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The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education

A Research-Practice Partnership | 2021

Introduction

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The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) is a **research-practice partnership** bringing together faculty and academic leaders who believe that decision making should begin with sound data—data that make the recruitment and development of faculty talent, and their own leadership, more effective.

COACHE, based at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, enrolled its first cohort of institutional partners in the 2005-06 academic year, and has since welcomed new cohorts annually.

Under COACHE, more than **300 colleges, universities, community colleges and systems** have strengthened their capacity to identify the drivers of faculty success and to implement informed changes.

Offering comparisons to self-selected peers, innovative approaches from exemplary institutions, and one-on-one consultations, COACHE is a **mission-driven partner in improving the academic workplace.**

Our Collaborative Network

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COACHE brings partnering *liberal arts colleges, universities, community colleges, and state systems* together to advance our mutual goals of creating the conditions in which faculty do their best work.

Virtually and in person, we gather *provosts, vice provosts, deans and associate deans, faculty leaders and other campus constituents.*

We provide our partners the opportunity to engage with their counterparts from peer institutions. Together, they respond to COACHE's findings, overcome common challenges, and explore exemplary programs and practices.



Our complete partner list is available on [our website](#).

Our Approach to Partnerships

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COACHE embraces the William T. Grant Foundation's Research Practice Partnerships model.*

Research Practice Partnerships:



Are sustainable in the long-term



Focus on practical problems



Benefit both researchers and academic leaders



Are intentional about relationships



Emphasize original analysis

*Coburn, C.E., Penuel, W.R., & Geil, K.E. (January 2013). Research-Practice Partnerships: A Strategy for Leveraging Research for Educational Improvement in School Districts. William T. Grant Foundation, New York, NY.

Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey

Based on scholarly literature, informed by interviews and focus groups with faculty, and guided by advisory groups of senior academic administrators, the COACHE Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey is the *benchmarking instrument preferred by college and university leaders who expect action from their data.*

We measured the survey's validity through cognitive testing with diverse faculty at various institutional types so that we could deliver an adaptive tool *personalized by institution, rank, tenure status, and other important demographic factors.*



Survey Themes

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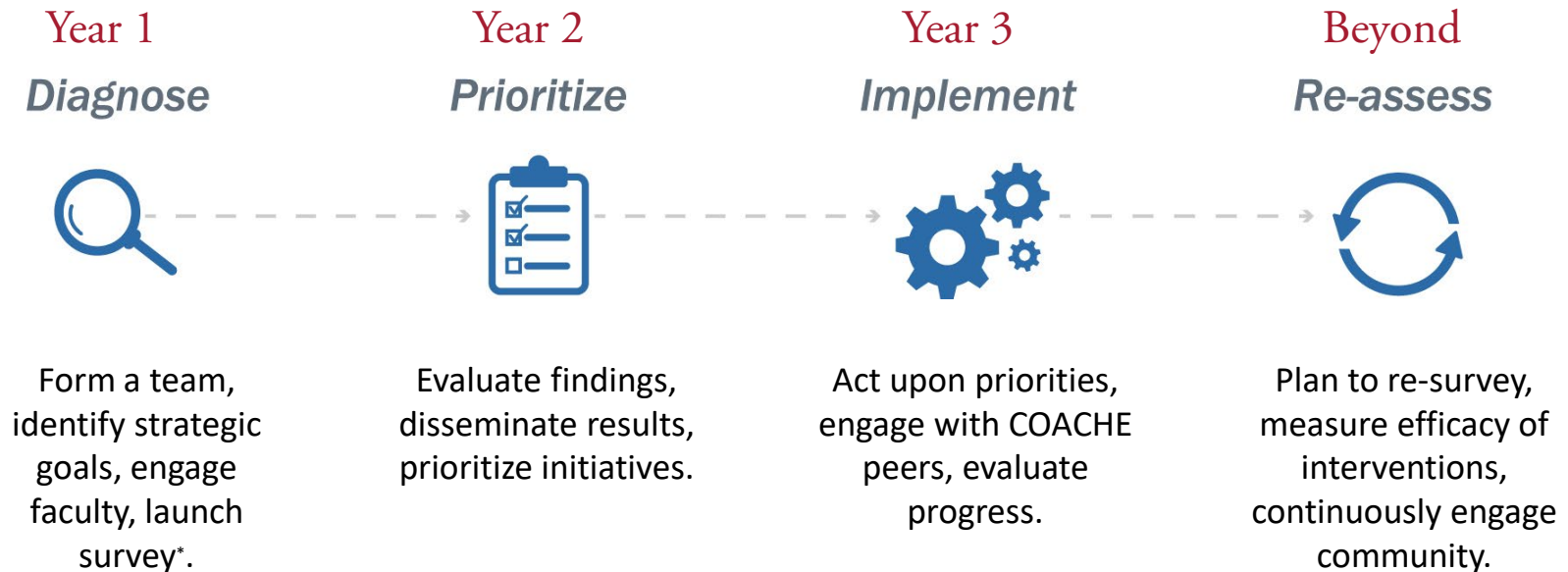
The survey themes reflect our findings about the faculty experience, including:

