Benchmark Best Practices:

Nature of Work: Teaching

collaborative on
academic careers
in higher education

HARVARD

GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF EDUCATION

This series of white papers is offered freely to member institutions as part of our project's three-year support and engagement plan.

Direct inquiries, feedback, and requests for reprint to:

Benchmark Best Practices:
Nature of Work: Teaching

What is measured in this benchmark?

NATURE OF WORK: TEACHING

Satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with:

- The portion of your time spent on teaching
- The number of courses you teach
- The level of courses you teach
- The discretion you have over the content of the courses you teach
- The number of students in the classes you teach, on average
- The quality of students you teach, on average
- How equitably the teaching workload is distributed across faculty in your department

Why Support for Teaching Is Important

Among the core areas of faculty work explored by the COACHE survey, teaching—and the supports institutions provide faculty to teach well—is bound by significant constraints, but also by great opportunities. The challenge for every faculty member is to strike a balance between institutional expectations for teaching and the time and ability available to invest in it.

Dissatisfaction can occur when faculty members feel expectations for teaching are unreasonable, institutional support is lacking, or the distribution of work is inequitable. Time is the common denominator: if expectations for any of these areas outstrips the time available to meet them, morale and productivity can suffer.

When considering COACHE results on this benchmark, keep in mind that our instrument does not measure teaching load—institutions already collect those data elsewhere—but it measures, instead, faculty *satisfaction* with teaching load in its various manifestations. Thus, while reducing teaching load is often "off the table" as a short-term fix, increasing faculty satisfaction with teaching load can improve faculty's experiences with these aspects of the job.

Benchmark Best Practices:
Nature of the Work: Teaching

Satisfaction can be raised through workshops and seminars about improving teaching, mentoring students, using instructional technologies, and experimenting with new pedagogical techniques (e.g., flipped classrooms). Increasingly, these development opportunities are housed in centers of teaching and learning (or of "faculty success" or "faculty excellence"), where other resources and advice are dispensed by seasoned experts. The implementation of and communication about these supports can increase faculty satisfaction with what teaching is expecting of them.

Getting Started

- Most of the institutions with exemplary results on this benchmark had the following qualities in common. Consider these characteristics a foundation for improving faculty satisfaction with teaching.

- Make expectations for teaching clear from the point of hire. "When we hire new faculty," explained the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Holy Cross, "we concentrate very heavily on the fact that they have been, and have the potential to remain, good teachers. And then they come into an environment in which everyone else is a good teacher."

- Recruit faculty who are already devoted to teaching. "The faculty who apply to Stonehill already identify as strong teachers," said the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs there. "They want to work at a place that values teaching; they often self-select into this culture."

- Ensure that faculty members have a say in which courses they teach and in their content. They do at Hobart and William Smith Colleges (HWS), where any course that has to do with a faculty member's specialty, s/he can redesign, redevelop or re-propose to the Committee on Academic Affairs. "So," explained the Associate Provost, "our faculty feel like they are really passionate about the topics they are teaching, the subject matter, and they really have the ability to target it at the level of students in those classes."

- Offer grants for pedagogical development and innovation through a center for teaching. Most campuses leading in this benchmark promote the value of teaching by rewarding improvements with real money. A typical comment came from the Associate Provost at HWS: "We provide grants through the provost's office for the Center for Teaching and Learning to get faculty to develop pedagogy outside of what they might be comfortable with, or there are some of these teaching innovation grants, where faculty try new things and have some support to do that."

- Recognize excellence in the classroom through public, prestigious, and substantive awards. Three institutions stood out among COACHE's exemplars on this item. Kenyon College rewards multiple faculty annually for exemplary teaching informed by creative scholarship; to support outstanding teaching in the humanities; and with high-prestige professorships (e.g., from the National Endowment for the Humanities). Among other teaching awards, Tulane University grants presidential fellowships of $5,000 per year for four years. "The awards go out at commencement and there are medals, a platform, and a presentation," said the Associate Provost there. "It's a big deal and provides recognition of the faculty member's accomplishments." At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, winners of the Tanner Award for high-quality teaching receive it from the chancellor and provost at mid-court during a basketball game in front of a standing ovation of thousands.

- Make teaching of primary importance in the mission of the institution. "Teaching is number one here," explained Hamilton College's Dean of Faculty. "The primacy of teaching and teaching excellence is reflected in the Faculty Handbook," he said, "but everyone understands here that there's no tenure without excellence in classroom teaching. We have a high premium on that."

What's Working

Hamilton College

Hamilton's "Network for Teaching and Learning" offers a series of conversations about teaching and learning, including such topics as:

- What Very Good Students Tell Us About Very Good Teaching
- Creating and Nurturing Creativity in Our Students
- Using Student Feedback to Improve the Learning Environment

The College has also put real resources behind teaching by committing to the construction of new teaching facilities and by growing its office that serves the technological needs of faculty in the classroom.

