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Population File Characteristics

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The purpose of maintaining a comprehensive population file seems straightforward at first glance: it is essential to determine whom to survey and what questions to pose. However, the rationale extends beyond these basics, as demonstrated by COACHE's approach in supporting partner institutions. By collecting specific variables, COACHE aids these institutions in comprehending the tangible costs of faculty departures. Institutions need to assess whether they are losing top grant recipients or their best educators, thus highlighting the need for a population file.
To make informed decisions about counteroffers, institutions require clear metrics for evaluating the past and potential contributions of their faculty. This involves both external and internal comparisons to determine which faculty members are at a higher risk of leaving. By analyzing the population file against the broader faculty body, institutions can identify if specific groups, such as women, faculty of color, or STEM faculty, are more prone to leave. Additionally, the comparative data in the Faculty Retention and Exit Survey (FRES) allows institutions to gauge if their win/loss rates among certain groups surpass those in the wider study population.

COACHE has learned from its partners that creating a population file for such a study demands a high level of coordination and planning, surpassing the simplicity of extracting a file from a database. This process challenges the unequal comprehension of who is at risk and whether processes remain equitable, especially when data on faculty departures are scattered.

The data crucial for assessing the "value" of faculty are often stored across diverse repositories, from Human Resources to Institutional Research, and even in spreadsheets maintained by administrative assistants on their local desktops. As a result, institutions might inadvertently rely on the most readily accessible data, potentially introducing unintended biases in valuing faculty contributions. Addressing these challenges requires deliberate planning and integration to ensure comprehensive and unbiased evaluations.

Even institutions that never participate in the COACHE Faculty Retention and Exit Study would benefit from building their own hypothetical population files to answer these questions:

- How many faculty were on the market last year with a genuine opportunity to leave the university?
- Who is tracking these data in a consistent and timely manner?
- If your institution keeps those data centrally, how often are they reviewed?
- Aside from names and email addresses, what other types of data does your institution use to evaluate the risk of departures?

Introduction

The demographic composition of university faculty in the U.S. continues to be a critical multi-dimensional issue. Faculty of color[1] have been underrepresented in the United States. Vestiges of historical exclusion (Ray, 2019), workplace discrimination (Zambrana, 2018), exclusionary disciplinary and epistemic logics (Posselt et al., 2020; Gonzales et al., 2024; Settles et al., 2022) and racial animus, apathy and aversiveness in faculty behaviors and career evaluation (White-Lewis, 2020) all play a role in institutional racism. The same can be said of women's underrepresentation in academia, despite the majority of undergraduate students today identifying as women. Racial and gender disparities become more apparent through the lens of rank and appointment status, with national data showing that these groups are more represented in lower and more precarious roles.

The matter of appointment type has also captivated observers of U.S. higher education. Many have commented that the increased reliance on contingent faculty in colleges and universities (i.e., full time, non-tenure-track and part-time faculty) has diminished the overall value of higher education (Baldwin and Wawrzynksi, 2011; Bowden and Gonzalez, 2012; Champlin and Knoedler, 2017). Furthermore, enrollment numbers and faculty FTE numbers across disciplines vary (Zhang and Liu 2010; Ehrenberg, 2012). Though we do not go into the level of detail in particular fields, this backdrop helps explain why STEM still performs highly in some areas throughout the report (e.g., salary), while not universally better across all areas.

We provide this backdrop because knowing who takes a survey can reflect broader higher education trends, both in terms of raw demographic representation *and* experiences and outcomes. 3631 people took part in COACHE's Retention and Exit Study, across 52 universities over 8 years. We see that lower proportions of faculty of color and Non-Tenure Track faculty responded to the survey. We provide these backdrops to help consider who responses represent. We can also consider why certain groups may be less likely to respond. Differences in this section and throughout the report are often not random but can be traced back to factors that create inequitable departmental workplaces.

In this section, we provide detail on our population and the respondent sample that we analyze through this report. We answer questions like:

1. What are the demographic characteristics (e.g. race, gender, sexuality, age) of our population? How closely aligned is the analytic sample?
2. What percentage of faculty have departed and have been retained?
3. What academic areas does our population come from?

[1] Those who identify as Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino/a, Asian or Asian American, Multiracial, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern or North African, and American Indian or Native Alaskan, (as categorized in the COACHE Retention and Exit Study)

Demographic Characteristics[2]

The data that are used in this compendium report span eight academic years, starting in 2016 until 2023. Participating institutions provided COACHE with a population file containing all eligible departures and retentions (those who received at least one formal outside offer) at their institution from the previous academic year. Some institutions also provided information for faculty who did not receive formal offers but were actively retained in the form of some employment change.

The distribution of the overall population and the respondent group looked like the following:

Category	Overall Population (%)	Respondent Group (%)	Response Rate (%)
Departure	55.3	51.7	37.6
Retention	21.6	23.8	44.2
Pre-emptive Retention	23.1	24.5	42.6
Woman	43.5	49.3	47.4
Man	51.3	49.0	39.9
Asian or Asian American	19.3	14.7	33.8
White (non-Hispanic)	61.0	66.1	48.1
Black or African-American	7.8	6.9	39.3
Hispanic or Latino/a	6.8	7.1	46.4
Multiracial	1.1	1.0	40.0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.2	0.1	38.5
Middle Eastern, Southwest Asian, or North African	0.9	1.6	78.9
American Indian or Native Alaskan	0.9	1.2	58.6
Other	1.4	0.8	25.7
NTT	20.2	15.4	31.7
Pre-tenure	29.3	30.3	42.6
Tenured	50.5	54.3	44.4
Instructor/Lecturer	2.4	2.0	32.7
Assistant Professor	38.9	36.1	37.5
Associate Professor	29.9	30.7	41.5
Full Professor	28.0	30.3	43.6
Humanities	15.8	17.8	45.8
Social Sciences	14.9	17.1	46.7
STEM	26.7	23.9	36.4
Professions & Other	42.6	41.1	39.1

[2] To download the Population File data tables, click this link or go to the following page to access all tables: https://coache.gse.harvard.edu/coache-faculty-retention-and-exit-compendium-report-files

Out of the 9042 faculty who were retained or had departed, the response rate for the survey over these years was 40.2% (3631 faculty).

While departures make up more than half of the population, they had a lower response rate than did retentions. Women had much higher response rates (47.4%) than did men (39.9%). Faculty of color also had a lower response rate (38.6%) than did white faculty (48.1%), mostly driven by lower response rates by Asian or Asian-American faculty, who had the lowest response rates (outside of those who identified as "Other") and Black or African-American faculty.

Response rates were lowest for non-tenure track faculty and lecturers/instructors. And faculty in the humanities and social sciences tended to response at greater rates than did faculty in STEM or Professional or other fields.

Faculty age was a survey item added in 2017 and is only known for those who complete the survey since those data are not collected in the population file. Out of the 3015 respondents who shared their age, the median age of the respondent group is 44 years old. While there is a good distribution of ages in the faculty who responded to the survey (between ages 30 and 65), the highest percentage of respondents were between the ages of 35 and 44.

The career age of the respondents, or the years since their terminal degree, also shows considerable variation. This suggests that the survey included both early-career academics who have recently completed their terminal degrees and more experienced individuals who have been in their field for decades. A large majority of respondents had been working for under 20 years, however, with about a third of respondents working for less than 10 years (35.4%) and 41.6% of respondents working between 10-19 years.

Weighing the Factors

Field Notes

In our recent survey, it became evident that while salary is a crucial component in faculty's decisions to stay or leave, it is not the sole factor. Over half of respondents cited salary as a top reason for their decisions, but there are 32 other factors that faculty selected among their top five.

This observation suggests that faculty weigh multiple factors beyond just financial remuneration when making career decisions. The metaphor of "when you only have a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail" aptly describes a one-dimensional approach to negotiations. Traditionally, partners might focus chiefly on salary, thereby restricting their negotiation strategies.

To broaden our negotiation toolkit, we might consider implementing an intake form that lists various negotiable factors for faculty, encouraging a wider conversation. Moreover, it's essential to probe deeper with our inquiries to uncover the genuinely motivating factors behind departures.

Addressing issues, even those currently unresolvable, is crucial. For instance, the feasibility of remote work has evolved significantly in the past decade and may warrant fresh consideration. By expanding our understanding of what faculty value, we can improve retention and satisfaction more effectively.

It may also be worth considering the development of a local *Negotiator's Guide* that highlights the types of resources and supports that can be included in the negotiations. Expanding the tool box of the organizational actors (Chairs, Deans, etc.) can widen the discussion beyond salary.

Introduction

Any time a faculty colleague leaves, especially unexpectedly, a number of questions invariably arise. Was it something about the workplace? Was it to be closer to family? And what sort of opportunity did they leave for - another higher education institution with more resources, or an entirely different occupation? Questions such as these are almost always asked because they imply an underlying question: did they leave for some *controllable* reason, or was this case *outside* of our control? O'Meara and her colleagues (2014) surveyed and interviewed two groups at the same university: (1) faculty who left the university, and (2) administrators and senior faculty who were involved in trying to retain those faculty. They asked both groups to share their "side of the story" and found that they reached different conclusions about the primary reason why faculty left, reflecting the "control" dichotomy. Administrators most often cited "better opportunities" (37%) and "location and family" (29%) and were less likely to cite "work environment or fit" (25%). But faculty leavers responded differently, with 69% citing the work environment, and only 8% citing better opportunities or location and family as the primary reasons. Though it may be the case that faculty told leaders different rationale for personal and professional reasons, this approach still makes it clear that narratives for faculty departure must be told by the faculty themselves.

