

October 2012

Undergraduate Teaching Faculty: The 2010–2011 HERI Faculty Survey

This report is based on responses from 23,824 full-time college and university faculty members at 417 four-year colleges and universities nationwide. We also report results from 3,547 part-time faculty members at 266 four-year colleges and universities. For this report, “faculty member” is defined as any employee of an accredited four-year college or university who spends at least part of the time teaching undergraduates. Responses are weighted to provide a normative profile of American faculty. This is the eighth in a series of faculty surveys administered on a triennial basis.

TOP SOURCES OF STRESS AMONG FACULTY

Institutional budget cuts were the top source of stress among faculty, as 86.1% of faculty at public universities and 83.4% of faculty at public four-year colleges reported institutional budget cuts as causing “some” or “extensive” stress (see Figure 1). By contrast, less than half of full-time faculty at private universities (47.2%) and just 62.5% of faculty at private four-year colleges rated institutional budget cuts as a source of stress in the last two years.

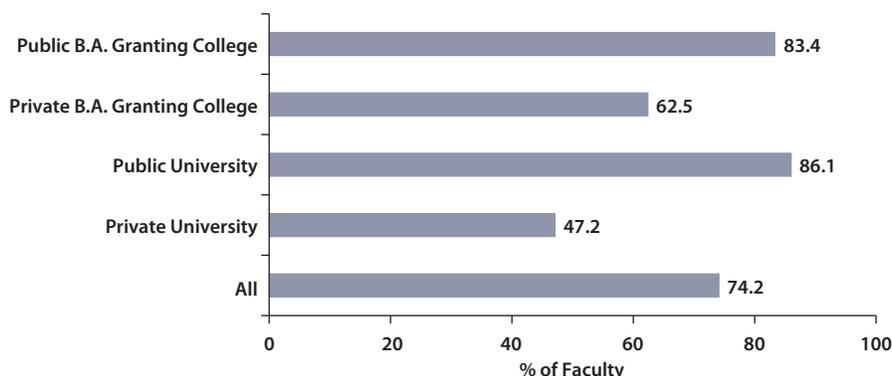
Women faculty reported more stress than men faculty on 22 of the 25 survey items. Job security remains an issue,

as only 22.3% of women faculty had attained the rank of full professor at the time of the survey, compared with 39.5% of male respondents. Women faculty are also twice as likely as men (40.0% vs. 20.2%) to report subtle discrimination (e.g., prejudice, racism, sexism) as a source of stress.

Although only about one-quarter (24.7%) of White faculty report subtle discrimination as a source of stress, 62.2% are women. Most notably, 63.6% of Black/African American faculty report subtle discrimination as a source of stress, which is more than 20 points higher than for any other race identity group. The next most prominent group to report subtle discrimination as a source of stress is Latina/o faculty (42.6%).

A greater percentage of faculty at public institutions than at private institutions (three-quarters vs.

Figure 1. Source of Stress: Institutional Budget Cuts, by Institutional Type
(% of Faculty Reporting “Some” or “Extensive”)



two-thirds) rate *institutional procedures and “red tape”* as a source of stress. Although more than half of faculty at private universities (58.1%) report *working with underprepared students* as a source of stress, it is much greater among faculty at public four-year colleges, at 83.5%.

STUDENT-CENTERED PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES IN STEM AND ALL OTHER FIELDS

We compared faculty in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) with faculty in the humanities, social sciences, and professional fields (or “all other fields”). Table 1 shows patterns of faculty behavior regarding student-centered pedagogy and general field of study by gender. Faculty in all other fields outside of STEM use more student-centered teaching practices. Gender differences in use of student-centered pedagogy are greater for faculty teaching in STEM than in all other fields, with only three exceptions: using *student evaluation of each others’ work*, *group projects*, and *student-selected topics for course content*. STEM faculty tend to use student-centered pedagogy less often than their colleagues in all other fields, regardless of the size of the class.

Both men (69.7%) and women (50.4%) teaching in STEM fields are more likely to use extensive lecturing in all or most of their classes compared to their

male (43.7%) and female (27.8%) colleagues in all other fields. In addition to using this less student-centered approach, faculty in STEM are also more likely than their counterparts in all other fields to grade on a curve, a practice that disguises the actual changes in learning and acquisition of skills of individual students. Male faculty in STEM are by far the most likely to use curve grading, as 30.6% report doing so in all or most of their courses, nearly double the proportion of female faculty in STEM who report doing the same.

