

Report

*to*  
The Faculty Senate  
*on*

## THE SPRING 2001 SURVEY OF THE FACULTY

*at*  
The State University of New York at Buffalo

### ABSTRACT

This survey was conducted by the Faculty Senate Research and Creative Activity Committee (RACAC), whose charge is as follows: “ This committee shall review, report and recommend to the Senate matters concerning University policies, procedures and actions regarding research and creative activity; University facilities for research and creative activity; funding for research and creative activity; and responsibilities and liabilities of researchers.” The purpose of this survey (of the full and part time faculty at UB) was to determine “issues,” related to research and creative activity, with a view toward recommending “action items” as part of a report to the Faculty Senate. Simply put, “what’s on the minds of the faculty regarding research and creative activity?” The survey was accessed by the respondents using a URL address and an Internet browser. The respondents were required to have a valid faculty username and password. The results of this survey were tabulated electronically and discussed and interpreted by the RACAC. The RACAC herewith formulates its conclusions and recommendations including specifics, where possible. Respondents’ confidentiality was preserved, but did not preclude the option of providing non-confidential information. Over one-half (1/2) of the currently active PI / co-Pi’s responded, and about one-half (1/2) of those provided optional written comments. Some of the demographic data collected include: faculty rank, school, funding level, funding agencies and years at UB. There were strong responses to many of the eighty (80) queries, which were ranked by “strength-of-response”. The RACAC believes that the results of this survey will be very useful to the administration in working with the faculty to achieve mutual goals. Also, the survey format itself can serve as a vehicle for monitoring the progress thereof. Current plans include repeating this survey annually and making this and subsequent reports available as a downloadable pdf file on the Faculty Senate web site.

*prepared by*

The Research and Creative Activity Committee

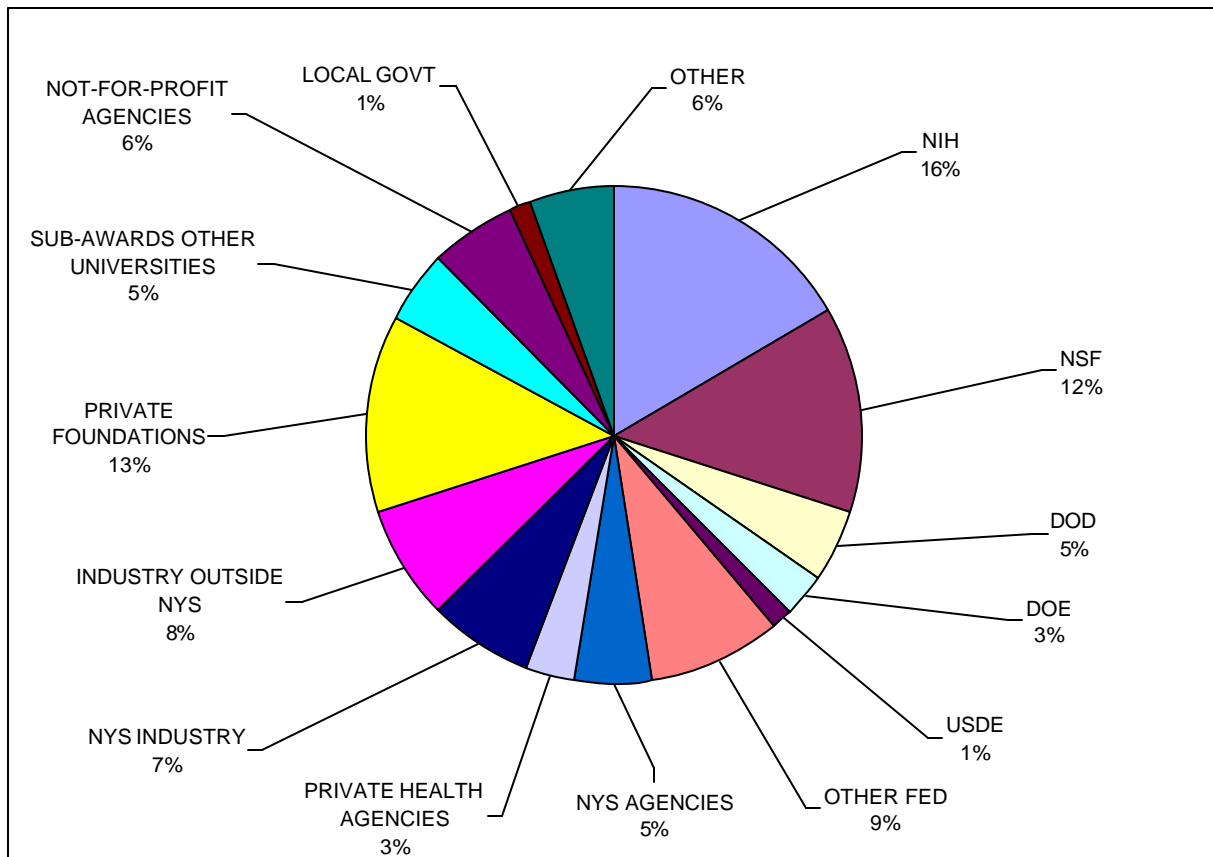
May 8, 2001

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the survey was to find out “what is on the minds of the faculty at UB concerning research and creative activity”, with a view toward improving the atmosphere and supporting services thereof. The RACAC met regularly many times during the Fall 2000 semester and after multiple drafts of the survey instrument, Buffalo Survey and Research Inc. was hired to critique the document with a specific charge of removing any unintentional bias in the queries. The resulting survey instrument “went live” on February 19, 2001, and survey input was terminated on March 19, 2001.

## DEMOGRAPHICS SUMMARY

There are currently about 600 presently funded PI’s or co-PI’s at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Although the survey was intended to include all research and creative activity, there was very little response from faculty involved in unfunded creative activity. Of the 308 respondents to the survey, 302 have been a PI or co-PI on a grant at UB and 300 have been a PI or co-PI on a grant elsewhere. The resulting variety of current funding sources - both federal and otherwise – is shown below.



Most (82%) of the respondents were full time faculty on a state line with a distribution of professors (38%), associate professors (24%), assistant professors (22%) and research/clinical professors of all ranks (9%).

The response frequency of the 15 schools was more or less proportional to their size, with the highest frequencies from: School of Medical and Biomedical Sciences (76), College of Arts and Sciences-Social Sciences (44), School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (42), College of Arts and Sciences-Natural Sciences and Mathematics (39), Health Related Professions (21) and College of Arts and Sciences-Arts and Letters (14).

About 40% (122) of the respondents had total annual funding levels below \$100,000; 25% (77) were between \$249,999 and \$100,000; and 11% (14) had more than \$500,000. The distribution in terms of years at UB was: 0 – 5 years, 26% (81); 6 – 10 years, 19% (58); 11- 15 years, 17% (51) and 16 or more years, 36% (111). The percent totals do not add up to 100% because there were some empty responses to these queries. Unfortunately, the RACAC was advised that “some junior faculty” did not complete the survey for fear of retribution.

## RESULTS

The results of the survey are shown in the accompanying figures. By and large, the results speak for themselves. It can be seen that there are strong responses to many of the queries. The strongest responses are perhaps identifiable by the highest (unipolar) frequency of “strongly agree” / “agree” and “disagree” / “strongly disagree”. Accordingly, each query response was arbitrarily assigned the following numerical values:

“strongly agree” (SA) = -2

“agree” (A) = -1

“neutral” (N) = 0

“disagree” (D) = +1

“strongly disagree” (SD) = +2.

The average of these numerical values, for each query, is the rank (RNK) given in the accompanying figures, sorted by decreasing absolute value of RNK. Also given is the number (n) of responses which were not “don’t know” (DK) or “blank” (B), along with that percentage (%) of the total. Results for each of the individual 15 schools will be made available by special arrangements with the Faculty Senate office.

There were 150 written comments, which are largely consistent with and elaborate on the query results. It is very difficult to briefly summarize these comments. However, the following general themes are prevalent. There is a need (in unranked order) to:

- o Improve direct two-way communications
- o Clarify our mission
- o Increase support for infrastructure
- o Increase support for pilot projects
- o Improve the responsiveness of sponsored programs
- o Address the difficulties of clinical faculty

- o Demystify indirect costs
- o Give more attention to creative activity
- o Provide PI-specific, convenient, user-friendly and useful information on funding sources
- o Improve planning

The verbatim written comments, without identifiers, will be made accessible by appointment with the Faculty Senate office.

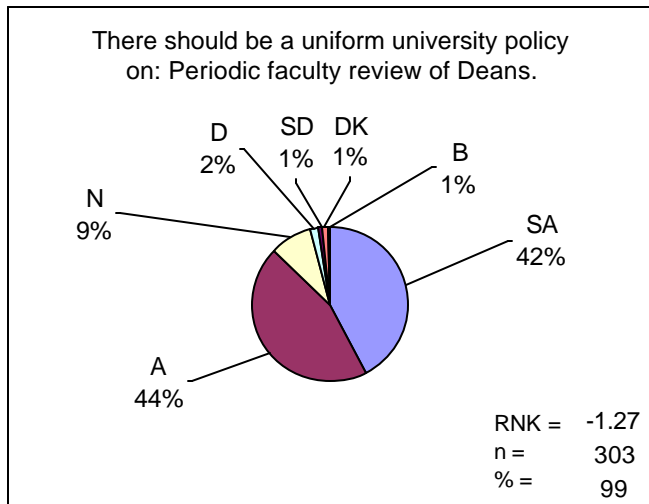
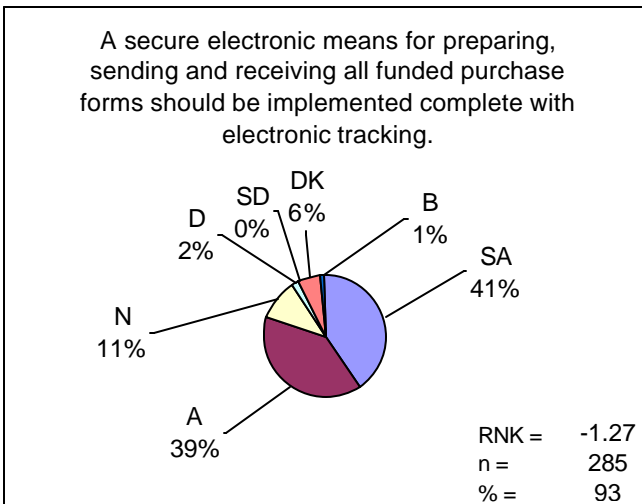
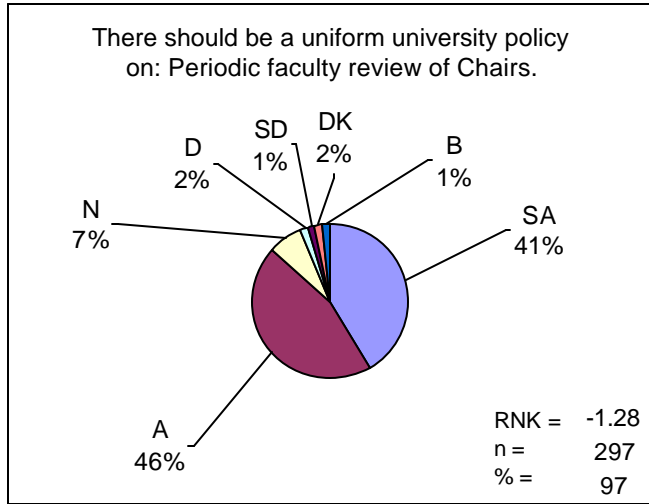
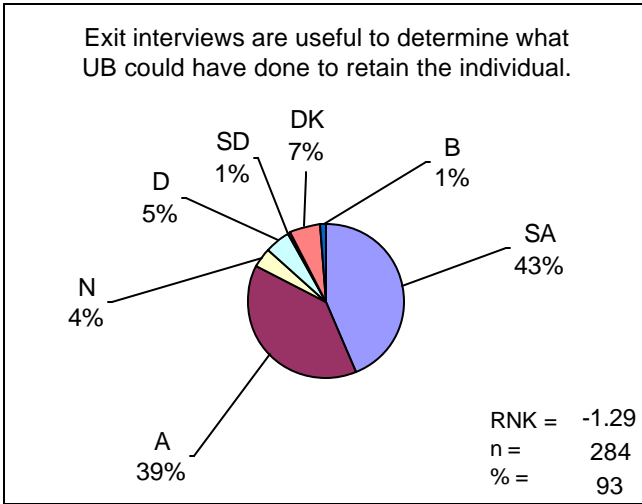
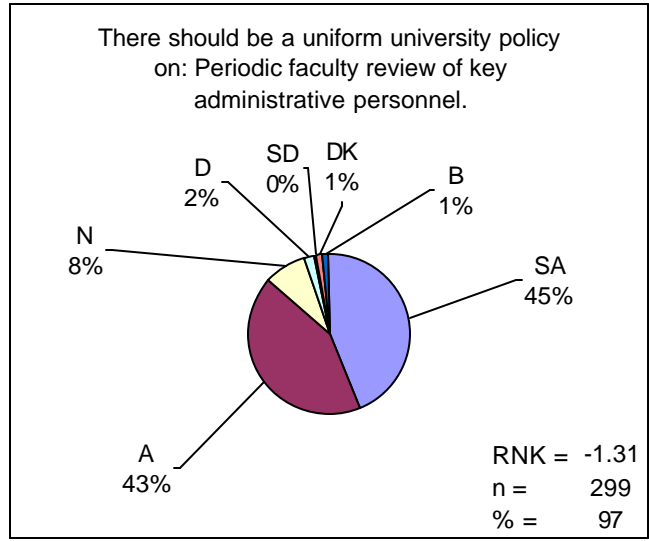
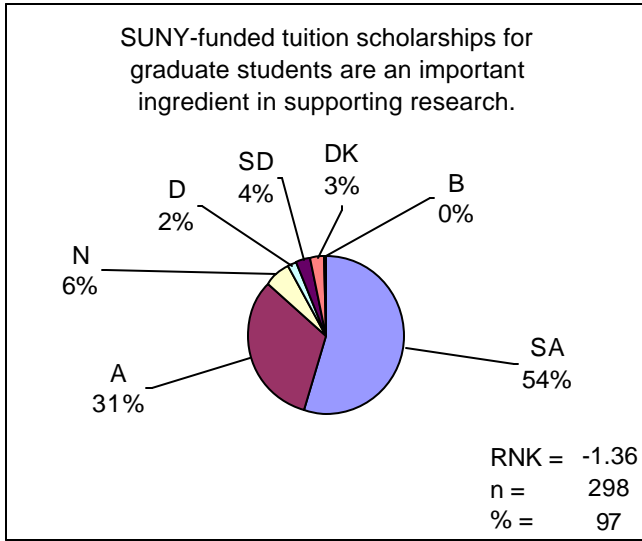
## **RECOMMENDATION**

