

COACHE Faculty Satisfaction Survey

In Spring 2019, the University of South Carolina participated in the COACHE Faculty Satisfaction Survey. During the Spring 2020 semester, we will share results of the survey to faculty groups including several town hall meetings on various topics. The discussions at these meetings will lead to development of initiatives to enhance existing strengths and address challenges and barriers identified in the survey. In addition, results and recommendations will also be considered in context of the Fall 2019 ModernThink Climate Survey (*Community Insights*) and the APLU/CIERTL Institutional Change network to increase diversity and inclusion among underrepresented STEM faculty.

What is COACHE?

Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education is a research-practice partnership and network of peer institutions dedicated to improving outcomes in faculty recruitment, development, and retention. Under COACHE, more than 300 colleges, universities, and state systems have strengthened their capacity to identify the drivers of faculty success and implement informed changes. Through over a decade of collaboration with senior faculty administrators, COACHE has a unique understanding of faculty needs and the intricacies of life in higher education. Based the Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey was crafted by and for academic affairs leaders.

Survey Methodology

Eligible faculty included all full-time faculty at USC Columbia, including all tracks and ranks. Faculty in administrative positions (associate dean and above) or on notice of non-reappointment were excluded. About 1700 faculty were invited to participate in the survey, which required 20-30 minutes to complete. Our response rate was 36%, compared to 40% for our peer institutions and 46% for all participating institutions. Response rates in faculty subgroups ranged from 27% for Asian/Asian-American faculty to 39% for tenured faculty to 44% for underrepresented minority faculty.

In evaluating the responses, we can consider all faculty or aggregate by tenure status, rank, gender, race, and disciplinary group. We can also compare ourselves to a peer group of five COACHE institutions (comparison group) that were identified earlier as our peer or peer aspirant institutions or to the aggregate of all COACHE institutions (cohort). From a list of COACHE-participating R1 institutions, we chose Auburn, Missouri and Tennessee (from our current peer institution list) and North Carolina – Chapel Hill and Virginia (from our peer aspirant institution list) for our peer comparisons.

For most questions, respondents were asked to respond on a five-point scale ranging from very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (5). Average for individual items and for groups of related items are reported. For comparative analyses, average responses across all participating institutions are grouped into lower 30%, middle 40%, and top 30%.

Select Highlights

- Areas of strength include collaboration, promotion to full, and tenure policies.
- Areas of concern included facilities and work resources; governance: productivity; governance: shared sense of purpose; governance: trust; governance: understanding the issue at hand; health and retirement benefits; leadership: college; leadership: faculty.
- The evaluation of our campus leadership varied significantly by level. Our department chairs received the highest ratings, while deans and faculty leadership were somewhat lower.

- Items concerning faculty governance were consistently rated lower than institutions in our comparison group and all COACHE institutions.
- For many areas, women faculty provided more positive responses than men faculty at USC, women faculty at institutions in our comparison group and at all COACHE institutions.
- For many areas, URM faculty (not white or Asian) provided more positive responses than white faculty at USC, URM faculty at institutions in our comparison group and at all COACHE institutions.

Areas of Strength and Concern

As shorthand, COACHE defines as an “area of strength” any benchmark where the institution scores first or second among our selected comparison group and in the top 30 percent of the cohort. Conversely, an “area of concern” is where our faculty rating of a benchmark falls fifth or sixth among our comparison group and in the bottom 30 percent of the cohort. Note there is substantial variation in areas of strength and areas of concern by faculty subgroup.

Areas of Strength

Area of Strength	All Faculty	Pre-Tenure Faculty	Associate Professors	Women Faculty	Faculty of Color
Nature of Work: Research		✓	✓	✓	✓
Nature of Work: Service		✓		✓	
Collaboration	✓		✓	✓	✓
Tenure policies	✓	✓		✓	✓
Tenure Expectations: Clarity				✓	✓
Promotion to Full	✓		✓	✓	✓
Leadership: Departmental				✓	
Department Collegiality		✓			
Department Quality		✓		✓	
Appreciation and Recognition				✓	

Areas of Weakness

Area of Weaknesses	All Faculty	Pre-Tenure Faculty	Associate Professors	Women Faculty	Faculty of Color
Facilities and Work Resources	✓		✓		
Health and Retirement Benefits	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interdisciplinary Work		✓			
Leadership: Senior		✓			
Leadership: Divisional	✓	✓	✓		
Leadership: Faculty	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Governance: Trust	✓			✓	
Governance: Shared Sense of Purpose	✓		✓	✓	
Governance: Understanding the Issue at Hand	✓		✓	✓	
Governance: Adaptability		✓			
Governance: Productivity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Global Considerations: Best Aspects and Worst Aspects

Near the end of the survey, faculty respondents are asked to think about the institution as a whole and to identify those issues (both good and bad) that are most on their minds. Here, faculty are given the opportunity to select the two best aspects of working at USC and the two worst aspects from lists of 25 each. In the tables below, we show those aspects most frequently cited by all faculty and by subgroups (four most common responses, plus ties).

