

University of California, Davis
COACHE SURVEY OF FACULTY JOB SATISFACTION: 2017

UC Davis COACH Survey Advisory Committee Highlighted Results

Introduction

The 2017 COACHE Survey of Faculty Job Satisfaction at UC Davis was guided by the COACHE Survey Advisory Committee, whose members provided essential advice for the implementation of the survey and interpretation of the results. This report presents the results that the Advisory Committee members feel are particularly useful for informing institutional efforts to provide the resources and conditions that enable faculty to excel in all of their professional activities – teaching and mentoring, research and scholarship, serving their colleagues and the institution, and contributing to society.

This report of the Advisory Committee's highlighted results is organized into two sections:

- The first section summarizes the results for 6 dimensions of faculty work life about which UC Davis faculty report being particularly satisfied or unsatisfied: mentorship, departmental climate, teaching, time allocation/ balance, senior institutional leadership, facilities and work resources.
- The second section presents the COACHE survey results that show significant disparities across faculty subpopulations defined by rank, gender, race/ethnicity and school/college.

The 2017 UC Davis COACHE Faculty Job Satisfaction survey

The 2017 UC Davis COACHE survey was distributed online to 2,407 ladder-rank, clinical and non-tenure-track faculty. Of the faculty members contacted, 46% (1,112) responded to survey which is designed to measure their degree of engagement, perception of support, and level of satisfaction with all aspects of their work at UC Davis.¹ The survey assess faculty perspectives on 25 dimensions or “thematic areas” of faculty work life using both open- and closed-ended questions. The closed-ended questions, which are the focus of this report, record respondents’ level of satisfaction using a scale that varies from 1 to 5, with higher values indicate greater levels of satisfaction. For each thematic area the survey includes multiple questions that probe faculty satisfaction with the multiple aspects of that area of faculty work.

To gauge the level of satisfaction among UC Davis faculty, the UC Davis results can be compared to the distribution of results from all institutions who participated in the survey, and to the public research-intensive universities identified as our “peer” institutions.² Differences among faculty at UC Davis are assessed by comparing average survey responses for faculty subgroups, and our 2017 survey results are compared to those from the 2013 UC Davis COACHE survey to gauge our progress over time.

Aspects of faculty work that elicit strong reactions from UC Davis faculty

► **Mentorship:** *High levels of faculty satisfaction and improvement since 2013*

The COACHE survey queries faculty satisfaction on 5 aspects of faculty mentorship:

- Effectiveness of: Mentoring respondent received from someone inside their department
- Effectiveness of: Mentoring respondent received from someone outside their department
- Effectiveness of: Mentoring provided to pre-tenure faculty in the respondent’s department
- Effectiveness of: Mentoring provided to tenured associate profs in the respondent’s department
- Agreement w/: My institution provides adequate support for faculty to be good mentors

Results: The average satisfaction rating among UC Davis faculty respondents is high relative to all institutions who participated in the 2017 COACHE survey and it exceeds the average rating at all 5 of our peer institutions. At the more detailed level of analysis, UC Davis faculty reported higher levels of satisfaction than the faculty at our peer institutions on all of the mentorship questions except one - satisfaction with mentorship of pre-tenure faculty in the respondent’s department.

¹ For more information about the COACHE Survey methodology see the Technical Appendix at http://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/local_resources/docs/COACHE_Technical_Appendix17.pdf.

² These institutions were selected as our peer institutions by the UC Davis COACHE 2016-17 Advisory Committee: Indiana University–Bloomington, Purdue University, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, University of Minnesota–Twin Cities, and University of Virginia. All of these are research-intensive universities; Purdue University and the University of Virginia are participants in the National Science Foundation ADVANCE program.

Furthermore, the average satisfaction rating for mentorship at UC Davis improved compared to those reported in the 2013 COACHE survey; and that improvement was generated by increased levels of satisfaction on all of the mentorship questions.

► **Departmental climate:** *High levels of faculty satisfaction and improvement since 2013*

UC Davis faculty respondents to the COACHE survey also expressed high levels of satisfaction with their departmental climate. The concept of “departmental climate” is multidimensional and the COACHE survey examines it with questions clustered within 4 thematic areas: departmental collegiality, departmental engagement, departmental quality, and opportunities for collaboration. The survey items the Advisory Committee relied on to assess faculty satisfaction with departmental climate measured respondents’ level agreement or satisfaction with the following:

Departmental Collegiality

- Agreement w/: Department colleagues do what they can to support work/life balance
- Agreement w/: Meeting times compatible with personal needs
- Satisfaction w/: How well you fit in your department
- Satisfaction w/: Amount of personal interaction with tenured faculty in department
- Satisfaction w/: Amount of personal interaction with pre-tenure faculty in department
- Agreement w/: Department colleagues “pitch in” when needed
- Agreement w/: On the whole, my department is collegial
- Agreement w/: Colleagues committed to supporting/promoting diversity and inclusion in the department

