

University of Virginia Survey of the Faculty 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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FACULTY SENATE
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Executive Summary

About the Survey

This survey is only the second survey conducted in the history of UVa by the Faculty Senate, with the first having been conducted in 2007. The Faculty Recruitment, Retention, Retirement and Welfare Committee (FRRRWC) began preparation for a second survey in 2010, with extensive review and discussion of the previous 2007 survey, other UVa school specific faculty surveys and surveys performed by other top tier universities. The decision was made to conduct a second survey five years after the first to both determine what changes occurred over the five-year time span and to determine the state of the faculty opinion as a baseline for the beginning of a new UVa administration. It is important to also note that this survey was undertaken nearly a year prior to the series of events at the University in June 2012 that included the resignation and then reinstatement of President Sullivan. The survey administration and data collection were complete before those events occurred.

Survey Design and Administration

The UVa Faculty Senators' time was solely on a volunteer basis, both for the 2007 and the 2012 surveys. The Office of U. Va. President Teresa Sullivan offered to provide funds to enable assistance in survey development, distribution and analysis. As a result, the University's Center for Survey Research (CSR) was hired to work with the FRRRWC. Staff at CSR worked intensively with Faculty Senate leaders during the fall of 2011 and the early spring of 2012 to develop a questionnaire and field the survey. In November 2011, CSR conducted a focus group with 12 faculty members randomly selected from across the University in order to help identify issues needing to be addressed in the questionnaire. In February 2012 a second group of faculty members convened to pretest the questionnaire for both technical and substantive problems.

The survey questionnaire addressed a broad range of topics, including workplace issues, communication and leadership, the Honor Code, the academic community, time devoted to work, and overall satisfaction with work at the University. One set of questions was selected from

the 2007 Faculty Senate Survey to allow for direct comparisons between the two surveys.

The 2012 Faculty Senate Survey was hosted completely on the web. The Center for Survey Research utilized the Dillman Tailored Design Method to ensure the highest level of faculty response to the survey. A list of 3,083 salaried faculty members and 865 wage faculty members was obtained from the University's Office of Institutional Assessment. A letter was then sent from President Sullivan announcing the survey and explaining its goals, accompanied by letters from Faculty Senate leaders and CSR Director Tom Guterbock. The advance mailing was followed by an email invitation to participate in the survey, including a link to the questionnaire itself. A series of follow-up contacts were made to faculty members by CSR to promote participation in the survey. Details are included in the full body of the report and in Appendix G, Survey Methodology.

The survey was designed to ensure anonymity for the respondents. At the close of data collection, CSR had received a total of 2,102 usable surveys, some of them incomplete. After adjusting for exclusions and a proportional adjustment to estimate the ineligible cases among those from whom we never heard, the survey response rate is 53.7%.

Demographic Overview

The survey questionnaire included demographic questions about respondents to allow for analysis of the data by personal, academic, and social characteristics. Included among these were the respondent's departmental and school affiliation, highest degree earned, academic rank and tenure status, and whether the respondent was teaching and research faculty or administrative and professional faculty, and length of affiliation with the University of Virginia. In addition, to allow potential further analysis, respondents were asked about their age, race, sex, sexual orientation, whether dependent children resided in the household and about the employment situation of their spouse or partner, if one was present. To ensure anonymity of respondents, some small categories were grouped for purposes of data

analysis. Where such grouping was inappropriate, results involving small groups are not reported.

Sampling Error

The overall margin of error for the survey as whole is ± 2 percentage points. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size drawn from the entire UVa faculty, the results obtained in the sample would fall in a range of ± 2 percentage points of what would have been obtained had every faculty member completed a questionnaire.

Results

Summary of Satisfaction

The overall results of the survey suggest that the University of Virginia’s faculty members are quite satisfied with UVa as a place to work and are proud to be affiliated with the school. They like and respect their colleagues and enjoy their work. The survey showed high levels of satisfaction with collegiality, autonomy at work, and benefits. There are a number of areas of concern. Responses showed low level of satisfaction with pay, with

UVa leadership beyond the department level, with performance reviews, and with communication and transparency.

Priority Matrices

The “priority matrix” presented below helps to summarize the responses of faculty in several areas of the questionnaire. This matrix combines ranking of the importance in needing attention of key-topic areas with measures of performance (satisfaction) for those areas. Cross-classifying performance and importance results in the matrix below; Table 0-1 shows this matrix schematically. Table 0-2 indicates the results of the faculty survey. On both importance and performance, key-topic areas have been assigned a category: high, medium and low, depending on the survey results. Each key-topic area falls into one of nine cells in the matrix based on the cross-classification of these two dimensions. The matrix suggests areas that are the highest priority for change – those that are high in importance but low in performance.

Table 0-1: Schematic of a Priority Matrix.

		Measure of Importance (Faculty Member Choices or Derived Statistically)		
		<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>
Performance	<i>High</i>	Areas of Strength		
	<i>Medium</i>	Second Priority		
	<i>Low</i>	First Priority	Third Priority	

Table 0-2: Priority Matrix: Perceived Importance and Performance Ratings, 2012.

