University of California, Davis
COACHE SURVEY OF FACULTY JOB SATISFACTION: 2012-13

Thematic Area Report:
Nature of Work - Research

INTRODUCTION

UC Davis is committed to making our campus one at which faculty at all levels and from all walks of life achieve their fullest potential as scholars and experience life-long career satisfaction. The results of the 2012-13 COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey presented here are being made available to spark discussion and generate ideas, as part of our ongoing effort to transform UC Davis into a true university of the 21st century—diverse, engaged and relevant.

The COACHE Survey is conducted annually 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 faculty; it aims to measure the faculty population's levels of engagement in the teaching, research, and service, their level of satisfaction with the terms and conditions of their employment, and how supported they feel in their work. This report presents the results for the "Nature of Work – Research" survey questions. For more information about the COACHE Survey methodology, see the Technical Appendix at:
http://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/local_resources/docs/COACHE_Technical_Appendix.pdf

Thematic area: Nature of Work - Research

Most faculty work primarily in three areas – research, teaching, and service. The COACHE survey inquires about all three primary areas of faculty work and includes multiple variables that aim to measure faculty satisfaction with the many dimensions inherent in each of these primary aspects of faculty life. Satisfaction with research is primarily a function of the time faculty members have to spend on research, their assessment of the institutional expectations for scholarly work, and their experiences with the level of resources and support the institution provides for their research activities. Dissatisfaction can occur when faculty members feel institutional expectations are unreasonable, institutional support is lacking, or that competing demands on their time cause their research productivity to suffer.

The individual survey items in the Nature of Work – Research thematic area are listed in Appendix A. All of the survey questions are measured with a 5-point scale on which higher values indicate greater levels of satisfaction.

Faculty satisfaction with aspects of their work related to research

The COACHE survey results presented in Figure 1 show that UC Davis faculty are most satisfied with the influence they feel they have over the focus of their research, the time they are able to
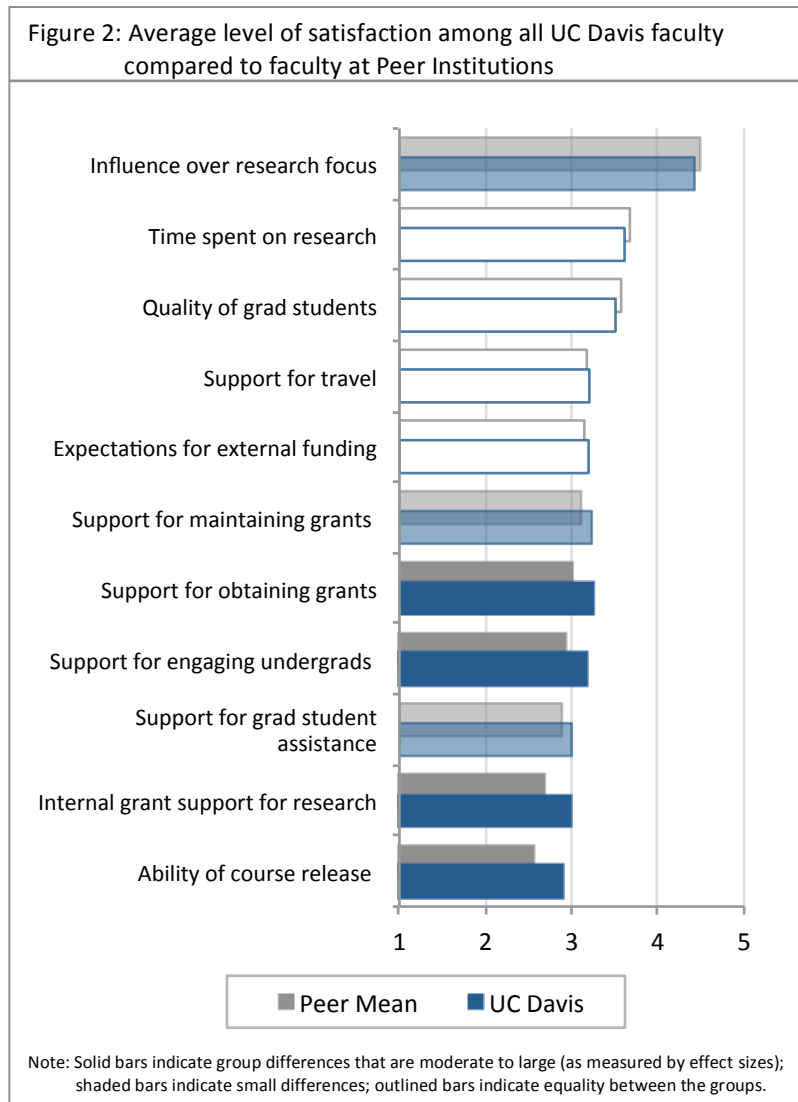