In this section, we do just that by showing data on the factors that faculty considered in their decisions to stay or leave. Many previous studies provide the impetus for this analysis; White-Lewis et al. (2022) provides an apt overview:

> There are numerous individual and organizational explanations as to why faculty leave their academic positions. These include dissatisfaction in the general sense and with work-life balance (Daly & Dee, 2006; Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002; Rosser, 2004; Smart, 1990), limited job security and dissatisfaction with compensation (Zhou & Volkwein, 2004; O'Meara et al., 2014, 2016), productivity (Ryan et al., 2012; Smart, 1990), familial and geographic concerns (O'Meara et al., 2014), and discrimination experienced in the workplace stemming from gender, race, and partner status (Kim et al., 2013; Rabe & Rugunanan, 2012; Rothblum, 1988; Smart, 1990; Zambrana, 2018).

With this literature as a critical backdrop, we present results to survey questions that explore the following:

1. What were the factors that were most frequently chosen by faculty as compelling reasons to stay at their institution? Does this vary by race, gender, or rank?
2. What were the factors that were most frequently chosen by faculty as compelling reasons to leave their institution? Does this vary by race, gender or rank?
3. What were primary factors faculty cited that weighed on their decision to stay or leave? Does this vary by race, gender, or rank?

Factors Compelling Faculty to Stay

Looking at the factors that were most frequently chosen by faculty as compelling reasons to stay at their current institution provides insight into what institutions can address to better retain their faculty. Across all years, the quality of colleagues emerged as the most often selected factor on average, with 33.5% of faculty respondents identifying it as one of the top five factors compelling them to stay. The other factors most selected in the top five reasons to stay included salary, department or institution reputation, benefits, including retirement and healthcare, and collegiality within the department.

The Top 5 Most Selected Compelling Reasons to Stay Overall

Factor	Total Selected	Responses (%)	Selected Rank 1	Means
Quality of Colleagues	832	34.4	353	2.18
Salary	637	26.3	240	2.36
Dept or Institution Reputation	493	20.4	138	2.56
Benefits (retirement, health care, etc.)	492	20.3	99	2.71
Collegiality within the Department	489	20.2	95	2.86

When looking across racial groups, quality of colleagues and salary remain the top two factors on average that compel faculty respondents to stay. Both faculty of color and white faculty also selected department or institution reputation among the top 5 factors to stay. For White, non-Hispanic faculty collegiality within the department and cost of living were among the top 5 most selected factors, whereas faculty of color more often selected prospects for receiving tenure and benefits.

Quality of colleagues and salary were the top two for both men and women. While salary is the second most chosen factor on average for both men and women, a higher percentage of men selected it (30.1%) compared to women (22.5%). Department or institution reputation and cost of living both were among the top 5 most selected factors for both men and women. Distinct factors among the top 5 were benefits for women and collegiality within the department for men. These data suggest that the women respondents might weigh tangible resources (e.g. salary, benefits, cost of living, etc.) in their decision to stay, whereas more intangible things like institutional reputation and collegiality are given more weight by men respondents.

When looking at factors by departure status, while salary and quality of colleagues are the top 2 most selected for both groups, quality of colleagues is the most selected reason to stay for departures while salary is the most selected reason to stay for retentions. Furthermore, cost of living, benefits and collegiality within the department are among the top five most selected reasons to stay for departures, while employment opportunities for spouse, proximity to family and department or institutional reputation are among the five most selected reasons to stay for retentions.

Quality of colleagues is the most selected reason to stay across ranks. Salary comes in second for associate and full professors, while prospects of receiving tenure or contract renewal comes second for assistant professors.

Finally, faculty who selected "other" (431 respondents) when asked about factors compelling them to stay at their institution highlighted several themes, including professional support (10%), personal and family reasons (16%), the institutional and community environment (17%), student quality (8%), and the role of leadership (3%). Among these, 7% mentioned research support and local collaborations as key professional motivators, while 3% cited teaching autonomy. Family concerns were important for 10%, and 6% emphasized the influence of longevity and personal ties, with 4% pointing to proximity to friends. Institutional features, such as hiring practices and support for marginalized communities, were relevant for 3%, while 10% mentioned aspects of the local environment, such as climate and political atmosphere. A notable trend during the pandemic was the increased focus on family considerations and community ties, with respondents highlighting the importance of stability during uncertain times.

Factors Compelling Faculty to Leave

The data present a different picture for factors that compel faculty to leave. Salary is the most selected factor, with 50.8% of respondents identifying it as one of the top five compelling reasons to leave an institution. This is followed by potential for professional growth and intellectual stimulation, highlighting the importance of career development opportunities in faculty retention. The reputation of the department or institution, quality of colleagues and proximity to family are also among five most selected reasons to leave.

The Top 5 Most Selected Reasons to Leave by Faculty Respondents Overall

Factor	Total Selected	Responses (%)	Selected Rank 1	Means
Salary	1207	50.8%	453	2.33
Potential for Professional Growth & Intellectual Stimulation	823	34.6%	249	2.63
Dept or Institution Reputation	782	32.9%	205	2.66
Quality of Colleagues	680	28.6%	149	2.71
Proximity to Family	577	24.3%	213	2.41

One of the most notable trends by race is the consistent importance of salary, potential for professional growth, quality of colleagues, department or institution reputation among all racial groups as reasons for departure, indicating a broad desire for career advancement, quality colleagues, and good pay. Salary is the most selected reason to leave across almost all demographic groups. Campus environment for faculty of color was the fifth most selected factor for Black and African American faculty and tied for fifth among American Indian or Native Alaskan faculty along with potential for work-life balance and number of faculty in the same discipline/specialization.

Factors to leave do not differ greatly between men and women. Salary, potential for professional growth, department or institutional reputation, quality of colleagues and proximity to family were the five most selected reasons for both groups. Salary is the most selected for both groups, just as it is across the sample, but a slightly higher percentage of men (52.6%) selected it than did women (48.1%).

Across ranks, salary, department or institution reputation, quality of colleagues and potential for professional growth are all amongst the top 5 most selected reasons to leave. Factors uniquely in the top 5 by rank are proximity to family for assistant professors, collegiality within the department for associate professors, and quality of academic leadership for full professors.

The open-text responses of 333 faculty members who selected "other" reveal a wide array of additional factors that would compel them to accept an outside offer. 11.1% of respondents mentioned leadership opportunities and 6.0% mentioned career growth potential, such as roles to be director of an institute or senior administrative positions. Furthermore, 10.5% of faculty also listed the support for research, including new or large start-up funds and quality and availability of

specialized research facilities and equipment, as a major factor, underscoring the role of institutional resources in attracting faculty. Additionally 4.2% of faculty valued recognition, mentioning they were compelled to leave because of "feeling wanted" indicating that a sense of belonging can influence faculty mobility. Another 3.3% of faculty mentioned having autonomy, particularly over teaching responsibilities, as a factor that would compel them to accept an outside offer. Faculty members also cited discrimination and poor campus climate (4.5%) and leadership (4.5%) as impacting their decision to leave. Finally, 6% of faculty mentioned the working environment as a factor influencing their decision to leave and another 6% cited institutional support and growth trends within the department.

Top Factors in Decision to Stay or Leave

Among the top 5 reasons to stay and to leave, the survey asks respondents to designate each reason as a primary or secondary factor in their decisions. Salary is the leading primary reason for departure or retention, with 43.1% of respondents identifying it as their primary reason. The quality of colleagues is the second most cited primary factor (33.2%).

Following salary and quality of colleagues, the potential for professional growth and intellectual stimulation, by proximity to family and department or institutional reputation are the most often selected as a reason to stay or to leave.

The Top 5 Most Selected Primary and Secondary Factors to Stay or to Leave

Factor	Primary (N)	Primary (%)	Secondary (N)	Secondary (%)
Salary	1008	43.1	529	22.6
Quality of Colleagues	776	33.2	493	21.1
Dept or Institution Reputation	548	23.4	567	24.2
Potential for Professional Growth & Intellectual Stimulation	773	33.1	276	11.8
Proximity to Family	629	26.9	334	14.3

Across all groups, salary consistently remained the top primary reason why a faculty member would choose to stay or leave. For all racial groups quality of colleagues, proximity to family, and potential for professional growth and intellectual stimulation remained among the top five most selected as a primary factor. The campus environment for faculty of color remained the fifth most selected as a primary factor among Black or African American faculty.

To Stay or Accept the Outside Offer

Faculty were also asked to think back to the time they received their outside offer, but before any counteroffer was (or was not) made, and share the factors that were weighing most heavily in the decision to stay at their institution or accept the outside offer. Out of 2295 faculty respondents, faculty shared many different responses around salary and compensation (29%), spousal support and

family considerations (21%), the work environment (10.2%), leadership (9.8%), career advancement (10.9%), diversity (3.3%), appreciation (8.6%), and research support (25.4%).

