

Introducing the 2012–13 UC Davis *COACHE Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey*

The greatness of a university, while resting on many pillars, depends preeminently on the quality of faculty work—in teaching and mentoring, research and scholarship, cooperation and collaboration with colleagues, commitment and service to the institution, and contributions to society. It is therefore critical for any great university to provide and vigilantly maintain the conditions that will best enable faculty to excel in all of their professional activities.

Chancellor Linda P.B. Katehi, Provost Ralph J. Hexter, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Maureen Stanton, and campus leaders at all levels recognize that one of the most important conditions affecting achievement of UC Davis faculty is the way they think and feel about such aspects of their employment as work expectations; availability of resources for teaching and research; recognition and reward; opportunities for advancement and professional development; and campus inclusiveness, diversity, and respect. Campus leaders also recognize that faculty job satisfaction must be an institutional priority if UC Davis is to be a place of growth, health, and personal fulfillment for all members of the university family—the place described in our cornerstone documents “A Vision of Excellence” and “Principles of Community.”

In short, faculty job satisfaction is not only key to UC Davis’ excellence and impact, but also something to which all of our exceptional and dedicated professors are entitled.

Mindful of all of the above, Provost Hexter committed our campus to participate in the 2012–13 *COACHE* (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) *Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey*. Conducted annually by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the *COACHE* survey is and has been administered to colleges and universities nationwide since 2003.

UC Davis’ participation in the 2012–13 *COACHE* survey allows us to meet multiple objectives. First, the survey’s comprehensiveness and national scale provide information on the full range of issues influencing faculty engagement in a way that enables us to identify our strengths and areas in need of investment in relation to our peer institutions. Second, data from the survey can help us make sound investments for improving our campus environment for both existing faculty and the several hundreds of new faculty we anticipate hiring over the next seven years. Finally, the survey gives us an essential baseline for evaluating the effectiveness of UC Davis *ADVANCE*, a five-year program funded by the National Science Foundation in fall 2012 to increase the equity and diversity of recruitment, retention, and career development of faculty in the STEM fields.

The 2012–13 UC Davis *COACHE* survey was distributed online to 1,358 ladder faculty members who were not in primarily clinical positions. In all, 630 faculty members responded, yielding an excellent 46% rate of response to survey items that measure degree of engagement, perception of support, and level of satisfaction with all aspects of faculty work-life at UC Davis.

What the *COACHE* data reveal about the perceptions of UC Davis faculty

Overall, faculty satisfaction is strong in many areas, some of which are noted below. Appropriately, though, we emphasize the areas in which we have room to improve.

Compared to faculty at all institutions included in the 2012–13 COACHE survey, and especially to those at the five other research institutions (four public, one private) with which UC Davis was most closely compared in this study¹, UC Davis faculty:

- Report higher levels of satisfaction with the clarity, reasonableness, and standards for tenure and promotion to full professor;
- Are more satisfied with the leadership, collegiality, engagement, and quality of their departments, as well as their opportunities for collaboration;
- Report lower levels of satisfaction with support for research, time spent on service, number of committee obligations, and many aspects of teaching; and
- Are less satisfied with the campus and college-level leadership and governance, campus facilities and work resources, faculty mentoring, and support for interdisciplinary work.

Among all UC Davis faculty:

- The highest levels of satisfaction are reported for the clarity and reasonableness of the standards for promotion to full professor, the reasonableness of the standards for tenure, departmental collegiality and quality, opportunities for collaboration, and health and retirement benefits;
- The lowest levels of satisfaction are reported for support and valuation of interdisciplinary work, leadership and governance at the central campus and divisional levels, and mentorship;
- Female faculty members rate all three areas of faculty work—research, teaching, and service—less positively than male faculty;
- Faculty of color are less satisfied than white faculty with opportunities for collaboration; and
- Associate professors are significantly less satisfied than are full professors with teaching and service, support for interdisciplinary work and opportunities for collaboration, standards and processes related to promotion, and appreciation and recognition.

Plans for more-focused analyses and responses

Faculty engagement on the findings of the COACHE survey is essential if we are to understand the realities of their job experience and identify potential actions that build on our strengths, address issues of concern, and support faculty productivity and career satisfaction. To this end, Provost Hexter will host two Town Hall Meetings to introduce faculty to the patterns revealed in the UC Davis COACHE survey, and provide a forum for discussion and sharing of ideas. The first Town Hall will be held on Thursday,

¹ Indiana University–Bloomington, Johns Hopkins University, Purdue University, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, and University of Virginia. All of these are research-intensive universities; Purdue University and the University of Virginia are participants in the National Science Foundation ADVANCE program.

April 10, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. in the Kalmanovitz Appellate Courtroom, King Hall, on the UC Davis main campus. The second Town Hall will be held Monday, April 14, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. in the Cancer Center Auditorium at the UC Davis Medical Center.

The Provost has also asked deans to begin convening advisory committees of faculty within their units to direct further analyses of the data and to assist in interpretation of the results.

To help focus and support discussion of the key issues influencing faculty job satisfaction, the office of the Vice Provost Academic Affairs will produce a series of campuswide reports that present analyses focusing on each of the theme areas investigated by the survey:

- Nature of the Work (Overall, Research, Teaching, Service)
- Resources & Support
- Interdisciplinary Work
- Collaboration
- Mentoring
- Tenure and Promotion
- Institutional Governance & Leadership
- Departmental Engagement
- Work & Personal Life Balance
- Climate, Culture & Collegiality
- Appreciation & Recognition
- Recruitment & Retention
- Global Satisfaction

These reports will be disseminated via the UC Davis Academic Affairs website, at http://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/tools/faculty_satisfaction_survey_reports/index.html

After the first stage of responses to the reports, Academic Affairs will work with the deans and others to develop the most helpful follow-up actions.

The COACHE survey is governed by standard practices and protocols for human subjects research. To protect the identities of all those responding to the UC Davis survey, access to the full dataset is restricted. Please make inquiries and suggestions to Robert Loessberg-Zahl (Budget and Institutional Analysis; rjloessb@ucdavis.edu) or Professor Kimberlee Shauman (Department of Sociology and UC Davis ADVANCE; kashauman@ucdavis.edu).