Figure 1: Average level of satisfaction among all UC Davis faculty for aspects of their work related to research
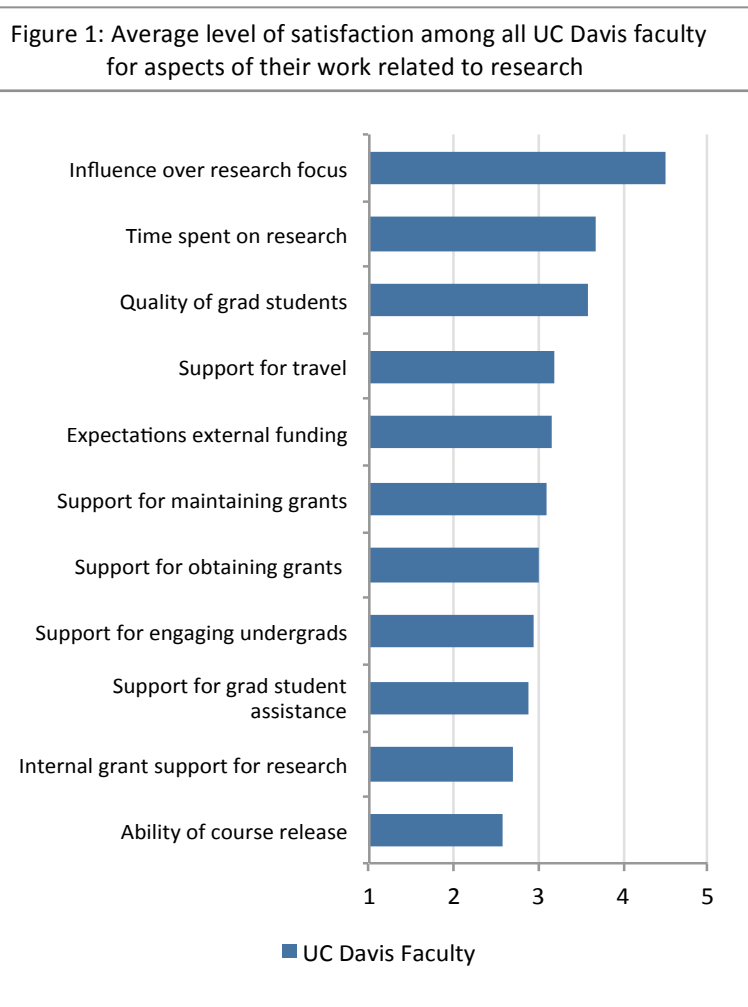
spend on research, and the quality of graduate students they work with on research.[1]

Faculty express lesser satisfaction, on average, about the level of support they receive for research-related travel, expectations for obtaining external funding, and the support they receive for obtaining and managing grant funding.

UC Davis faculty are least satisfied with the level of support available to them for engaging undergraduates in research and for securing graduate student research assistance, the availability of internal or institutional sources of seed funding for research, and their ability to obtain course release for research.

To contextualize the levels of satisfaction among UC Davis faculty, we can look at how the UC Davis average responses compare to the satisfaction levels among the faculty at the five research institutions identified as peers of UC Davis (among the institutions that participated in the 2012-13 COACHE survey).[2] Compared to faculty at the Peer Institutions (Figure 2), UC Davis faculty report slightly higher levels of satisfaction with the extent to which they influence the focus of their research. Faculty at UC Davis are as satisfied as faculty at the Peer Institutions with the time they spend on research, the quality of the graduate students they are able to attract to work on their research, the level of institutional support for research-related travel and the normative expectations for securing external funding.[3]

UC Davis faculty are, however, significantly more satisfied than faculty at the Peer Institutions with the support they receive for obtaining grants and managing research funding, for engaging undergraduates in research, for supporting graduate student research assistants, the availability of internal (e.g., seed grant) funding for research, and their ability to secure course releases for research.

