

Key Findings Tenure-Track Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey

July 6, 2007

(Based on the forthcoming COACHE Highlights Report)

About COACHE

The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) provides academic leaders with in-depth peer data to monitor and improve work satisfaction among full-time, tenure-track faculty.* More than 80 four-year colleges and universities have joined COACHE to enhance the quality of life for pre-tenure faculty and to enhance their institutions' ability to recruit, retain, and develop the cohort most critical to their long-term future.

The core element of COACHE is the Tenure-Track Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey, a validated survey instrument developed, tested, and continually improved with assistance from the Ford Foundation, the Atlantic Philanthropies, and participating institutions. We now have job satisfaction data on several thousand junior faculty nationwide.

The COACHE Survey assesses faculty experiences in several areas deemed critical to junior faculty success:

- Clarity and reasonableness of tenure processes and review
- Workload and support for teaching and research
- Importance and effectiveness of common policies and practices
- Climate, culture and collegiality on campus
- Global satisfaction

Academic leaders use COACHE to focus attention, to spot successes and weaknesses, to compare results with a self-selected set of peer institutions, and then to take concrete steps to make policies and practices more effective and more prevalent. The COACHE Institutional Report pinpoints problem areas, whether within a particular policy or practice, academic area, or demographic. Ultimately, COACHE provides a powerful lever to achieve a competitive advantage in the recruitment, retention, and success of new faculty.

About This "Key Findings" Report

These "Key Findings" excerpt portions of a more complete report of results across all 77 COACHE sites in the 2005-06 and 2006-07 cohorts. The COACHE Highlights Report, which includes ancillary information such as data tables, will be available this summer for download at www.coache.org. If your institution would like more information about enrolling in the Collaborative, please call 617-496-9348. You may also e-mail us at coache@gse.harvard.edu or visit our web site at <http://www.coache.org>.

Response Rates

	Total Faculty N	Male Faculty N	% Males	Female Faculty N	% Females	White Faculty N	% White Faculty	Faculty of Color N	% Faculty of Color	Missing Race Data
Total Population	11278	6604	59%	4659	41%	8135	72%	3021	27%	122
Total Respondents	6773	3755	55%	3018	45%	5060	75%	1703	25%	10
Total Response Rate	60%	--	57%	--	65%	--	62%	--	57%	--

NOTE: We are missing gender data for 15 faculty members included in the university population file; thus, the total number of males and females does not equal the total faculty population (10469) in the above table.

*For the purposes of this project, "tenure-track" and "junior" faculty are defined as full-time, non-clinical, pre-tenure or "probationary" faculty with at least one year of service and not in their terminal year after being denied tenure.

KEY FINDINGS

The COACHE survey is organized around five themes: (I) Tenure; (II) Nature of the Work; (III) Policies and Practices; (IV) Climate, Culture and Collegiality; and (V) Global Satisfaction.

I. Tenure

Overall, junior faculty:

- Were most clear about the tenure process and least clear about tenure standards.
- Reported the greatest clarity about the expectations for their performance as scholars and as teachers.
- Reported the least clarity about what is expected of them as a member of the broader community.
- Felt expectations for performance as a colleague and teacher were the most reasonable, while expectations as a scholar were the least reasonable.

Compared to male faculty, female faculty:

- Reported less clarity on all dimensions, and significantly¹ less clarity on the tenure process, body of evidence, and standards.
- Reported significantly less clarity about the expectations for their performance as scholars.
- Felt that expectations for performance as a scholar, teacher, advisor, colleague, campus citizen, and member of the community were significantly less reasonable.

Compared to white faculty, faculty of color:

- Were similarly clear about the tenure process, criteria and body of evidence.
- Reported significantly more clarity with regard to tenure standards.
- Reported significantly more clarity about the expectations for their performance as a scholar, teacher, advisor, colleague, campus citizen and member of the broader community.
- Felt that expectations for performance as a teacher were significantly less reasonable.