Faculty commonly expressed frustration over salary inequities, such as earning less than new hires or colleagues with less experience. This financial dissatisfaction was often tied to feelings of being undervalued, especially when combined with disparities based on gender or race. Furthermore, family considerations, particularly spousal support, emerged as another major factor influencing decisions. Faculty cited the lack of spousal hires or institutional support for their partner's career as critical reasons for leaving or on the other hand, the support for their spouse as reasons for staying (6.9%). Several respondents mentioned that not only was professional satisfaction important for them, but also family stability and well-being. This included concerns around cost of living in the area and family considerations, such as schooling costs for children, family tuition, and the social and emotional impact.

Faculty who mentioned the work environment as critical aspects of the decision-making processes frequently pointed to toxic work cultures, dysfunctional departments, and poor leadership as significant drivers for leaving. Experiences of bullying, difficult relationships with colleagues and supervisors, and lack of support from department chairs or deans were among several concerns that weighed in faculty's decision-making process, particularly to leave the institution. In some cases, faculty highlighted the failure of leadership to address these issues. On the other hand, faculty mentioned that enjoying their current colleagues and having great community within academic departments were among reasons they would choose to stay.

When it came to career growth, faculty saw that lack of career opportunities as reason to leave and possibilities of advancement as reasons to stay. Those that expressed dissatisfaction included frustrations over unclear tenure paths or the inability to secure administrative roles, which faculty mentioned prompted them to seek opportunities elsewhere where they believed their career progression more assured. Others were more generally excited about leadership opportunities, whether at their current institution or another one.

Faculty mentioned that while their institution had invested in leadership training for them, it hadn't fostered them into a leadership role that was not directly related to diversity issues. Furthermore, the burden of being the only faculty member from a minority background weighed heavily on some respondents, particularly those who felt culturally isolated. This also played a role in whether faculty felt appreciated for their work and contributions, which was another major theme in faculty's comments. Several mentioned that while their department had claimed they wanted to retain them, there was no movement until there was an outside offer.

Finally, research support was a major theme that came up in faculty's open-ended responses, particularly around frustration over inadequate resources. Faculty members highlighted various factors, including the lack of infrastructure and administrative support necessary for sustaining a

successful research program, the inability to train graduate students or complete research due to a lack of faculty in their program, and their institution's failure to invest in key resources, such as lab space and internal grant review services. Many faculty also mentioned the disconnect between teaching and research, falling on both sides of the coin, where some mentioned enjoying teaching \ more than research and others feeling burdened by the teaching load.

Spousal and Partner Considerations

Introduction

Spousal and partner status has historically been included alongside demographic variables, like race and gender, in faculty mobility studies for good reason (e.g., Daly & Dee, 2006; Kim et al., 2013; Ryan et al., 2012; Zhou & Volkwein, 2004). From a gendered organizations perspective, the distribution of household and other forms of labor in heterosexual relationships disproportionately falls onto women who relieve men of responsibilities. Heterosexual women, however, do not reap similar benefits, most often juggling household, maternal, and career responsibilities simultaneously which can negatively impact their careers (Acker, 1990, 2006). Thus, understanding who are in such partner arrangements helps contextualize career experiences and outcomes between gender groups in higher education.

Spousal and partner status is also relevant to how faculty experience their search process. Sometimes individuals are employed in similar settings as their spouse, either in the same field or even the same institution, which can complicate job prospects. In a classic study of gender discrimination in faculty hiring, Rivera (2017) found that search committees actively considered women's, but not men's relationship status when deliberating candidates and making hiring decisions. This was because heterosexual women whose partners held academic or perceived high-status occupations were not considered "moveable," compared to similarly competitive men or single women. Alternatively, men were discussed as moveable regardless of the occupation or prestige of their partners. Other scholars (e.g., Blake, 2023, Culpepper, 2023) found similar racialized and gendered inequities in dual-career hiring. Though less is known about single faculty, Culpepper et al. (2020) found that single faculty, particularly single women associate professors, felt less able to balance work and life compared to faculty who had a partner. Thus, in this section, we examine responses to survey questions like:

1. What is the marital status of respondents at the time they received an outside job offer?
2. How did respondent's spouse's/partner's career factor into their external offer?
3. What are respondents' spouses' and partners' employment status at the time they received an outside job offer? And if they are in higher education, what role do they have?

Marital Status at Time of Job Offer

When looking at the distribution of marital/partner status among faculty respondents who received an outside job offer, the vast majority were married or in a civil union (75.8%). An additional 5.3% of respondents were unmarried but living with a partner. A higher percentage of men reported being married or partnered 86.4% compared to 76.6% of women. A higher percentage of white faculty were married or partnered (83.0%) compared to faculty of color (78.0%). Higher ranks and tenured faculty also had higher percentages of married or partnered respondents.

Partner's/Spouse's Career in Relation to External Offer

Of those who were partnered, 42.0% said that their spouse's career was unrelated to their search for a new position. About a quarter of respondents reported that they received an offer first, then their partner/spouse searched for a job to move with them, and about one-fifth of respondents received a 'dual-hire' offer. This is important to note because it emphasizes the importance of dual-hire opportunities in academia (Blake, 2022), a theme which appears throughout much of the open-ended text responses to spousal-related questions. Men were more likely than women to report that their partner/spouse's career was unrelated to their job search (44.3% compared to 38.7% of women). A higher percentage of women reported receiving a job offer first with their spouse moving with them, and a higher percentage of women also reported receiving a 'dual-hire' offer.

Those at higher ranks were more likely to have their search unrelated to their partner's or spouse's career. Associate professors had the highest percentage of 'dual-hires'.

Partner's/Spouse's Employment Status at Time of Offer

In terms of the types of roles spouses and partners have, while the highest percentage of respondents, at 44.8%, reported that their spouse/partner was employed elsewhere, 31**%** shared that their spouse/partner was employed at the same institution. Women were more likely to report that their spouse/partner was employed at the same institution at 35.6% compared to 27.2% of men. A higher percentage of white faculty reported that their spouse was employed at the same institution compared to faculty of color. And those in higher ranks were more likely to have spouses/partners employed at the same institution.

Partner's/Spouse's Position at Time of Offer

Survey respondents were asked about the type of position their spouse or partner had when they received their offer. The majority of respondents (55.3%) reported that their spouse or partner had a role within an academic institutions, 38.2% as faculty members, 8.5% as administrators, 5.2% as postdoctoral fellows, and 3.4% as students. After that, 42.5% reported that their spouse/partner had a role outside of higher education.

A higher percentage of women reported that their spouse/partner was a faculty member (42.9% vs. 33.7% of men) while a higher percentage of men reported that their spouse was either an administrator, postdoctoral fellow, or student (21.4% vs. 13% of women). An equal proportion of men and women reported spouses/partners who had roles outside of higher education. A higher percentage of white faculty (48.2%) reported that their spouse/partner worked as either a faculty member or administrator in an academic institution compared to faculty of color (44.2%). Those at higher ranks were more likely to have spouses/partners who were faculty or administrators in academic institutions.

The Search

Field Notes

Recent data reveal that about one-quarter of faculty considered leaving their current positions for at least two years before receiving an outside offer. This finding prompts several important questions for academic leaders. Firstly, do they have the necessary tools to identify faculty who are contemplating departure? Moreover, are there effective mechanisms to intervene with these faculty members before they actively pursue opportunities elsewhere?

The motivations behind seeking outside offers provide another layer of insight. Approximately 13% of respondents admitted that they pursued external offers solely to renegotiate terms with their current institution. This raises further questions:

For institutions with a formal policy allowing renegotiation after receiving an outside offer:

- Is this policy widely communicated and understood by faculty?
- Is it consistently enforced, and who is responsible for overseeing its implementation?
- Are there established exceptions to the policy, and if so, what are the criteria? Do faculty comprehend the rationale behind these exceptions?

Conversely, at institutions where external offers are not requisite for renegotiation:

- Are some faculty under the impression that such offers are necessary? What misinformation might be circulating, and could it stem from mentors or colleagues?
- Does possessing an outside offer, even when unnecessary, afford faculty more negotiation power?

These questions highlight the need for clear communication and consistent policy enforcement to better manage faculty retention and satisfaction.

Introduction

These data portray *candidate perspective and behavior* in academic hiring. There is substantially less empirical scholarship on applicant behavior compared to institutional behavior. But a scholarly gap does not mean there is a lack of public interest. Quite the contrary, one does not need to look far (e.g., social media outlets like Twitter and Reddit, personal blogs, academic job coaching, etc.) to witness discussion on how many applications jobseekers submitted before landing their job, or how long it took for them to do so. A difficult job market, even for those who have already secured a job like COACHE respondents have, is one significant reason that people leave academia. The difficulty of securing terminal employment within academia is often captured through "quit-lit" and "staypieces" which refers to the corpus of public narratives that describe why individuals stayed or

left their academic roles (Bartram, 2018; Dreger, 2015; Kendal & Waterhouse-Watson 2020; Larson, 2020; Lee, 2015 Laudan, 2021; McKenzie, 2021; Pannapacker, 2021). Though some faculty every year intend to leave academia, much fewer do (Benson et al., 2016), which is one of the subjects of this section. Individuals who may enjoy more success in academia become the target of recruitment, though there are no studies that report how often this is the case, or who is recruited most often. Thus, The Search should satisfy readers who are interested in these seldom documented applicant trends.