Figure 2: Average level of satisfaction among all UC Davis faculty compared to faculty at Peer Institutions

Note: Solid bars indicate group differences that are moderate to large (as measured by effect sizes); shaded bars indicate small differences; outlined bars indicate equality between the groups.

---

[1] For all charts in this report, the bar length represent the mean value of the faculty responses for survey items specified. See Appendix B for mean values and effect sizes for all statistics presented in this report.

[2] Indiana University–Bloomington, Johns Hopkins University, Purdue University, University of North Carolina– Chapel Hill, 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, as is UC Davis.

[3] Solid bars indicate group differences in effect sizes (measured by Cohen's *d*) of at least 0.3, i.e., differences that are conventionally considered moderate or large. Shaded bars indicate group difference effect sizes of 0.1-0.29, i.e., conventionally considered small. Outlined bars indicate that there are no group differences (effect sizes of 0-0.09).

Group differences in faculty satisfaction with research-related aspects of work at UC Davis

The COACHE data allow comparisons between groups of UC Davis faculty to identify differences in faculty satisfaction. We compare levels of faculty satisfaction by gender, race/ethnicity, and academic rank.

Figure 3: Average level of satisfaction among all UC Davis faculty by gender

Note: Solid bars indicate group differences that are moderate to large; shaded bars indicate small differences; outlined bars indicate between-group equality.
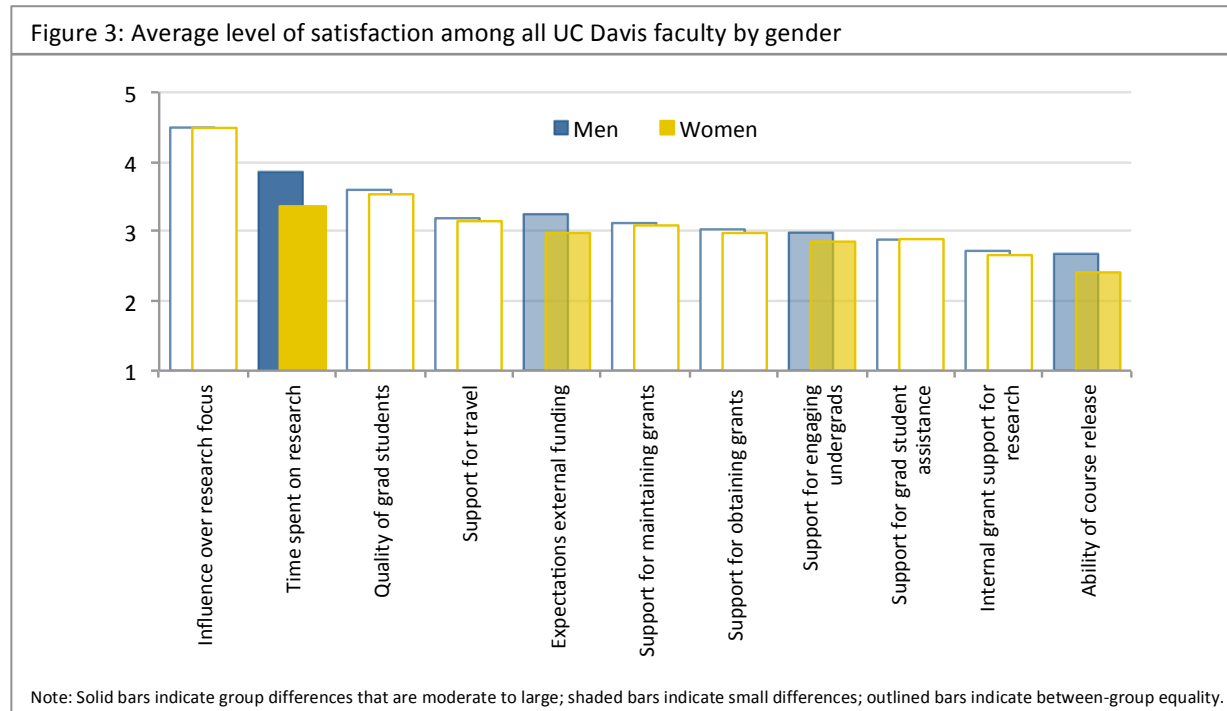
Figure 3 shows the average levels of faculty satisfaction with work related to research separately for women and men. Women faculty report significantly lower levels of satisfaction than do male faculty with the time they are able to spend on research, normative expectations for finding external funding, support for engaging undergraduates in research, and their ability to secure course releases for research.

