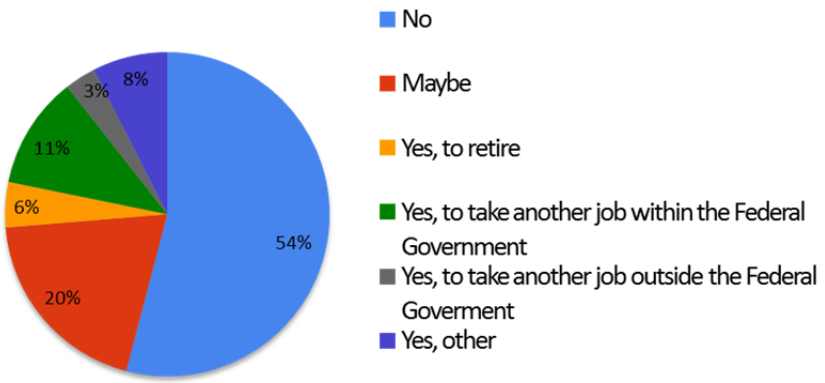
# DPA Working Group Survey

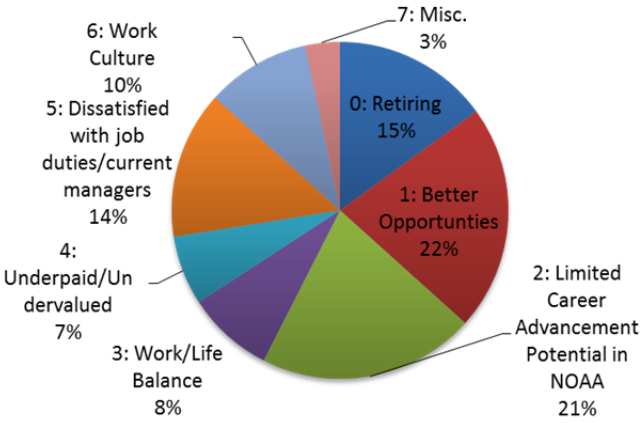
***Summary of Results - September 1, 2015***

## General Survey Results

- A DPA Working Group survey was developed with the intention to assess areas of strength and areas of improvement for job satisfaction, mentorship, diversity, and career advancement.
- Distributed to all-NOAA (approximately 12,500 federal and 10,000 affiliate employees) and open for one month
- 1,609 completed surveys
- Demographics
    - 50% male/female
    - 15.66% underrepresented minorities
    - NWS (35%) and NMFS (28%) were the largest response groups; followed by NOS (11%), NESDIS (6%), and OAR (5%)
    - 25% of respondents are considering leaving NOAA within the next year but most are not (54%).



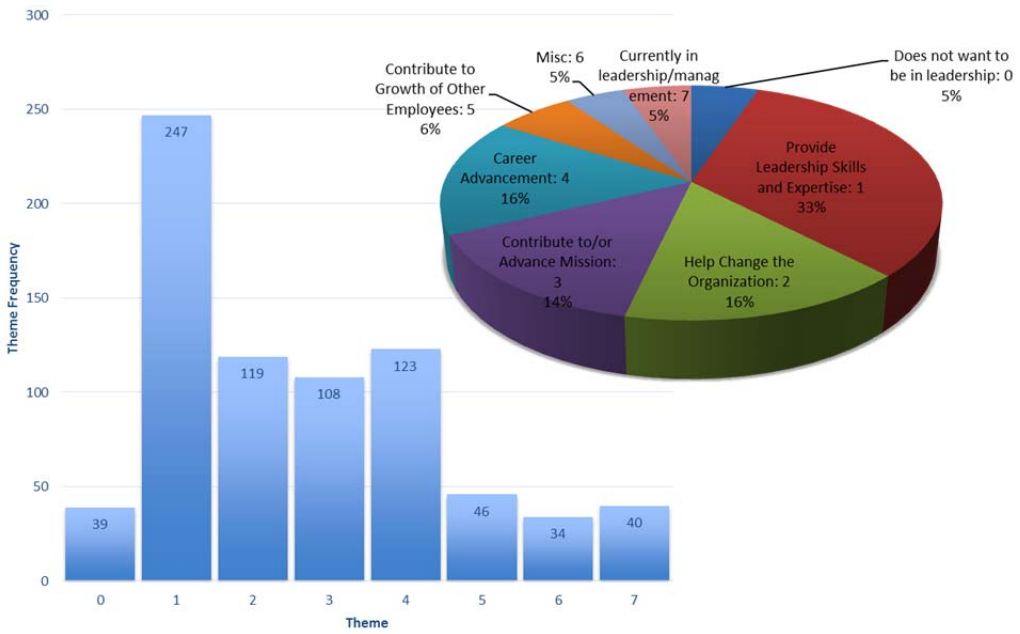
- Comments from respondents who answered yes include the following:




## Survey Responses

- Entry to NOAA
  - Most learned of their position through USAJobs (30%)
  - Most respondents did not receive a NOAA-supported scholarship/fellowship. Top three scholarship/fellowships received included student appointment (8%), Knauss (2.4%), and EPP GSP (1.4%).
- Job satisfaction
  - Generally job satisfaction is high. For example, 78% of respondents feel a sense of belonging at work, and 71% feel valued and affirmed.
- Mentoring
  - 89% believe mentoring is important but only 16% are currently being mentored
  - About 50% want/do not want a mentor
  - About 53% are not interested in becoming a mentor
- Career advancement
  - Responses were nearly split on whether or not their immediate supervisor prepares them for career advancement (51% positive, 48% negative).
  - About 40% applied for a promotion and only half were successful. Top three reasons for being successfully promoted included job performance (92%), serving in an acting position (47%), and training (46%).