We see the starkest gender gaps across fields in faculty’s use of cooperative learning. The majority of women in all other fields (71.8%) use cooperative learning techniques in all or most of their courses, and it is encouraging that 60.3% of women teaching in STEM use cooperative learning in the classroom, a figure that exceeds both men in STEM (40.7%) and men in all other fields (52.6%).

DECLINES IN TIME SPENT TEACHING

One area to watch in the coming years is the amount of time faculty spend teaching scheduled classes (determined by time spent in the classroom) and preparing for teaching. The proportion of faculty reporting they spent nine hours or more per week teaching (roughly a quarter of their time) is currently 43.6%, a considerable decline from a high of 63.4% two decades ago and from

Table 1. Faculty Approaches to Teaching and Evaluation, by Field and Gender

Methods used in “all” or “most” courses taught	STEM (N= 6,768)			All Other Fields (N=17,056)		
	Women (N=2,721)	Men (N=4,047)	% Point Difference	Women (N=8,093)	Men (N=8,963)	% Point Difference
Extensive lecturing	50.4	69.7	-19.3	27.8	43.7	-15.9
Grading on a curve	16.6	30.6	-14.0	9.8	16.2	-6.4
Student presentations	42.8	25.5	17.3	57.7	42.9	14.8
Student evaluations of each others’ work	17.5	9.7	7.8	30.5	20.5	10.0
Class discussions	72.2	55.9	16.3	93.7	90.0	3.7
Cooperative learning (small groups)	60.3	40.7	19.6	71.8	52.6	19.2
Experiential learning/field studies	33.1	22.9	10.2	30.6	21.2	9.4
Group projects	36.0	27.1	8.9	38.1	28.7	9.4
Student-selected topics for course content	13.9	10.8	3.1	27.0	20.5	6.5
Reflective writing/journaling	16.7	4.1	12.6	27.9	17.1	10.8
Using student inquiry to drive learning	43.3	32.9	10.4	54.2	46.9	7.3

56.5% just 10 years ago. The decline has been slow, except for a significant 11-percentage-point drop from the 54.7% of faculty who, in 2007–2008, reported they spent nine or more hours teaching scheduled classes. The data also show an increase in the number of faculty reporting they taught only 1–4 hours per week, which is roughly the equivalent of one scheduled course per week. This percentage has more than doubled in the last decade from 7.0% in 2001–2002 to 15.8% in 2010–2012. The dramatic shift may be caused by furloughs and reduction of course sections, which institutions have implemented to respond to budget constraints.

A considerable drop—from 65.6% to 59.1%—in the last three years in the amount of time spent in preparation for teaching (more than nine hours per week) also mirrors the decline in scheduled teaching hours. Changes in the time allocated for teaching activities may have to do with the rise in the use of part-time faculty to teach classes, which also represents a budget reduction measure.

TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF FACULTY

Although sustaining faculty vitality and retention are key, only one-third (33.4%) of full professors reported they mentored new faculty. On-the-job career mentoring is crucial, as less than half of assistant (48.7%) or associate professors (46.9%) felt that the training they received in graduate school prepared them well for their roles as faculty.

Roughly two-thirds of assistant professors (66.6%) and 60.7% of associate professors participated in a teaching enhancement workshop, whereas less than half of full professors (46.9%) reported that they did so in the past two years. This may be because 18.2% of full professors plan to retire in the next three years and 31.0% have considered early retirement in the past two years. More than half (50.8%) of associate professors had considered leaving their institution in the past two years, as did 45.0% of full professors, and 48.6% of assistant professors.

PART-TIME FACULTY: A GROWING PHENOMENON

Contingent faculty (those in academic positions off the tenure track) now represent the majority of individuals holding academic appointments at colleges and

universities. Students are increasingly taught by part-time faculty, particularly in introductory courses.

