



Forming a Team

Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey | Module 1

There are technically only two prerequisites to launch the Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey on your campus: a database of your eligible faculty, and a letter endorsing COACHE to those faculty. However, COACHE isn't just about making data. It is a research-practice partnership whose mission is to help build your capacity to make meaning from data. A critical step in that process is to form a team locally on your campus that will be responsible for preparing for survey launch and coordinating data interpretation and policy making once you have your institution's results. Building a dedicated team will be key to ensuring high survey response rates, making the right inferences from the data, and building credibility on campus about the survey and its results.

Here, we outline key principles and logistical components of building your COACHE team.

Guiding Principles

Don't try to do it alone

If there is anything we have learned in our work with partners, it is that no one can do this work alone. Change management in any complex organization can be difficult, and we have found that adopting a model of distributed leadership has helped our partners reach a broader audience. From our perspective, a distributed leadership model acknowledges the limitations of a top down model. Distributed leadership leverages the distinctive skills that members of a team can bring to task and it sends a clear message to constituents that this work will be collaborative and inclusive. Colleges and universities often benefit from distributed leadership model when the work is complex. COACHE teams should include members with diverse skills to manage the tasks of communicating, analyzing, and managing the process. Depending on your institutional context, your COACHE team can be as small as three or four, or as large as a dozen or more. Some colleges have created a new group, while others already have committees, task forces, or advisory groups wired for this purpose.

Ask yourself and your colleagues: Who are the key stakeholders? Are there offices or committees whose leaders might learn from certain "cuts" of COACHE results (e.g., by minority-identifying, rank, discipline)? Might involving the faculty senate or collective bargaining group help the process? What might be the consequences of excluding some or any of these groups? Not all of these groups need to be on the team, but those on the team should have access to all key constituents.

Include faculty from the beginning

Part of the reason we ask you to form a COACHE team is because of the message it sends to your faculty. When you form teams that include both faculty and administration, you affirm the principle that this work is intentionally collaborative. The process of improving the workplace for faculty begins by sending the message that faculty are a part of the solution. When a COACHE survey is seen as a top-down initiative, faculty are less likely to spend their valuable time completing the survey and are more likely to regard the results with skepticism.

Build around the skills you need

Faculty bring different types of expertise depending on their disciplinary background and their prior service to the institution. Consider the types of skills most important to the work at hand. Which faculty bring expertise in communications and marketing? If you are considering a module of custom questions, consider including faculty with survey design experience. Every team should include individuals with expertise in data analytics (both quantitative and qualitative).

Adopting a skills-based approach may make the ask more amenable to faculty. When we ask faculty to help with any type of service, it helps to explain why they have been chosen. Tying the invitation to be on the COACHE team to a specific skill that they bring demonstrates that you value the work and you value the contributions they can make as a faculty member.

Ensure that your team mirrors your campus

Although less tangible than particular skills, representation is a critical part of team composition. Faculty want to know that there will be someone at the table who has a shared experience with them. Faculty are also more likely to take the survey if they see themselves and their interests represented at the decision-making table.

Consider who has access to and respect of your faculty from as many angles as possible so that your communication with faculty can come from colleagues they trust. When the team is representative of your faculty, they are more likely to participate in the survey. This does not just mean a higher response rate, but also that your data will be more representative of your faculty as a whole. Representation matters even more after you receive your reports. Analysis is a social activity, and having underrepresented faculty at the table improves the chances that your understanding of the results will resonate across the institution. Further, when your team shares the results, faculty will be more likely to trust the findings because they were represented throughout the process.

Invite challenging voices to the team

When institutions work with COACHE, they are committing to having a deep and sustained conversation with faculty about the state of the institution. Those conversations can be challenging simply because there are competing visions for the institution. One question that you might ask yourself is “When I share the findings from the COACHE Report next year, who do I expect to challenge me the most?” Then, consider how the work might be different if that person was presenting with you instead of questioning your choices. Inviting dissenting voices to be a part of the team can send a very powerful message about the importance of healthy disagreement. The tradeoff is that team leaders will have to do more work behind the scenes to build trust but the team composition itself sends a message to faculty that COACHE partnerships are not simply pro-forma. It is also important to bring in dissenting voices early in the process. Making them part of the process early means that they had a voice in the decisions that will need to be defended when the results are shared with the faculty writ large.



From Principles to Practice

Every team looks different because every campus has different needs. Nonetheless, over the past several years we have seen some common members forming the core of successful COACHE teams. These include:

- Chief Academic Officer (often in ex-officio role)
- senior academic officers in faculty affairs, development, diversity
- division heads/Deans
- chief diversity officer
- committee on the status of women/minorities
- tenure and promotion committee member
- faculty governing body chair or similar rep
- faculty collective bargaining unit representative
- institutional research/effectiveness officer
- director of center for teaching and learning
- sponsored research director
- principal investigator (e.g., NSF ADVANCE)
- communications officer
- faculty with expertise in higher ed., org. development/behavior, data analysis, etc.