Best Aspects

Best Aspect	All Faculty	Pre-Tenure Faculty	Associate Professors	Women Faculty	Faculty of Color
Quality of colleagues	33%	26%	33%	33%	25%
Support of colleagues	19%	26%		22%	21%
Cost of living	21%	25%	23%	19%	20%
Teaching load		21%	20%		
Academic freedom	17%	21%	20%	14%	17%

Worst Aspects

Worst Aspect	All Faculty	Pre-Tenure Faculty	Associate Professors	Women Faculty	Faculty of Color
Quality of graduate students		16%	15%		
Quality of facilities	20%	20%	19%	18%	19%
Compensation	30%	26%	32%	34%	24%
Lack of diversity					13%
Geographic location		25%		9%	19%
Too much service/too many assignments	11%		17%	13%	
Quality of leadership	12%				

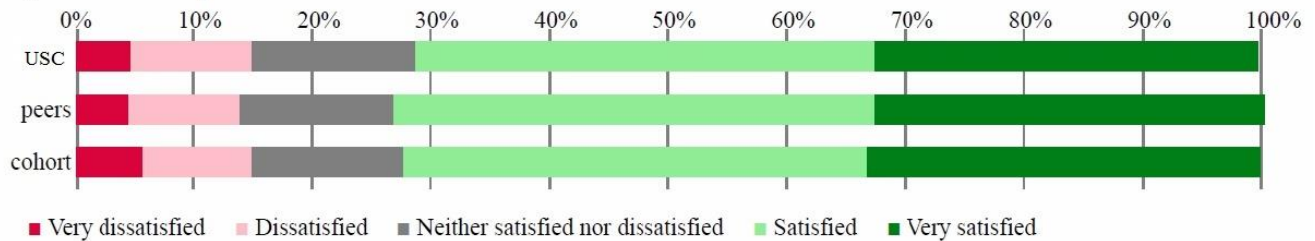
Global Considerations: In Your Own Words

The final survey item is an open-text response to the prompt “What is the one thing your institution could do to improve the workplace for faculty?” The table below lists the most common themes of these comments as categorized by the COACHE project staff. Additional insights about the open ended responses will be shared as we further explore the survey results over the next few weeks.

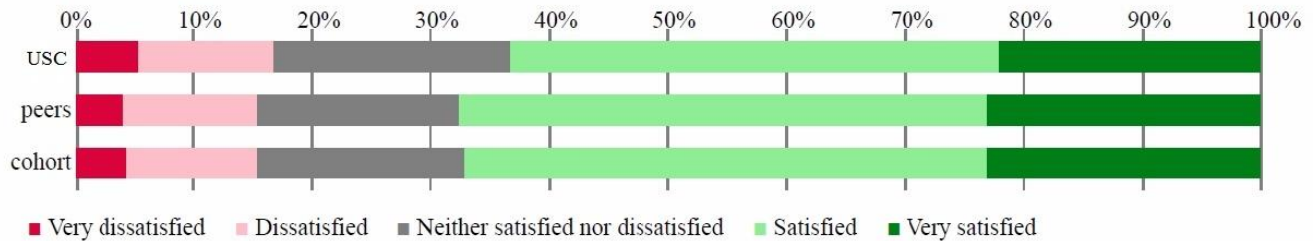
Most common themes	Percent
Compensation and benefits	31%
Nature of work: Teaching	21%
Nature of work: Research	18%
Facilities and resources for faculty	16%
Leadership: General	12%

Global Considerations: The Department and Institution as a Place to Work

Department as a place to work



Institution as a place to work



Peers: comparison group of the five R1 institutions

Cohort: 103 COACHE partner institutions that are generally similar to USC

Next Steps

February 2020:

- Release report on the **Nature of Work (and Resources to Get It Done)**
- Town Hall meetings on March 2 (2:30-4:00 pm, School of Law 103) and March 3 (10:00-11:30 am, School of Law 103). At least one session will be live-streamed and recorded. Otherwise the meetings are identical. Faculty will be invited to submit questions prior to the meeting.

March 2020:

- Release report on **How We Work: Advancement, Collaboration, and Governance**
- Town Hall meetings on March 30 (2:30-4:00 pm, Currell 107) and March 31 (10:00 – 11:30 am, Russell House 229). At least one session will be live-streamed and recorded. Otherwise the meetings are identical. Faculty will be invited to submit questions prior to the meeting.

Academic Year 2020-2021

- Create workgroups to develop specific recommendations to address strengths and concerns in the survey results
- Present recommendation to Provost, other administrators and Faculty Senate Leadership as appropriate.