II. Nature of the work

Overall, junior faculty were most satisfied with teaching² and least satisfied with research.³

Compared to male faculty, female faculty reported significantly less satisfaction with how they spend their time as faculty members, with research, and with support services.⁴

Compared to white faculty, faculty of color reported significantly greater satisfaction with how they spend their time as faculty members and with support services. However, faculty of color reported significantly less satisfaction than did white faculty with several aspects of teaching.

III. Policies & practices

Overall, junior faculty:

- Reported that the most important policies for their success were an upper limit on teaching and travel funds to present papers or conduct research.
- Rated financial assistance for housing as the least important policy.
- Found the least effective⁵ policy to be professional assistance for obtaining externally funded grants. The most effective policy/practice was informal mentoring.
- Reported less agreement with statements regarding their *institution's* support for having and raising children than with those statements about their *departmental colleagues'* support.
- Were "somewhat unsatisfied" with their ability to balance professional time and personal or family time.
- Were moderately satisfied (3.14 out of 5.00) with their compensation (i.e., salary and benefits).

¹ Throughout this report, "significant" or "significantly" indicates results based on two-sided tests assuming equal variances with significance level $p < .001$, $p < .01$, or $p < .05$.

² The teaching composite represents the mean satisfaction ratings of: level of courses taught, number of courses taught, degree of influence over which courses are taught, discretion over content of courses taught, number of students taught, quality of undergraduates taught/interacted, quality of graduates taught/interacted.

³ The research composite represents the mean satisfaction ratings of: expectations as a researcher, amount of time to conduct research, amount of external funding required, influence over research focus

⁴ The support services composite represents the mean satisfaction ratings of support services in the following categories: clerical/administrative, research, teaching, and computing.

⁵ Only faculty who rated a policy as "fairly important" or "very important" were included in the analysis of effectiveness.

Compared to male faculty, female faculty:

- Rated every policy (sixteen) significantly more important for their success.
- Agreed that professional assistance in obtaining externally funded grants was the least effective policy.
- Found paid or unpaid research leave to be the most effective practice, while their male counterparts found informal mentoring to be most effective.
- Rated seven (of sixteen) policies as significantly more effective: financial assistance with housing, formal mentoring, paid or unpaid personal leave, professional assistance for improving teaching, stop-the-clock provisions, and paid or unpaid research leave.
- Did not rate any policy as less effective to a significant degree.
- Reported significantly less agreement with four (of four) statements regarding support for having and raising children.
- Reported significantly lower satisfaction with the balance between professional time and personal or family time.
- Reported a similar level of satisfaction (3.14 female, 3.16 male) with their compensation (i.e., salary and benefits).

Compared to white faculty, faculty of color:

- Found nine (of sixteen) policies significantly more important to their success.
- Agreed that professional assistance in obtaining externally funded grants was the least effective policy.
- Found periodic, formal performance reviews to be the most effective practice, while their white counterparts found informal mentoring to be the most effective.
- Rated five (of sixteen) policies as significantly more effective: professional assistance in obtaining externally funded grants, formal mentoring, peer reviews, periodic formal reviews and written summaries of reviews.
- Rated two policies as significantly less effective: stop-the-clock provisions and paid or unpaid research leave.
- Reported significantly less agreement with four statements regarding their departmental colleagues' support for having and raising children.
- Reported significantly less satisfaction with their compensation (i.e., salary and benefits).

IV. Climate, culture & collegiality

Overall, junior faculty:

- Reported the greatest satisfaction with the fairness with which their immediate supervisor evaluates their work and the amount of personal interaction with junior colleagues.
- Were least satisfied with opportunities to collaborate with senior faculty.

Compared to male faculty, female faculty

- Reported significantly less satisfaction with: the fairness with which their immediate supervisor evaluates their work, the interest senior faculty take in their professional development, the opportunities to collaborate with senior faculty, and their sense of fit.
- Were significantly more satisfied with their personal (as opposed to professional) interaction with junior colleagues.
- Were significantly less likely to agree with the statement, "On the whole, my department treats junior faculty fairly compared to one another."