- Nature of Work: Research
- Nature of Work: Teaching
- Nature of Work: Service
- Tenure & Promotion
- Interdisciplinary Work, Collaboration, & Mentoring
- Department Engagement, Quality, & Collegiality
- Resources & Support
- Shared Governance
- Institutional Leadership
- Appreciation & Recognition
- Retention & Negotiation
- Clinical Work (if applicable)

High-Level Timeline



We are dedicated to helping our partners make meaning from their results and enact data-driven policy changes that will improve the academic workplace on their campus. For this reason, participation in the Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey is a three-year commitment.



*Survey launch occurs once per year, typically in the first week of February, and remains open for two months.

Diagnostic Reporting

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After survey administration, partners receive access to their results through our digital Chief Academic Officer Report. This report is designed to provide internal and external comparisons on each of the survey themes in an easy-to-navigate format. Partners also receive a hard copy summary of our findings and can elect to receive de-identified unit-level data for deeper analysis.



Click to view report overview, or watch at coache.gse.harvard.edu/reporting

Our reports include:

- ✓ Data disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, tenure status, academic area, and rank.
- ✓ Statistical comparisons to national results and self-selected peers.
- ✓ Internal comparisons between academic areas and demographic groups.
- ✓ Qualitative analysis of open-ended comments.
- ✓ Change over time indicators for repeat partners.

Comparative Data for Deans

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In our continuing commitment to make COACHE data not merely interesting, but actionable, we have created **Deans' Comparative Reports** to supplement our Chief Academic Officer Reports on an as-needed basis. These reports give school or college leadership insights into their own faculty with the depth of tailored, contextual data for which COACHE is known. Reports are delivered as means and frequencies tables in spreadsheet format (Excel).

Three levels of reporting are available:

	Tier 3 \$1,200 ea.	Tier 2 \$2,900 ea.	Tier 1 \$4,900 ea.
School/College faculty compared to the entire institution (internal comparison only)	✓	✓	✓
School/College faculty compared to faculty at all similar schools/colleges at other universities		✓	✓
School/College faculty compared to faculty at five similar schools/colleges hand-picked by you			✓

Costs for additional reports are capped at \$30,000 total per institution



52%

*average institutional
response rate in 2020.*

92%

*of faculty who take
the survey finish it in
one sitting.*

25

*minute average
response time.*





Peer Network

The value of engaging COACHE reaches beyond our satisfaction data and benchmarking reports. As a collaborative, *COACHE creates opportunities for its partners to engage with our researchers and with each other* on important topics related to the faculty experience. Whether convening at the conferences where faculty affairs leaders gather or inviting you to the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education, we are building a data-driven community of practice.