Departmental Engagement

- How often engage w/ department faculty in discussions of undergrad student learning
- How often engage w/ department faculty in discussions of grad student learning
- How often engage w/ department faculty in discussions of effective teaching practices
- How often engage w/ department faculty in discussions of effective use of technology
- How often engage w/ department faculty in discussions of current research methods
- Satisfaction w/: Amount of professional interaction with tenured in department
- Satisfaction w/: Amount of professional interaction with pre-tenure in department

Departmental Quality

- Satisfaction w/: Intellectual vitality of tenured faculty in department
- Satisfaction w/: Intellectual vitality of pre-tenure faculty in department
- Satisfaction w/: Scholarly productivity of tenured faculty in department
- Satisfaction w/: Scholarly productivity of pre-tenure faculty in department
- Satisfaction w/: Teaching effectiveness of tenured faculty in department
- Satisfaction w/: Teaching effectiveness of pre-tenure faculty in department
- Agreement w/: My department is successful at recruiting high-quality faculty members
- Agreement w/: My department is successful at retaining high-quality faculty members
- Agreement w/: My department is successful at addressing sub-standard tenured faculty performance

Collaboration

- Satisfaction w/: Opportunities for collaboration with other members of respondent’s department

Results: Between 2013 and 2017, faculty at UC Davis became increasingly satisfied, on average, with the quality and engagement of their departmental colleagues.

Compared to faculty at our peer institutions, UC Davis faculty reported greater levels of satisfaction on all questions related to departmental quality and departmental opportunities for collaboration. UC Davis faculty are more positive (compared to peer institution faculty) on all but two of the departmental collegiality questions; and on those two questions – which measure agreement with “Department colleagues ‘pitch in’ when needed” and “Department colleagues do what they can to support work/life balance” – UC Davis faculty ratings are on par with the peer institution faculty ratings.

Similarly, faculty at UC Davis reported relatively high levels of satisfaction on all of the departmental engagement questions, except for two – those assessing engagement in discussions about undergrad student learning and effective teaching practices – on which faculty at UC Davis are as satisfied as the faculty at our peer institutions.

► **Teaching:** *Satisfaction levels are high but significantly lower compared to all peer institutions*

The COACHE survey queries faculty about the following aspects of their work as teachers:

- Satisfaction w/: Time spent on teaching
- Satisfaction w/: Number of courses taught
- Satisfaction w/: Level of courses taught
- Satisfaction w/: Discretion over course content
- Satisfaction w/: Number of students in classes taught
- Satisfaction w/: Quality of students taught
- Satisfaction w/: Equitability of distribution of teaching load
- Satisfaction w/: Quality of grad students to support teaching
- Satisfaction w/: Teaching schedule
- Satisfaction w/: Support for teaching diverse learning styles
- Satisfaction w/: Support for assessing student learning
- Satisfaction w/: Support for developing online/hybrid courses
- Satisfaction w/: Support for teaching online/hybrid courses

Results: Although the average levels of satisfaction with teaching reported by UC Davis faculty are high relative to their satisfaction with other dimensions of their employment, they are notably less positive about their teaching experiences than are faculty at our peer institutions.

UC Davis faculty report relatively low levels of satisfaction with the time they spend on teaching (too much), the number and level (undergraduate versus graduate) of courses they teach, the discretion they have over course content, the number of students in their classes, and the quality of students they teach.

UC Davis faculty report particularly low levels of satisfaction (compared to their perceptions of the other aspects of teaching covered by the survey) with the level of support the institution offers for addressing diverse learning styles in the classroom, assessing their students' learning, and developing and teaching online or hybrid courses.

UC Davis faculty are more satisfied than the faculty at our peer institutions about how equitably the teaching workload is distributed across the faculty in their departments, and the quality of the graduate students that support their teaching.

► **Time allocation/balance:** *Low levels of satisfaction on all dimensions*

The COACHE survey includes many questions about faculty satisfaction with their current allocation of time to various activities, their ability to control those time allocations, and their ability to balance their diverse responsibilities and the demands on their time. These questions are spread across multiple sections of the survey, so to assess UC Davis faculty satisfaction with how their time management and usage, the 2017 UC Davis COACHE Survey Advisory Committee examined faculty responses to the following questions:

- Satisfaction w/: Time spent on research
- Satisfaction w/: Time spent on service
- Satisfaction w/: Time spent on teaching
- Satisfaction w/: Time spent on outreach
- Satisfaction w/: Time spent on administrative tasks
- Agreement w/: I am able to balance the teaching, research, and service activities expected of me
- Agreement w/: I have been able to find the right balance between my professional life and my personal/family life

Results: Overall, UC Davis faculty are not satisfied with how their time is allocated or their ability to balance the demands on their time. This was the finding from the 2013 UC Davis COACHE survey and the 2017 survey showed no improvement on any of the questions querying faculty satisfaction with their time allocation or balance.

