Focus on Faculty

The December 2014 issue of Inquiry, Trends & Insights highlights Tulane’s participation in and results of the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) faculty survey of job satisfaction. Tulane has been a member of COACHE since 2008 and is entering its third administration of the survey.

Tulane faculty members assume many roles including scholar, teacher, advisor, mentor, contributor, volunteer, researcher, leader, and colleague. The COACHE survey affords the nearly 600 full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty members the opportunity to share their opinions about these faculty issues and many more. The results of the survey are used to plan and execute faculty development initiatives to ensure that Tulane can attract and retain outstanding faculty across all disciplines.

I hope you enjoy learning more about Tulane’s participation in COACHE, what faculty have said about their experience, and what Tulane is doing to provide professional development activities to support faculty.

Katie Busby
Assistant Provost for Assessment and Institutional Research

About COACHE

Tulane is a member of the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE), a consortium of over 200 four-year colleges and universities across North America committed to making the academic workplace more attractive and equitable for faculty. Founded in 2002, with support from the Ford Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies, COACHE is based at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and is now supported completely by its members. COACHE Website

Tulane joined COACHE in 2008 and is launching its third round of the COACHE Survey of Faculty Job Satisfaction to pre-tenure and tenured faculty in early Spring 2015. Designed and administered by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the COACHE survey is a powerful tool for academic administrators at Tulane to conceptualize the quality of work/life/career experiences for its faculty. With thousands of faculty members participating in the survey nationwide, Tulane will be able to gauge its faculty members’ satisfaction in the context of data from peer institutions to highlight areas of both strength and need for improvement. The survey results shed light on actionable issues facing faculty, which informs both policy and programming to improve quality of life for faculty at Tulane.
COACHE Survey

The COACHE survey asks faculty about many aspects of their career and work-life issues. In particular, COACHE focuses on nine benchmarks as follows:

- Nature of work in research, teaching and service
- Benefits, compensation, and work/life
- Mentoring
- Leadership and governance
- Appreciation and recognition
- Resources in support of faculty work
- Interdisciplinary work and collaboration
- Tenure and promotion practices
- Departmental collegiality, quality, engagement

Tulane University participated in the Tenure-track Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey in 2008-2009 and again in 2011-2012.

2008 COACHE Results

In fall 2008 117 tenure-track faculty members were invited to complete the confidential, online questionnaire and 78 submitted their feedback (67% response rate). The results indicated a desire among junior faculty for better professional development opportunities including mentoring.

The Office of Academic Affairs utilized this feedback during the development and implementation of a multi-phase faculty development initiative that included sponsorship of grant-writing workshops and development of a mentoring resource website.

Faculty participants at 2011 Grant Writing Workshop
2011 COACHE Results

In late fall 2011, 132 junior faculty members were invited to participate and 78 completed the survey (59% response rate). Overall, Tulane faculty indicated satisfaction with the nature of their work in the areas of research and teaching, and the quality of their departments. Tulane was among the top 30% of all institutions in these categories and in the area of nature of work related to teaching Tulane was ranked first or second among a selected group of five comparison institutions. Comparison institutions include: Clemson University, Johns Hopkins University, Middlebury College, the University of Kansas, and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Tulane faculty indicated concerns in the areas of health and retirement benefits, tenure clarity, tenure reasonableness and mentoring.

Respondents indicated that the best aspects of working at Tulane are: geographic location (29%), support of colleagues (23%), quality of colleagues (21%), and sense of “fit” at Tulane (17%).

The worst aspects of Tulane are: compensation (21%), quality of the facilities (19%), lack of support for research/creative work (16%) and lack of assistance for grant proposals and spousal/partner hiring program (11% each).

Tulane asked six customized questions related to the satisfaction of university-sponsored programs. In many cases, the junior faculty have not utilized the programs that are being offered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following university-sponsored programs at Tulane University:</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
<th>Have not utilized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Faculty Orientation</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee on Research (COR) Fellowships</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Activities Fund</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly and Artistic Engagement Fund</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Travel Grants</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CELT)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2015 COACHE

The COACHE Survey takes a census approach to eligibility. To have confidence in the results, Tulane is counting on as many faculty members as possible to participate. In this new round of the COACHE Survey, Tulane will be collecting data from both tenure-track and tenured faculty. The modules for these two populations are designed to account for the unique professional experiences of the respective groups.

The COACHE Survey will be available from January 26—April 10, 2015. Responses are anonymous and Tulane only receives aggregated results. Those results are used to develop and implement faculty development policies and initiatives.

COACHE Team

A working group of faculty and staff are committed to the successful administration of the 2015 COACHE Survey. Members of this work group are available to answer any questions you have about the survey. The COACHE team includes the following members:

- Katie Busby, Assistant Provost for Assessment & IR
- Gwyn Garrison, Senior Program Coordinator for Faculty Development Initiatives
- M. A. “Tonette” Krousel-Wood, Professor of Medicine and Professor of Epidemiology and Associate Provost for Health Sciences
- Michael Kuczynski, Associate Professor of English and Chair, Department of English
- Ana Lopez, Professor of Communication and Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs
- Susann Lusnia, Associate Professor, Department of Classical Studies and Executive Director, Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching

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