The RACAC urges the Administration to carefully review the results of this survey and then engage in dialogue to squarely address the issues revealed by this study. It is strongly recommended that these reviews become part of an ongoing process – not a series of “fire drills”. The RACAC believes that the results of this survey will be very useful to the administration in working with the faculty to achieve mutual goals. Also, the survey format itself can serve as a vehicle for monitoring the progress thereof.

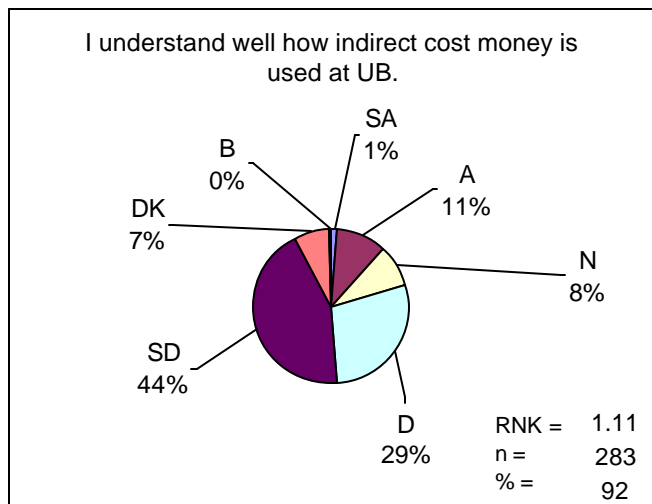
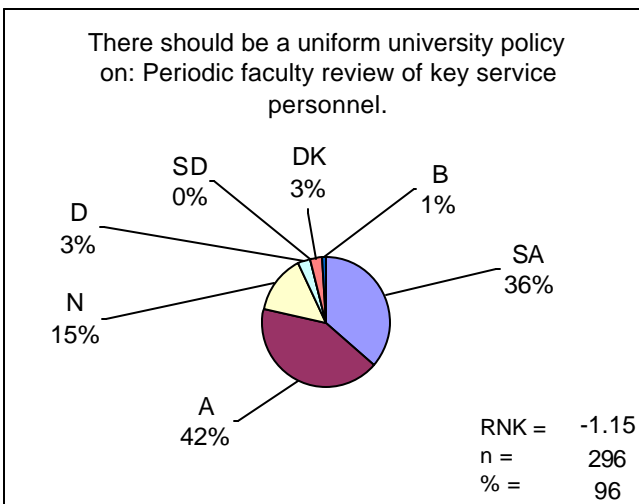
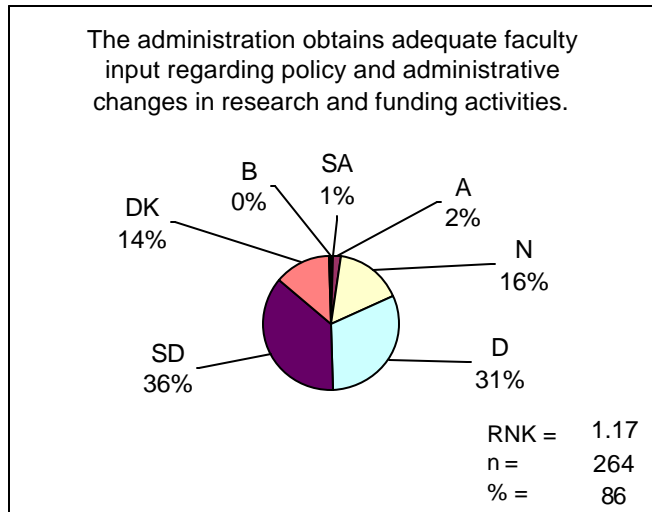
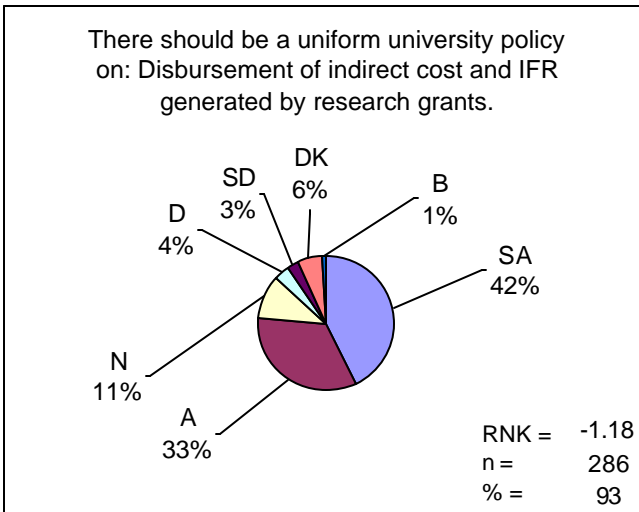
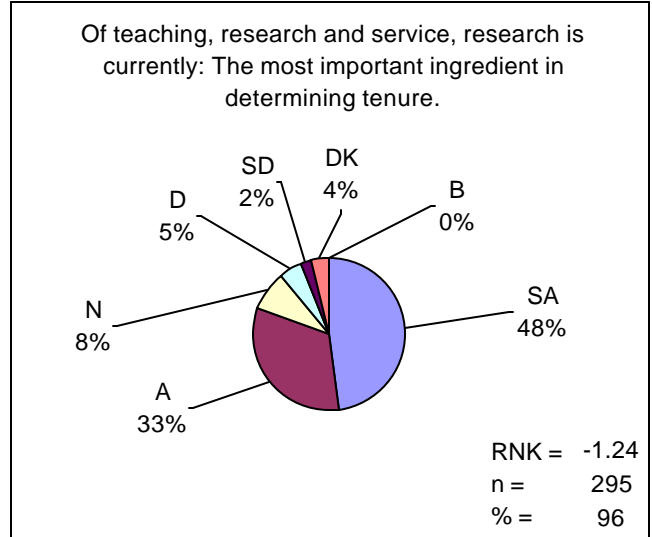
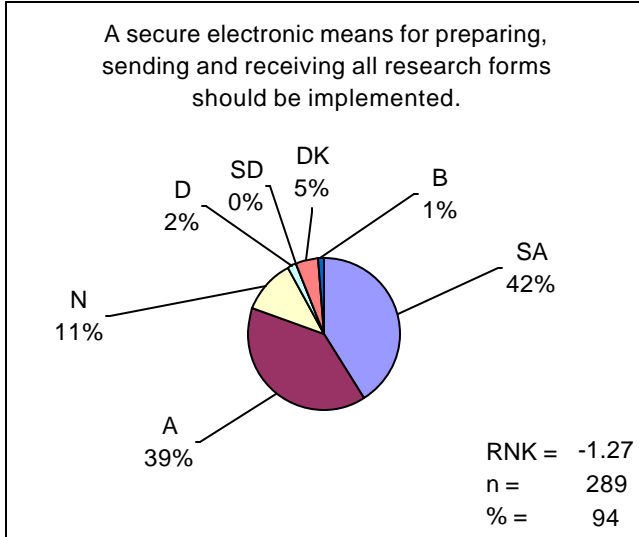
## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The RACAC would like to thank first the faculty for their numerous suggestions and for taking time to complete the survey. Useful discussions with the Provost and Vice President for Research are also acknowledged.