Leaders at Hamilton also credit the consistency and clarity of expectations provided in the articulation of general and department-specific tenure guidelines about teaching. "Teaching is a complex task," reads the faculty handbook. "Its evaluation requires consideration of several characteristics that should be reflected in an instructor's performance: commitment to teaching." The handbook goes on to require all voting department or program colleagues to evaluate "from firsthand knowledge" the classroom teaching abilities of tenure- and promotion-eligible faculty. Also accepted in a candidate's dossier are "published works and works in progress on teaching, new courses developed or old courses revised and updated, innovative teaching methods, participation in redesigning curricular offerings, work in cross-disciplinary courses, guidance of independent study, and other course evaluation forms developed by departments or individual faculty members."

Hobart and William Smith Colleges

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at HWS provides several grants annually of $1,500 each, weekly teaching tips, discussion sessions on pedagogical practices, individual faculty consultations, mid-semester teaching and learning evaluations, in-class workshops and support for first-year seminar faculty. In addition, faculty can share syllabi and access links and bibliographies on the CTL BlackBoard site. The CTL also sponsors the Faculty Teaching, Learning, and Evaluation Series, which is described as "Four intertwined year-long series connecting teaching methods, learning, and multi-purpose evaluation."

The College of the Holy Cross

Through the Office of Grants and Corporate and Foundation Giving, Holy Cross competes for challenge grants and works with corporate matching gift programs to provide more incentive to donate to the college's teaching enterprise. (One website exhorts, "Support the College in honoring its commitment to the highest standards of personalized instruction in the Jesuit, liberal arts tradition.") These activities fund grants that assist in the development of new courses, concentrations and pedagogical approaches; fund new technologies in the classroom, laboratory, library and office; and link Holy Cross and regional K-12 educational programs.

Support in various forms comes from an "Ed Tech" office, an active Center for Teaching, and the Office of the Dean, which sponsors speakers, events, and faculty development opportunities. The office also provides a website that collects and organizes a catalog of the resources available to faculty at Holy Cross (see *academics.holycross.edu/dean/facultyresources*).

Kenyon College

Kenyon's Faculty Teaching Initiative Grant Program provides funds to support members of the faculty in developing new courses and for enhancing teaching methods and strategies in existing and new courses. In addition, the Faculty Handbook is unequivocal about the primacy of teaching among the

criteria for evaluation of faculty: "Teaching Excellence is the sine qua non for retention and advancement at the College."

Middlebury College

As part of the faculty professional development initiative at Middlebury, new faculty hold a professional consultation with their department chair and one other tenured colleague. "At least two terms before the first review (normally during the third semester of teaching)," reads the faculty handbook, "a faculty member on regular appointment will invite the department chair and one other tenured colleague to visit one class each." Following these visits, and before the end of the term in which these visits occur, the chair and the other tenured faculty member hold an oral consultation with the faculty member. The dean of faculty ensures this meeting takes place. Middlebury faculty members also have access to professional development funds, including funds for "professional conferences and workshops, pedagogical and course development, additional training, and purchase of materials needed for teaching and research (which are not readily available).

Middlebury's Center for Teaching, Learning, and Research (CTLR) organizes the resources available to faculty for their teaching (full details are available at *middlebury.edu/academics/writing/teaching*). Faculty can participate in the Pedagogy Series of discussions, apply to the Sponsored Research Office for curricular development grants, avail themselves of the CTLR's support for incorporating more technology into the classroom, or just meet CTLR staff for periodic lunch meetings (open to all faculty and instructors) on the teaching of writing. The CTLR also has information on a writing retreat to which all faculty are invited; a clear and detailed Middlebury writing rubric; help for how to use peer writing tutors and First Year Seminar Mentors in classes; and other forms of curricular support (e.g., guidelines for teaching writing intensive courses, guidelines and criteria for assessing student writing, handouts for writing classes, and steps in the writing process).

Stonehill College

Beyond the standard seminars, "brown bags," and other sponsored on-campus conversations about pedagogy and learning, Stonehill also sends its faculty off-campus with scholarships for a three-day retreat to Cape Cod where faculty members write and discuss articles on teaching. The college provides $750 pedagogy grants for those interested in attending pedagogy-related conferences. These activities cleave near to Stonehill's commitment to supporting cross-disciplinary Faculty Learning Communities, which "provide faculty the opportunity for sustained reflection on a substantial and timely teaching question."

Other teaching resources at Stonehill include:

- Toolkits to assist faculty who are planning to take students abroad
- A Faculty Reading Room and Print Library
- Resources on Teaching about Privilege
- A scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL) bibliography on RefWorks
- An archive of syllabi from Stonehill
- Sample syllabus statements
- Workshops to help faculty work better with students with disabilities and with emotional and other psychological challenges
- Funding and staff support to support faculty piloting new instructional technologies in the classroom.
- A "Faculty-Librarian Partnership Program," which provides funding for faculty to redesign a course in collaboration with a research librarian.

