GUIDE TO YOUR COACHE INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

One of the great strengths of an institution of higher education is its faculty. Research literature demonstrates that the faculty are affected by their perception of the values and rewards in their work environment and that supportive environments promote faculty satisfaction, which can lead to increased productivity and retention. With this understanding, the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education developed the Tenure-Track Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey to be a diagnostic and comparative management tool for college and university policymakers. The first stage of this endeavor consisted of focus groups with pre-tenure faculty designed to elicit information on what comprises workplace and career satisfaction. This work, combined with the extant literature on faculty satisfaction, reviews of institutional satisfaction surveys, and conversations with numerous stakeholders, led to the development of the survey. We have now administered the Tenure-Track Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey at over one hundred colleges and universities, each of whom receives their custom version of this benchmarking report and comparative analysis.

Membership in the Collaborative, however, does not conclude with delivery of this report. Our mission to make the academy a more attractive place to work is advanced only when supported by institutional action. To that end, COACHE is your partner and a resource for maximizing the ability of your data to initiate dialogue, recruit talented new scholars, and further the work satisfaction of all faculty at your institution. Please contact us at any time to discuss the continuing benefits of COACHE participation.

CONTENTS

The data provided in your COACHE Institutional Report tell the unique story of your junior faculty’s experiences working at your institution. The report is comprised of an executive summary, a question-by-question analysis of survey results, special analyses, and highly detailed appendices. This guide will acquaint you with the contents and organization of your report as you navigate through its various layers.

I. Executive Summary

The executive summary gives an overview of what your pre-tenure, tenure-track faculty members think about working at your institution. It shows, in a condensed fashion, your institution's strengths and weaknesses, in relation to the five peer institutions you chose for comparison, as well as in relation to all COACHE universities. The Executive Summary is composed of four parts, each of which represents a different aspect of the data or level of analysis. Together, these four components provide a comprehensive distillation of the data.

A. Institutional Profile, by Theme. The survey collects information according to five themes:

- **Tenure:** Clarity and reasonableness of tenure process and criteria
- **Nature of the Work:** Satisfaction with work-related duties and support services
- **Policies and Practices:** Policy importance, effectiveness, and satisfaction
- **Climate, Culture, Collegiality:** Satisfaction with cultural and interpersonal aspects of work environment
- **Global Satisfaction:** Overall satisfaction with the institution as workplace

The institutional profile features an "at-a-glance" bar chart showing your pre-tenure faculty's mean scores among those at your benchmark peers. Each bar in the chart shows the percentage of items within a particular theme on which your institution scored in the a) top third (ranked first or second; green), b) middle third (ranked third or fourth; gray), and c) bottom third (ranked fifth or sixth; red). Mean scores are averages of responses on a five-point Likert-type scale. The names of your five peer institutions appear below the chart.

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1 The results of the survey's demographic questions (1 through 18) are in Appendix A, "Frequency Tables."
B. Results Presented by Theme. This section presents five charts showing the results of the individual survey items by theme. Each chart shows:

1. your junior faculty’s mean scores for each survey item;
2. how each mean score ranks relative to your five peers—overall, by gender, and by race; and
3. gender and race differences within your institution.²

For each theme, we display the responses to each survey item ranked highest to lowest by mean rating or a five-point scale (5 = highest).

Column 1 mean ratings show where your pre-tenure faculty are on average most satisfied and least satisfied.

Columns 2, 3, and 4 show, for each item, how the mean ratings of your pre-tenure faculty rank in relation to the means at your five peers, for faculty overall, grouped by gender, and grouped by race (i.e., white faculty and faculty of color²). A plus sign (+) in a cell indicates that your faculty’s mean score on that item ranked in the top two out of six peers (your institution plus your five peer institutions). A minus sign (−) indicates that your faculty’s mean score on that item ranked in the bottom two out of six peers. A blank cell indicates a score ranking third or fourth among peer scores. For Columns 3 and 4, we used the following symbols: $F = \text{Females}$, $M = \text{Males}$, $W = \text{White Faculty}$, and $C = \text{Faculty of Color}$. As with the overall scores, a “+” or “−” symbol indicates respectively a mean score in the top or bottom third of your peer group. For example, “F+” indicates that the female faculty at your institution had a mean score on that item ranking in the top two out of six peers (your institution plus your five peer institutions).