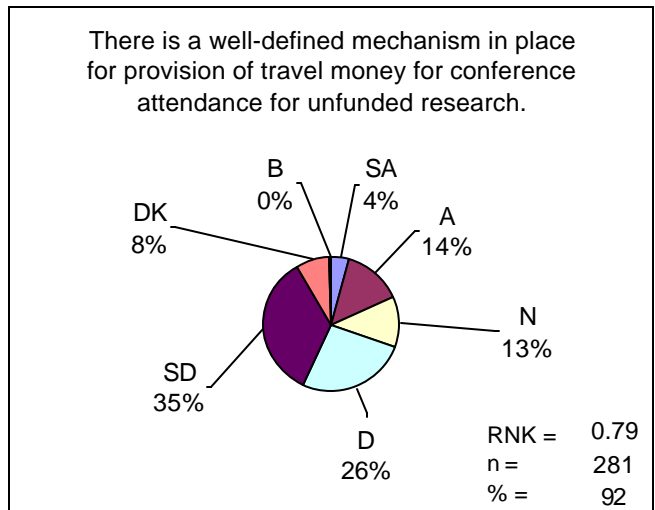
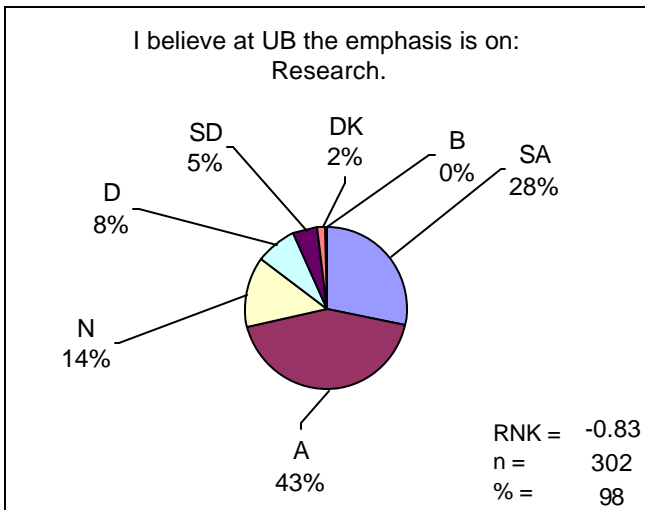
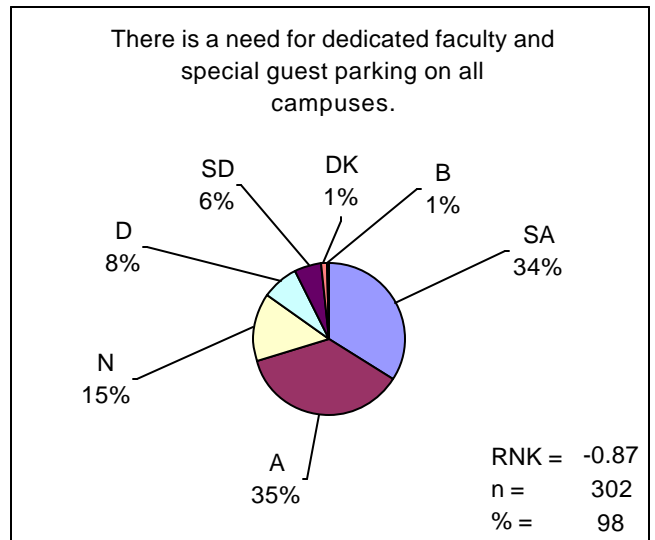
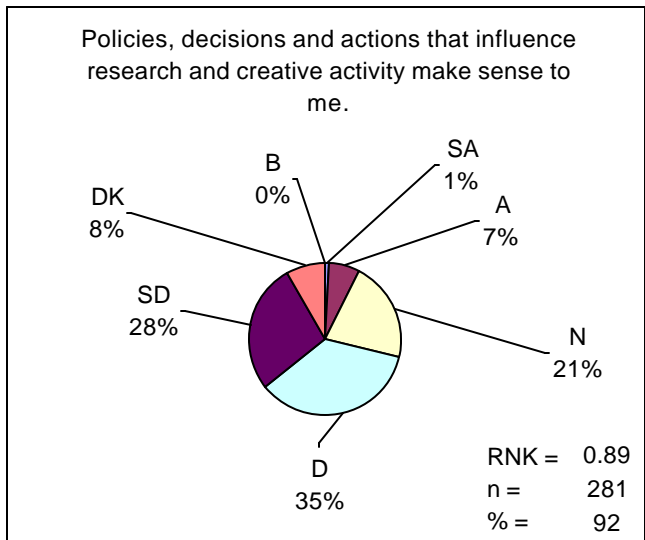
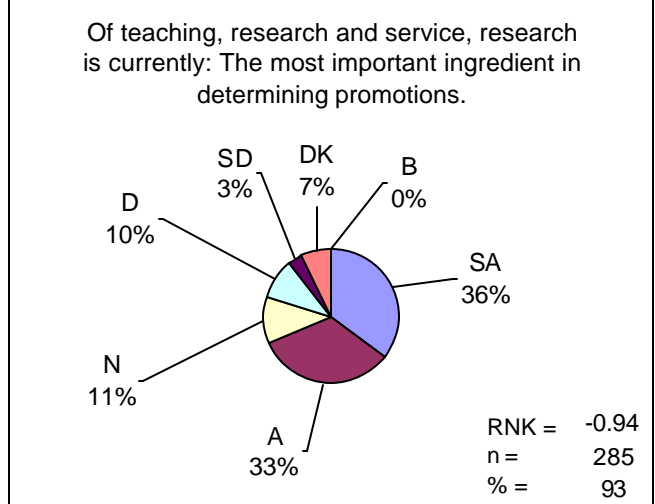
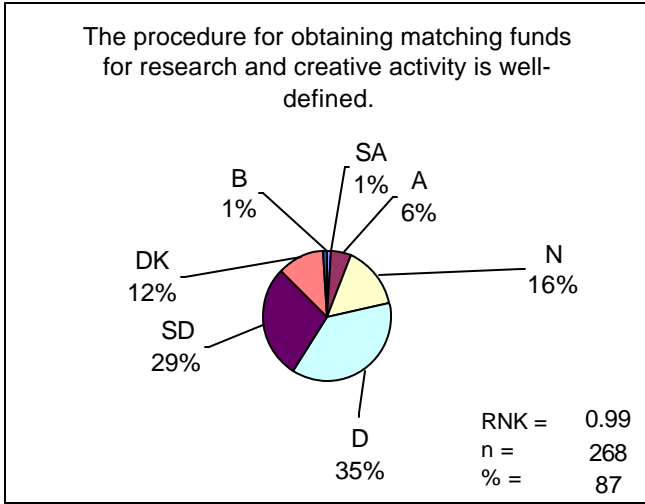
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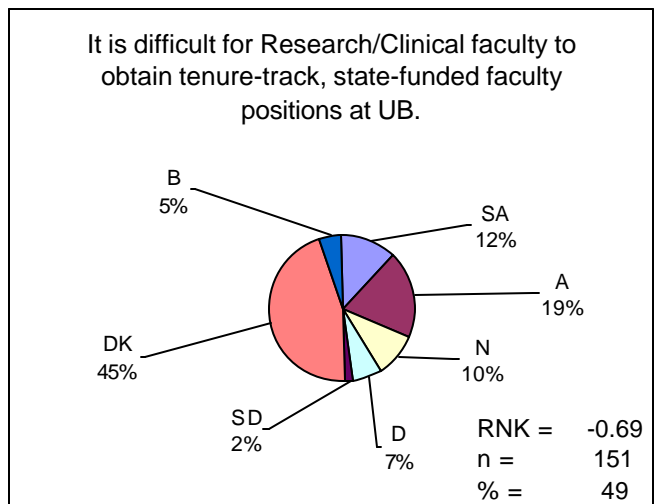
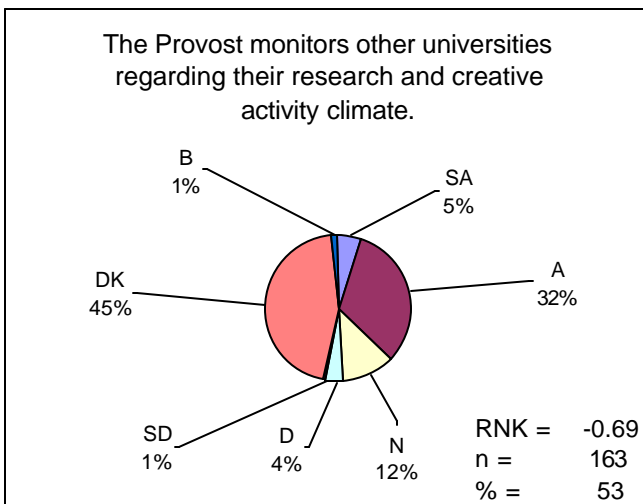
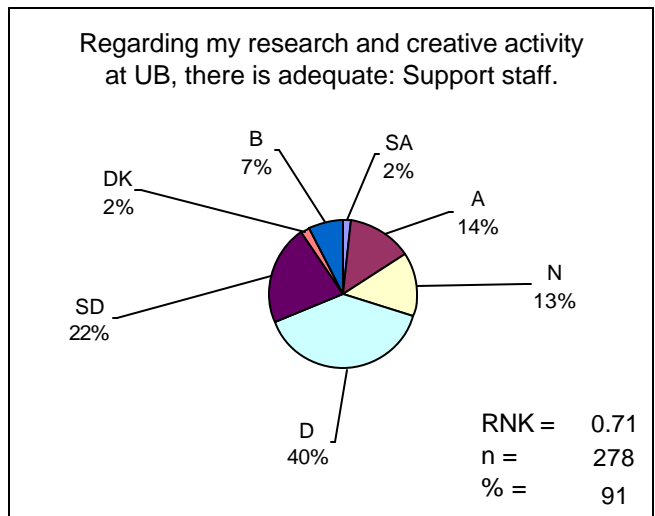
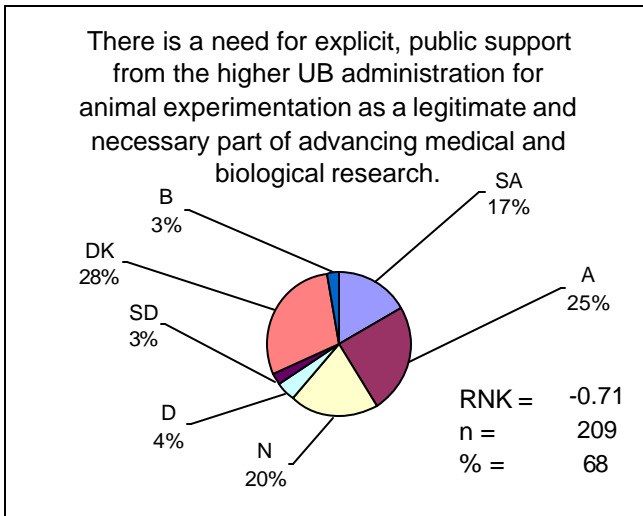
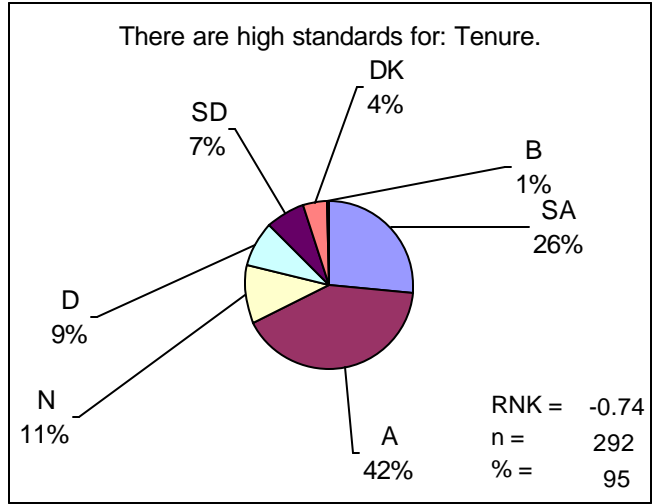
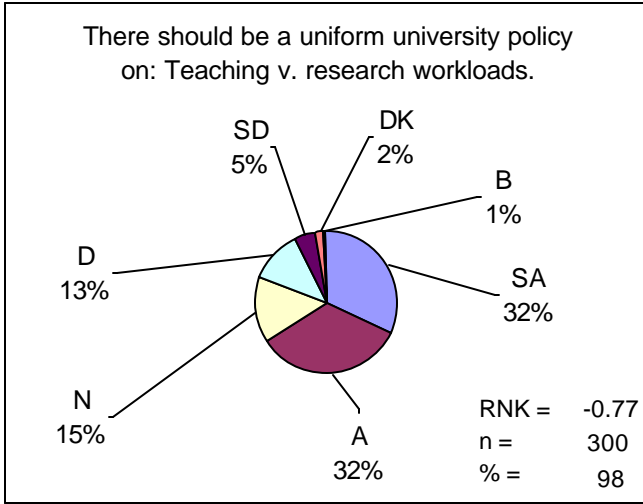