In this section, "the search" refers to applicant choice and decision-making. We present results to survey questions that explore the following:

1. What are the external opportunities that are most salient for faculty in their decision to leave or stay? How does this breakdown by demographics?
2. How many external positions did faculty apply for?
3. How was communication first initiated between the offering institution and the faculty member?

Time Spent Considering Leaving and Time Spent on Search

The COACHE survey asks faculty respondents for approximately how long they were considering leaving their institution prior to receiving an offer or opportunity to work elsewhere. While most faculty spent less than 2 years considering leaving, 26.6% of faculty spent more than 2 years thinking about leaving their institution. This means that over a quarter of faculty in our respondent population had not been satisfied with their current employment for over 2 years.

A higher percentage of women considered leaving their institution for more than 2 years while men were more likely to report never considering leaving their institution compared to women. Faculty of color were more likely to report that they never considered leaving their institution than were white faculty. Hispanic or Latino/a faculty had the highest percentage of respondents who never considered leaving the institution compared to all other racial groups. Assistant professors were more likely to consider leaving for 12 months or less, while a higher percentage of associate professors considered leaving for more than 2 years. Full professors had the highest percentage of respondents who reported that they never considered leaving the institution.

Those who ultimately departed were more likely to consider leaving for 2 years or less. Those who were retained were more likely to consider leaving for more than 2 years or to never consider leaving. It is worthwhile for institutions to consider how they might identify faculty who are considering leaving earlier.

The survey also asks respondents for how long they were actively searching for a new position prior to receiving an offer or opportunity to work elsewhere. While differences by gender and race are not large, a slightly higher percentage of women and a slightly higher percentage of faculty of color

actively searched for less than 6 months compared to their counterparts. When breaking down race by subgroups, Black or African American faculty had the highest percentage of respondents who reported actively searching for more than 2 years and Hispanic or Latino/a and American Indian or Native Alaskan faculty had the highest percentage of respondents reporting that they never actively searched for a position.

Assistant professors and instructors/lecturers were most likely to search for 12 months or less. Associate professors were most likely to actively search for 1-2 years as well as over 2 years. Full professors were most likely to have never actively searched for a job.

Unsurprisingly, those who left their institutions were more likely to have actively searched for a position than those who were retained. About 40% of those who were retained reported that they never actively searched for a new position, while 25.5% of those who left reported the same.

Ultimate Motivation for Search

A large majority of the faculty respondents in the COACHE sample who considered leaving their institution looked for opportunities within academia; 89% considered faculty or administrative positions at other academic institutions. The remaining 10% of respondents considered a wide range of external opportunities such as positions in industry or private sector organizations, government, NGO or policy positions, entrepreneurial ventures, private practice, research positions outside of academia and education or professional development programs.

A slightly higher percentage of women and faculty of color considered academic positions compared to their counterparts. When breaking down race by subgroups, Black or African American faculty, American Indian or Native Alaskan, multiracial and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander faculty had the highest percentages of respondents considering academic positions.

The majority of respondents reported that their primary motivation for the search was to leave the institution (54.6%). A lightly higher percentage of women reported that their primary motivation was to use an outside offer as leverage to renegotiate the terms of their employment, while men were more slightly more likely to report that their primary motivation was to leave their institution. Men were also most likely to report that they did not initiate a search for a job offer.

A higher percentage of faculty of color reported their primary motivation was to use an outside offer as leverage to renegotiate the terms of their employment. A higher percentage of faculty of color also reported not initiating a job search. When breaking down race by subgroups, Black or African American faculty had the smallest percentage of respondents reporting that they used an offer as leverage to renegotiate the terms of their employment (9.7%), smaller than all other groups, including white faculty. A slightly higher percentage of Black or African American faculty (59.3%) reported initiating a search to leave compared to white faculty.

A higher percentage of assistant and associate professors initiated a job search to renegotiate terms of their employment. Full professors had the smallest percentage of respondents initiating a search to leave (44.9%) and the highest percentage of respondents who did not initiate a search for a job offer (19.2%).

Unsurprisingly, departures were more likely to initiate a job search to leave while retentions were more likely to initiate a search to renegotiate terms of employment or to not initiate a search at all.

Initial Contact with Offering Institution

The data on how communication was first initiated regarding the most recent job offer highlights various methods through which outside institutions engage with potential candidates. The most commonly reported form of communication involved a person from the institution contacting the respondent to submit an application for an advertised position (34.6%). This suggests that institutions often take an active role in reaching out to candidates for open positions. Over a quarter of respondents reported submitting unsolicited applications to advertised positions, also indicating a proactive approach by job seekers. Additionally, nearly one-third of respondents were contacted by the institution to gauge their interest in a potential offer (14.2%) or to submit an application for an unadvertised position (12.5%).

This distribution reflects the more prominent role that institutions play in job offers, with 63.2% of respondents contacted first by someone in the offering institution. Whereas a higher percentage of retentions were contacted first by the institution, a higher percentage of departures submitted an unsolicited application to an advertised job position (31.4% vs 18.1% of retentions) or contacted someone at the institution about an unadvertised position.

A higher percentage of women were contacted by the institution for an advertised position whereas a higher percentage of men were contacted by the institution about a potential offer or a verbal/formal offer.

As with gender and the overall trends, the most common method of initiating communication across all racial/ethnic groups was contact by the institution to submit an application for an advertised position. A higher percentage of faculty of color than white faculty were contacted to submit an application for an unadvertised position as well as contacted about a potential or verbal/formal offer. Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino/a faculty had the highest percentage of respondents who were contacted about an unadvertised position. Black or African American faculty also had the highest percentage of respondents who were contacted about a potential offer. Middle Eastern or North African faculty, although a small proportion of the sample, had the highest percentage of respondents who were contacted with a verbal or formal offer. These results may suggest that there may have been targeted efforts to recruit from these groups for positions and may reflect efforts in recent years to create more pathways for faculty of color (Huff, 2021; Connor, 2022).

Applications Sent and Offers Received

On average, women applied to fewer positions and received fewer job offers than did men. Faculty of color applied to more positions and received more offers than did white faculty, by slightly higher averages. A higher percentage of faculty of color did not apply to any jobs compared to white faculty (7.2% and 3.1% respectively). A higher percentage of women received just one job offer, while men were more likely to receive more than one job offer. White faculty were more likely to receive just one offer, while faculty of color were more likely to receive more than one job offer. Assistant professors applied to the highest number of jobs on average and received the most job offers. Departures applied to more jobs, on average, than did retentions and received more job offers, on average as well.

The Negotiation Process

Field Notes

While most negotiations involve some give and take between individuals and their institutions, there is much more to the work than just the terms. The way faculty are treated during negotiations is just as important as what they receive. When faculty understand the rules of engagement and that they are being treated with respect during the negotiation process, it goes a long way towards coming to an amicable resolution. Even faculty who end up leaving the institution, can do so on better terms.

The real question is: what does constructive negotiation between faculty and the administration look like? To begin with, a healthy negotiation process is one where faculty understand the rules of engagement including which terms can and cannot be negotiated. If a faculty member begins negotiations with an unclear understanding of the process, it increases the likelihood of frustration. The survey asks faculty to provide details regarding two critical components of the negotiation process. First, is the question of who received counter offers and who did not. The decision itself is often complicated by the myriad factors that are used to measure the contributions (past and future) of the faculty member. This decision alone is rife with opportunities for inconsistencies and in some cases inequitable treatment.

Second, understanding the duration of negotiations can offer some sense of the expediency of the process. In many cases, the decision to leave a university is tied with the decision to move to a new geographic location. Add a spouse/partner and children to the equation and the decision becomes further complicated. When universities drag out negotiations, it places pressure on the faculty member who is navigating this decision both professionally and personally. One strategy for mitigating that frustration is to encourage administrators to send regular updates to faculty about the negotiation process. Something as simple as bi-weekly messages that reassure faculty that the process is still moving may alleviate some of the frustration and uncertainty faculty feel.

Some questions that academic leaders should consider:

- To what extent are faculty consistently informed about the negotiation process and timeline?
- On average, how long does the negotiation process take at your institution? What factors contribute to variability in that timeframe? For example, if a faculty member is negotiating for specific lab equipment, that might require higher levels of approval, budgeting, etc.
- Does your institution elicit feedback from faculty about the way they were treated during negotiations?

Introduction

Much attention has been devoted to what gets negotiated (e.g., salary, start-up, other benefits, etc.) but much less attention has focused on the *how*. As in, what is our latest understanding of how faculty perceive and interact with negotiations between their initial pay, outside offer, and counteroffer? In this section, we include data on the following survey questions:

1. How do faculty notify leadership of their outside offer, if at all?
2. How seriously do faculty consider their outside offer?
3. How many days transpire between notifying leadership of the outside offer and receiving a counteroffer?
4. How do faculty perceive that the counteroffer process was handled?

Institution's First Notification of Outside Offer

Nearly three-quarters (70.1%) of respondents reported that they first informed their chair or head about their job offer. Nearly 1 in 12 faculty respondents (8.4%) accepted the job offer before notifying anyone at their institution, and unsurprisingly, almost all of those respondents left. A higher percentage of faculty who were retained informed someone at their institution. Institutions do not always have the opportunity to present a counteroffer, which makes it important to consider other ways to stay informed regarding how faculty are faring and improving on retention efforts before faculty decide to leave.