Figure 4: Average level of satisfaction among all UC Davis faculty by race/ethnicity

Note: Solid bars indicate group differences that are moderate to large; shaded bars indicate small differences; outlined bars indicate between-group equality.
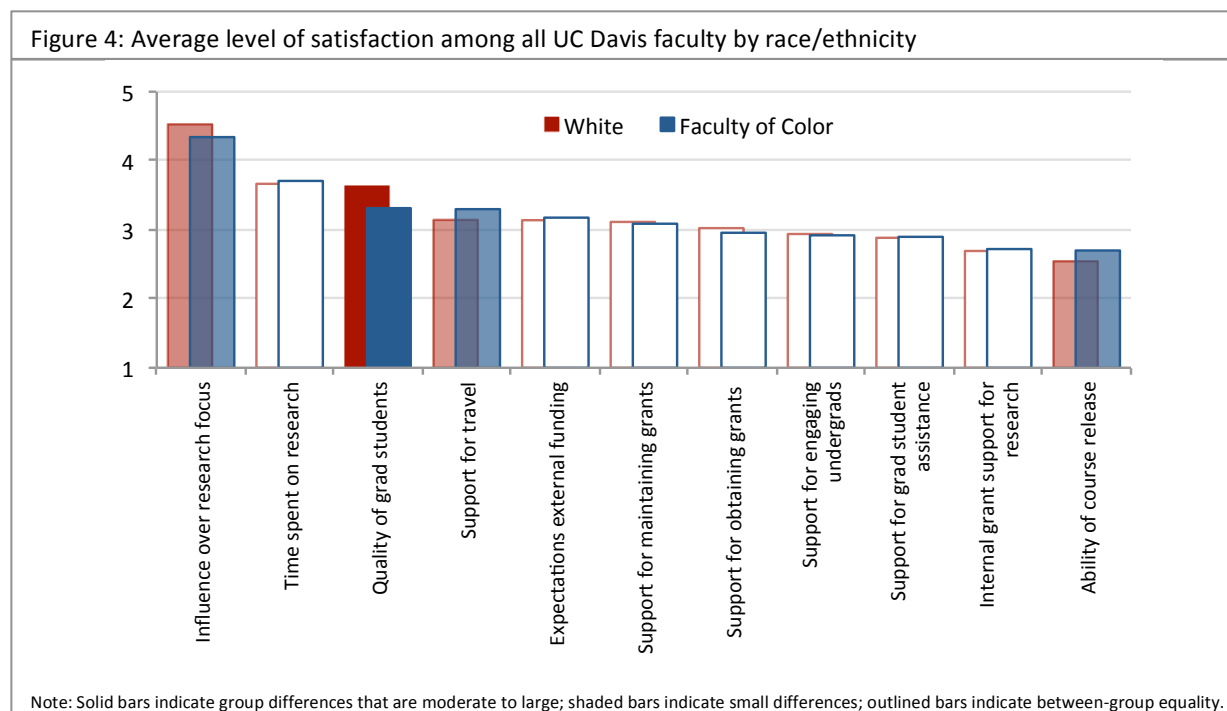
Figure 4 shows the average levels of faculty satisfaction by race/ethnicity. Faculty of Color report significantly lower levels of satisfaction than do white faculty with the degree of influence over the focus of their research and the quality of the graduate students they can attract to work on their research. In contrast, White faculty report relatively lower average levels of satisfaction with their access to support for travel to present or conduct research, and their ability to secure course releases for research.

