

One Size Doesn't Fit All: Tailoring Professional Development to IT Staff

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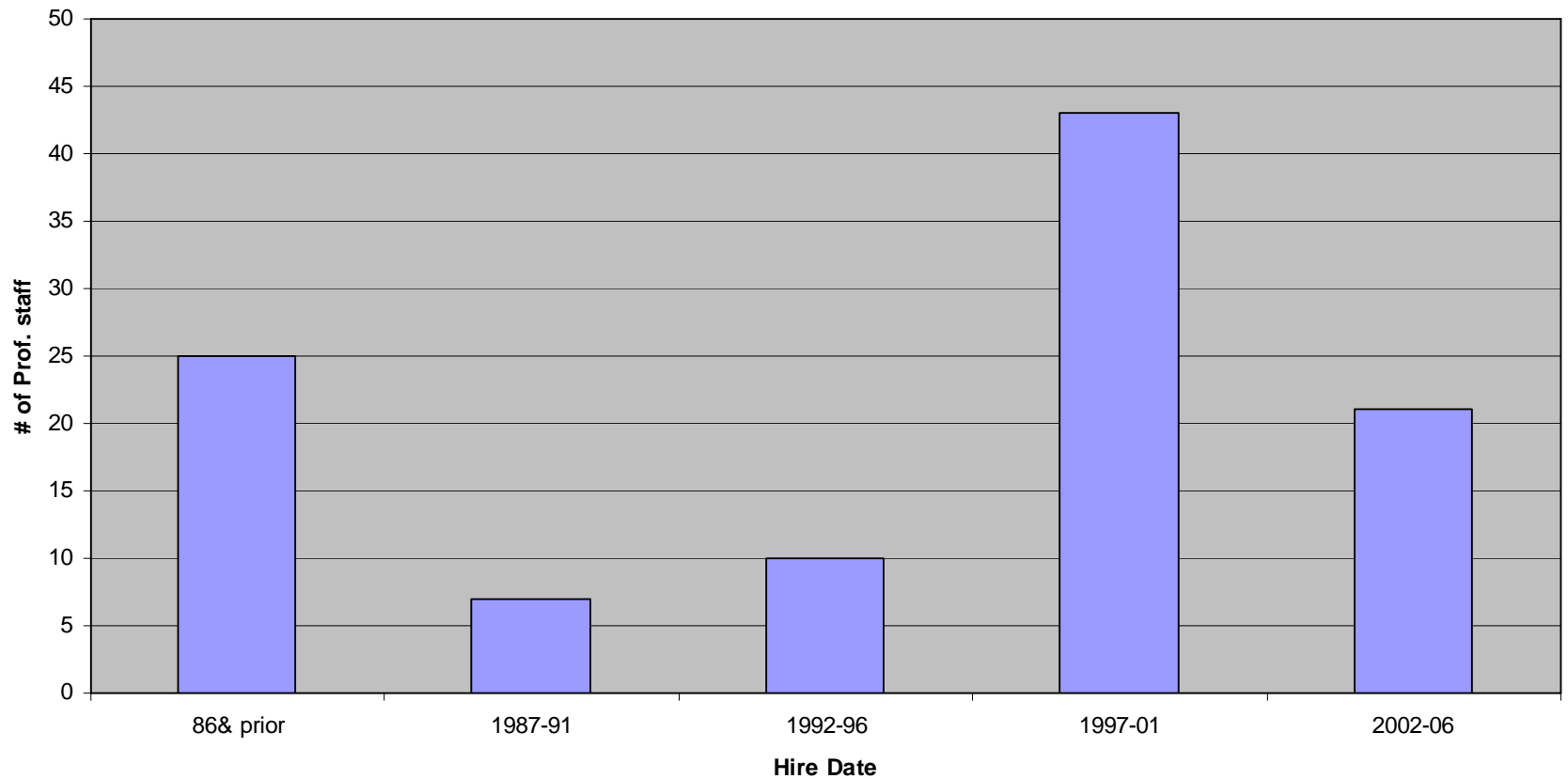
About the University at Albany

- One of four University Centers in the SUNY system
- 10 colleges and schools across 3 campuses
- ~17,000 students
- ~4,400 faculty and staff