When looking at these results by race of respondents, there were not large differences between faculty of color and white faculty. Disaggregating race reveals more variation in responses, with higher percentages of Asian/Asian-American and Hispanic/Latino/a faculty informing chairs first (75.2% and 73.8% respectively) than white or Black/African American faculty (69.0% and 62.5% respectively), and with Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino/a, and multiracial faculty (19.3%, 17.4% and 24.0% respectively) more likely to inform their deans than Asian/Asian American or white faculty (10.9% and 16.4% respectively). While a higher percentage of white faculty (9.3%) chose to accept the offer without informing anyone at the institution compared to faculty of color as a whole (9.3% vs 6.7% of faculty of color), Black/African American faculty had the highest percentage who accepted the offer without telling their institution (10.8%).

There are no notable differences by gender in how faculty informed their institutions of their outside offer. However, a slightly higher percentage of men informed their chair first (71.1% vs 69.1% of women) while a slightly higher percentage of women accepted the outside offer without speaking to anyone at the institution (9.1% vs. 7.7% of men).

A much higher percentage of full professors (29.0%) chose to inform their dean about the offer than did assistant or associate professors (7.7% and 12.5% respectively). Assistant and associate professors were more likely than full professors to take the offer before informing the institution

(10% and 8.6% respectively vs 4.8%). Instructors/lecturers were the most likely to accept an offer before informing the institution (24%). This may be indicative of the depth of relationships that faculty in different ranks have, especially since full professors may have the benefit of relationship longevity. This also may show how full professors may be able to use more leverage in negotiating with upper-level administration.

Seriousness of Outside Offer

When asked how seriously faculty were considering accepting a job offer before any counteroffer was made by their institution, the majority of respondents indicated some level of seriousness, with more than half reporting that they considered it "extremely seriously". These results suggest that a significant portion of faculty members were strongly inclined to accept their job offers.

Overall, faculty members of different races and ethnicities generally took job offers from external institutions quite seriously. A higher percentage of white faculty (83.5%) considered outside offers seriously (either quite or extremely) than did faculty of color (76.2%). This may be an indication that more faculty of color wanted to stay at their institutions. When looking at motivation for searching by race, we can see that a higher percentage of faculty of color (15.4% vs 11.9% of white faculty) overall were using the offer as leverage to renegotiate the terms of their employment at their current institutions. When we look at motivation by seriousness of considering their outside offer, we see that a significantly smaller percentage of those using the offer as leverage took the offer "extremely seriously" (28.4% compared to 70.2% of those who were searching with the intention of leaving).

Counteroffers

The COACHE survey also asked faculty to share their experience with counteroffers from their institutions. About 45.3% of respondents reported seeking a counteroffer and about half of respondents reported receiving a counteroffer (48.7%). Not everyone who sought a counteroffer received one and not everyone who received a counteroffer sought one. About 16.6% of those who sought a counteroffer did not receive one and about 22.4% of those who received a counteroffer did not seek one.

Retained faculty were far more likely to seek and receive counteroffers (74.5%), in contrast with only 19.1% of faculty who did the same. About half of those who received a counteroffer without seeking one ended up staying. Furthermore, a large majority (93%) of those who sought a counteroffer and didn't receive one, ended up leaving. Of the faculty who sought a counteroffer and receive one, a majority stayed. These findings highlight the critical role that counteroffers seem to play in faculty retention.

When looking at different demographic groups, there were no large differences between white faculty and faculty of color. However, among those who sought counteroffers, Asian/Asian American faculty had the smallest percentage receive one (75% vs 83-95% of other racial groups).

This may be explained by disciplinary differences, as a higher percentage of Asian/Asian American respondents were in STEM fields or Professional or Other fields and those disciplinary areas had lower rates of counteroffers. Male faculty were more likely to receive a counteroffer without seeking one (12.3% vs 9.6% of women faculty), while women were more likely to receive a counteroffer after seeking one (39% vs 36.7% of men faculty). And predictably, higher ranked professors were more likely to receive counteroffers whether seeking or not seeking one. This may simply reflect that institutions are more likely to both proactively and reactively offer counteroffers to retain more senior and experienced faculty.

Time from Notification to Counteroffer

Of the respondents who sought a counteroffer and who received one, the average number of days that transpired from the day the faculty's home institution learned of their outside offer to the day they received an official counteroffer was 28.8 days. The median number of days was 14 with a range of 0 to 500 days.

Faculty of color waited an average of 34.2 days compared to 25.5 days for white faculty. Women waited an average of 26.3 days compared to men who waited on average 30.4 days. There is more variability by rank in the wait time with higher ranked faculty waiting longer for their counteroffers. These differences suggest that senior faculty may encounter more prolonged decision-making processes in the counteroffer stage, possibly due to the complexities of negotiating offers at higher ranks.

Finally, faculty who ultimately departed reported a shorter average wait time than those who were retained. Similarly with rank, the differences may suggest that institutions take more time in the counteroffer process for faculty they end up retaining, potentially due to more intensive negotiations.

Time from Notification to No Counteroffer

For those who sought a counteroffer and did not receive one, the average number of days that transpired from the day their home institutions learned of their outside offer to the day that they learned they would not receive an official counteroffer was 31.52 days with a median of 7 days.

A closer look at demographic and position-based differences reveals interesting patterns. Women experienced a longer average wait time compared to men. While faculty of color had on average shorter wait times than white faculty, they had a longer median wait time and high variability in both the mean and median number of days when disaggregating by specific groups. While Asian or Asian-American faculty had the lowest average wait time of 16.08 days compared to 31.96 days for white faculty, 57.75 days for Black or African-American faculty, and 54.44 days for Hispanic or Latino/a faculty, they had higher median wait times of 9.5 days compared to 7 days for both white and Black or African-American faculty and 10 days for Hispanic or Latino/a faculty. While Black or African-

American faculty had a lower median wait time than Asian or Asian-American and Hispanic or Latino/a faculty, their higher means indicate that there was more variation in wait times across Black faculty. When looking at wait times by rank, associate professors had the highest mean and median wait times compared to assistant professors and full professors.

Finally, while there was no difference in the median number of days for wait time between departures and retentions (7 days), retained faculty had a much higher mean wait time of 78.14 days compared to 28.82 days for departures, again indicating potentially complex negotiations for those who were retained. Additionally, for faculty who left, 0 days was the most frequently reported time (20.7%) it took for the institution to inform them that they would not receive a counteroffer.

How Counteroffer Process was Handled

Faculty members were also given the chance to share comments about the way that their counteroffer process was handled – 30.8% respondents shared details about a positive experience, 22.1% of respondents shared a negative experience, and 7.9% shared mixed experiences. Positive experiences often centered on institutions demonstrating value for the faculty and offering competitive terms, with many individuals across different years reporting that their counteroffers led to a sense of being valued. Dissatisfaction, on the other hand, often stemmed from slow processes, lack of transparency, and inadequate or non-competitive offers. The absence of counteroffers also remained a common grievance, with respondents across years stating that their institutions failed to take their outside offers seriously.

Respondents also mentioned the involvement of deans, chairs, and directors in the counteroffer process, with specific concerns about negligent or unengaged department chairs and deans. Furthermore, 1 in 10 of faculty respondents mentioned the need for spousal support and considerations around family relocation as critical factors in decision-making. Across all years, individual responses underscore the personal and professional complexities involved in negotiating counteroffers, with speed, communication, and institutional transparency playing key roles in shaping the overall experience.

The Negotiation Terms

Introduction

Different from the section on the Negotiation Process, Negotiation Terms documents *what* faculty are negotiating for: compensation, start-up, other benefits, etc. We analyzed data on faculty initial salaries, start-up packages, the number of months included in their contracts, and similar data included in their outside offers and counteroffers. We also provide statistical insight on how these factors differ by various dimensions, such as faculty rank, race, gender, and discipline. These factors are important because there has been much concern about how faculty pay differs by these variables over the years as a function of negotiations between initial pay, outside offers, and counteroffers (e.g., Crothers et al., 2010; Fiset & Robertson, 2020; Rose & Danner, 2010).

Research shows that women faculty are disadvantaged in negotiations, though this may be beginning to change in more recent years as we develop a firmer understanding of those inequities and ways to intervene. For instance, Fiset & Robertson (2020) tested the impact of "perceived academic supervisor support (PASS) on negotiation outcomes using a sample of recently appointed assistant professors of management. They found that although women were less likely to engage in negotiations and were less effective than men when bargaining for certain elements regarding pay (e.g., salary, research funding), PASS moderated that relationship such that women had better outcomes and parity with men. This research and more form a critical backdrop that informs our approach to data analysis.

In this section, we examine results for the COACHE survey questions that ask:

1. What are faculty members' rank, tenure, and title between different offers?
2. How does compensation differ between initial salary, outside offer, and counteroffer?
3. What is the permissible use of start-up funds, and how do start-up funds differ between the initial salary, outside offer, and counteroffer?
4. How does the difference in compensation and start-up packages differ by race, gender, rank, and discipline?
5. How aligned was your counteroffer to your outside offer?
6. What are reasons you suspect that you did not receive a counteroffer?

Rank, Tenure, and Title: Pre-offer vs. Offer

When comparing faculty's rank at the time of offer, and the rank that was offered to them, over half of the faculty respondents (57.8%) received a job offer that included the same rank as their original rank. However, some notable upward movements in rank are evident.