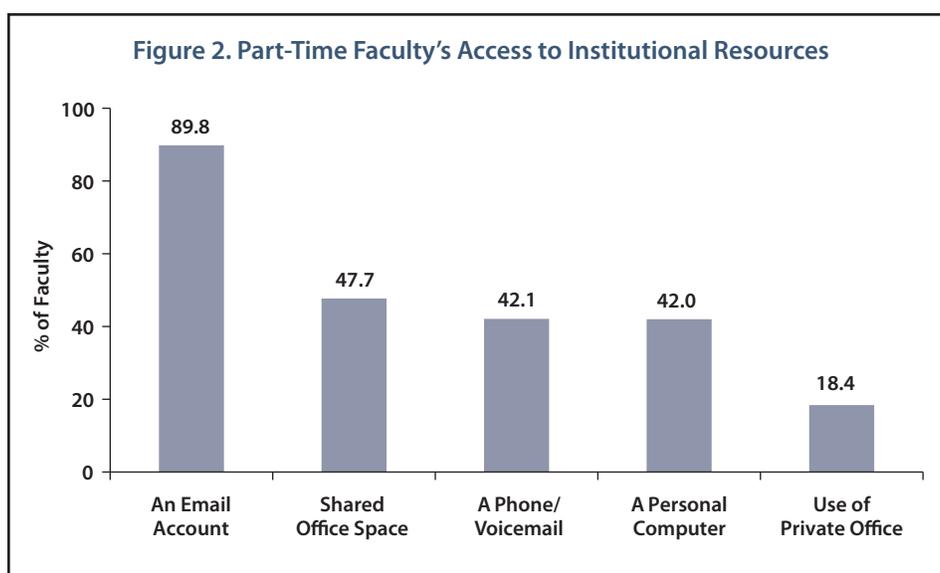
Some part-time faculty may work to supplement their income for their full-time career outside academia, whereas others work part-time in hopes of finding a full-time faculty position. Given this diversity, we considered two types of part-time faculty: voluntary and involuntary. Involuntary part-time faculty can be considered underemployed faculty who work part-time but actually desire full-time teaching positions, and who indicated that they would prefer to work full-time at their current institution or had sought a full-time teaching position at their current institution or elsewhere. Voluntary part-time faculty are individuals who had no interest in working in a full-time academic position at their current institution and who had never sought a full-time teaching position.

More than twice as many involuntary part-time faculty as voluntary part-timers see their part-time position as a stepping stone to a full-time teaching position (58.6% vs. 23.7%), which demonstrates the academic career focus of involuntary part-time faculty. The majority of involuntary part-time faculty envision full-time college teaching as their career. Likewise, more than two-thirds of involuntary part-time faculty (68.1%) are teaching part-time simply because full-time teaching positions were not available; just more than a third of voluntary part-time faculty (37.4%) said the same. Substantially more involuntary part-time faculty than voluntary part-time faculty believe that part-time faculty rarely get hired into full-time positions at their institution (67.8% vs. 52.6%).

Voluntary part-time faculty tend to be supplementing their income by teaching part-time while involuntary part-time faculty are more financially dependent on these positions. This point becomes even more evident when considering that 62.8% of voluntary part-time faculty report that compensation is *not* a major consideration in their decision to teach part-time, compared to 51.1% of involuntary part-time faculty. Similarly, nearly all voluntary part-time faculty (97.5%) indicate that teaching part-time fits their current lifestyle; by contrast, 80.7% of involuntary part-timers report that teaching part-time fits their current lifestyle.

Many part-time faculty lack office space, access to a personal computer provided by the institution, or an office phone and voicemail (see Figure 2). Not surprising, but somewhat concerning, is that just 18.4% of part-time faculty have use of a personal office at their current institution. Approximately one out of three part-time faculty responding (36.3%) had no access to an office on campus, either shared or private.

A number of involuntary part-time faculty string together many different part-time teaching positions. While 21.3% of voluntary part-time faculty indicate that they taught part-time at one additional institution, 1.5 times as many involuntary part-time faculty report doing the same (30.1%). Overall, more than a quarter of voluntary part-time faculty (28.6%) report holding part-time teaching appointments at multiple institutions, whereas just under half (45.5%) of involuntary part-time faculty have strung together multiple part-time teaching appointments. Working at multiple campuses involves navigating several different political and bureaucratic processes unique to each institution and developing professional relationships with multiple sets of colleagues.



SOURCE

Hurtado, S., Eagan, M. K., Pryor, J. H., Whang, H., & Tran, S. (2012). *Undergraduate teaching faculty: The 2010–2011 HERI Faculty Survey*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA.

Please contact the Higher Education Research Institute for more information or to order your copy of the 2010–2011 Undergraduate Teaching Faculty monograph. To download copies of the monograph with expanded tables, please visit <http://heri.ucla.edu/facPublications.php>.



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