Finally, Stonehill's faculty handbook provides not only information about instruction and course management, teaching loads and assignments, and course evaluations, but also clear instructions for documenting (i.e., for tenure and promotion) effective teaching; evidence of course content, rigor, and organization; stu-

dent learning, mentoring, and advising; and ongoing development and improvement as a teacher.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Since joining COACHE, UNC Chapel Hill founded its Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE), a campus-wide professional development center that "tailors its programs and resources to meet the diverse needs of faculty members throughout all stages of their careers." As UNC's Executive Vice Provost and Chief International Officer explained:

"The CFE promotes new approaches to education and supports innovative endeavors for faculty educators. That's been a very strong contribution to faculty interest in education… that you will grow as an educator. We've also spent quite a bit of time on a 10-year academic plan that addresses issues of education, interdisciplinary work, faculty rewards, and globalization. The first theme in the academic plan is faculty and student engagement, so it's pretty central. It's not peripheral to who we are as a university. While all campuses honor their best teachers, we make sure that our finest teachers receive accolades and we enjoy the chance to celebrate their teaching."

Resources for faculty run by the CFE include new faculty orientations; workshops, seminars, and symposia; printed and online materials; individual consultations; and a library of resources on teaching, research and academic leadership. The CFE also offers Lenovo Instructional Innovation Grants "to promote innovation in the areas of collaborative learning, global education, and large class sections." In addition, the CFE developed an application called the Professional Interests Manager (PIM), "designed to inform faculty members about professional development resources and opportunities in the areas of teaching, research, and leadership." PIM sends tailored email notifications about resources and opportunities related only to the topics faculty have selected, such as links to useful websites, summaries of relevant journal articles, and announcements of campus events (see *cfe.unc.edu/pim/*).

Resources

Blackburn, R.T., and J.H. Lawrence. (1995). *Faculty at work: Motivation, expectation, satisfaction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Boyer, E.L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Finkelstein, M.J., R.K. Seal, and J.H. Schuster. (1998). *The new academic generation: A profession in transformation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Glassick, C.E., Huber, M.T., and Maeroff, G.I. (1997). *Scholarship assessed: Evaluation of the professoriate*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hutchins, P., Huber, M.T., and Ciccone, A. (2011). *Scholarship of teaching and learning reconsidered: Institutional integration and impact*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Middaugh, M.F. (2001). *Understanding faculty productivity: Standards and benchmarks for colleges and universities*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schuster, J.H., and M.J. Finkelstein. (2006). *The American faculty: The restructuring of academic work and careers.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Kelly, R. (2005). Balancing teaching, scholarship, and service. *Academic Leader*, 21(6), 3-8.

Carroll, V.S. (2003). The teacher, the scholar, the self: Fitting thinking and writing into a four-four load. *College Teaching*, 51(1), 22-26.

Marsh, H.W., and J. Hattie. (2002). The relation between research productivity and teaching effectiveness. *Journal of Higher Education*, 73(5), 603-641.

Price, J., S.R. Cotten. (2006). Teaching, research, and service: Expectations of assistant professors. *American Sociologist*, 37(1), 5-21.

Rosenthal, J., M. Cogan, R. Marshall, J. Meiland, P. Wion, and I. Molotsky. (1994). *The work of faculty: Expectations, priorities, and rewards. Academe*, 80, 35-48.

COACHE Benchmarks

This benchmark report is part of a series of white papers available through COACHE. The complete list of white papers includes:

APPRECIATION & RECOGNITION

DEPARTMENTAL ENGAGEMENT, QUALITY & COLLEGIALITY

DEPARTMENTAL LEADERSHIP

INTERDISCIPLINARY WORK & COLLABORATION

MENTORING

NATURE OF WORK: RESEARCH

NATURE OF WORK: SERVICE

NATURE OF WORK: TEACHING

TENURE & PROMOTION

About COACHE

The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) is a consortium of more than 200 colleges and universities across North America committed to making the academic workplace more attractive and equitable for faculty. Founded in 2002 with support from the Ford Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies, COACHE is based at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and is now supported by its members.

Designed to generate not simply "interesting" data, but actionable diagnoses, COACHE's suite of faculty job satisfaction surveys have been tested and continuously improved across multiple administration sites and cycles. Institutional reports and executive dashboards provide college leaders with a lever to increase the quality of work-life for their faculty; to advance a reputation as a great place for faculty to work; to provoke better questions from and more informed decisions by prospective faculty; and to generate ideas and initiatives from faculty that enrich and expand the range of possible improvements.

COACHE also brings academic leaders together to advance our mutual goals of maximizing the impact of the data, with many opportunities to meet with counterparts from peer institutions and to discuss COACHE findings on faculty affairs.

Call (617) 495-5285 to request your invitation to participate.

collaborative on
academic careers
in higher education

HARVARD

GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF EDUCATION

www.coache.org