



2017 HERI Faculty Survey Executive Summary

Introduction

This report provides a brief overview of the results of the HERI Faculty Survey administered in Spring 2017.¹ This survey is designed and administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California – Los Angeles (UCLA). This was the first instance in which the HERI Faculty Survey had been administered to UW-Whitewater faculty and instructional academic staff.

The HERI Faculty Survey focuses on five themes:

- Teaching practices
- Research activities
- Faculty satisfaction
- Sources of faculty stress
- Faculty perspective on campus climate

In order to contextualize the results of the survey, the aggregate UW-Whitewater response to each question are compared to the aggregate response at comparable institutions that also participated in the HERI Faculty Survey during the 2016-2017 cycle.²

Methods of Analysis

The survey was administered to 594 UW-Whitewater faculty and staff members in Spring 2017. The survey population was comprised of both full-time and part-time faculty and instructional academic staff. Only individuals employed at UW-Whitewater as instructional faculty and staff in Fall 2016 October Payroll records were included in the survey population.³

HERI administered the survey via an online survey tool to the UW-Whitewater survey population. The survey opened on March 27, 2017 and closed on April 15, 2017. Invitations to participate in the survey were sent on March 27, 2017; three additional reminder emails encouraging participation were sent during the subsequent two weeks.

¹ The HERI Faculty Survey was administered in conjunction with the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) (which is administered on a three-year cycle on UW System campuses) and the University of Maryland Faculty Time Use Survey, which was also administered to UW-Whitewater faculty in Spring 2017.

² The UW-Whitewater comparison population is described as public four-year colleges with high selectivity, and included a population of 1,877 respondents.

³ The Office of Institutional Research and Planning worked with HERI to facilitate survey administration by providing the names and university email addresses of the survey population to HERI, along with associated information regarding the employees' full-time/part-time status, academic rank, and tenure status. This employment status information was requested by HERI for the purposes of aggregate data analysis.

In total, 214 UW-Whitewater faculty and instructional academic staff participated in the survey, which equates to a 36% response rate.⁴ The respondent population is generally representative of the survey pool in terms of both gender and ethnic diversity, with 51.4% of respondents identifying as women, and 82.2% of respondents identifying as White/Caucasian. Respondents were affiliated with departments across campus, with the largest percentage of respondents indicating an academic affiliation with the Social Sciences, Education, and Business, respectively.

Findings

The results of the HERI Faculty Survey indicate that UW-Whitewater faculty and instructional academic staff share many commonalities with colleagues in the comparison population. There were some notable exceptions. These are highlighted in some detail below.

With regard to teaching practices, UW-W faculty rank better than comparison groups in habits of mind related to encouraging students to use scientific resources and to explore topics on their own. That said, UW-W faculty report that they are less likely than the comparison group to use simulations and audience response systems (but more likely to use other types of technology in the classroom). In terms of the type of courses taught, UW-W faculty appear more likely to have taught first-year seminar (25.1% versus 18.3%) and less likely to have taught a service learning course than comparison group (17.4% versus 22.1%). More importantly, UW-W faculty report teaching more courses than the comparison group (4.39 versus 4.08); this may inform the responses in the faculty satisfaction section of the survey.

With regard to research activities, the levels of publications and other measures of productivity by UW-W faculty appear to be on par with the comparison group. However, UW-W faculty appear to spend somewhat less time conducting research on racial and ethnic minorities and somewhat more time engaged in academic research and spans multiple disciplines than comparison group. Notably, UW-W faculty report conducting more research with undergrads than comparison group (39.1% versus 34.3%), which may reflect UW-Whitewater's growing commitment to facilitating High Impact Practices (HIPs) – including undergraduate research – over the past several years.

With regard to faculty job satisfaction, notably fewer UW-W faculty reported satisfaction with their workload than the comparison group (43.4% versus 57.0%); this is possibly correlated with higher course loads reported by respondents in the teaching practices section. That said, UW-W faculty report being more satisfied with their departmental leadership than the comparison group. In addition, while generally similar to peers in other areas related to compensation, notably fewer UW-W faculty report satisfaction with their salary than the comparison group (26.9% versus 50.4%). Specifically, UW-W faculty appear to be on par with the comparison group in terms of satisfaction with flexibility and overall employment conditions, but notably less satisfied with the relative equity of salary and job benefits (26.5% versus 43.1%). Importantly, when respondents were asked if they would still pursue their career at this institution, only 35.5% of UW-W faculty indicated that they definitely would (versus 44.7% of comparison group).⁵ In addition, there appears to be some discrepancies in UW-W faculty in terms of job satisfaction by ethnic group, particularly for the small population of individuals that identify as “other” or “two or more ethnicities”. Moreover, it should be noted that when asked about career options, 44.4% of UW-W faculty have considered leaving academe for another job and 51.7% have considered leaving UW-W for another institution in the past year (versus 34.5% and 44.3% respectively in the comparison group).

⁴ This includes both complete and partial submissions.

⁵ 75.6% of UW-W faculty responded with a “definitely yes” or a “probably yes”, versus 81.0% in comparison group.

With regard to sources of workplace stress, UW-W faculty report notably higher levels of stress related to job security (17.9% points higher), increased work responsibilities (6.9% points higher) and institutional budget cuts (22.8% points higher). These represent three of the five categories of additional stress examined. While these sources of stress may be attributed to recent changes in the UW System, it is worth noting that workplace stress appears to impact sub-populations of the UW-Whitewater faculty and instructional academic staff differently. Specifically, women faculty at UW-W report experiencing notably more stress due to discrimination than men, and traditionally underrepresented minority faculty at UW-W report experiencing notably more stress due to discrimination than other ethnic groups. It should be noted, however, that the disproportionate levels of stress experienced by these sub-populations is on par with the sub-populations within the comparison group respondents.

With regard to faculty perspective on campus climate, UW-W faculty indicate that UW-W is more committed to facilitating civic engagement than the comparison group and that UW-W has a higher commitment to diversity in all three categories examined than the comparison group – including the promotion of racial and ethnic diversity in the faculty and administration. That said, a majority (58.4%) of UW-W faculty indicate that they are not well-prepared to deal with conflicts over diversity issues in the classroom, which is 6.6% points higher than the comparison group. In terms of overall campus climate, UW-W faculty generally rate UW-W well. For example, only 36.4% of UW-W faculty reported that “faculty are typically at odds with campus administration” compared to 42.9% of the comparison group. However, there is one exception: a notably higher percentage of UW-W faculty report that “there is a lot of campus racial conflict here” than the comparison group (37.2% versus 25.0%).

Conclusion

The 2017 HERI Faculty Survey provides UW-Whitewater insight into faculty and instructional staff perspectives on the university in Spring 2017. The report highlights several areas for improvement as well as many areas in which UW-Whitewater is doing well. However, without a longitudinal perspective, the data allows for only tentative conclusions to be drawn. For that reason, it is advisable that UW-Whitewater participate in the next HERI Faculty Survey cycle (2019-2020) in order to analyze trends over time. In addition, data collected through other longitudinal studies of UW-Whitewater faculty and instructional academic staff (such as the FSSE survey) should be triangulated with the data collected in this study.

Citations

More information on the HERI Faculty Survey is available at: <https://heri.ucla.edu/heri-faculty-survey/>. A PowerPoint presentation summarizing the UW-Whitewater results of the 2017 HERI Faculty Survey is available at the UW-Whitewater HERI Faculty Survey page (<http://www.uww.edu/irp/university-data/university-wide-surveys/employeesurveys/herifaculty>).