

Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE): Georgia State University Summary of Findings.

In the Fall Semester of AY 2010, some 231 tenured GSU faculty, representing 47% of those eligible, completed the COACHE Tenured Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey. The following description of the survey is taken from the COACHE literature.

“The Tenured Faculty Survey asked full-time tenured faculty to rate the attractiveness of various terms and conditions of employment and to assess their own level of work satisfaction.

Survey design

The chief aim in developing the COACHE Tenured Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey was to assess, in a comprehensive and quantitative way, tenured faculties’ engagement and work-related quality of life. The survey addresses multiple facets of job satisfaction and includes specific questions that would yield unambiguous, actionable data on key policy-relevant issues. The COACHE instrument was developed and validated in stages over a period of several years.

First, an exhaustive review of the literature revealed a series of recurring themes in the lives of faculty which are crucial to their satisfaction and success. These themes were used as scaffolding for the construction of a series of focus groups. Eight focus groups with 73 tenured faculty revealed how they view certain work-related issues, including specific institutional policies and practices, work climate, the ability to balance professional and personal lives, issues surrounding promotion, governance and overall job satisfaction.

Drawing from the focus groups, prior surveys on job satisfaction among academics and other professionals, and consultation with experts on survey development, COACHE researchers developed a web-based survey prototype.

COACHE solicited feedback about the survey by conducting cognitive interviews with tenured faculty to clarify ambiguous items, refine language, reconsider the ordering of items and in some cases, eliminate invalid questions.

Survey administration

All eligible subjects at participating institutions were invited to complete the survey. Eligibility was determined according to the following criteria:

- Full-time
- Tenured
- Hired and tenured prior to 2010 (new hires or recent promotions are unable to respond meaningfully to many questions)
- Not *clinical* faculty in such areas as Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Veterinary Medicine

Subjects first received a message about the survey from a senior administrator (e.g., president, provost, or dean) at their institution. Next, subjects received an email from COACHE inviting

them to complete the survey. Over the course of the survey administration period, up to four automated reminders were sent via email to all subjects who had not completed the survey.

Participants accessed a secure web server through their own unique link provided by COACHE and responded to a series of multiple-choice and open-ended questions (see *Appendix A*). The median survey completion time was approximately 25 minutes; the mode (most frequent) completion time was approximately 21 minutes.”

Demographic Data

Tables 1 through 8 below summarize demographic and employment data on the survey respondents ($n = 231$). Tables 9 and 10 summarize the top 10 items with which respondents reported greatest dissatisfaction (Table 9) and the top 10 items with which respondents reported greatest satisfaction (Table 10).

The 231 respondents represented 47% of those faculty eligible to participate in the survey, 46% of eligible males and 49% of eligible females, 46% of eligible full professors, and 48% of eligible associate professors. One hundred percent of the respondents were full time, 58% hired since the year 2000. Some 29% ($n = 68$) were in administrative positions: including 26 Department Chairs, or Heads. In terms of age, of those reporting only 6% ($n = 10$) were aged 40 or younger with 64% ($n = 118$) aged 51 and over. Of the 231 respondents, 61% were male and 39% female, some 79% were married or in a civil union, 83% were White, 8% were Asian, 6% were Black, and 2% were Hispanic or Latino.

Table 1: Response rate by gender, race, and rank ($n = 231$)

	n	Response rate (n/N)
overall	231	47%
male	141	46%
female	90	49%
white	192	48%
Asian	18	46%
URM	21	42%
full	104	46%
associate	127	48%

Table 2: Current Employment Status

Status	$n = 231$	%
Full-time	231	100%
Part-time	0	0%
Emeritus	0	0%
Other	0	0%
None of the above	0	0%

Table 3: Year appointed to current rank

	<u>n</u> = 231	
2000 to present	128	58%
1990 to 1999	73	33%
Before 1989	19	8%

Table 4: Currently serving in administrative position.

	<u>n</u> = 231	%
Yes	68	29%
No	163	71%
	N = 66	%
Department Chair or Department Head	26	39%
Center or Program Director	29	44%
Other	11	18%

Table 5: Age of respondents

	<u>n</u> =186	%
40 or younger	10	6%
41 to 50	58	31%
51 to 60	82	44%
61 or above	36	20%

Table 6: Race of respondents

	<u>n</u> = 231	%
American Indian or Native American	0	0%
Asian, Asian-American, or Pacific Islander	18	8%
White (non-Hispanic)	192	83%
Black or African-American	13	6%
Hispanic or Latino	5	2%
Other	1	0%
Multiracial	2	1%

Table 7: Gender of respondents

	<u>n</u>	%
Male	141	61%
Female	90	39%

Table 8: Marital Status of respondents n = 201

	<u>n</u>	%
Single	15	7%
Married or in a civil union	159	79%
Unmarried, living with partner	10	5%
Divorced, separated, or widowed	17	8%

Results

Table 9 below outlines the 10 items for which respondents reported the highest levels of dissatisfaction. The number one item with which they were dissatisfied was that “outside letters are required as leverage in compensation negotiations” (1), and it seems that frustration with compensation was strong as the number 3 item was dissatisfaction with salary (3). There were also two items related to mentoring that appeared on the list of top 10 dissatisfiers, the lack of adequate support for faculty as mentors (2) and the apparently commensurate dissatisfaction with mentoring of associate professors (6). Three items in the top 10 list were connected to interdisciplinary work, dissatisfaction with the conduciveness of spaces and buildings to interdisciplinary work (4), lack of reward for interdisciplinary work in the merit process (8), and recognition in the promotion and tenure process for interdisciplinary work (10). The remaining 3 dissatisfiers were concerned with: course release (5), support for faculty assuming leadership roles (7), and consistency in the priorities of leadership.

Table 9: Top 10 items for which respondents reported dissatisfied/very dissatisfied or equivalent (e.g. disagree or strongly disagree with positive statements)

Item	description	Rank
240a	Outside offers are not necessary as leverage in compensation negotiations.	1
130c	My institution provides adequate support for faculty to be good mentors.	2
90g	Please rate your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the following aspects of your employment: Salary.	3
100b	Campus facilities (e.g. spaces, buildings, centers, labs) are conducive to interdisciplinary work.	4
70g	Please rate your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the availability of course release time to focus on your research.	5
130b	There is effective mentoring of tenured associate professors in my department.	6
55b	My institution does what it can to help faculty who take on additional leadership roles, to sustain other aspects of their faculty work.	7
100c	Interdisciplinary work is rewarded in the merit process.	8
170c	My institution's priorities are acted upon consistently across all levels of leadership.	9
100d	Interdisciplinary work is rewarded in the promotion process.	10

Table 10: Top 10 items for which respondents reported satisfied/very satisfied or equivalent (e.g. agree or strongly agree with positive statements).

item	description	Rank
70c	Please rate your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the discretion you have over the content of the courses you teach.	1
265	If a candidate for a faculty position asked you about your department as a place to work, would you recommend?	2
245e	If I had it to do all over, I would again choose an academic career.	3
80b	Please rate your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the influence you have over the focus of your research/scholarly/creative work.	4
70b	Please rate your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the level of courses you teach.	5
170b	In the past five years, my institution's priorities have changed in ways that affect my work in my department.	6
115	Would you agree or disagree that being a mentor is/has been fulfilling to you in your role as a faculty member?	7
210c	On the whole, my department is collegial.	8
195d	Please rate your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the research/scholarly/creative productivity of pre-tenure faculty in your department.	9
45a	Please rate your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the portion of your time spent on the following: Teaching.	10