The UC Davis faculty respondents report being dissatisfied with how much time they spend on research, service, teaching, outreach and administrative tasks. And while UC Davis faculty are dissatisfied with *how little* time they spend on research, they are not as dissatisfied as the faculty at our peer institutions with this aspect of their work life. In contrast, UC Davis faculty members are

dissatisfied with *how much* time they spend on service, teaching, outreach and administrative tasks, and their dissatisfaction is stronger than that expressed by the faculty at our peer institutions.

UC Davis faculty are also more dissatisfied than the faculty at our peer institutions with their ability to balance their research, teaching, and service activities and to balance their professional and personal/family lives.

► **Institutional Leadership – Senior:** *Low levels of satisfaction on all dimensions*

Academic leaders play critical roles in shaping the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of faculty members. The COACHE survey includes multiple questions that query faculty satisfaction with institutional leaders' priorities, communication of those priorities, and pace of decision making. These questions are asked in reference to leaders at various institutional levels: senior, including the president or chancellor, and chief academic officer or provost; divisional, i.e., the college/school dean; departmental, i.e., department chair; and faculty, e.g., academic senate leaders.

Faculty at UC Davis expressed strong dissatisfaction with senior campus leadership through their responses to the following questions:

- Satisfaction w/: Chancellor's pace of decision making
- Satisfaction w/: Chancellor's stated priorities
- Satisfaction w/: Chancellor's communication of priorities
- Satisfaction w/: Provost's pace of decision making
- Satisfaction w/: Provost's stated priorities
- Satisfaction w/: Provost's communication of priorities
- Agreement w/: My institution's priorities are stated consistently across all levels of leadership
- Agreement w/: My institution's priorities are acted upon consistently across all levels of leadership.
- Agreement w/: In the past five years, my institution's priorities have changed in ways that negatively affect my work.

Results: UC Davis faculty reported low levels of satisfaction on all of these questions and the ratings are consistently low across all subpopulations of faculty identified by rank, gender and race/ethnicity. The levels of dissatisfaction expressed by UC Davis faculty were also significantly greater than the faculty ratings at all of our peer institutions for all of the questions. Furthermore, on two of the questions – satisfaction with the Chancellor's pace of decision making and stated priorities – the ratings were more negative in 2017 than they were in 2013.

► **Facilities and Work Resources:** *Low levels of satisfaction on all dimensions*

Faculty productivity, effectiveness and satisfaction can be affected by both the physical facilities faculty experience regularly, as well as the support staff they may rely on to get their work done efficiently. The COACHE survey queries faculty satisfaction with their facilities and work resources using the following questions:

- Satisfaction w/: Support for improving teaching
- Satisfaction w/: Office space
- Satisfaction w/: Laboratory, research, studio space
- Satisfaction w/: Equipment
- Satisfaction w/: Classrooms
- Satisfaction w/: Library resources
- Satisfaction w/: Computing and technical support
- Satisfaction w/: Clerical/administrative support

Results: UC Davis faculty respond to all of the questions about facilities and work resource with low average satisfaction ratings. These ratings were low on all dimensions, for all subpopulations of faculty defined by rank, race/ethnicity and gender, and they were more negative than those among faculty at our peer institutions.

In addition, between 2013 and 2017, UC Davis satisfaction with the classrooms in which they teach declined significantly. In contrast, although the average levels of satisfaction remain very low, they have improved since 2013 on three dimensions: support for improving teaching, computing and technical support, and clerical/administrative support.

Disparities among UC Davis faculty

The 2017 UC Davis COACHE Survey Advisory Committee examined the survey results for differences in satisfaction level across subpopulations of faculty defined by rank, race/ethnicity and gender. They investigated disparities across the thematic areas (i.e., the average satisfaction rating aggregated for all of the detailed survey questions in a thematic area) and for individual questions. The significance of differences between-groups is assessed with effect sizes using Cohen's *d* to test for the magnitude of differences since it is a systematic test that is applicable when sample sizes are small.³ The Advisory Committee focused on between-group disparities that are moderate or large in size (i.e., effect size equal to 0.3 or greater), and highlight those results in this section of the report: all disparities reported here are at least moderate in size; those that are large (i.e., effect size equal to 0.5 or greater) are denoted with an asterisk (*).