Columns 5 and 6 highlight for each question any disparities within your institution based on gender and race. Because each of these columns compares means between two distinct groups on your campus (i.e., men and women; white and faculty of color), we used a test of statistical significance. The letter designations (e.g., F, M, W, C) in a given cell indicate responses where the difference between the two means is large enough that it is very unlikely (less than 5% chance) to have occurred by chance alone. Where there are no statistically significant differences, the cells are left blank. The letter designations and “greater than” (>) and “less than” (<) symbols indicate which group has the higher score.

C. Policies and Practices Summary. For each of 16 policies, respondents rated how important the policy is or would be to their success and how effective each policy is at their institution. This section of your report consists of two charts. For each policy, the top chart shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that it was both important and effective, whereas the bottom chart shows the percentage who indicated that it was important and ineffective (not offered). Higher percentages in the top chart indicate relatively successful policies, whereas higher percentages in the bottom chart indicate policies that your junior faculty think would lead to their success, but that are currently absent or not working well at your institution.

D. Best and Worst Aspects about Working at Your Institution. Respondents saw a list of aspects of working at an institution (e.g., support for teaching; quality of graduate students), and chose the two they perceived to be the “best” at your institution and two they perceived to be the “worst.” The table in this section shows the four aspects most frequently mentioned as one of the two best aspects at your institution, and the four most frequently chosen as one of the two worst aspects, overall, by gender, and by race. The two columns to the right show how many other peers (out of 5) and how many other COACHE universities also had the item in their top four best (or worst) aspects. See Appendix C for the list of aspects from which respondents made their choices.

² Only statistically significant differences are shown here (see below, Statistical Terms in the Institutional Report).
³ To ensure the confidentiality of all responses, “faculty of color” as a category is not further disaggregated by racial and ethnic groups.
II. Survey Results

The survey results begin with the survey response rates, weight scales, and your selected peers. Then, for each survey item (excluding the demographic questions and the special questions outlined below), the Report presents, in three pages, the results of pre-tenure faculty respondents as a whole (Overall Results), for males and females separately (Gender Results), and for white faculty and faculty of color (Race Results).

To understand the format of your COACHE survey results, refer to the descriptions below and to the sample page at right.

A. At your institution: Statements under this heading compare the mean scores of sub-groups defined by gender or by race. A *t*-test at the standard *p* < .05 level was used to determine statistically significant differences.4

B. Compared to your peers: These statements indicate the rank of your faculty's mean score relative to those at your five COACHE peers (i.e., out of six).

C. Among all universities: These statements indicate the percentile5 of your faculty's mean score relative to all participating COACHE universities. In the context of this survey, higher percentile ranks indicate strengths; lower ranks indicate weaknesses.

D. Across all universities: These statements compare the mean scores of gender or racial subgroups across all survey respondents at COACHE universities, based on *t*-tests (see "At your institution" above).

E. Data table: This table contains the mean ratings of faculty at your institution, at your peer institutions, and across all universities. Further descriptive statistics are provided: standard deviation (SD), standard error (SE), and the 95% confidence interval (CI) of the mean. The rows labeled "Your peers" and "All Universities" indicate the mean of the five peer mean scores and of all COACHE universities, respectively. No CI is given for the mean of your five peers or of all universities, as these means are calculated directly, without the need for statistical inference. Also, means are not reported in demographic categories where there were too few respondents at your institution or at your peers.

F. Frequency chart: This chart illustrates the frequency of each of the five scale points in percentages for faculty at your institution, at your peer institutions, and at all COACHE universities combined. Exact frequencies can be seen in Appendix A, "Frequency Tables."

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4 *Significance tests* were performed to determine whether the difference between group mean scores is statistically significant (i.e., there was at most 5% likelihood that the difference between groups occurred by chance alone). However, even when the difference is not statistically significant, it can be meaningful and *practically* significant. For example, differences in means between subgroups with fewer than 30 participants are difficult to detect with statistical tests. Under such circumstances, meaningful differences might exist regardless of these test results.

