

University of California, Davis
COACHE SURVEY OF FACULTY JOB SATISFACTION: 2021

Technical Information

Introduction

This document provides background information for each in a series of thematic reports that present the descriptive results for the 2021 UC Davis Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Survey of Faculty Job Satisfaction, which are posted on the UC Davis Office of the Vice Provost – Academic Affairs website.

Description of the COACHE survey

The COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey is annually conducted by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and has been administered to colleges and universities nationwide since 2003. The survey is designed specifically for tenure-stream, clinical, and non-tenure-track faculty, and aims to measure the faculty population's levels of engagement in teaching, research, and service, their level of satisfaction with the terms and conditions of their employment, and how supported they feel in their work.

The survey questions are organized to measure faculty satisfaction in multiple areas:

- Nature of the work (research, teaching, service)
- Interdisciplinary work and collaboration
- Mentoring
- Tenure and promotion policies and expectations
- Institutional leadership (senior, divisional, and departmental)
- Shared governance
- Departmental collegiality, engagement, quality
- Facilities and work resources
- Personal and family policies
- Health and retirement benefits
- Appreciation & recognition
- Global satisfaction

Survey population

The survey was administered to UC Davis faculty who are:

- Full-time
- Pre-tenure or tenured, non-tenure-track, and clinical faculty
- Not hired in current year (new hires are unable to answer many survey questions)
- Not in terminal year after being denied tenure
- Not in a senior administrative position, e.g., Dean, Assistant/Associate Dean, Vice Provost (but chairs were included)

These criteria yielded a total population of 2,449 faculty who were sent the online survey. The overall response rate was 40%, yielding 998 faculty respondents. Response rates were:

- Slightly higher among tenured (49%) than pre-tenure (48%) faculty.
- Higher among associate (53%) and full (48%) professors
- Higher among women (48%) than men (38%)
- Higher among white faculty (44%) than faculty of color (34%) [Asian (30%), URM (40%)]

The response rates by college/division/school:

- Agricultural and Environmental Sciences= 51%
- Biological Sciences = 40%
- Education = 68%
- Engineering = 40%
- Law = 40%
- L&S: HACS = 50%
- L&S: Mathematical and Physical Sciences = 40%
- L&S: Social Sciences = 47%
- Management = 50%
- Medicine = 31%
- Nursing = 62%
- Veterinary Medicine = 48%

COACHE benchmark indicators of faculty satisfaction

To increase the utility of the COACHE results and to ease interpretation, individual survey items are combined into “Benchmark Indicators.” These multi-item scales of faculty satisfaction combine responses on a series of survey questions that cover multiple dimensions of an aspect of faculty work life. For example, the Benchmark Indicator for “Interdisciplinary Work” combines variables measuring faculty members’ level of agreement/disagreement with the following statements:

1. Budget allocations encourage interdisciplinary work
2. Campus facilities are conducive to interdisciplinary work
3. My department understands how to evaluate interdisciplinary work
4. Interdisciplinary work is rewarded in the tenure/promotion system

There are 25 Benchmark Indicators covering the various aspects of faculty work life. The thematic reports focus on 1-3 Benchmark indicators that represent a definable area of faculty work life and present the results for the individual survey questions that are included for each of those areas. The Benchmark indicators cover the following areas:

- Nature of the Work - Research
- Nature of the Work - Teaching
- Nature of the Work - Service
- Facilities and Work Resources
- Personal and Family Policies
- Health and Retirement Benefits
- Interdisciplinary Work
- Collaboration
- Mentoring
- Tenure Policies (Asked only of pre-tenure faculty)
- Tenure Expectations Clarity (only of pre-tenure faculty)
- Promotion to Full (Asked only of tenured faculty)
- Leadership: Senior
- Leadership: Divisional
- Leadership: Departmental
- Leadership: Faculty
- Shared Governance: Trust
- Shared Governance: Shared sense of purpose
- Shared Governance: Understanding of issues
- Shared Governance: Adaptability
- Shared Governance: Productivity
- Department Collegiality
- Departmental Engagement
- Departmental Quality
- Appreciation and Recognition

All of the survey questions combined into the Benchmark Indicators are measured on a 5-point scale that distinguishes levels of agreement or satisfaction, and are coded such that higher values indicate greater levels of agreement/satisfaction:

1. Strongly disagree / Very dissatisfied
2. Somewhat disagree / Dissatisfied
3. Neither agree nor disagree / Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Somewhat agree / Satisfied
5. Strongly agree / Very satisfied

Peer institutions

All institutions that participate in the COACHE survey are asked to select five institutions that are also participating in the survey as “peers” against whom to compare the COACHE Survey results. The results from these peer institutions, aggregated across all five of them, are presented (labeled as “Peers”) to provide context for the interpretation of our campus-specific results. The peer institutions selected by UC Davis are:

- Florida State University (2021)
- Iowa State University (2021)
- Louisiana State University (2021)
- University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill (2021)
- University of Tennessee (2021)