How Partners Use COACHE: Vanderbilt University



VANDERBILT
UNIVERSITY

- Vanderbilt University conducted their first Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey in 2016 and have since leveraged the results to launch 70+ faculty-focused initiatives in the span of two years.
- Examples of initiatives resulting from the survey include:
 - Launch of the *Global Vanderbilt* web portal to better connect faculty to international opportunities
 - Expanded mentoring programs in six schools
 - Establishment of a Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Board at the Owen Graduate School of Management
- Of the ongoing initiatives, Interim Chancellor and Provost Susan R. Wentz said "the faculty are the lifeblood of the university, and I hope all know your voices are being heard and we will keep listening."
- Vanderbilt re-surveyed in February 2020 to gauge the success of these initiatives and re-prioritize as needed.

[Learn more about Vanderbilt's initiatives →](#)

Pricing: Research Universities

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The base fee for participation is **\$25,000 + \$20 per record.**

- The per record fee is capped at \$25,000.
- This fee covers all three years of partnership.
- Costs may be allocated across multiple fiscal years.
- A 20% discount on the base fee applies for commitments to multiple survey administrations.

Optional fees:

<i>Description</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Medical Schools Expand survey eligibility to include full-time clinical faculty members in the school of medicine (subject to per record fees) and receive additional medical school comparative report.	\$7,500.
Deans' Comparative Reports Receive additional data tables to supplement the Chief Academic Officer Report (additional details on p. 9)	Tier 3 - \$1,200 Tier 2 - \$2,900 Tier 3 - \$4,900
Custom Survey Items Append the survey with up to 15 additional survey items to be administered to your faculty.	\$250 per item.
Pass-through Variables Include additional faculty record-level variable information in your Population File and COACHE will return it in your Data File.	\$100 per variable for up to 5 variables.



Next Steps: What We Need from You

Now:

- Verbally confirm intent to participate by **November 1** (deadline is **Aug 1** to attend the Strategy Workshop)
- Sign a Participation Agreement

Before launch:

- Form a COACHE team
- Send payment for first invoice
- Attend the Partner Strategy Workshop (dates TBD) to prepare for survey administration
- Pull data on eligible faculty

Survey launch (Feb – Apr, 2022):

- Send a message of endorsement to eligible faculty
- Track response rates online and work with our team to improve if necessary

Institutional roles to consider including in your team:

- CAO
- Senior academic officers in Faculty Affairs, Development, Diversity, etc.
- Chief Diversity Officer
- Faculty governing body Chair or similar representative
- P&T committee member
- IR officer
- Director of CTL
- HR officer
- Communications/Marketing officer
- Sponsored Research Director
- Principal Investigator (e.g. NSF/ADVANCE)
- Faculty with experience in higher ed., organizational development/behavior, data analysis...

Faculty Retention and Exit Survey

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COACHE has deployed the *first multi-institutional survey of faculty retention and departure*. Until now, there has been no systematic, coordinated effort for like-minded universities to collaborate in research design or data analysis to develop a common understanding of faculty mobility.

COACHE partner institutions are poised to make *significant improvements in faculty exit management and retention efforts* through a sustained commitment to this applied research.

Faculty Turnover Concerns All Universities



- More than **1 in 5 assistant professors plan to leave in less than ten years**—even if they earn tenure.
- In the past five years:
 - Nearly **1 in 4 faculty actively sought an outside offer**,
 - 14% of all faculty **received a formal offer**, and
 - 12% **renegotiated their employment terms...**

... but through the Faculty Retention & Exit Survey, we can learn which universities retain faculty better than others--and how.

Source: COACHE Workplace Satisfaction Data (2012-2017).

Faculty Renegotiation & Departure

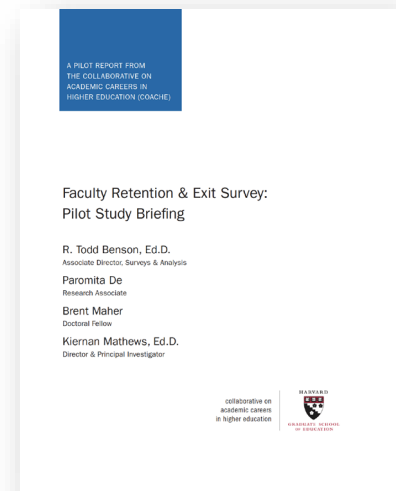
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Provosts, deans and chairs can do better to retain faculty:

- 1 in 4 departures left for *less than a \$6,000 increase* in salary.
- 35% of faculty who searched for an offer did so just to renegotiate the terms of their employment...*but half of them ended up leaving.*
- Among those who didn't ask for a counteroffer, *men were more than two times more likely than women* to receive one.



