

A WHITE PAPER SERIES
FROM THE COLLABORATIVE
ON ACADEMIC CAREERS IN
HIGHER EDUCATION (COACHE)

Benchmark Best Practices: Appreciation & Recognition

collaborative on
academic careers
in higher education

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

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Benchmark Best Practices: Appreciation & Recognition

COACHE Benchmarks

Our surveys of college faculty produce data that are both (a) salient to full-time college faculty, and (b) actionable by academic leaders. The survey items are aggregated into 20 benchmarks representing the general thrust of faculty satisfaction along key themes.

The COACHE benchmarks are:

NATURE OF WORK: TEACHING	TENURE CLARITY	DIVISIONAL LEADERSHIP
NATURE OF WORK: RESEARCH	TENURE REASONABLENESS	DEPARTMENTAL LEADERSHIP
NATURE OF WORK: SERVICE	PROMOTION	DEPARTMENTAL COLLEGIALITY
INTERDISCIPLINARY WORK	FACILITIES & WORK RESOURCES	DEPARTMENTAL ENGAGEMENT
COLLABORATION	PERSONAL & FAMILY POLICIES	DEPARTMENTAL QUALITY
MENTORING	HEALTH & RETIREMENT BENEFITS	APPRECIATION & RECOGNITION
TENURE POLICIES	SENIOR LEADERSHIP	

What is measured in this benchmark?

APPRECIATION & RECOGNITION

Satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the recognition you receive for your:

- Teaching efforts
- Student advising
- Scholarly/creative work
- Service contributions (e.g., department/program administration, faculty governance, committee work, advising/mentoring students, speaking to alumni or prospective students/parents)
- Outreach (e.g., extension, community engagement, technology transfer, economic development, K-12 education)

For all of your work, the satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the recognition you receive from:

- Your colleagues/peers
- Your chief academic officer (Provost, VPAA, Dean of Faculty)
- Your dean or division head
- Your department head or chair

Agreement (or disagreement) that:

- I feel that my school/college is valued by this institution’s President/Chancellor and Provost
- I feel that my department is valued by this institution’s President/Chancellor and Provost
- The person who serves as the chief academic officer at my institution seems to care about the quality of life for faculty of my rank

Why Support for Appreciation & Recognition Is Important

Faculty, at all ranks, are just like other employees when it comes to wanting to be appreciated by colleagues and recognized for doing good work. Focus group research conducted by COACHE showed that while many tenured faculty members feel valued by undergraduate and graduate students, with whom research relationships were especially gratifying, they do not receive much recognition from other faculty and up-

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per-level administrators. The degree to which appreciation/recognition themes appeared in our 2010 study of tenured faculty far surpassed their appearance in our pre-tenure faculty research.

In our recent study, tenured faculty (especially at smaller institutions) felt that extramural service that increases the reputation of their colleges, while expected of them, is not recognized and goes unrewarded. Being engaged in the local community or on the board of a nationally-recognized association yields neither recognition from senior colleagues nor appreciation from others at their home institutions. This gap between expectations and appreciation discouraged many faculty from serving their institutions in this way.

Getting Started

- The chief academic officer should get to know the faculty in a variety of forums, including brown-bag lunches, speakers' series, workshops, and seminars that engage faculty members in appealing topics and current issues.
- Likewise, deans and chairs should make opportunities to showcase faculty work, share kind words, and offer a "pat on the back" from time to time.
- Take note of what faculty are doing and celebrate that work in each school or college at some point every year; such occasions do not have to be costly to be meaningful.
- The greatest obstacle is simply not knowing what faculty have done that warrants recognition. Cultivate a culture of recognition by creating ways for students, faculty, and campus leaders to highlight the accomplishments of your faculty. For example, a physical and a virtual drop box allow others to comment on the good work of your faculty.

What's Working

COACHE researchers interviewed leaders from member institutions whose faculty rated items in this theme exceptionally well compared to faculty at other participating campuses. While the highest ratings were found at baccalaureate institutions, the lessons derived from our interviews with their leaders are transferable to universities at the school-, college-, or division-level.

Hamilton College

Administrators at Hamilton described how the college awards and celebrates both teaching and scholarship. "We have a big award and a few teaching prizes," said the Dean of Faculty. He continued, "A few years ago, we started scholarship awards to recognize junior and senior faculty members for career, early career, or a notable year accomplishments—which celebrates faculty success at all ranks." (More information can be found online at <http://www.hamilton.edu/dof/teaching-awards>.)

Hamilton has also focused on starting salaries and scholarship packages in order to bring them closer to competitive peers. "We have developed a clear target and plan through the budget process for the resources to hit that target," the Dean of Faculty affirmed. "We put a lot of money into our salaries and into better structuring the assistant professor rank. We increased starting salaries by 15 percent in one year and adjusted the whole rank on a comparative basis that was fair and competitive."

College of the Holy Cross

Holy Cross representatives described a general campus ethos in which department chairs recognize faculty throughout their careers. They also noted the "Celebration of Faculty Scholarship," an elaborate reception featuring large poster boards containing lists of all of the faculty's scholarly accomplishments for the prior year.

“I think that it is appreciated when faculty members see their names on that list along with their articles, books, and grants listed in ways that their colleagues can appreciate. But I can’t believe that’s really the source of our scoring well on this benchmark. It really has to be more that on a relatively small campus, it’s possible for the dean, the associate deans, and even the president to know what faculty members have been doing and to mention it when they pass them in the hall.”

— Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College

In addition, the Holy Cross Office of Public Affairs (OPA) recognizes faculty service to the institution’s cause.

“The OPA holds a mid-year reception where they recognize faculty who have helped public affairs by fielding journalists’ queries, by putting out op-ed pieces, and by meeting with local press. These activities can be quite time consuming, and quite nerve wracking for junior faculty... and I think a lot of places don’t acknowledge it. The OPA actually hands out little plaques, little awards, for those who have been particularly productive and helpful in this regard.”

— Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College

Stonehill College

Stonehill hosts regular faculty recognition dinners and awards faculty for every five years of service. In addition, the Stonehill Faculty Focus (published annually since 2001) highlights faculty scholarship, curricular innovation, and educational trends at the College. The Focus also includes a “Year in Review,” featuring promotion and tenure decisions; recognition of the newest members of the faculty; faculty publications, exhibits and performances; conferences and invited lectures; and academic grants and awards. For their strength in this area, Stonehill’s leaders credit more than their programs:

“From an academic leadership view, we’ve always made it our goal to see if we can say ‘yes’ more than ‘no’ to faculty. If they have a good idea or a program to start, if they’ve got personal issues for a semester, then we try to be flexible. ...we feel like if we are flexible with faculty then the overall outcomes will be better. You have to have academic leadership that can do more than apply policy. The faculty feel like they have some advocates in this office and that makes a big difference.”

— Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Resources

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COACHE Benchmarks

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

APPRECIATION & RECOGNITION	INTERDISCIPLINARY WORK & COLLABORATION	NATURE OF WORK: SERVICE
DEPARTMENTAL ENGAGEMENT, QUALITY & COLLEGIALITY	MENTORING	NATURE OF WORK: TEACHING
DEPARTMENTAL LEADERSHIP	NATURE OF WORK: RESEARCH	TENURE & PROMOTION

About COACHE

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

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

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

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

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