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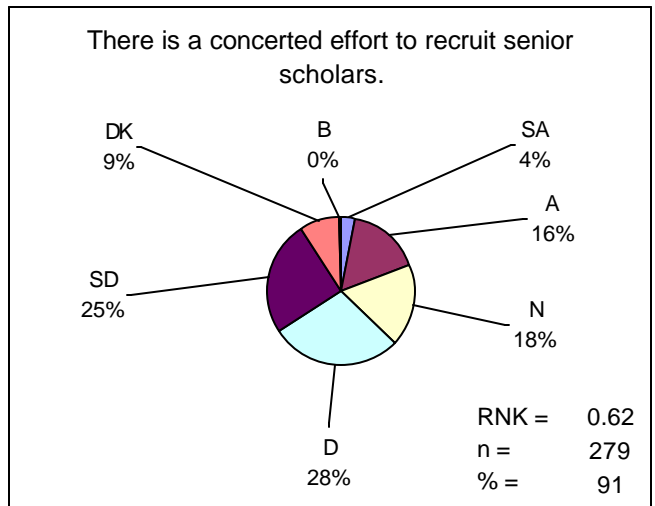
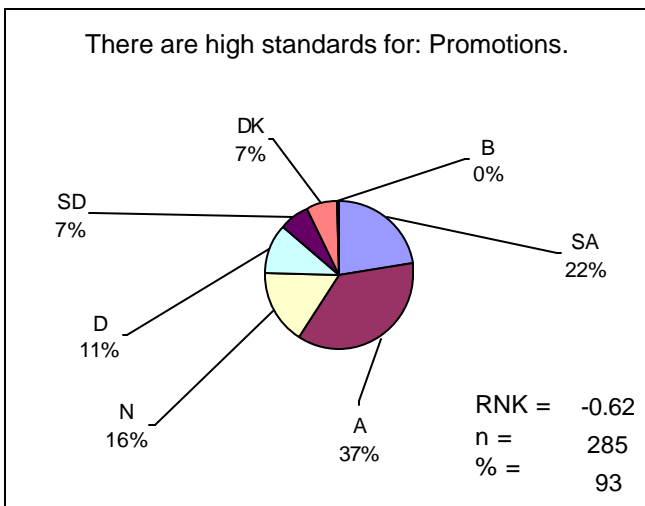
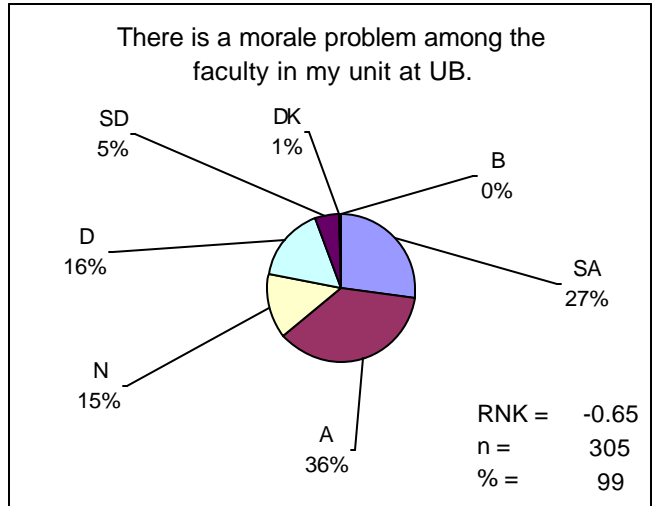
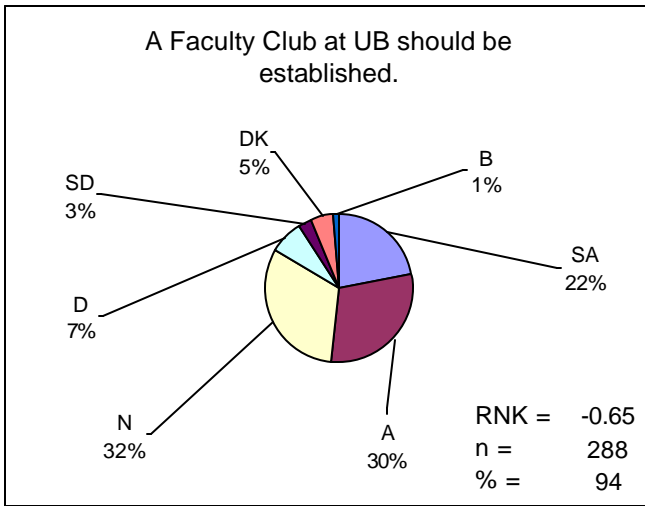
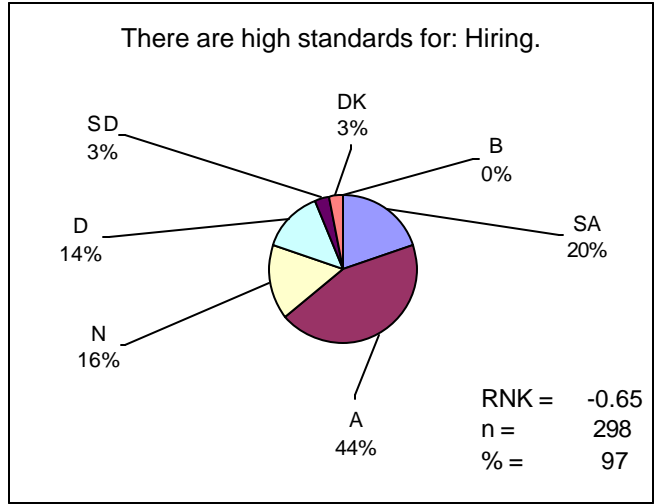
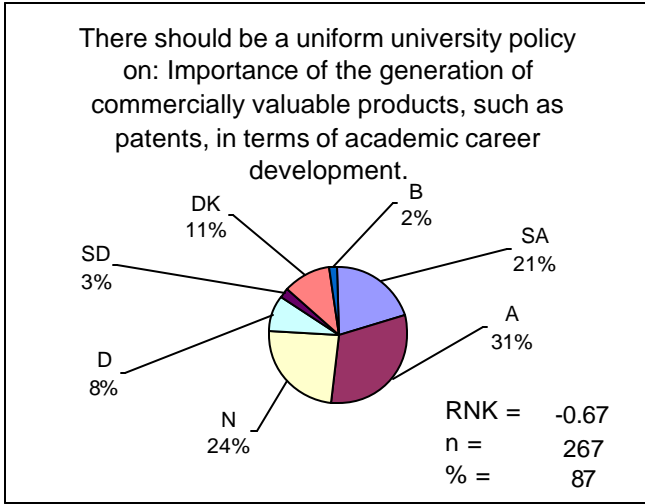
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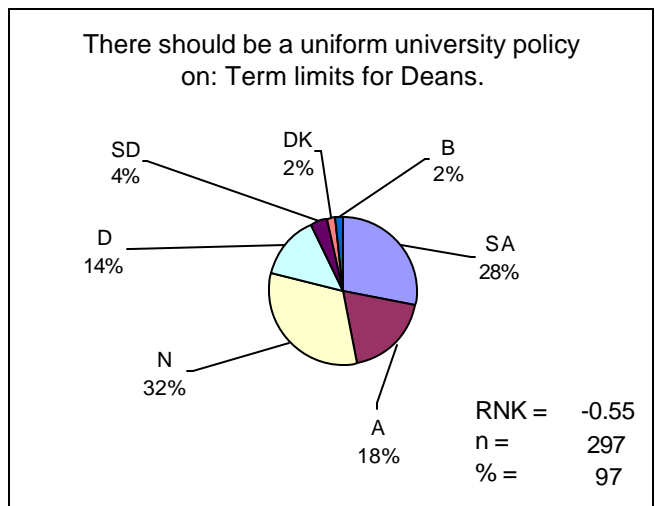
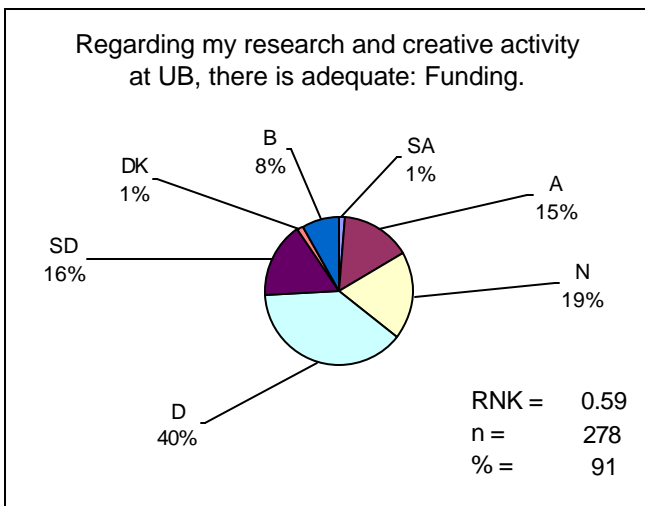
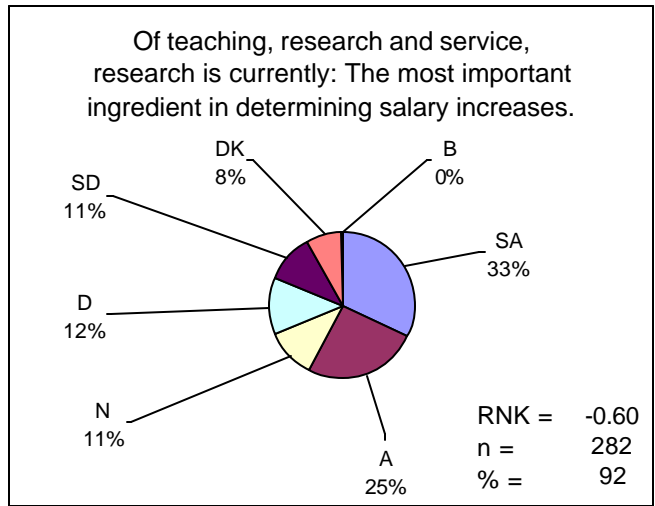
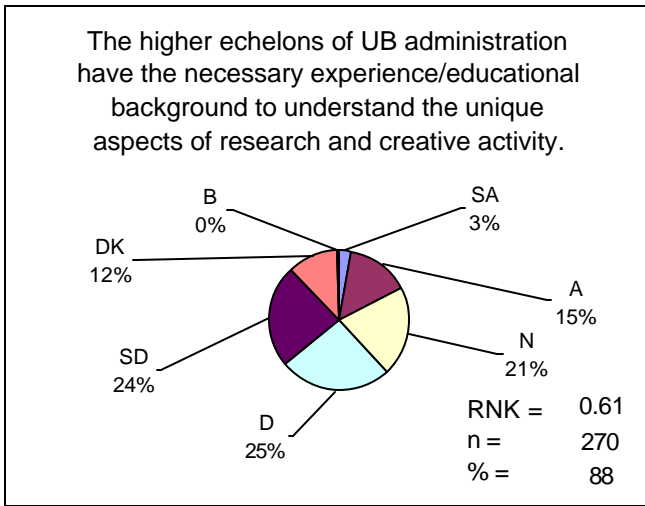
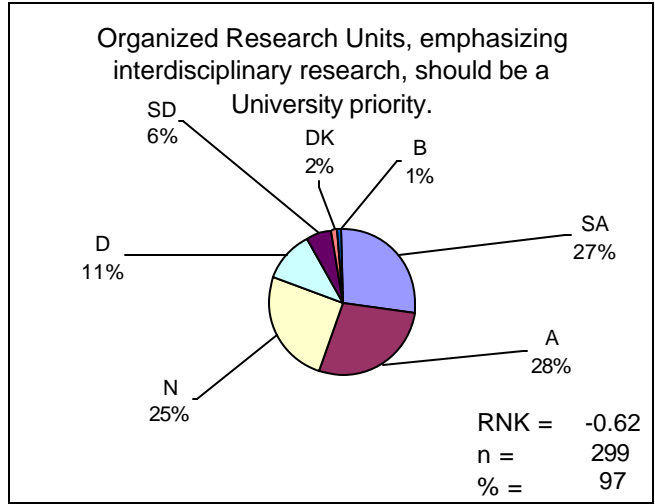