For instance, among assistant professors on a pre-tenure track, 15.7% were offered positions as tenured associate professors, and among associate professors with tenure, 23.2% were offered positions as tenured full professors. Finally, 29.8% of tenured full professors were offered an

Endowed Chair position. These findings suggest that while many faculty offers do not alter rank, there are offers to advance academic status, reflecting institutions' efforts to attract top talent by offering significant promotions.

A substantial majority of faculty who received outside offers (65.7%) reported that they were not offered any administrative title in their outside offers. This indicates that most outside offers focus primarily on academic roles rather than administrative leadership positions. There is, however, a notable minority of faculty who were offered leadership roles, particularly as program or center directors, making up 13.9% of the offers. Other administrative titles that were seen in faculty's outside offers included department chair/head or Associate or Assistant Chair/Head, which accounted for 8.8% of respondents. Higher-level administrative roles, such as Dean, Associate Dean, Assistant Dean, Vice Dean, Division Chief **(**6.2%), and Provost-level positions (0.5%), were much less frequently offered.

Compensation: Pre-offer vs. Offer vs. Counteroffer

Offers

Survey respondents reported the base salary provided in their initial offer, outside offer, and counteroffer (if they received one) from their current institution.[3] Thus, we were interested in (1) the difference between outside offers and initial salaries, (2) the difference between counteroffers and outside offers, and (3) the difference between counteroffers and initial home salaries. We also explored these differences by discipline, departure status, race, gender, rank. We use percentages instead of raw numbers for salary gains and losses because salaries vary greatly by institutional type and discipline.

The median home salary across 2,532 faculty was $109,840 (mean = $131,700). The median best outside offer for 1,853 respondents was $136,500 (mean = $163,302). The median counteroffer for 827 respondents was $130,000 (mean = $152,394). [4] On average, outside offers were higher than the initial home salary *and* the institution's counteroffer. However, median counteroffers in STEM were the closest to matching median outside offers.

Most respondents indicated a gain between their best outside offer and initial home salary, with only 10.8% reporting a loss. Most respondents received either a 1-24% gain (36.3%) or 25-49% gain (27.6%).

Faculty in the Professions & Other category had the greatest occurrence of loss between the best outside offer and their home salary (12.9%). Meanwhile, 42.2% of faculty in the humanities – nearly

[3] We cleaned salary values that were clearly mistakes in entry, such as single to triple digit values and values of $9,999,999.
[4] Differences could only be calculated for those who reported their salary. We do not include pre-emptive retentions in these reports since they did not receive official outside offers for comparison. Offer and counteroffer salary variables have more missing data so sample sizes for those calculations will be smaller.

half – had outside offers that were between 1% - 24% of their home salary and social science faculty had the highest percentage of respondents reporting 25-49% gains.

While there were no notable differences by gender, when looking at race, a larger percentage of white faculty reported losses (11.8%) compared to faculty of color (8.6%). Among faculty of color Hispanic or Latino/a faculty had the highest percentage reporting loss (11.5%). Asian or Asian American faculty and Hispanic or Latino/a faculty had the highest percentage of their respondents reporting 1-24% gains, Black or African American faculty had the highest percentage of respondents reporting 25-49% and 50-99% gains, and while a small number of respondents reported 100-200% or over 200% gains, white faculty had the highest percentage of respondents reporting those gains.

Counteroffers

Of the 823 faculty who reported their counteroffer salaries compared to their original salaries, 11.2% of faculty reported no change to their salary between their counteroffer and original salary. The majority of respondents received a 1-24% increase in their counteroffer salary. A large majority of respondents received a 1-24% increase in their counteroffer salary (60.1%) or a 25-49% increase (23.7%).

Faculty in the "Professional & Other" fields had the highest percentage of respondents reporting no change between their counteroffer salary and original salary. Social sciences faculty had the highest percentage of faculty making more than 25% gain. Again, there were no notable differences by gender across categories or by race when comparing white faculty to faculty of color. There is greater variation if we look at changes by racial groups.

Months Included in Base Salary

Of respondents who reported the number of months provided in their various offers, most reported that 9 months were included in their original salary at their home institution (68.0%) with 24.1% reporting 12 months. A higher percentage of outside offers included 12 months (42.8%) with the largest percentage still including 9 months (49.2%).

Start-up Packages

Among the 2,301 faculty members who responded to the question about whether their outside offer included a start-up package, a significant majority (72.6%) reported that it did, while 23.2%. When breaking down the data based on race, 78.6% of faculty of color reported that their outside offer included a start-up package, which is notably higher than the 69.0% of White, non-Hispanic faculty who reported the same. There was less of a difference by gender with 73.1% of women and 71.7% of men reporting that they received start-up packages in their outside offers. STEM and Social Sciences faculty had higher percentages of respondents with start-up packages included in their outside offers.

Start-Up Packages by the Numbers: Pre-offer vs. Offer vs. Counteroffer

The median of start-up funds offered when faculty were hired at their institution was $60,000 (mean = $167,812) with 1045 faculty respondents. The median start-up funds offered in the outside offer for 1074 respondents was $75,000 (mean = $220,162) and the median start-up value included in counteroffers for 448 respondents was $100,000 (mean = $201,308).[5] The high difference in values suggests high variance in start-up packages, which is most likely explained by disciplinary differences. That is, start-up packages in STEM greatly vary from those in other fields. Therefore, start-up values between *and* within disciplines should be interpreted with some caution.

Median Start-Up Funds with % over $1 Million

Discipline	Base		Offer		Counter	
	Start-Up ($K)	Over $1M (%)	Start-Up ($K)	Over $1M (%)	Start-Up ($K)	Over $1M (%)
Humanities	15	0	25	1.2	26.5	0
Social Sciences	35	1.3	60	6.2	50	3.2
STEM	272.5	4.5	400	29.2	257	8.0
Professions & Other	50	0.9	75	11.3	110	7.3

It is important to note that while a higher percentage of faculty of color received start-up funds compared to white faculty (even when disaggregating faculty groups of color), when we look at the median start-up funds and those who receive start-up funds over $1 million, there is greater variation. Median funds for Asian/Asian-American faculty are higher than all other groups, and they also have the highest percentage receiving over $1 million in start-up funds. White faculty, also have higher median salaries than most other faculty groups of color with higher percentages receiving over $1 million. This should also be contextualized by the fact that white and Asian/Asian-American faculty make up higher proportions of STEM faculty, which could be driving some of these differences. Deeper analysis would be required to distill any causal differences by race. These same patterns exist for gender differences, with men having higher median start-up funds and more likely to receive funds over $1 million. This, again, could be driven by discipline or rank differences. Further analysis would be required to examine the drivers of those differences.

Permissible Uses for Startup Funds

The survey also asked faculty to rank the permissible uses of their outside offer's startup funds, according to uses that were most important to them. The most common permissible use for startup funds was research equipment (including hardware, software), travel expenses, unrestricted or discretionary funds, and graduate student support or research stipends, in that order. This trend mapped onto the data when broken down by both gender and race, where research equipment and discretionary funds were the top two for both men and women, as well as faculty of color and white faculty.

[5] We excluded values of 0 as that indicates no start-up funds and exclude values over $1 million in the means calculations.

Counteroffer: Proposed Changes

When faculty received counteroffers from their institution, a variety of changes were often proposed to make the offer more competitive and appealing. A significant majority of respondents (86.9%) reported that their base salary was adjusted in the counteroffer, making it the most common modification. This emphasis on salary adjustments suggests that institutions recognize the importance of financial incentives in retaining faculty, particularly in competitive academic markets. As faculty were asked to choose all modifications that applied, beyond salary, 40.9% of respondents indicated that research support, such as funding for equipment and infrastructure, was included in the counteroffer. This reflects the institution's commitment to supporting faculty research, which is often a critical factor in faculty satisfaction and productivity. Other forms of compensation, such as summer salary, were also adjusted in 36.6% of cases, highlighting the importance of overall financial packages, rather than just base salary.

Did Counteroffer Match Outside Offer?

For institutions, the hope is that the counteroffer matches as well as it can to prevent departure, though this is not always the case. Of the 1067 faculty who responded to this survey item, 17.6% reported that the counteroffer did not match the outside offer at all. The largest percentage of respondents reported that it matched "somewhat" (32.9%) or "mostly" (23.3%). A greater percentage of women than men reported that their counteroffers exceeded the outside offer. And a greater share of Black faculty (22.2%) responded "not at all" compared to Asian/Asian-American, White, and Hispanic/Latino/a faculty, when asked if their counteroffer matched their outside offer.

Your counteroffer: Faculty assessment of comparison

Among the 750 faculty who provided an open-text response regarding how their counteroffers compared to their outside offers, 24.9% felt that the counteroffers fell short in some areas. For example, while salary might have been matched, other critical factors like spousal support, startup packages, or graduate student funding were not addressed. Others shared that while the outside offer was objectively better than their counteroffer, they appreciated their institution's effort to retain them, particularly citing their attachment to colleagues and leadership. Over a quarter (27.7%) of respondents conveyed dissatisfaction. Many faculty found the process insulting or humiliating, with some experiencing delays and others sharing that their home institutions were not able to match either the salary, the research and start-up funding, or meet specific requests, such as housing support or office space.