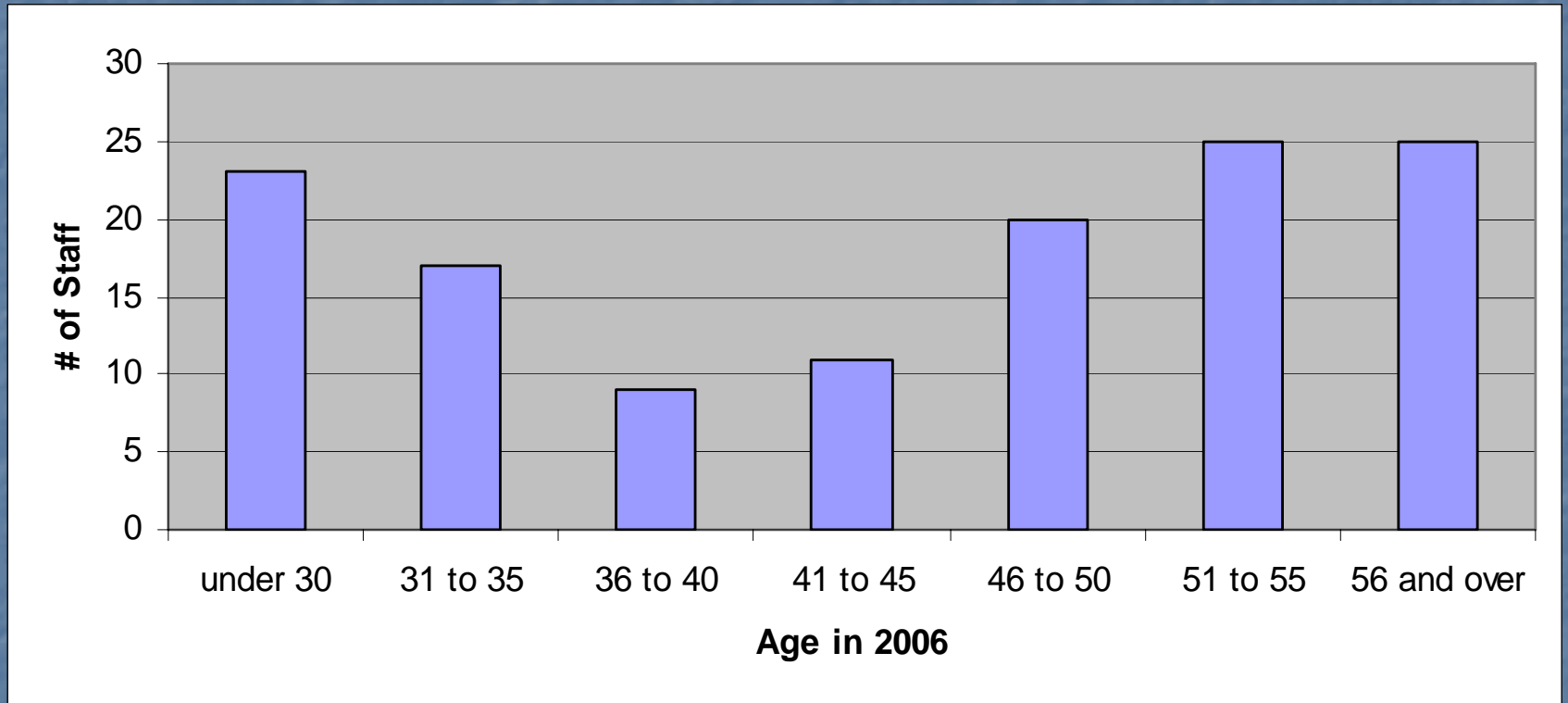
UAlbany's Unique Characteristics

- ~130 centralized IT staff
- ~50 distributed IT staff
- Unionized professional staff
- Low turnover

Central IT Staff by Hire Date



Central IT Staff By Age



The workforce we've got is the workforce we'll have ...

- The majority of employees are young professionals or seasoned veterans
- Fewer "mid-career" staff
- Professional development (PD) needs change over the course of a career; must be flexible enough to accommodate all the needs of a diverse workforce

ITS Managers Investigate PD

- Team 1 surveyed ITS staff about their perception of professional development opportunities
- Team 2 conducted an inventory of jobs and skill sets across the organization
- Team 3 examined best practices at other institutions