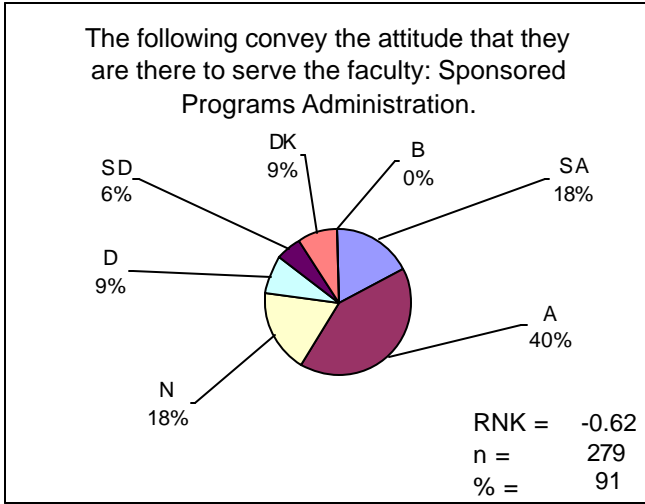
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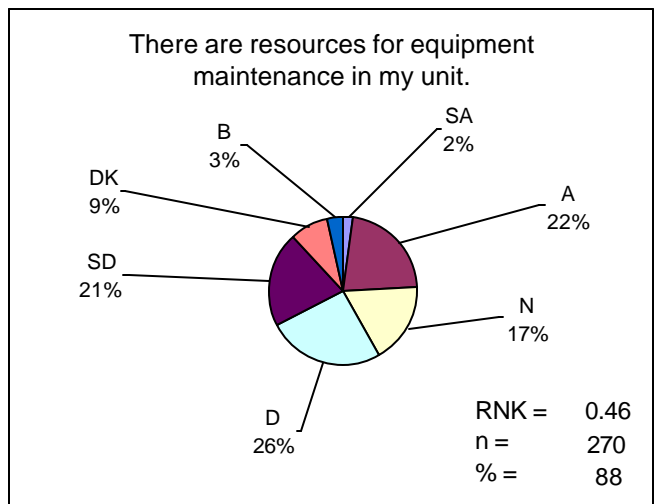
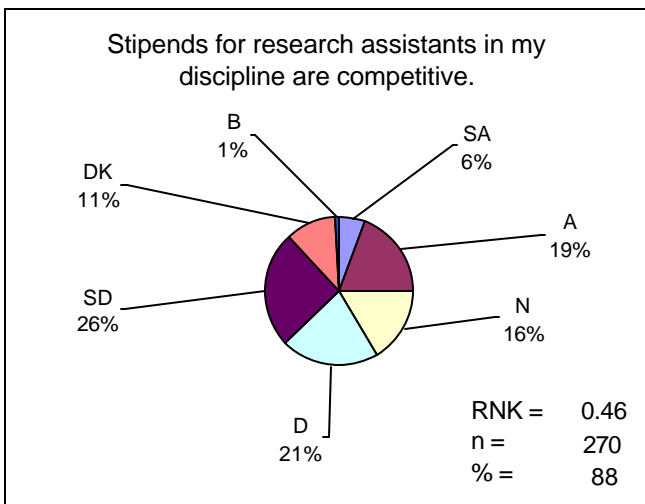
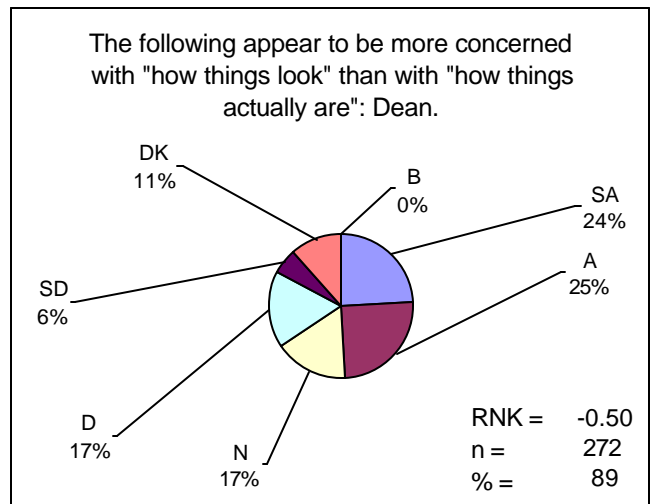
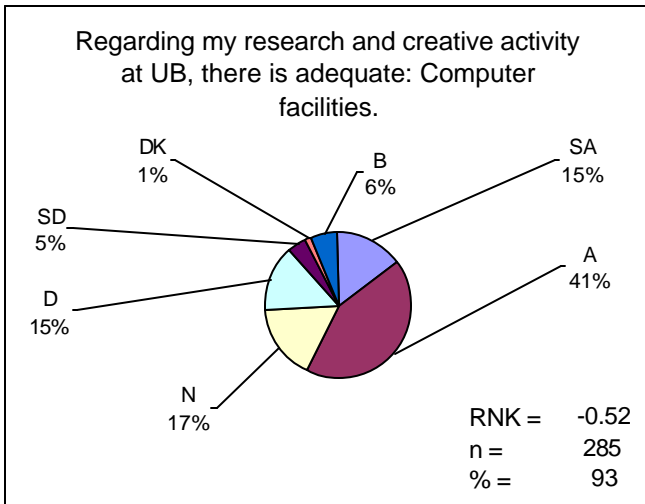
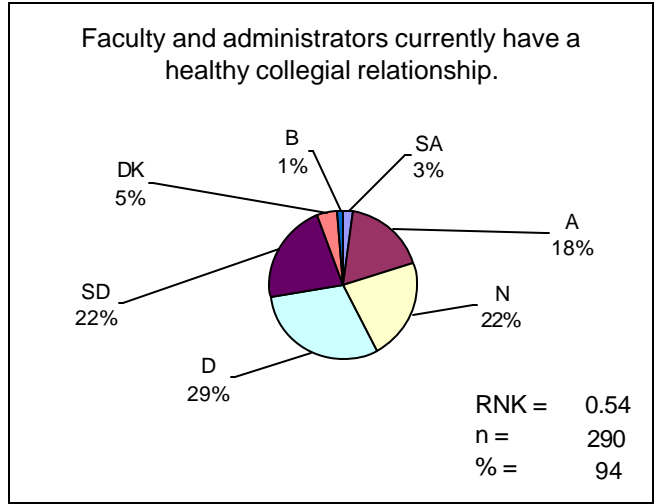
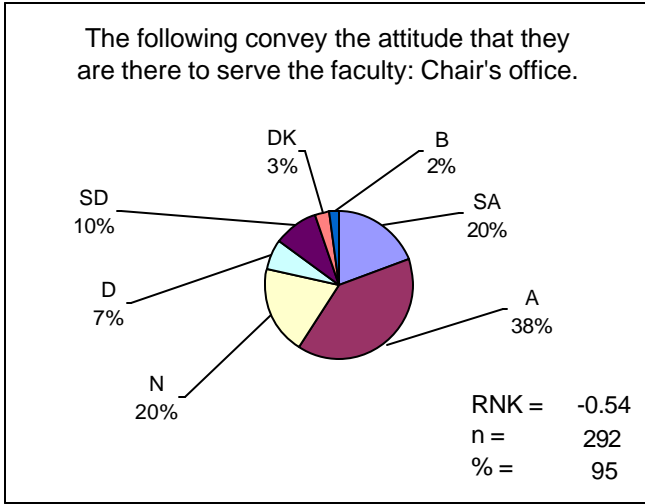
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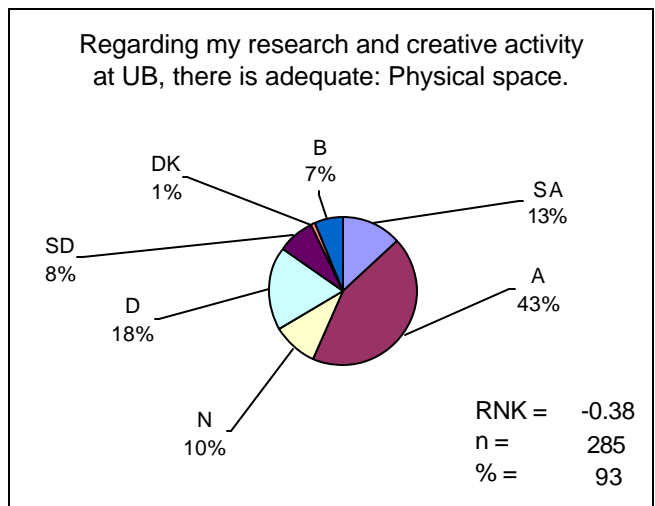
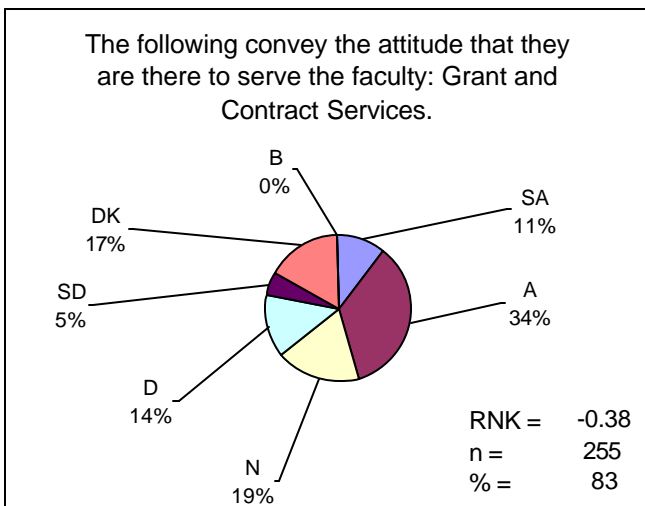
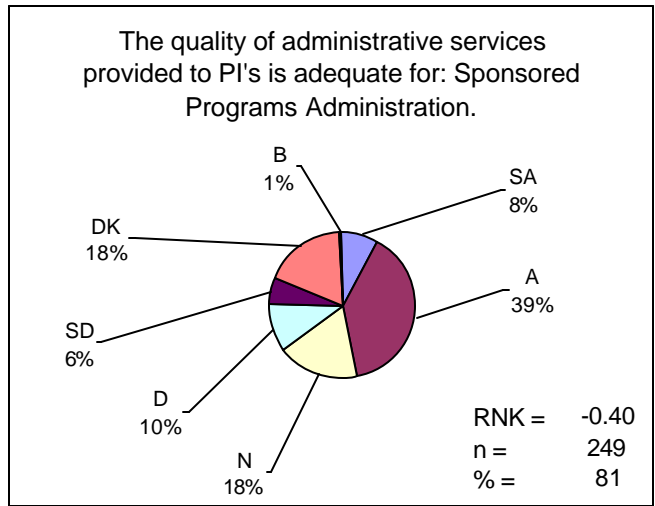
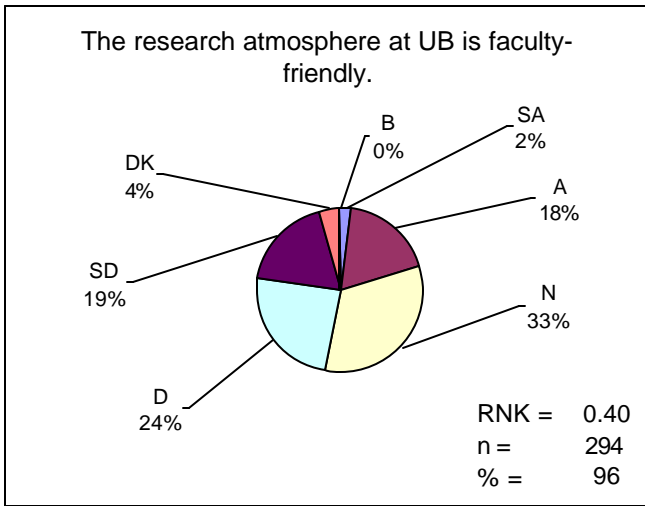
