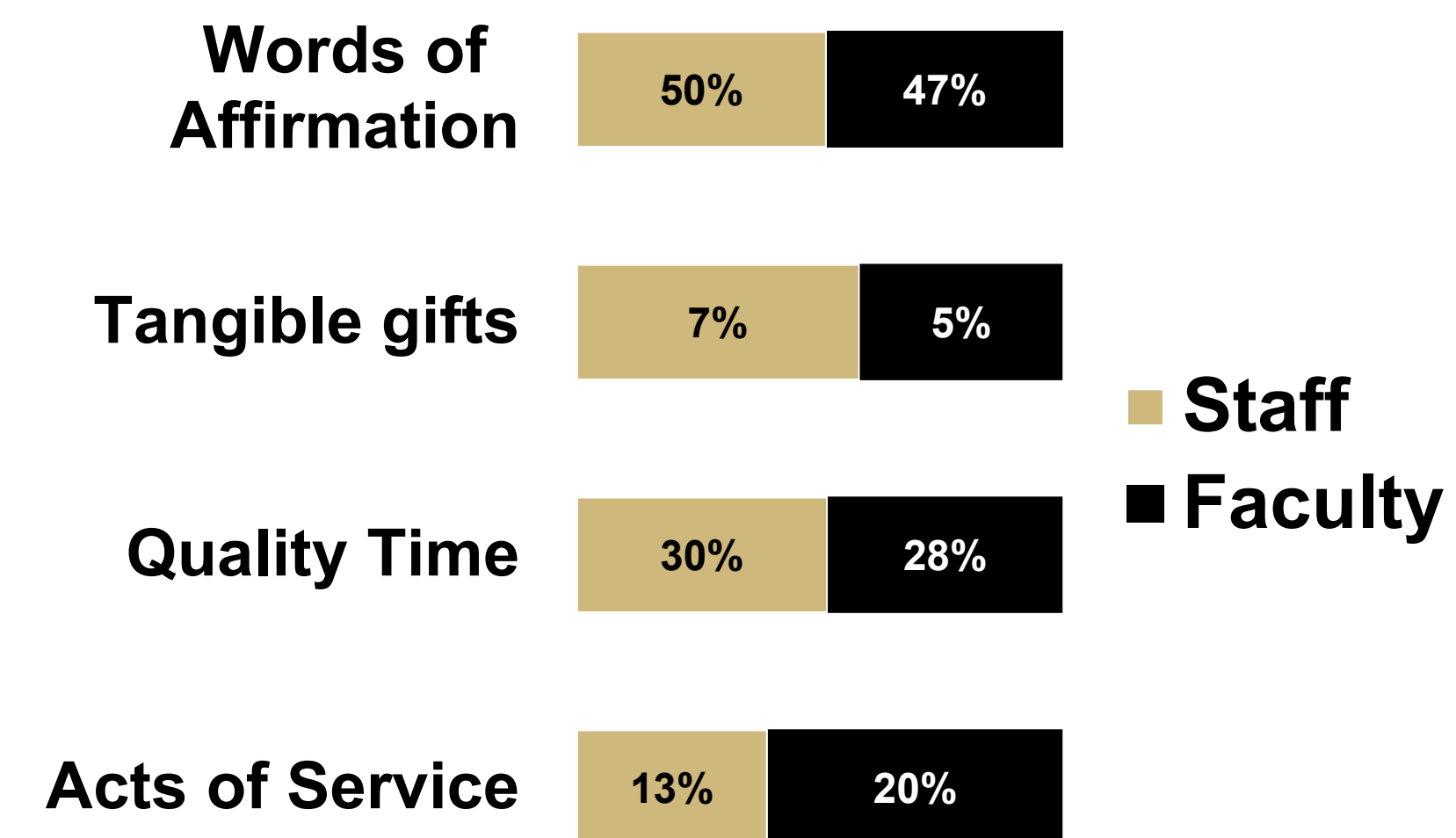➢ Response rate = 76%

Response

■ Faculty ■ Staff

Staff: 108
Faculty: 76

Comparison of Primary Language of Appreciation

	Staff	Faculty
Words of Affirmation	50%	47%
Tangible gifts	7%	5%
Quality Time	30%	28%
Acts of Service	13%	20%

➢ Faculty were 7% more likely to appreciate Acts of Service when compared to staff

