

IMPROVING RETENTION EFFORTS BY STUDYING FACULTY DEPARTURES

FIVE TAKEAWAYS FROM THE COACHE FACULTY RETENTION AND EXIT SURVEY

Studying faculty who leave can inform how you support faculty who stay.

Here are five key takeaways from the COACHE Faculty Retention and Exit Survey drawing on data from more than 50 participating institutions.

1 MONEY TALKS – BUT IT’S NOT THE FULL STORY

Recognizing the full range of factors — including hidden drivers — behind faculty departures and retentions enables institutional leaders to **negotiate more effectively and find better retention solutions.**



SALARY
Most frequently selected reason to leave (50.8%)



QUALITY OF COLLEAGUES
Most frequently selected reason to stay (34.4%)

TOP 10 REASONS TO LEAVE OR STAY

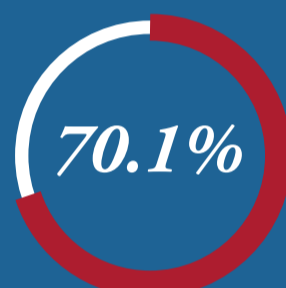
FACULTY RETENTION AND EXIT SURVEY - ALL DATA	Reason to leave	Reason to stay
Salary	50.8%	26.3%
Quality of colleagues	28.6%	34.4%
Department or institution reputation	32.9%	20.4%
Potential for professional growth and intellectual stimulation	34.6%	13.3%
Proximity to family	24.3%	18.9%
Collegiality within the department	18.0%	20.2%
Employment opportunity for my spouse/partner in the region	16.8%	16.9%
Cost of living	12.2%	20.0%
Potential for work-life balance	17.3%	14.3%
Availability of cultural, social, or recreational activities	17.9%	13.3%

2 WELL-EQUIPPED CHAIRS ARE A KEY ASSET IN FACULTY RETENTION



A consistent and transparent counteroffer process is essential for retaining valued faculty. Department chairs typically lead this process, yet current practices often lack clarity and uniformity regarding how counteroffers are determined.

Because **department chairs are usually the first to learn of a faculty member’s potential departure**, it is important for them to understand relevant policies to prevent unnecessary departures and ensure equitable negotiations.



Department chairs are key to faculty retention. 70.1% of faculty report they told their chair first about their intention to leave.

3 AMBIGUOUS RENEGOTIATION POLICIES PUSH FACULTY OUT THE DOOR

Data from the Faculty Retention and Exit Survey indicate that communication about the necessity of having an outside offer to renegotiate with the institution is unclear. This ambiguity, or the perception that an outside offer is required, often prompts faculty to seek such offers — even if they have no intention of leaving. Consequently, **many faculty who initially did not wish to leave ultimately end up departing after engaging in the outside offer process.**

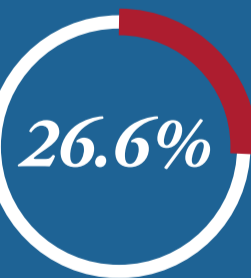


1 in 8 faculty pursued outside job offers to renegotiate. Of those, over half (58.3%) ended up leaving anyway.

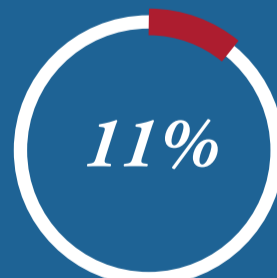
4 AN OUNCE OF ENGAGEMENT IS WORTH A POUND OF RETENTION



Given the nature of academic careers, decisions to move between institutions are rarely made impulsively. **Colleges and universities often have a long window in which faculty are considering or attempting to leave**, underscoring the opportunity for proactive engagement, development, and job satisfaction to support faculty retention.



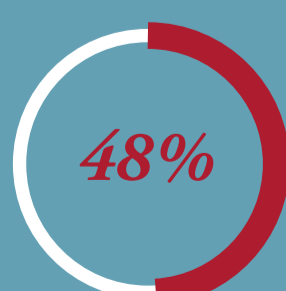
Over a quarter of respondents have thought about leaving for at least two years.



About 1 in 10 respondents have been actively job searching for more than two years.

5 RETENTION IS NOT “ONE AND DONE”

Even among faculty who are retained, nearly half report being open to new job opportunities in the next year. This highlights the need for ongoing engagement and proactive retention efforts. **Preventing faculty from feeling like they need to look elsewhere is better than retention efforts once they’ve been presented with outside opportunities.**



Almost half of retained faculty were likely to entertain job offers in the next year.