Performance (Mean Summary Satisfaction Scores)	Ranked Importance in Needing Attention (Faculty Choices)			
		<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>
	<i>High</i>		Collegiality Benefits	Autonomy
	<i>Medium</i>	Appreciation/Value	Departmental Leadership	Diversity & Equal Opportunities
<i>Low</i>	Pay UVa Leadership (deans and above) Communication & Transparency	Performance Reviews		

The grid can be interpreted this way: we see that faculty respondents rated four items high in needing attention: appreciation/value, pay, UVa leadership (deans and above), and communication and transparency. Of those areas, none was rated high in performance by the faculty, though appreciation and value fell into the middle category of performance. That no areas rated high in satisfaction fall into the important area is to be expected, since those areas in which the University is doing well would not be perceived as needing attention. Areas both important and having a low performance rating are: pay, UVa leadership (deans and above), and communication and transparency. Performance reviews were viewed as less important than those items, but also were rated low in performance. Those low performing items can be viewed as the areas needing attention from University leaders.

The grid indicates areas of strength as well. Those items rating high in performance included collegiality, benefits, and autonomy. Departmental leadership was rated both medium in importance and middle-level in performance. Faculty choices suggested that diversity and equal opportunities were less in need of attention and received a middle-level performance rating.

Chapter VII of the report provides a second matrix, based on regression of overall satisfaction with the University as a place to work on the summary key-topic satisfaction scores. That matrix provides insight into what areas actually drive satisfaction with the University.

Summary of Opinion about the Honor System

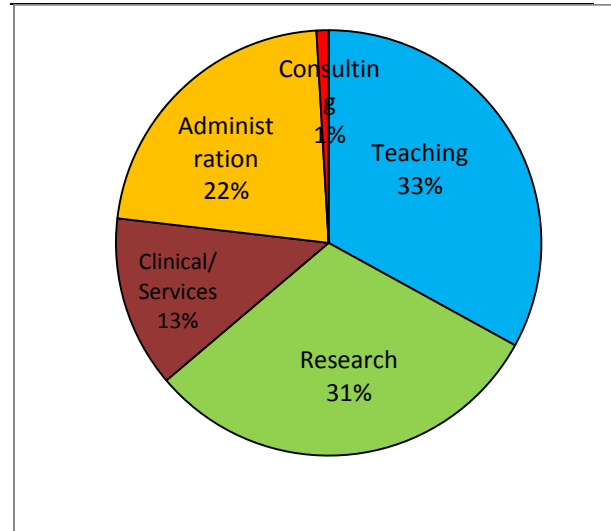
The survey asked a number of questions about familiarity with and support for the Honor System. Most of the faculty are at least somewhat familiar with it. Support remains high among faculty, but many have reservations about it. Thirty-eight percent strongly support it, and an additional 35 percent support it with reservations. Support is weakened and reservations increased when experience is considered; those who have referred a case to the Honor System are much less likely to support it than those who have not (20 percent compared to 41 percent). As is detailed in Chapter VI, about 48 percent of faculty believe that cheating is very or somewhat common at the University, but when their own classes are considered, that figure drops to 21 percent.

Summary of Faculty Time Use

This survey was designed in part to determine how faculty members spend their time at work, a sizable challenge given the wide variety of faculty members' disciplines and professional commitments. Faculty tasks include teaching, research, clinical work, administration, and service work. Some faculty members are teachers of students; others are not. Some work on nine-month contracts, some on twelve-month contracts. The survey data showed that the average UVa faculty member worked just under 55 hours per week, and when the analysis was restricted to full-time only, that number was about 57 hours per week. About 30 percent of full time faculty respondents reported working 60 or more hours per week. In-depth analysis, reported in detail in the report, resulted in classification of faculty into five types, depending on broad emphasis of their work: teaching, research, administration, clinical and service work, and "balancers," those whose work is balanced between teaching and research. The analysis also determined how specifically effort was spent in each of those areas.

The pie chart below illustrates the overall allocation of time in each major work area for faculty. Roughly speaking, the faculty as a whole devotes about one-third of its time to teaching, one third to research, and one third to clinical, service, and administrative work combined. Consulting takes up very little faculty time: less than one percent of total work time when averaged across all faculty, amounting to only one-half hour per week per faculty member.

Figure 0-1: Broad Areas of Faculty Work.



Conclusion

Overall, University of Virginia faculty members find the university a collegial and satisfactory place to work. They work hard in all of the various tasks that make up their professional lives. They report feeling satisfied with their students, colleagues, and their own work. They are proud to be part of the University of Virginia. But the faculty respondents to this survey clearly identified areas in need of improvement.

The opinion of the faculty and their detailed assessment of way they spend their time comprise a significant tool for decision-making for faculty and administrators at the University charged with strategic planning. The wealth of data provided by the Faculty Senate's Survey of the Faculty 2012 provides a clear statement of direction from one important group of stakeholders at the University of Virginia.