Figure 5: Average level of satisfaction among all UC Davis faculty by academic rank

Note: Solid bars indicate group differences that are moderate to large; shaded bars indicate small differences; outlined bars indicate between-group equality.
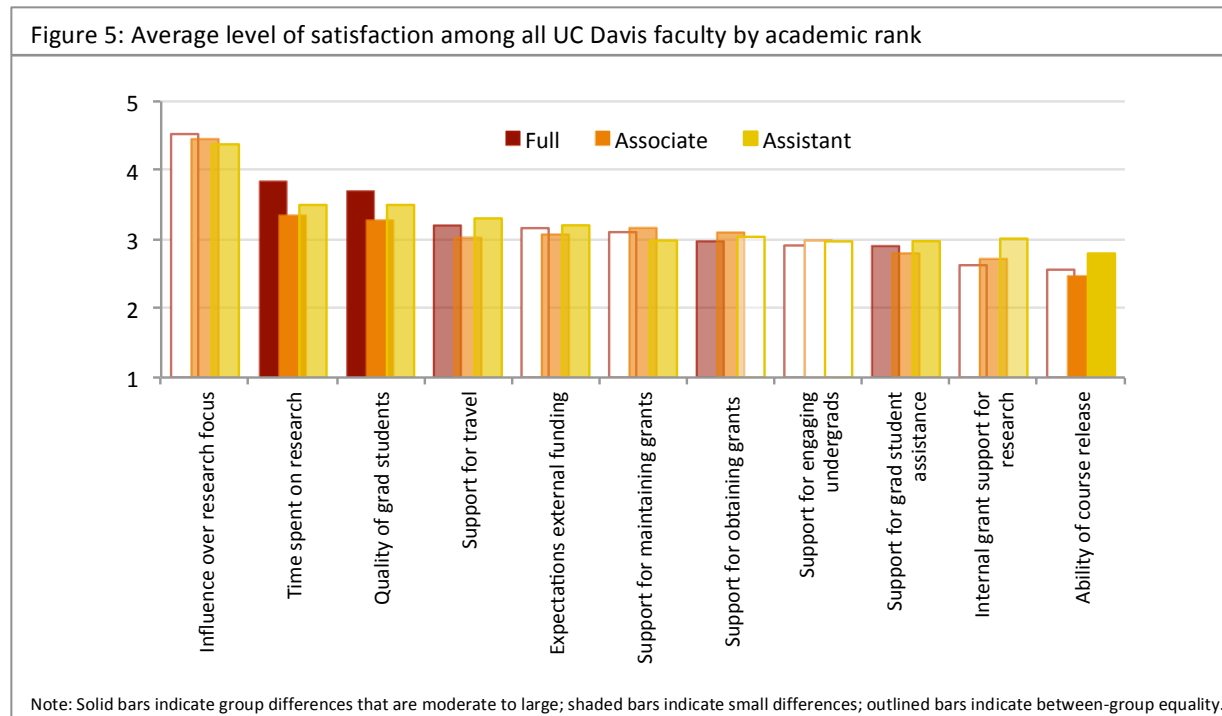
Figure 5 reports the average levels of satisfaction among faculty by academic rank. The survey results show that associate professors tend to be less satisfied than both assistant and full professors on most of the survey questions that inquire about the level of support and resources available to them for research. Associate professors are significantly less satisfied than assistant and full professor with the amount of time they have available to spend on research, the quality of the graduate students they work with on research, support for research-related travel and support for securing graduate student assistance.

Full faculty members report lower levels of satisfaction with support for obtaining grants than do associate professors.

Compared to associate professors, assistant professors report higher levels of satisfaction with the time they spend on research, the quality of the graduate students with whom they work, the availability of institutional support for research-related travel, expectations for external funding, support for graduate students, internal sources of support for research, and their ability to secure course releases for research. Assistant professors are slightly less satisfied than associate professors with the level of influence they have over the focus of their research.

MOVING FORWARD
To make the best use of these findings as we continue transforming UC Davis, our colleges and schools are beginning to discuss the survey results for their units, and deans and Academic Senate leaders will be recommending responses that build on our strengths and address areas in need of improvement. To determine whether our ongoing efforts have had impacts on faculty job satisfaction measures, UC Davis will field the COACHE survey again in 2017.