Survey Results From Team 1

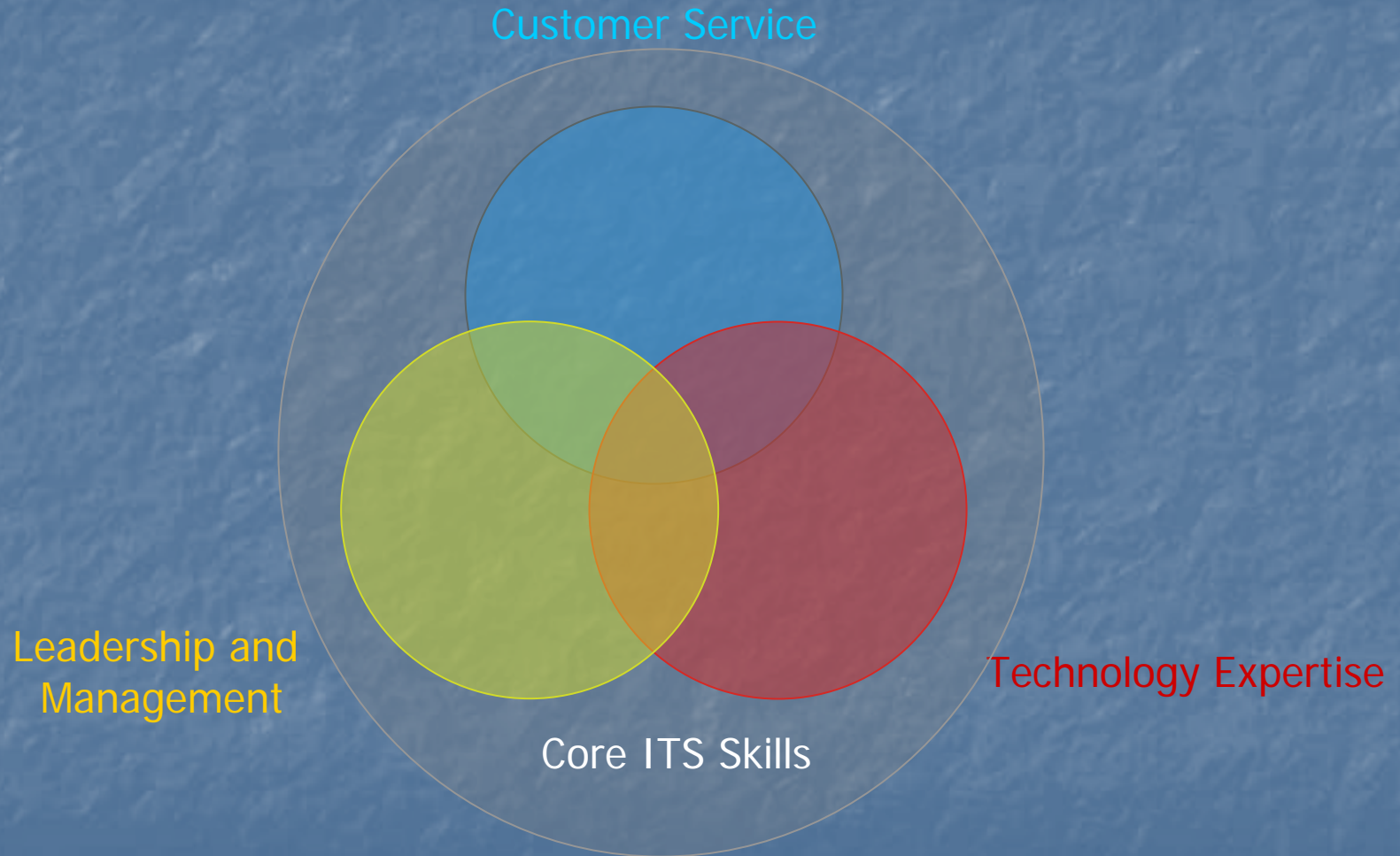
- Most staff reported they were neutral to very satisfied with current PD opportunities
- Managers were somewhat less satisfied with staff opportunities
- The biggest impediments to PD were time, money and awareness

Team 2's

Job Inventory and Skill Sets

- 62 job types identified in ITS
- 7 new job types anticipated over the next 5 years
- A set of core skills identified for all ITS jobs
- PD at UAlbany designed to build on core skills set

IT Jobs Often Require Skills From Each Group



Best Practices Identified by Team 3

- Joint responsibility of management and staff
- Often formalized with a written Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- Most IDPs are a negotiated between a manager and an employee

Core Skills Evaluation Guide PD Needs

- Evaluation of core skills identify areas where PD is needed
- Identifies strengths and areas needing improvement
- Results guide future PD activities

PD Goals for ITS

- 100% staff participation
- IDPs negotiated between employees and their immediate supervisor; approved by their director and CIO
- IDPs written into annual performance programs

Tailoring to Fit Personal and Professional Goals

- Personal preference, along with individual PD needs, play a significant role in determining appropriate activities
- Creativity and initiative are strongly encouraged

The Many Faces of PD

- National, regional and local conferences
- Training
- Communities of practice
- Online courses and webinars
- Guest speakers
- Publications (reading and writing)

Cross-training Opportunities

- “Inside Outreach” at Cornell University
- Three 3-day visits
- Opportunity to see how things are done somewhere else
- Attend regular meetings
- One-on-one discussions with Cornell staff

Challenges

- Making professional development a top priority for all ITS staff
- Creating professional development opportunities for distributed IT staff
- Evaluating the IDP in annual performance evaluations