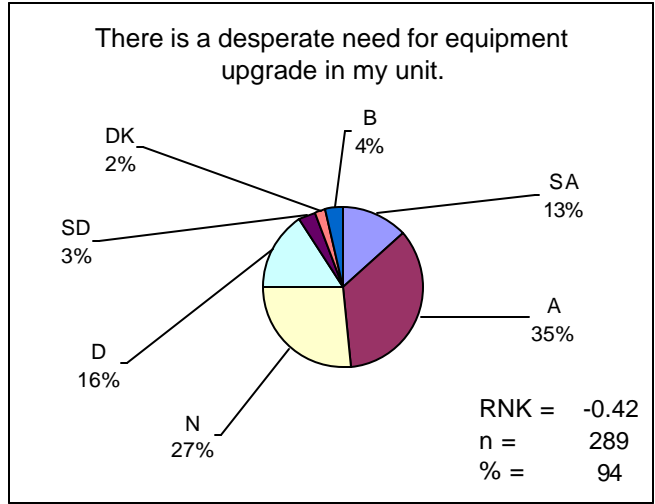
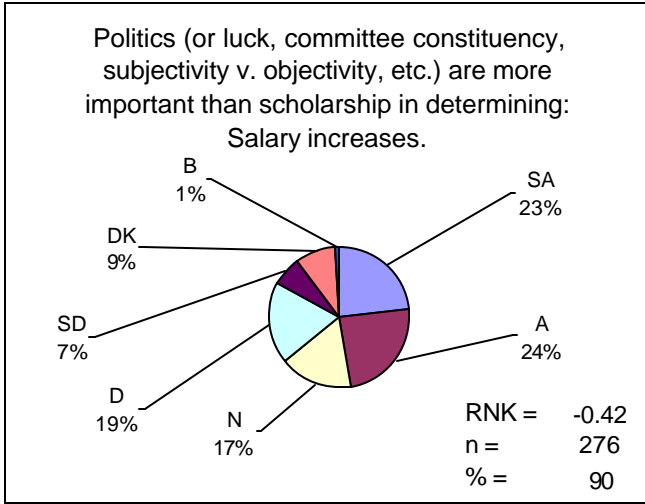
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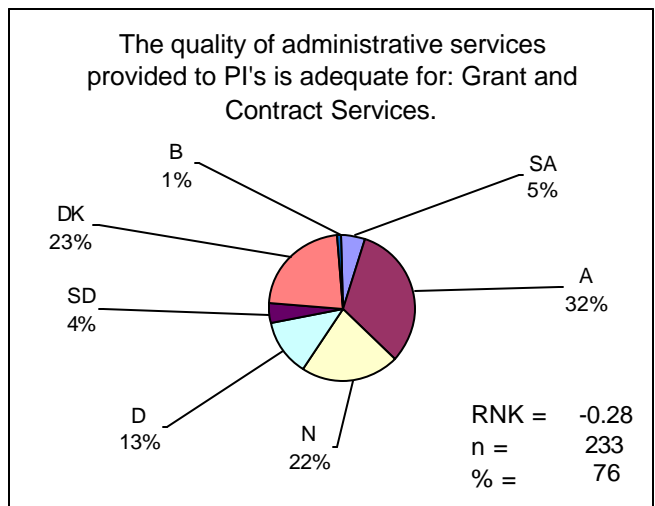
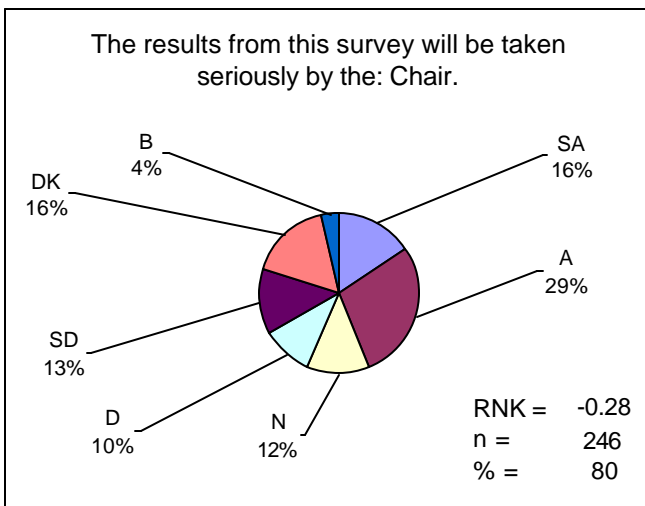
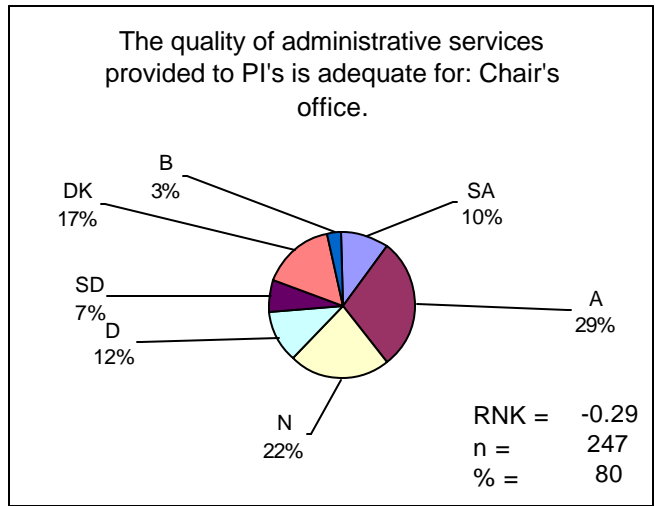
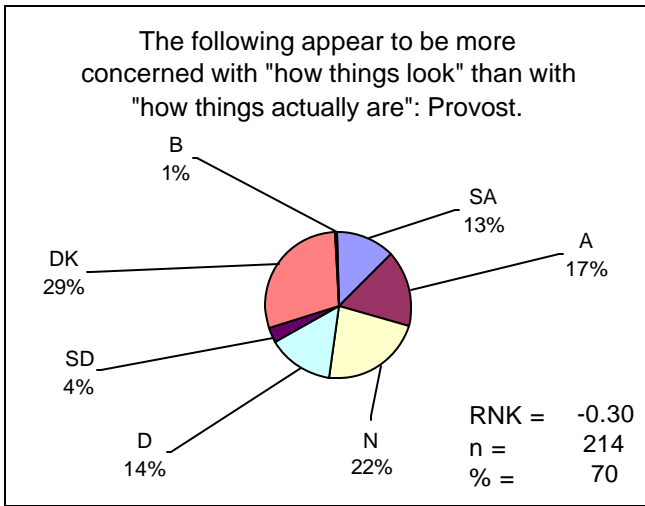
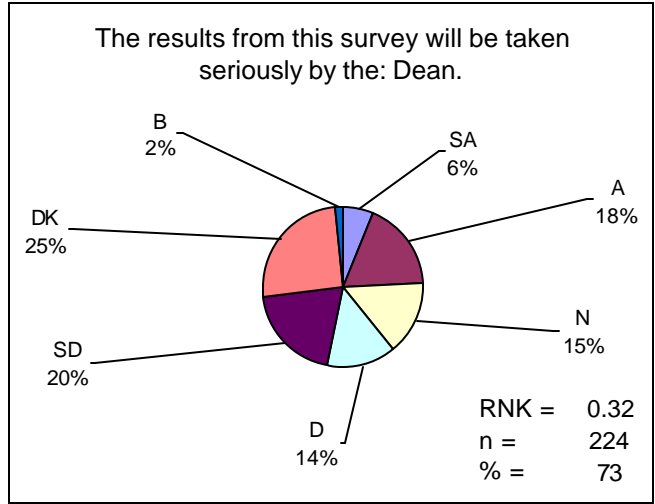
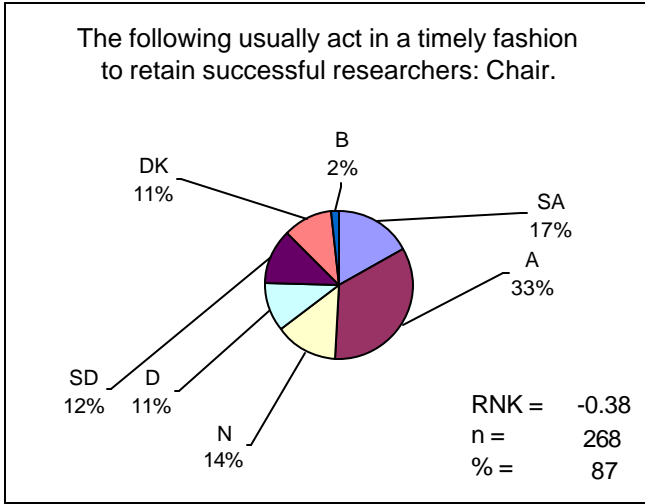
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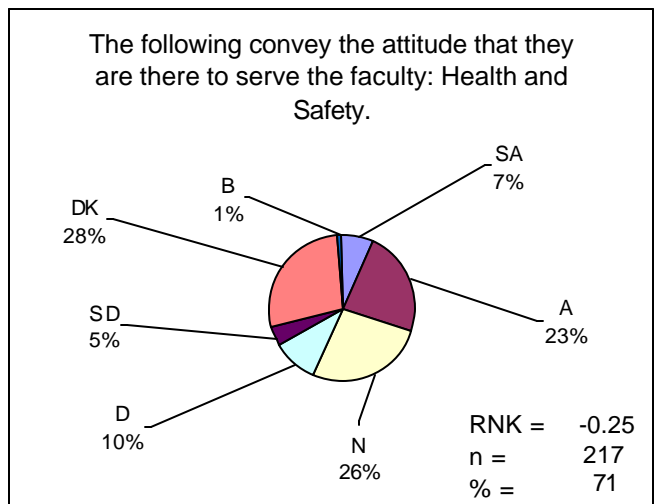
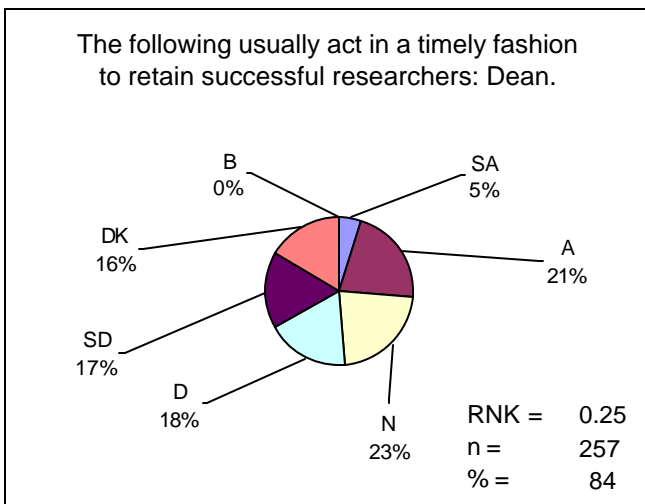