Appendix A: *Nature of Work – Research* individual survey questions

Q45B	Please rate your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the portion of your time spent on the following:	Research
Q80	Please rate your level or satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the following:	The amount of external funding you are expected to find
		The influence you have over the focus of your research/scholarly/creative work
		The quality of graduate students to support your research/scholarly/creative work
		Institutional support (e.g. internal grants/seed money) for your research/scholarly/creative work
		The support your institution provides you for engaging undergraduates in your research/scholarly/creative work
Q85	Please rate your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with <u>the support your institution has offered you</u> for:	Obtaining externally funded grants (pre-award)
		Managing externally funded grants (post-award)
		Securing graduate student assistance
		Traveling to present papers or conduct research/creative work
		The availability of course release time to focus on your research

Appendix B: *Nature of Work – Research* individual survey item summary statistics

UC Davis vs Peers

	UCD Mean	Peer Mean	Cohen's *d*
Influence over focus of research	4.491	4.424	0.129
Time spent on research	3.674	3.613	0.075
Quality of grad students to support research	3.573	3.507	0.085
Support for travel to present/conduct research	3.174	3.204	0.037
Expectations for finding external funding	3.146	3.195	0.065
Support for maintaining grants (post-award)	3.108	3.232	0.157
Support for obtaining grants (pre-award)	3.01	3.257	0.302
Support for engaging undergrads in research	2.935	3.173	0.311
Support for securing grad student assistance	2.886	2.999	0.149
Support for research	2.698	2.995	0.351
Ability of course release for research	2.574	2.908	0.428

UC Davis Faculty by Race

	Faculty of White	Color	Cohen's *d*
Influence over focus of research	4.527	4.342	0.035
Time spent on research	3.665	3.707	0.013
Quality of grad students to support research	3.635	3.313	0.252
Support for travel to present/conduct research	3.143	3.298	0.013
Expectations for finding external funding	3.138	3.175	0.037
Support for maintaining grants (post-award)	3.113	3.087	0.059
Support for obtaining grants (pre-award)	3.023	2.956	0.019
Support for engaging undergrads in research	2.938	2.919	0.024
Support for securing grad student assistance	2.883	2.897	0.024
Support for research	2.692	2.72	0.302
Ability of course release for research	2.543	2.699	0.135

UC Davis Faculty by Gender

	Men	Women	Cohen's *d*
Influence over focus of research	4.493	4.488	0.262
Time spent on research	3.857	3.379	0.192
Quality of grad students to support research	3.598	3.534	0.007
Support for travel to present/conduct research	3.19	3.148	0.007
Expectations for finding external funding	3.249	2.978	0.423
Support for maintaining grants (post-award)	3.121	3.087	0.046
Support for obtaining grants (pre-award)	3.03	2.978	0.120
Support for engaging undergrads in research	2.983	2.854	0.053
Support for securing grad student assistance	2.883	2.89	0.031
Support for research	2.721	2.66	0.060
Ability of course release for research	2.679	2.412	0.036

UC Davis Faculty by Rank

	Full Faculty	Associate Faculty	Assistant Faculty	Full vs Assoc. Cohen's *d*	Assoc. vs Asst. Cohen's *d*
Influence over focus of research	4.527	4.456	4.378	0.090	0.090
Time spent on research	3.834	3.34	3.5	0.171	0.171
Quality of grad students to support research	3.702	3.271	3.5	0.098	0.098
Support for travel to present/conduct research	3.203	3.027	3.305	0.101	0.101
Expectations for finding external funding	3.164	3.072	3.205	0.428	0.428
Support for maintaining grants (post-award)	3.106	3.168	2.985	0.117	0.117
Support for obtaining grants (pre-award)	2.973	3.101	3.038	0.068	0.068
Support for engaging undergrads in research	2.913	2.985	2.972	0.080	0.080
Support for securing grad student assistance	2.905	2.799	2.975	0.057	0.057
Support for research	2.627	2.719	3.012	0.397	0.397
Ability of course release for research	2.562	2.471	2.797	0.152	0.152