- Responses were nearly split on whether or not one had aspirations to become a member of NOAA leadership (Yes: 57%, No: 43%).
  - To provide leadership skills, help change the organization, and contribute to or advance NOAA's mission were the main reasons respondents have aspirations to be a leader in NOAA.




  - Respondents noted the following reasons for not having aspirations to become a member of NOAA's leadership team.
    - Unappealing: Respondents perceived inadequacies and dysfunction in leadership, therefore making leadership positions unappealing.
    - Disinterest: Respondents were not interested in leadership or retiring soon.
    - Unfeasibility: Respondents expressed there is no path to leadership, and also that leadership positions were centered in DC/Silver and they were unwilling to relocate.
    - Vocation: Respondents expressed that they were satisfied with their current work, and did not want to move away from science.
    - Values: Respondents expressed a concern with the work life balance issues of a leadership position and also the increased amount of stress.

- Responses were also nearly split on whether or not NOAA's leadership development programs are accessible options for becoming a member of leadership. Respondents

who did not believe NOAA's programs were viable options for becoming a member of leadership noted the following:

- Lack of support/funding/time: Respondents expressed a lack of support from management to participate in the programs.
- Ineligible: Respondents expressed concern over eligibility to attend due to grade or prerequisites.
- Not aware of programs: Respondents were not aware of the programs.
- Favoritism: Respondents feel that participants are pre-selected based on personal relationships.
- Location: Respondents feel NOAA's leadership programs are centered around people who are located within the commuting distance of NOAA HQ.

- Diversity
  - Most people feel treated fairly related to their race/ethnicity (86%)
  - Most believe that their supervisor is committed to and supports racial/ethnic diversity (82%)
  - Many believe that NOAA's policies and programs promote racial/ethnic diversity (70%)
  - However not as many people feel management shows diversity is important through its actions (62%).

## Minority and Majority Comparisons

- Overall, the minority population within NOAA is satisfied with their work, their sense of belonging and their opportunities to develop professional skills to advance.
- However, not many believed that management displays racial/ethnic diversity through its actions (38% vs 69% majority).
- About half of this population feels that NOAA's policies and programs promote racial and ethnic diversity in the workforce (49% vs 76% majority).

**Leadership Development**

- Many of the minority respondents do not have a mentor, yet would like one because they see the value and have aspirations to obtain SES positions.
- Only 40% see NOAA's leadership development programs as a viable option to leadership (vs 50% majority). An associated word cloud is below.

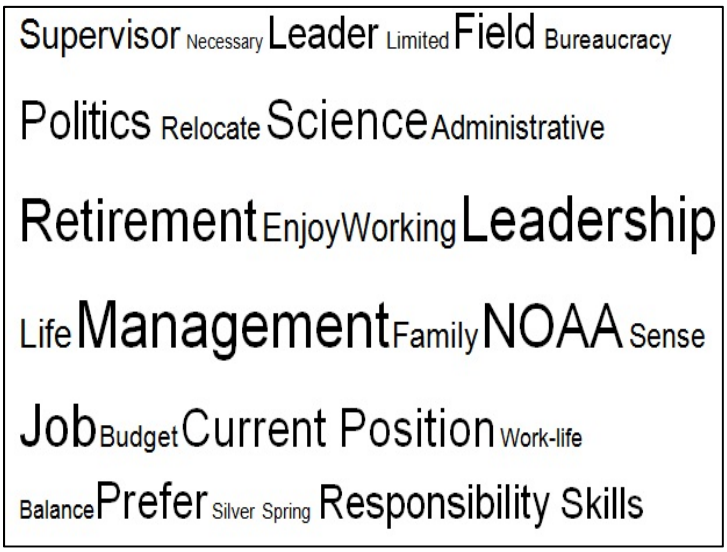
Notable quotes:

- *If there are programs of opportunities they are not shared.*
- *There is no correlation between participation in NOAA's leadership development programs and that participation as a pathway to leadership. Paths to leadership are still closed to the chosen few.*
- *I don't feel that NOAA leadership development programs are accessible to minority applicants. I base this belief on the evidence of the low number of participants from under-represented groups chosen to participate in programs like the NOAA LDP.*
- *Each LO has its "picks" as to who it wants to be part of these programs and many are not minorities which has been reflected in the past make-up of those selected.*
- *It is a 'good ole boy/girl' system. If you think differently than the current Executives then your opportunities are limited. There lacks ethnic diversity amongst the SES in NOAA*

**Aspirations to be a Leader in NOAA**

- Many minority respondents have strong feelings of commitment to their work and the overall mission of the agency.
- Slightly more minority respondents (64%) than majority respondents (57%) have aspirations to be a leader in NOAA. However many do not see a clear path to obtaining leadership positions.

- The word cloud below provides some insight regarding responses of those who did not have aspirations to become a member of NOAA's leadership team.




Notable quotes:

- *NOAA from what I have seen has a good old boy system and hire/promote the majority of the time employees in their circle of friends*
- *It would probably require moving to Silver Spring*
- *I am an older female and feel I am not really valued or seen as likely candidate*
- *Impression that too much of what happens at a NOAA Leadership level does so on the basis of politics, personalities, chain of command and Bargaining Unit considerations -- rather than open, rational consideration and discussion of how to best meet the mission*
- *I don't see anyone in leadership positions who represents my social group (transgendered individuals)*
- *No good role models. I'm too close to retirement. Tried to get into development programs but was thwarted. No spirit or energy left to do a good job as a supervisor*
- *There is not much racial diversity in NOAA leadership. I don't think there is malicious intent on the part of management, however, it is 2015 it is easier to find a workplace with diversity than to wait for it to arrive.*