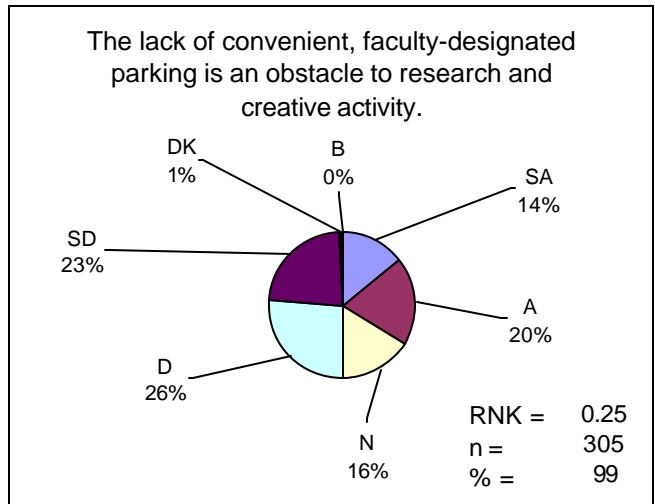
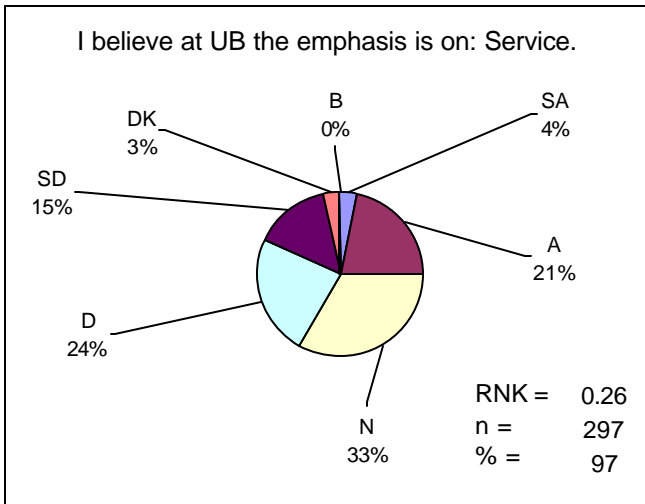
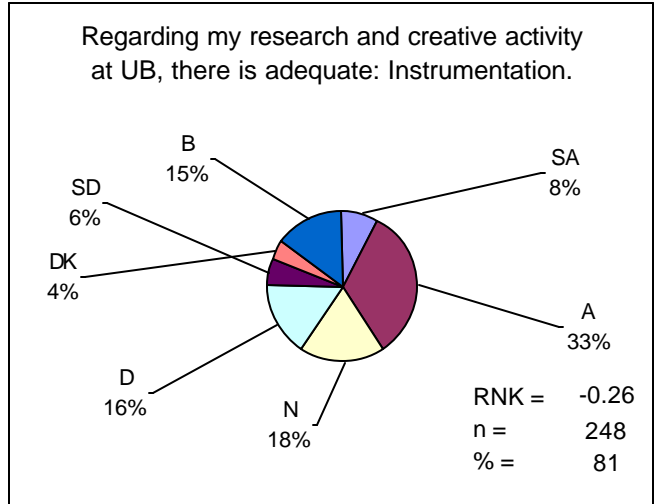
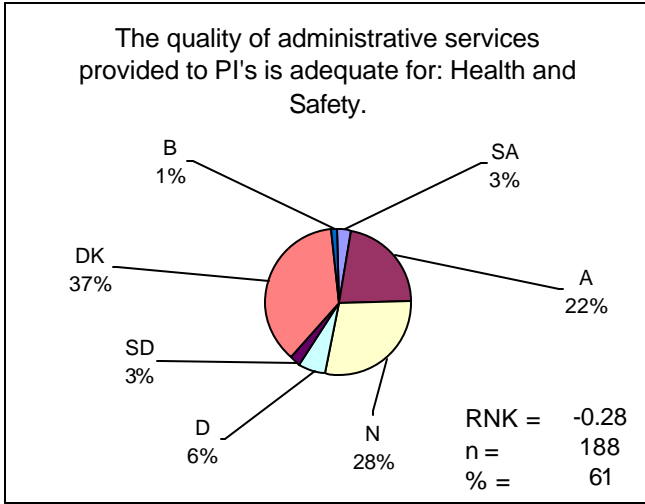
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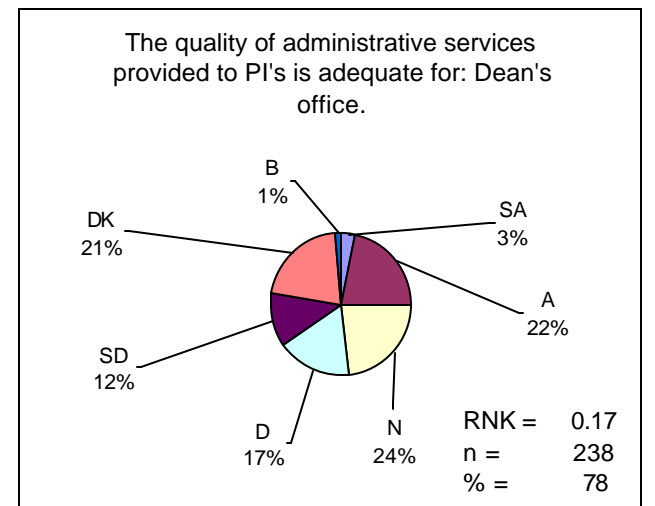
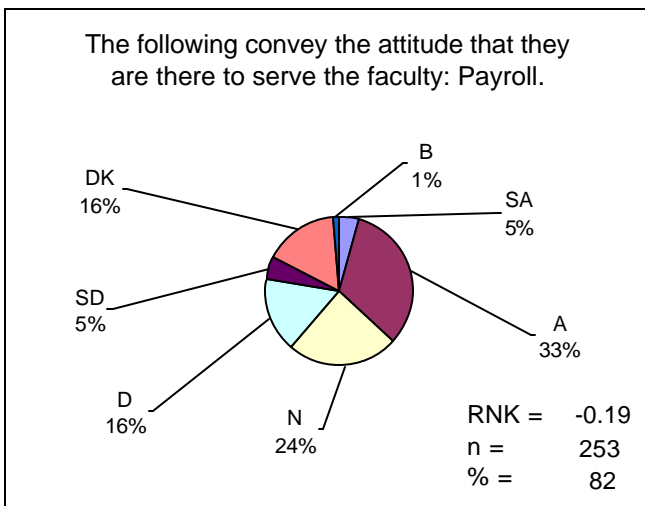
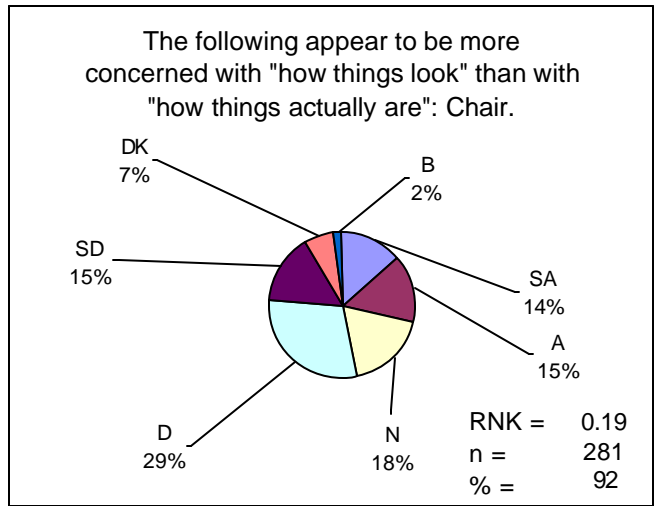
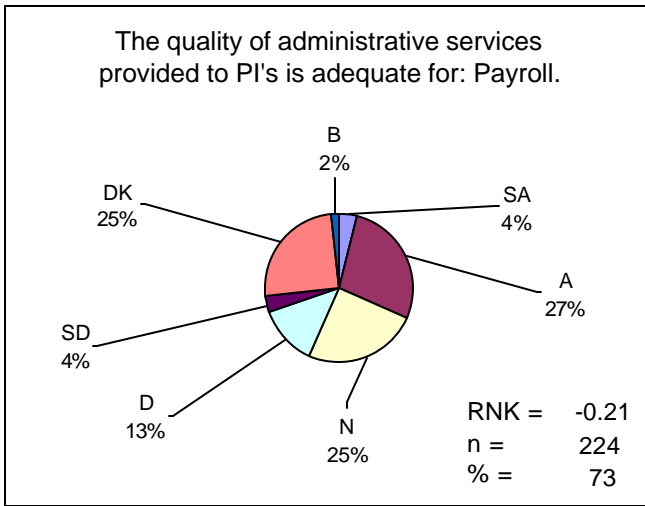
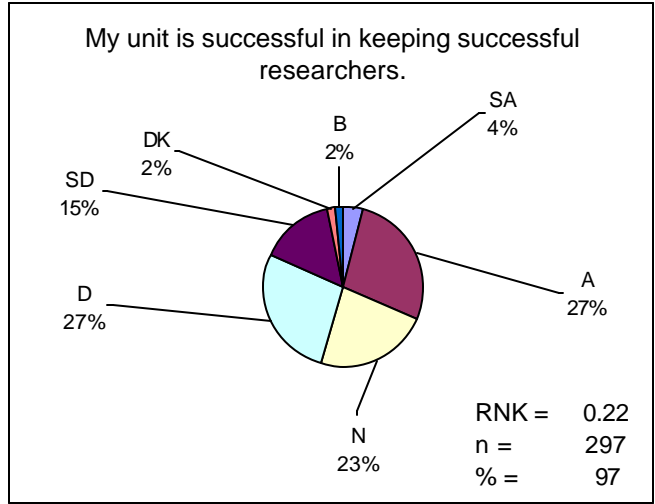
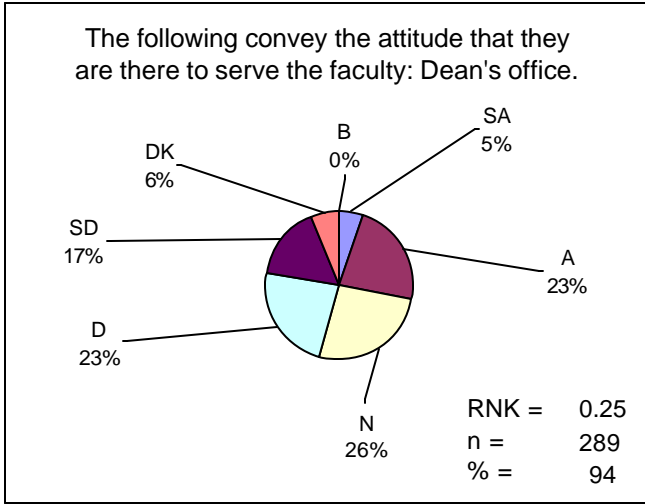
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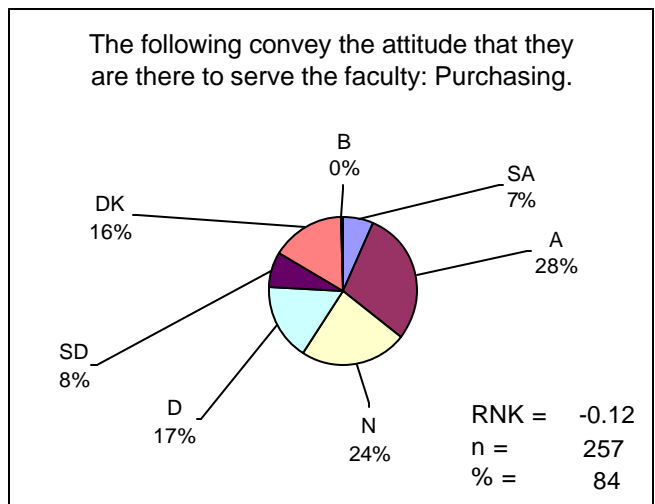