One of the reasons that we refer to these groups as a “team” and rather than a “committee” is because teams can make substitutions. You do not have to rely on the same people throughout your entire three-year partnership, although this may be preferable. For example, you might want to have a core faculty/admin team, but supplement with survey design or communications skillsets in Year 1 as you prepare for survey launch, data analysis or visualization skills after receiving your report, and organizational change or specific subject matter expertise [e.g. tenure policies, or benefits administration] in Year 3 as you implement policy changes. In addition to strengthening the team’s capabilities, this approach can also lessen the load on faculty members, who may be more willing to make a semester-long commitment rather than three full years.

Partner Spotlight: The University of Central Florida

The Office of Faculty Excellence spearheaded UCF’s COACHE initiative. When UCF received its report in Summer 2021, the team lead took an innovative approach to recruiting and managing the work of data analysis, dissemination of the results, and forming data-driven policy recommendations. Instead of asking faculty and staff to commit to a longer-term project with unclear outcomes, the team lead invited members to participate in abbreviated, goal-specific components of the work. This approach resulted in two implementation teams with specific tasks and deadlines. The first, a Priority-Setting Committee, was tasked with analyzing the data and identifying the areas of greatest potential impact. The second team was a Strategy-Setting Committee, which focused on ideating and researching specific policy changes to address the agreed-upon priority areas. Having smaller, more focused teams meant that faculty could understand their role and why they were recruited. There was also an end to the work, so faculty knew they could commit to one semester and at the end of that period be able to walk away.

More can be learned about UCF’s work with their Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey results on their [webpage](#).



Questions to ask before finalizing your team

What characteristics of my faculty are represented in the team?

Do my team members bring the skills we will need to engage/communicate with faculty, analyze a large complex data set, and make recommendations regarding policies/programs?

Are there subsets of faculty who might not feel represented? If so, how might I assuage their concerns about representation?



What are there political/strategic implications for my choices?

How can I frame the work (e.g. the committee charge) so that it encourages collaboration even if there are naysayers on the team?

What role (if any) does my Chief Academic Officer play on the team?



Sample Agenda: Introducing your team to COACHE

Topic: Setting up our institution for a successful engagement in COACHE

Meeting objectives:

- (1) To get acquainted with COACHE and the skills/experience that this team assembles.
- (2) To establish the connection between the work of this group and other activities on campus.
- (3) To agree on a schedule of activity (meetings, check-ins by phone, etc.) for the next few months.

Facilitator: _____ Note taker: _____ Timekeeper: _____

To prepare for this meeting, please:

- (1) Browse the [COACHE website](#).
- (2) Reflect on what has worked and where we have fallen short at this campus concerning our work in faculty development, diversity, work/life, tenure and promotion, and other faculty affairs.

Schedule [60 minutes]

# min	Activity
5	What is COACHE? Information available from COACHE website and partner sites .
5	What is the COACHE timeline? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-launch preparations (incl. Strategy Workshop) (Y1: Summer and Fall) • Survey launch and administration (Y1: February to April) • Survey conclusion and report preparations (Y1: April to June) • Delivery of results (incl. Strategy Workshop) (Y1: July) • Campus-wide engagement, recommendations for action (Y2: Fall, Winter, Spring) • Further action and communication of outcomes (Y3: Fall, Winter, Spring)
5	How have institutions like ours benefited? Examples available from COACHE

10	<p>Who are we?</p> <p>What expertise and past experiences does everyone bring to the team?</p> <p>Consider reporting of data, workplace issues, faculty policies and programs, organizational change, communication, and shared governance successes and challenges.</p>
10	<p>What prior efforts to assess and improve the academic workplace have we tried?</p> <p>When they have fallen short of expectations, why? When they have met with success, why? How are data used—or when unused, why?</p>
10	<p>What do we hope to accomplish?</p> <p>What goals would we like to achieve through partnership with COACHE? What must happen for us to say, “That was worth it”? Are there any obstacles (or opposition) that could delay or derail our progress?</p>
5	<p>What needs or activities, specifically, might COACHE data support?</p> <p>Which offices or committees should we engage?</p> <p>Examples include: Strategic planning; Accreditation; Human resources; Center for Teaching & Learning; Faculty development activities; Establishing budget priorities; Search committees; Diversity and inclusion; Grant seeking; Faculty-Trustee engagement; Consortial activities.</p>
5	

	<p>Is there anything else we should share today about the context in which this project begins?</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Review next steps from this meeting. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact COACHE with outcomes of this discussion, including any questions raised. • Reach out to the offices, committees, etc. who could be involved in building awareness, in receiving and interpreting results, and later, in disseminating and engaging campus communities. • If possible, find out when they meet (e.g., faculty senate meeting dates, deans' meetings, chairs' council). • Plan for next meeting: Draft an engagement and communication plan leading up to launch, through survey administration, and inclusive of the dissemination of results. Examples available from COACHE.
<p>adjourn</p>	<p>Assess what worked well about this meeting and what we would have liked to change.</p> <p>What we liked (plus) What we'll change (delta)</p>