5 *Percentile* indicates the percent of scores that fall at or below your institution's score.
Therefore, the pages of results for most COACHE survey questions present the following information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Your mean score's rank relative to your peers</th>
<th>Your percentile rank among all universities</th>
<th>Differences between groups within your institution</th>
<th>Differences between groups across all universities</th>
<th>Table of means: your institution, your peers, all universities</th>
<th>Frequency chart: your institution, your peers, all universities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall results</td>
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<td>Gender results</td>
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<td>Race results</td>
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<td>Academic area results</td>
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**Interpreting Results: Means and Frequencies.** While a group's mean score on an item gives valuable information about the group's central tendency, the frequency can tell you the extent to which the group is polarized in their responses. For example, consider the following two hypothetical cases:

1) In one case, half of a group of pre-tenure faculty chose "1" on a 5-point scale (e.g., Very dissatisfied), and half chose "5" (Very satisfied);
2) In the second case, every respondent in the group chose "3" (Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied).

In both cases, the mean score is 3.0; however, whereas in the second case the mean reflects individuals' attitudes very accurately, in the first case, the mean (Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) does not actually reflect the attitude of anyone in the group. Rather, this group seems to be made up of two sub-groups with very different attitudes. It is important to take into account the polarization of scores when considering policy changes in order to gain a greater understanding of how faculty members will be affected.

For actual percentages of each response at your institution, see Appendix A, "Frequency Tables."

**New Questions for 2007-08.** In response to requests from member institutions, some survey dimensions were added or altered for the 2007-08 survey administration. For these few items, peer comparisons are unavailable. However, we do present your faculty's responses alongside those of faculty at institutions who were administered these new questions.

**III. Special Analyses**

**Importance and Effectiveness of Policies and Practices.** For this section (Theme III; Questions 34a and 34b) respondents saw a list of 16 policies common at academic workplaces; for each, they rated how important the policy is or would be to their success, and how effective it is at their institution. Respondents could also indicate that the policy is not offered at their institution.

The results are summarized in five tables: overall, for males, for females, for white faculty, and for faculty of color. The columns of most interest are those that show the percent of faculty who rated the policy as: important, but ineffective or not offered (Column 2) and the percent who rated it as both important and effective (Column 3). Policies with higher percentages in Column 2 are working well at your institution, whereas those with higher percentages in Column 3 are working less well, and can perhaps be targeted for improvement.
Best and Worst Aspects of Working at This Institution. For these questions (Theme V; Questions 44a and 44b), respondents saw a list of 28 common attributes of institutions as workplaces, and chose the two they perceived to be the “best” and the two they perceived to be the “worst.” The table presented in this section shows (overall, by gender, and by race) the four aspects most frequently mentioned as one of the two best aspects, and the four most frequently chosen as one of the two worst aspects. The two columns to the right show how many peers (out of 5) and how many other COACHE institutions also had the item in their top four best or worst aspects. See Appendix C ("Survey Instrument") to see the list of aspects from which respondents chose.

The second page of these results lists the responses submitted by faculty who named their own best or worst aspects instead of or in addition to choosing from the list.

Survey Results by Academic Area. This analysis is the result of our efforts to categorize faculty at all COACHE universities into discrete “academic areas” to permit comparison of survey responses across institutions. These definitions arose from a review of structural designations (i.e., schools and colleges, which differ from campus to campus) and CIP codes (which are too narrowly defined for meaningful reporting).

As there is currently no uniform system of nomenclature among the schools and colleges of COACHE institutions, we hope that the following 12 academic areas strike a useful—if imperfect—compromise suitable for this analysis:

- Humanities
- Visual and Performing Arts
- Social Sciences
- Physical Sciences
- Biological Sciences
- Engineering, Computer Science, Mathematics, and Statistics
- Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Environmental Science
- Business
- Education
- Health and Human Ecology
- Medical Schools and Health Professions
- Other Professions, including (among others) Architecture, Journalism, Law, Library

A. At your institution: The first set of tables shows the relative performance of the academic areas within your institution. For each item, your pre-tenure faculty’s mean scores are shown for 12 academic areas, listed in order from highest to lowest mean. To protect the identity of respondents, cells with fewer than five data points (i.e., mean scores for questions that were answered by fewer than five faculty from an academic area within an institution) are not reported.

B. Compared to peers and all COACHE universities: The second set of tables shows, for each item, your pre-tenure faculty’s mean score for each academic area as expressed as a ranking among at your peers (rank 1-6) and as a percentile among all universities for that academic area. Again, to protect the identity of respondents, cells with fewer than five data points are not reported.

If your institution would like to receive custom analyses by school or college, please contact COACHE at coache@gse.harvard.edu.