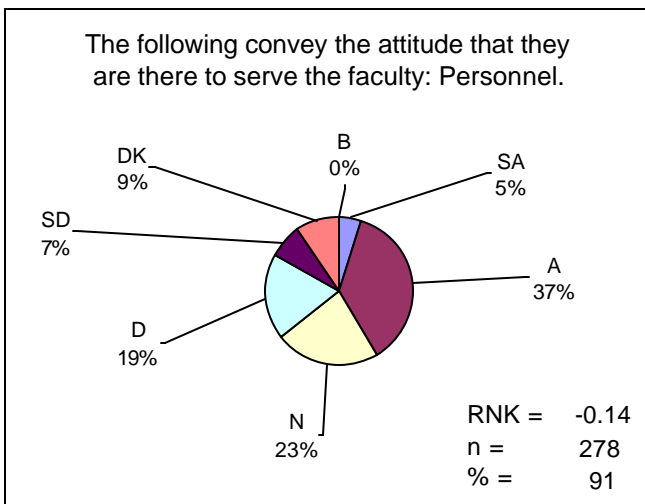
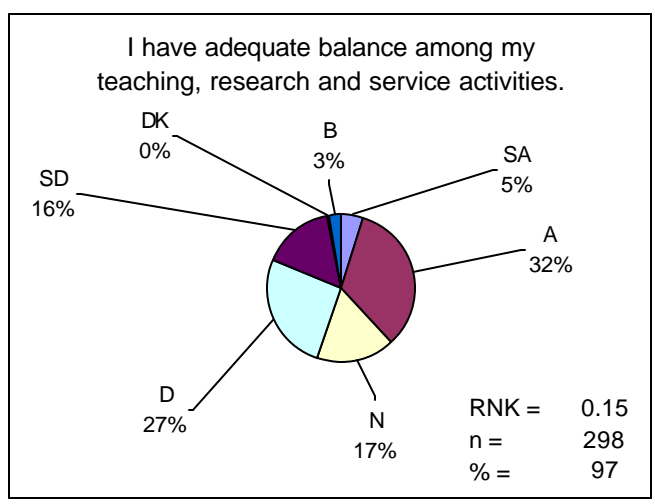
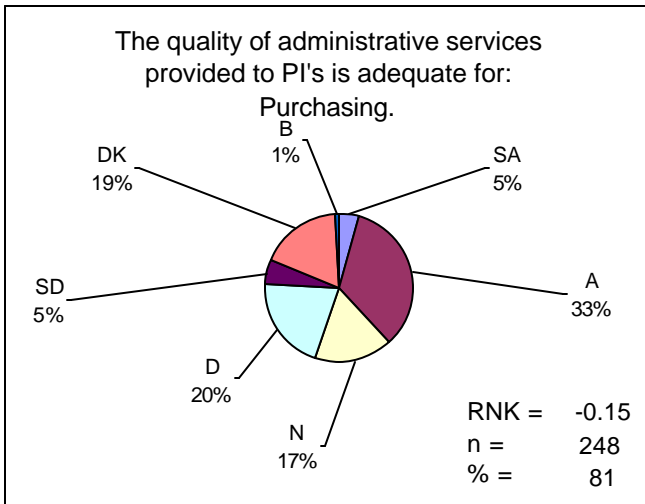
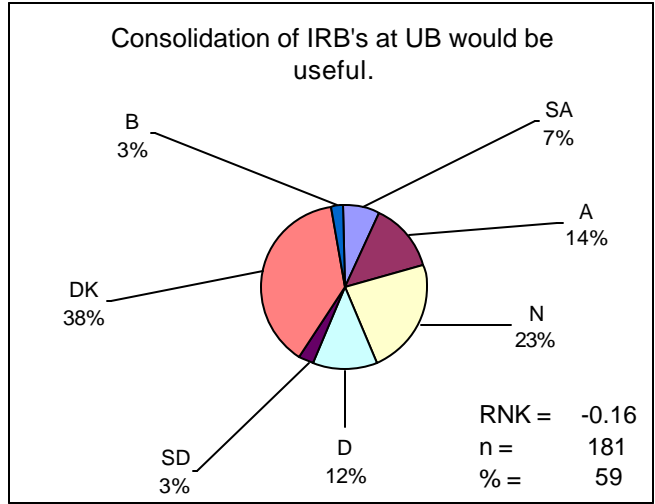
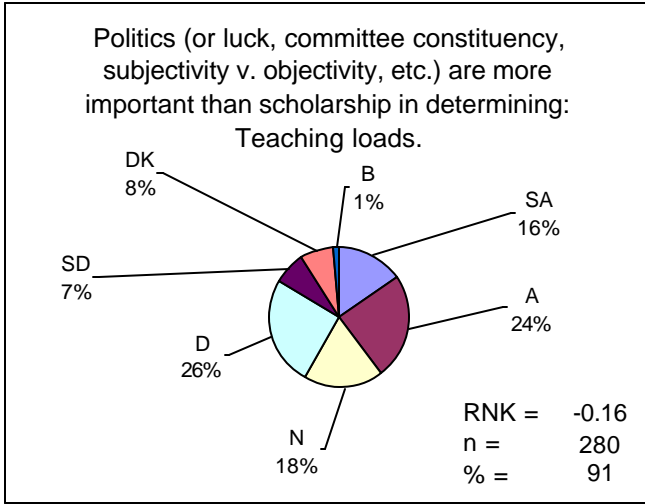
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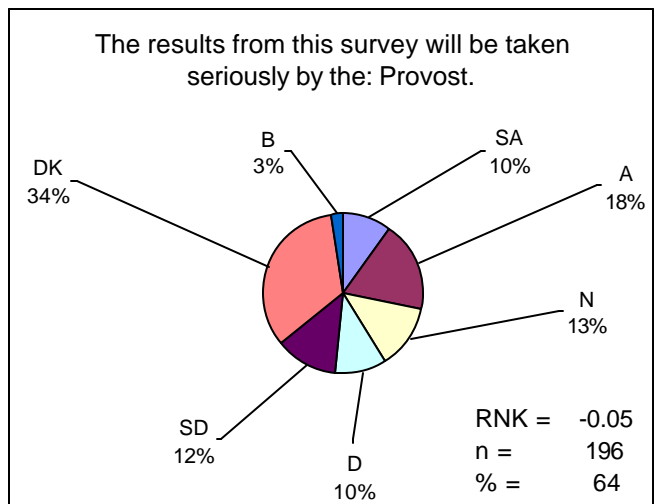
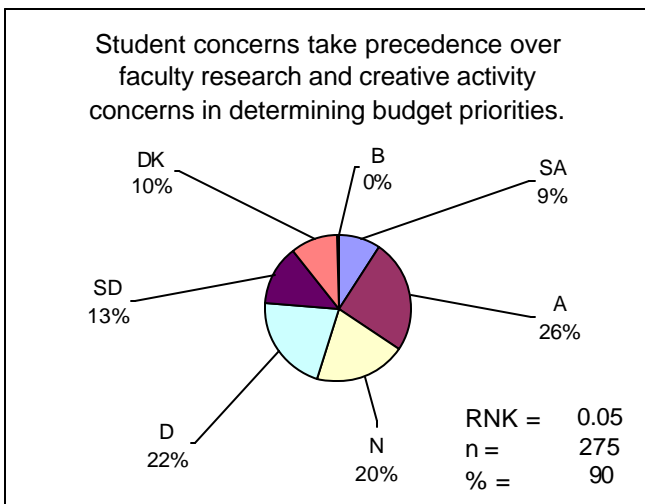
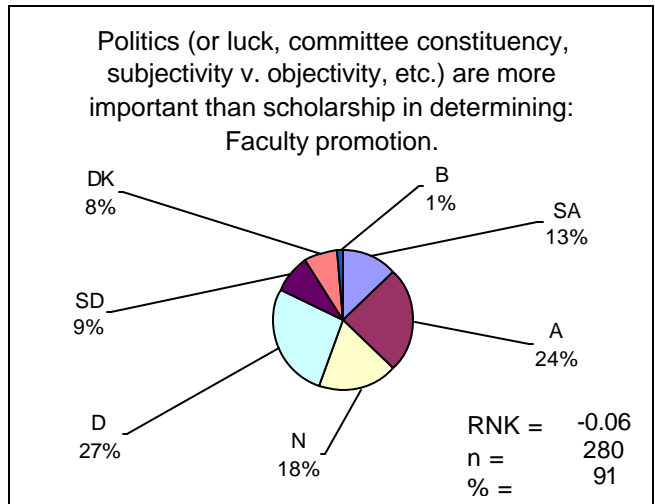
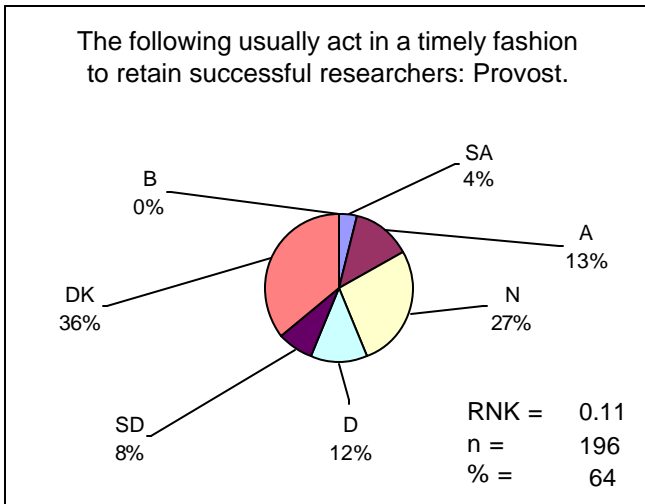
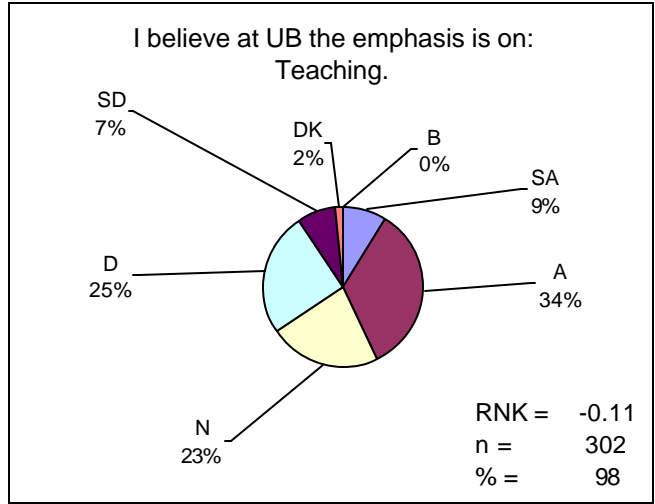
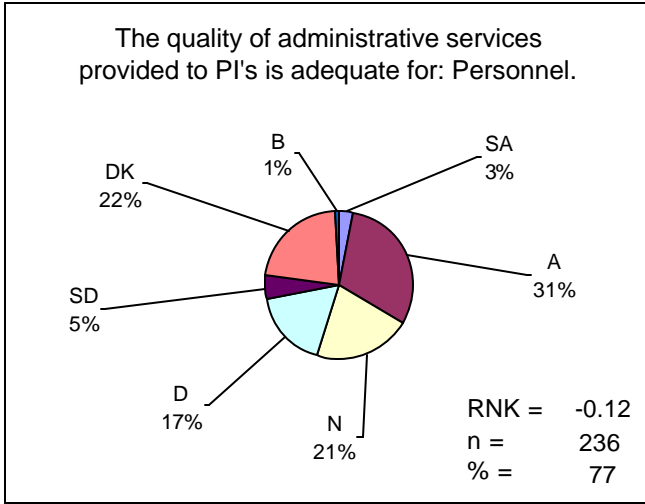
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