Compared to white faculty, faculty of color:

- Reported significantly less satisfaction with: the fairness with which their immediate supervisor evaluates their work, the amount of personal interaction with senior colleagues, the amount of professional and personal interaction with junior colleagues, their sense of fit, and the intellectual vitality of senior faculty.
- Were significantly less likely to agree with the statement, "On the whole, my department treats junior faculty fairly compared to one another."

V. Global satisfaction

Overall, junior faculty:

- Agreed "somewhat" (4.08 out of 5.00) that they would accept their current positions if they "had to do it over again."
- Rated their institutions as moderately "good" (3.75 out of 5.00) places for early-career faculty to work.

Compared to male faculty, female faculty:

- Were equally likely (4.08 out of 5.00 for both males and females) to agree that they would accept their current position if they "had to do it over again."
- Provided, by a significant degree, lower ratings of their institutions as places for early-career faculty to work.

Compared to white faculty, faculty of color:

- Were significantly less likely to agree that they would accept their current positions if they "had to do it over again."

EXAMPLE ACTIONS BY COACHE INSTITUTIONS

“COACHE made a very important difference in pointing out the need to take action, in persuading skeptics that these issues do, in fact, matter in our ability to recruit and retain faculty, and in speeding up the timetable for implementation.”

-- *Associate Dean of the Faculty, COACHE Research University*

Following are actual initiatives undertaken by COACHE members in response to their reports. Whether your institution chooses to evaluate your results primarily against your peers (normative method) or against internal benchmarks (criterion method), you might consider learning from COACHE institutions who have:

Promotion and tenure

- Hosted two programs, one with new hires and one with junior faculty in their tenure review year, to discuss the tenure review process so that junior faculty receive consistent messages regarding the expectations of them and the tenure process.
- Established a Junior Faculty Task Force to interpret COACHE data along with other studies and to make recommendations on faculty evaluation and development.
- Reviewed and ultimately overhauled tenure processes.

Nature of the work

- Established or improved faculty teaching/development centers to help new faculty stay on track.
- Improved clerical and teaching support, including better access to teaching assistants and research assistants.
- Assigned new faculty to “shadow” experienced faculty in their first-year seminars.
- Publicized the availability of grant-writing assistance and developed workshops and other forums to enhance skills in this area.
- Initiated a thorough compensation study.

Work/Life

- Developed workshops for department chairs on work/life issues.
- Addressed work/life concerns by communicating “stop-the-clock” policies more clearly and widely.
- Made automatic the extension of the probationary period for primary caregivers.
- Offered awards of up to \$750 per year to support dependent care expenses incurred in association with professional travel.
- Provided more and better-targeted assistance with dual-career job placement, in part by joining a regional consortium.
- Built new child care centers on campus and improved scholarships for dependent care.
- Expanded housing assistance to include support after tenure review.

Climate, culture and collegiality

- Initiated a series of breakfast and luncheon meetings for junior faculty. These meetings had a stated agenda (the first of these was to discuss the COACHE results), but the unstated purpose was to provide an opportunity to meet senior administrators and faculty from other departments, to discuss concerns and ask questions, and to build a sense of community among junior faculty who might otherwise feel somewhat isolated.
- Established a Diversity Council to address areas of concern and advertise areas of strength.
- Established a mentoring program that matched junior faculty with senior faculty from other departments.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

In addition to their own resources, dozens of COACHE sites have leveraged the expertise of our associates, who are available to provide a number of ancillary services, including:

- Guided tours through your COACHE data
- Tutorials on best practices in targeted areas of concern
- Workshops for deans, department chairs, and faculty
- Users group meetings with other COACHE administrators
- Special reports for custom comparisons and deeper insight