Source: [COACHE Faculty Retention & Exit Survey Pilot Study Briefing](#).

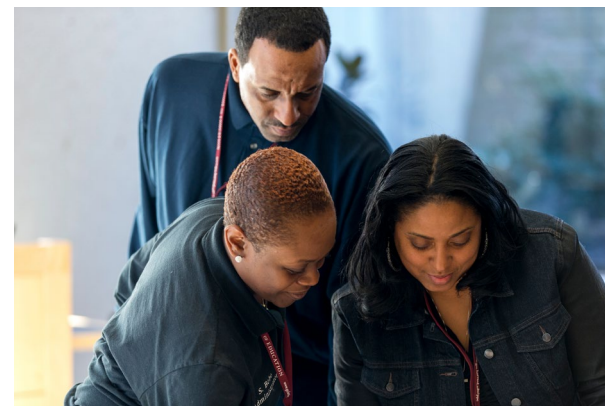


Investing in Your Faculty

With a validated instrument and comparative academic personnel data, COACHE partners:

- Make better use of their recruitment, retention, and development resources.
- Identify turnover causes and costs relative to competitors in the faculty labor market.
- Realize where department chairs and deans can fix the departure process.

In addition, we have learned that there is value in simply asking faculty about their experiences: doing so imparts a sense, even as faculty are leaving, that their university cares about them.



Survey Population

Faculty who fall under the following three categories are eligible to participate in the Faculty Retention and Exit Survey:

1. **Faculty who left your institution** in the prior academic year (not including retirements and involuntary departures).
2. **Faculty who received an offer** to work elsewhere in the past year, **but were retained** by your institution.
3. **Optionally, faculty who were preemptively retained** by your institution.

At a typical university, the eligible population ranges between 20 and 50 retentions and departures each year.



Survey Themes



The survey's themes span:

- The **search** for a new position
- The **nature of the outside offer**
- The **compelling factors** in a decision to stay or leave
- The influence of **spouses' and partners' careers**
- The **counteroffer** process
- The **transition** away from the institution

A High-Level Timeline



Year 1



Survey 1*, data collection, & brief recap

Year 2



Survey 2, data collection, & brief recap

Year 3



Survey 3, robust data & comparative analysis



COACHE provides *brief narrative recaps of each year's findings*.

After the third survey is completed, COACHE sends *full quantitative analysis with comparative, robust data on faculty retention and departure*.

*Survey launch takes place in October each year.

Pricing



Annual participation fee:

\$1,500, plus \$100 per record.

Additional fees:

Custom questions may be appended to the survey for \$500 per block of five items.



Next Steps: What We Need from You

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Now:

- Request & sign a Participation Agreement by July 1

Before launch:

- Send payment for first invoice.
- Pull your data on eligible faculty.

Survey launch:

- Send a message of endorsement to those faculty.
- Our team handles the rest.

Your institution will be asked to provide an Excel or SPSS file containing information on the faculty and former faculty who are eligible to participate in your institution's survey.

Who:

- ✓ *Faculty who left the institution (year prior to current fiscal year)*
- ✓ *Faculty who have received an outside offer but were retained*
- ✓ *Any faculty who were preemptively retained*

What:

- ✓ *Contact information*
- ✓ *Demographic info*
- ✓ *Institutional investments*
- ✓ *Professional achievements, e.g. scholarly activity, teaching awards*

When:

- ✓ *Mid-September: Data Pull*
- ✓ *Late October: Survey Launch*

Learn More

For additional information on partnering with COACHE, contact:

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