► Disparities by Faculty Rank: Associate Professors less satisfied on many dimensions

Results: Associate professors at UC Davis are notably less satisfied than Assistant and Full professors on many aspects of their work. This “associate professor deficit” is common nationally, and it was starkly evident in the 2013 COACHE survey at UC Davis. In 2017 associate professors at UC Davis reported average satisfaction ratings that were lower than others (by moderate to large effect sizes) on 11 thematic areas, indicating the expressed significantly lower satisfaction ratings on the many individual survey items within these areas:

- Nature of Work: Research
- Nature of Work: Service *
- Nature of Work: Teaching
- Personal and Family Policies
- Interdisciplinary Work
- Collaboration
- Mentoring
- Promotion to Full *
- Departmental Collegiality
- Departmental Quality
- Appreciation and Recognition

► Disparities by Gender: Women faculty tend to report lesser satisfaction

Results: The 2017 COACHE survey results reveal many gender disparities that are considered small, but consistently show that women are less satisfied than men.⁴ For the aggregated thematic area satisfaction ratings, however, the only gender gap that reaches the moderate-level threshold is for the “Promotion to Full” theme. In that thematic area, the female deficit in satisfaction is significant for the following questions:

- Agreement w/: Department culture encourages promotion
- Clarity of: Time frame for promotion
- Clarity of: Whether I will be promoted

At the detailed, question level of measurement, the responses by women faculty are significantly less positive than the responses by men on the following questions:

- Satisfaction w/: Time spent on research
- Satisfaction w/: Right balance between professional/personal
- Satisfaction w/: Equitability of committee assignments
- Agreement w/: I am able to balance the teaching, research, and service activities expected of me *
- Agreement w/: I have been able to find the right balance between my professional life and my personal/family life.

³ Effect sizes are calculated using:

$$\frac{|\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2|}{s_{\text{average}}}$$

The following thresholds are the generally-accepted ranges of effect size magnitude:

Less than 0.1	Trivial difference
Between 0.1 and 0.3	Small difference
Between 0.3 and 0.5	Moderate difference
Greater than 0.5	Large difference

⁴ The thematic areas of the COACHE Survey show small gender differences (female faculty less satisfied): Nature of Work: Research; Nature of Work: Service; Nature of Work: Teaching; Facilities and Work Resources; Health and Retirement Benefits; Interdisciplinary Work; Collaboration; Departmental Collegiality.

- Agreement w/: Interdisciplinary work is rewarded in reappointment
- Agreement w/: Colleagues committed to diversity/inclusion

In contrast, the responses by male faculty are significantly less positive than the responses by women on the following questions:

- Satisfaction w/: Effectiveness of mentoring outside department
- Satisfaction w/: Effectiveness of mentoring outside the inst.

► **Disparities by Race/Ethnicity** – *URM and Asian faculty tend to report lesser levels of satisfaction than White faculty*

Results: There are significant disparities among race/ethnic groups on two of the broad thematic areas. First, *URM faculty are less satisfied than White faculty on all aspects of the **promotion to full professor** process queried in the COACHE survey, and the disparities moderate or large for the following questions:*

- Agreement w/: Department culture encourages promotion *
- Agreement w/: Expectations for promotion from associate to full professor are reasonable to me
- Clarity of: Promotion process
- Clarity of: Time frame for promotion

Second, *White faculty are significantly less satisfied than URM faculty with their **divisional leadership***. In particular, they are less positive (moderate effect sizes) on the following:

- Satisfaction w/: Dean's stated priorities
- Satisfaction w/: Dean's communication of priorities
- Satisfaction w/: Dean's ensuring opportunities for faculty to have input into school/college priorities

At the more detailed, question-level of analysis, *URM faculty are significantly less satisfied than White faculty on the following:*

- Satisfaction w/: Spousal/partner hiring program
- Agreement w/: Interdisciplinary work is rewarded in promotion
- Agreement w/: Interdisciplinary work is rewarded in tenure
- Agreement w/: I have received consistent messages about the requirements for tenure
- Agreement w/: There is visible leadership at my institution for the support and promotion of diversity
- Agreement w/: My department is successful at retaining high-quality faculty members
- Satisfaction w/: Recognition for scholarship

And *Asian/Asian-American faculty responses are significantly less satisfied than White faculty on the following questions:*

- Satisfaction w/: Influence over focus of research *
- Satisfaction w/: Spousal/partner hiring program
- Agreement w/: Interdisciplinary work is rewarded in tenure
- Satisfaction w/: Opportunities for collaboration outside department
- Agreement w/: Department culture encourages promotion
- Clarity of what is expected in order to earn tenure: Broader community
- Agreement w/: There is visible leadership at my institution for the support and promotion of diversity
- How often do you experience: My institution cultivates new leaders among faculty
- Satisfaction w/: Intellectual vitality of pre-tenure faculty
- Satisfaction w/: Scholarly productivity of pre-tenure faculty

On only one question are *White faculty significantly less satisfied than Asian/Asian-American faculty:*

- Clarity of what is expected in order to earn tenure: Teaching