Faculty also shared specific themes that were important to them in the counteroffer consideration process, such as spousal support (10.7%) and tenure (5.1%). Other faculty commented about the process, highlighting that it took them multiple rounds of negotiation to reach a solid counteroffer or shared that there were systemic inequities in how counteroffers were handled.

Your counteroffer: Why It Did Not Materialize

Faculty were also given the chance to provide insight into why they believe they did not receive a counteroffer from their institution. Of the 135 respondents that answered this question, a few themes were noticeable in their answers, including perceived lack of value and respect (14.8%), financial constraints or unwillingness (16.3%), dismissive attitudes from leadership or personal politics (25.9%), lack of responsiveness (6.7%), and difficulty in finding employment for spouses/partners (8.9%).

Furthermore, 5.9% of faculty respondents also shared that their institution had a policy that they would not give a counteroffer for various reasons, including to junior faculty, a blanket ban, to institutions outside the United States, etc. Faculty also mentioned that they perceived that their institutions thought they wouldn't stay, thus leadership did not bother to provide a counteroffer. All of these factors seem to contribute to faculty's decisions to ultimately leave, which may also point to broader systemic challenges.

The Transition

Treatment of Faculty after News of Departure

COACHE also asked faculty about their treatment from colleagues, department chairs, deans, and staff and administrative support after they accepted an external job offer. Out of the 1,498 faculty respondents, the majority of faculty experienced no significant change in how they were treated after accepting an external offer. Although we cannot conclude whether the baseline treatment of these faculty were bad or good, we know that most of them did not experience changes in treatment following the news of their departure.

When it comes to changes in treatment, more faculty experienced worse treatment than better treatment. The largest change was in treatment by department chairs, with 15.6% of respondents reporting that they experienced worse treatment ("much worse" or "somewhat worse"). Respondents also experienced worse treatment by colleagues (12.6%), by their dean (12.3%), and administrative staff/support (8.0%).

A higher percentage of women overall reported worse treatment than did men by colleagues, department chairs, and deans. The largest difference was reported treatment by department chairs, with 17.8% of women reporting worse treatment compared to 13.5% of men.

Hispanic or Latino/a respondents had the highest share who reported worse treatment from their colleagues, with only 1% reporting better treatment by colleagues. They also had the highest share reporting worse treatment by department chairs. Asian or Asian American faculty had the highest percentage (9.4%) reporting much worse treatment by their deans, compared to the average among all other faculty of 6.3%.

Assistant and associate professors reported more negative changes in treatment by other colleagues and their department chair as compared to full professors. Higher ranked professors reported slightly worse treatment by deans but differences are not large.

Institutional Support During Transition

Out of the 1,163 respondents who provided open-text responses about institutional support during their transition, 72.6% reported receiving support in some capacity, whether it was helping with administrative issues, transferring grants and data, or transition with success. While 14.3% mentioned colleagues being supportive, others mentioned supports like the grants office, department chair, dean, HR department as important personnel in facilitating their transition. About one-fifth of respondents (21.3%) felt that their institution was not supportive at all. These respondents also reported challenges such as an inability to obtain necessary information (e.g. healthcare benefits), a lack of exit interviews, lack of appreciation for their service, and losing access to email on their last day of appointment. Additionally, 4.0% indicated that the institution made their

transition more difficult, citing issues like being asked to repay a sabbatical, difficulty obtaining COBRA information, and challenges in releasing lab equipment.

The analysis suggests that while a majority of faculty felt supported during their transition, a notable minority experienced a lack of institutional support or even faced active obstacles.

Possibilities for Institutional Support

Faculty were also asked about how their institution could have better supported them during their transition, to which 936 respondents provided open-text responses. About two-thirds of respondents (60.7%) provided feedback on potential improvements. Among these, 3.7% suggested that the institution could have offered a counteroffer or some form of retention effort, while 3.7% indicated that the institution should have conducted an exit interview. Additionally, 8.8% mentioned that the institution could have assisted with the grant transfer process. On the positive side, 25.7% felt that everything was handled well and could not think of anything to change or suggest. This feedback indicates that while a significant portion of respondents felt their transition was handled well, there is room for improvement in specific areas to enhance the overall transition experience for faculty.

Final Impressions

In this final section, we cover the last remaining variables that will be of interest to readers. Specifically, we address questions like:

1. What could your institution have changed to convince you to stay?
2. What is your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with efforts made by your institution to retain you?
3. How likely are you to seek or entertain a job offer in the next twelve months?
4. If a candidate for a faculty position asked you about your department as a place of work, what would your recommendation be?
5. What are your final comments related to your decision to stay at the institution or accept an outside offer?

Top Changes to Convince Faculty to Stay

COACHE asked faculty members who left to share what their institution could have changed to convince them to stay at their institution; out of 1,505 respondents, nearly a quarter (24.5%) reported that they could not have been convinced to remain at their institution.

From the 72% of respondents who reported changes they felt could have convinced them to stay, the two most frequently selected changes were higher base or supplementary salary and the climate of the department (both 13.2%). Other noteworthy changes include "Changes to departmental or divisional leadership" (8.5%) and "Assistance in finding employment for spouse/partner" (7.7%).

Of the 7.8% of respondents (118) who selected "Other changes", themes that emerged were other spousal or partner concerns (17.8%), such as visa support or security of employment (e.g. tenure-track line) and institutional climate and leadership (31.4%), whether calling for changes in leadership or support for faculty of color. There were also themes related to salary and compensation, faculty workload and professional development, and the need for enhanced research and academic resources. Lastly, specific grievances, such as unfair treatment and the desire to be respected and valued, were mentioned by several respondents, underscoring the variety of changes that faculty considered as the top factors that might have convinced them to stay.

Assistant professors had the highest percentage of respondents who could not have been convinced to stay (29.8). They were also more likely than associate or full professors to select assistance in finding employment for their spouse/partner. Full professors were much more likely to select additional leadership opportunities as a change that could have convinced them to stay. These differences reflect the different career stage and professional aspirations for faculty by rank. It is clear that financial rewards are important to all ranks but additional leadership opportunities for full professors and departmental climate for assistant and associate professors trumped salary changes.

While a higher base or supplemental salary was a key factor across most racial groups, a higher percentage of Black or African American faculty reported that it was a change that would have convinced them to stay compared to Asian/Asian American, white, and Hispanic/Latino/a faculty. This suggests that salary concerns are particularly pronounced among Black or African American faculty members, highlighting a potential area for targeted retention efforts. The climate of the department was also especially important for Black or African American faculty and Hispanic or Latino/a faculty, with 20.3% and 18.4% selecting this as a change that could have convinced them to stay, compared to 8.4% of Asian or Asian American faculty and 12.8% of White or Caucasian faculty. Assistance in finding employment for a spouse or partner was a notable factor for Asian or Asian American faculty. Asian/Asian American faculty also more frequently selected recognition for their performance as a change that could have convinced them to stay.

While there were fewer differences by gender, a higher percentage of men selected higher base or supplementary salary and additional leadership opportunities than did women, while a higher percentage of women selected departmental climate and changes to departmental or divisional leadership than did men.

Satisfaction with Retention Efforts

Among 2,236 respondents, faculty expressed a varying level of satisfaction with retention efforts made by their institutions. The data underscore a fairly even distribution of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, with 35.7% of faculty not satisfied with their institution's retention efforts (dissatisfied and very dissatisfied) and 36.3% of faculty satisfied with retention efforts (satisfied and very satisfied).

Assistant and associate professors were more dissatisfied with the efforts made by the institution to retain them than were Full Professors. It will come as no surprise that faculty departure status strongly mirrored how they felt about the institution's efforts to retain them. Among those who voluntarily departed, nearly half (45.5%) expressed dissatisfaction. In contrast, among retained faculty, about two-thirds (66.0%) were satisfied with the efforts.

A greater proportion of white, non-Hispanic faculty expressed satisfaction (37.5%) than faculty of color (34.1%), while both groups were similarly dissatisfied (35.8% and 35.1%, respectively). When disaggregating race, the data show Hispanic or Latino/a, Multiracial, and Middle Eastern or North African faculty had among the highest percentage of respondents (27.2%, 28.0%, and 28.1%, respectively) who reported dissatisfaction with their institutions' retention efforts. On the other hand, Hispanic or Latino/a respondents were also among the highest percentage of folks (20.1%) that were very satisfied with retention efforts, compared to 12.1% of Asian or Asian American faculty, who had the lowest percentage reporting that they were very satisfied with retention efforts. Black or African American faculty and Asian or Asian American faculty reported the most ambivalence about retention efforts with 31.4% and 29.0% respectively, reporting they were neither satisfied or dissatisfied.

There was a slightly higher proportion of women who were dissatisfied with retention efforts and a slightly lower proportion of women who were satisfied with retention efforts than there were for men.

Likelihood to Seek a Job Offer

Among 1,124 retained faculty respondents who reported their likelihood of seeking or entertaining a job offer in the next twelve months, the majority (57.2%) reported they were "very unlikely" or "somewhat unlikely" to seek or entertain a job offer. Conversely, a smaller portion of the respondents (28%) expressed being "somewhat likely" or "very likely" to seek or entertain a job offer within the next year.