Highest Primary Language of Appreciation CUSSPPS Faculty & Staff

Acts of Service 16.3%
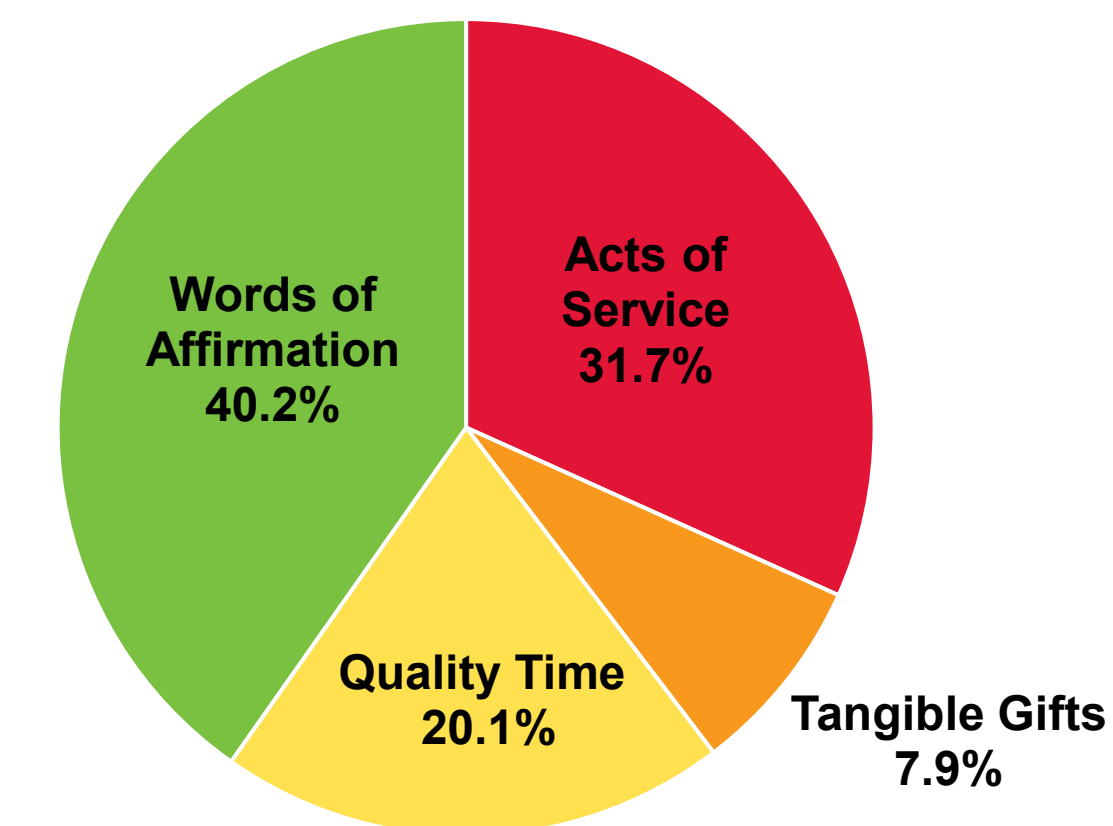Tangible Gifts 6.5%
Words of Affirmation 48.4%
Quality Time 28.8%

➢ 20% of Faculty and Staff surveyed identified as having more than one primary language of appreciation

Highest Primary Language of Appreciation Medical Professionals[3]

Acts of Service 31.7%
Words of Affirmation 40.2%
Quality Time 20.1%
Tangible Gifts 7.9%

➢ Compared to other work settings, medical professionals more frequently choose Acts of Service as their secondary language of appreciation over Quality Time

Conclusions

➢ Faculty and Staff responses coincided on both the primary and the least chosen languages of appreciation.
➢ Faculty and Staff differed in their secondary language of appreciation.
➢ The CUSSPPS results are aligned with the literature on this subject.[2]
➢ Each person expresses and receives appreciation differently, and understanding these preferences can boost employee morale, engagement, and collaboration.

Future Directions

➢ Develop an opt-in program for CUSSPPS faculty and staff to share their languages of appreciation with supervisors and teams to foster stronger bonds and minimize miscommunication.
➢ Intentional culture-building events will incorporate activities to recognize the different languages of appreciation:
  • Examples: providing thank you cards at events, training on Kudo boards, CU swag giveaways
➢ New CUSSPPS employees will complete the Languages of Appreciation survey during new employee integration.

References

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2. Chapman G and While P. *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace*. Northfield Publishing; 2019.
3. White P. *The Five Languages Of Appreciation: Understanding How To Show Gratitude In The Workplace*. HR.com. https://www.hr.com/en/magazines/recognition_engagement_excellence_essentials/april_2023_human_experience_excellence_engagement_performance_rewards_recognition/the-five-languages-of-appreciation-understanding-h_lgaxzkpq.html. Accessed June 30, 2024.