Full Professors had the highest percentage of respondents who reported that they were "very unlikely" to seek a job offer in the next year (40.8%). Unsurprisingly, assistant professors had a higher percentage who reported being "very likely" to seek a job offer than did associate and full professors.

In terms of race, Black/African American faculty had the smallest percentage of respondents who reported being "very unlikely" to seek a job offer and the highest percentage reporting that they were "very likely" to seek a job offer. More research is needed to understand the relationship between race and ethnicity and faculty members' intentions to explore external job opportunities. A deeper look into how retention efforts relate to likelihood of job searches and how those relationship do or do not vary by race would be an interesting place for further analysis.

Recommendation of Department

Of 2,635 respondents who reported whether they would recommend their department as a place to work, the same proportion reported that they would strongly recommend their department as a favorable place to work and that they would recommend their department with reservations (37.2% each). This means that most faculty generally recommend their departments. While a smaller percentage of respondents reported that they would not recommend their department (21.7%), it is not an insignificant proportion and worth examining further.

There are no large differences between faculty of color and white faculty beyond a slightly higher percentage of white faculty reporting that they would not recommend their department. When breaking it down by racial group, Asian American faculty have the highest percentage of respondents who strongly recommend their department (41.8%), while Black/African American and multiracial faculty have the highest percentage to recommend with reservations (43.5%).

Full professors had the highest percentage strongly endorsing their department (45.2%). A higher percentage of men strongly recommended their departments (41.4%) compared to 33.6% of women. Unsurprisingly, there was a much higher percentage of those who were retained who

strongly recommended their department as a place to work (50.5%) compared to those who departed (26.8%). A significant portion of those who departed (36.9%) recommended their department with reservations, highlighting the presence of unresolved issues that may have contributed to their decision to leave.

Decision to Stay or Accept Offer

Among 1,487 respondents who provided additional comments about their decision to stay or accept an outside offer, leadership reasons were one of the most frequently cited, mentioned by 16.8% of respondents. 14.2% of respondents specifically mentioned their dean, often expressing dissatisfaction with the support they received. Family reasons were also frequently cited, mentioned by 10.6% of respondents, with 7.9% specifically mentioning their spouse, often around the lack of support they were given to assist or a poorly handled spousal hire. Salary concerns were cited by 9.3% of respondents, with many expressing frustration over needing an outside offer to negotiate a better salary. Other factors included the lack of diversity (2.2%), geography (0.9%), and cost of living (1.7%). These themes highlight a mix of personal and institutional factors influencing faculty decisions.

Pre-emptive Retentions

Introduction

Pre-emptive retentions are cases where a faculty member accepts some change in their employment *before* receiving an outside offer. These retention packages emerged as an alternate to the usual process of faculty courting outside offers to generate a counteroffer from their home institution. The hope is that by showing the faculty member you value them through a pre-emptive retention package, you can either disrupt their current process of being recruited or prevent that from ever happening. The other benefits to this process are that would-be job-seeking faculty members save time, the current institution may save resources by not having to compete with a known quantity, and other institutions focus on candidates that are more likely to accept their offer.

There are still challenges to this approach, however, which may be why the outside offer/counteroffer process still persists. For example, when should academic leaders make pre-emptive retention offers, and what evaluation metrics should they use when considering who receives them and who does not? When making pre-emptive retention offers, what are the negotiable areas of change, such as salary, rank, administrative and/or graduate student support, teaching responsibilities, and more? And what separates an ideal pre-emptive retention package from one that is less than ideal? These questions show that pre-emptive retentions are yet another discretionary space (O'Meara, 2021) where disparities can thrive if no known data or efforts are present.

There are very few data sources, and no studies to our knowledge, on pre-emptive retentions. Though we cannot answer all of the aforementioned questions, we unpack data on the 890 faculty in our respondent sample who were successfully retained by a pre-emptive retention offer. We present results to survey questions that ask:

1. Do preemptively retained faculty experience changes in their employment conditions? If so, what types of changes are the most frequent?
2. Do changes related to faculty's employment conditions by way of preemptive retentions differ by rank, race, and gender? If so, how?
3. What are faculty's experiences with preemptive retentions? How have changes to their employment influenced their plans to remain at their institution?

Proposed Changes Over Past Years

Of the pre-emptively retained faculty who responded to the question regarding changes in employment (808), the large majority (90.9%) shared that they experienced a change in their employment conditions such as salary, title, job description, or institutional supports (e.g., lab space, teaching load, sabbaticals, administrative or graduate student support, research equipment, etc.) over the last two years. Though 9.1% of pre-emptively retained faculty reported no changes, their

institutions considered them pre-emptively retained. It is interesting to consider that there might be a group of faculty who are being pre-emptively retained without recognizing it.

Of the various changes in employment reported by pre-emptively retained faculty, base salary changes were the most prevalent (92.2%). This indicates that salary adjustments are a major factor in faculty compensation strategies. Following base salary, other notable adjustments include changes to other forms of compensation (31.3%), changes in academic rank or series (30.8%), and modifications to job descriptions or responsibilities (25.9%).

From respondents who selected "Other" (6.3%) some changes described included sabbatical, a named and/or endowed professorship, hiring colleagues or faculty lines in their department, or changed term appointment (e.g. 9 to 12 month or vice versa, part to full time, etc.). Other faculty additionally indicated that they saw changes to their spouse's salary, housing support, service responsibilities, and workload changes. These qualitative responses suggest that while many changes are systematic, there are also unique, personal adjustments made to better support faculty members' individual career goals and personal circumstances.

While base salary was the most common change across all ranks, assistant professors had the highest percentage of base salary change. A higher percentage of associate and full professors, on the other hand, received other forms of compensation. After base salary, while other compensation was the next most reported change for full professors, academic rank or series changes were the next most reported change for assistant and associate professors, reflecting the importance of promotion and tenure for junior and mid-career faculty.

Looking at these changes by gender, while a slightly higher percentage of men received a base salary change, there was also a higher percentage of men who received only one change to their employment compared to women. Furthermore, women reported higher rates of changes related to personal or family issues compared to men, as well as changes in supervisors compared to men, which may indicate greater burden of family falling on women or challenges in mentorship for female faculty. Conversely, men reported slightly higher rates of changes in research support than women. These variations underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of how gender impacts faculty experiences and the types of institutional support required.

The breakdown of changes experienced by faculty based on race shows several differences. A higher percentage of white (non-Hispanic) faculty reported base salary changes, other compensation, job description or responsibilities, teaching responsibilities, and change in supervisors compared to faculty of color. While Black or African-American faculty reported a higher percentage of changes in other compensation, a lower percentage reported receiving a base salary change. Further investigation can help to decipher whether differences can be explained by discipline or rank.

Changes to Work or Employment Made in a Preemptive Action

Faculty who were preemptively retained also shared details around their recent experience at their institution through qualitative responses. Themes that came up included inequity in salaries, feeling valued by their preemptive offer, evaluations and incentives, support from deans and colleagues, workload, and administrative burden. Around salary, faculty mentioned frustrations at inequitable distribution, even among faculty at the same rank and step in the department, salary compression, and demoralization of the lack of merit raises, which may cause faculty to look for outside offers, just to help increase their salary. On the other hand, faculty also mentioned feeling valued when their institution made significant efforts to retain them.

Additional Details about Actions to Preemptively Retain Faculty

Faculty respondents (660) also shared how changes to their work and employment influenced their plans to remain at the institution. Of those respondents, 65% shared that the changes had influenced their plans, while 15.3% shared that it slightly influenced their plans and 18.3% reported that the changes had no impact on their plans to remain at the institution. Among those affected, 31.5% mentioned salary as a key factor in their decision to stay. Others shared details about frustrations with the retention process and inequities. Many felt that increases in salary, additional research funds, reduced teaching loads, and offers of administrative roles made them feel valued and influenced their decision to remain.

For the 15.3% of faculty that felt only a slight influence, their responses reflected complex factors that go into decisions around staying in their institutions. While many expressed a sense of improved value through salary adjustments or other compensations, these positive changes were coupled with or overshadowed by deeper frustrations with institutional politics, poor departmental leadership, and/or inadequate support. Issues such as inconsistent administrative processes, inadequate staffing, and a lack of respect for faculty voices contributed significantly to their dissatisfaction. Some faculty noted that it was discouraging to have to put their job on the line just to get support.

From the 18.3% of respondents who felt no impact, many expressed that minimal salary increases that could not meet the cost of living or reflect their workload were reasons for discontent. Furthermore, there was resentment due to long-term stagnation in salary and inadequate merit raises. While some faculty acknowledge financial recognition, the primary reasons for staying or leaving are more closely tied to work environment, institutional support, and equitable compensation practices rather than the incremental financial changes themselves, as mentioned above.

A number of respondents (466) shared additional details about recent changes to their work. Of those respondents, 29.2% mentioned salary, 13.5% mentioned their workload, and 24.7% shared how their personal experience with preemptive retentions and more broadly about the practice's broader impact on the field. When talking about salary, faculty shared details about raises and the

frustrations regarding their own compensation, particularly when comparing across gender, race, cost of living, and/or rank. Many faculty respondents felt that their salaries did not reflect their productivity or the market value of their roles and criticized the reliance on external offers as a primary means for negotiating salary increases. Finally, faculty pointed out that institutions could be more effective if they addressed salary and workload concerns more comprehensively and equitably before faculty are forced to look elsewhere.