

Strategic Planning Guidebook

Workplace Characteristics Important to Faculty

The American Faculty Poll

Sanderson, Phua and Herda (2000)

National Opinion Research Center, Chicago, Illinois

Overview

Many studies have investigated faculty attitudes, satisfaction and the importance they place on various characteristics of their campuses. What follows are the findings of the most recent comprehensive study of faculty attitudes, focusing on the importance they place on various characteristics. The full study as well as a summary can be found on the Strategic Plan Website (The American Faculty Poll Full Study, 2000; the American Family Poll Summary). As we envision what we will look like when we become a “college of first choice” for faculty, an understanding of what dimensions are most important to faculty overall may be helpful.

Abstract

This report provides an overview of the American Faculty Poll project and principal findings which covers faculty members' attitudes about their career choices and professional life, their level of satisfaction with various aspects of the work environment, their opinions about institutional policies and priorities, and their views about the present state of higher education and prospects for its future. The third section examines faculty overall career choices and attitudes. The discussion continues with a section covering factors that faculty members consider important in their work and career as well as their levels of satisfaction with these factors. In the fifth section, the report examines factors that impinge upon the academic work of faculty. Next, the report presents faculty members' assessments of institutional policies and priorities. The seventh section provides faculty members' opinions on tenure, tuition, and fees. The report concludes with faculty members' views on the present state of higher education and possible future directions. Appendices contain a copy of the questionnaire survey used; additional demographic data; contains tables and figures referenced in the text; and technical notes on sample design and selection, descriptions of data collection and preparation, weighting scheme, and sampling errors.

Summary of Important Characteristics

What follows on the next page is a list of 17 dimensions found in multiple studies to be of some importance to faculty when deciding to join and/or remain a campus community. The focus here is not on faculty *satisfaction* with dimensions of their positions and campuses, but the *importance* they place on these dimensions. Dimensions rated “very important” by fewer than 50% are seen as less important drivers of faculty decisions regarding accepting and maintaining positions on their campuses.

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Percentage of Faculty Considering this Factor to be “Very Important”</u>
Opportunity to Educate	86%
Teaching courses of interest	77
Having time for family and personal needs	76
Working in an intellectually challenging environment	70
Having institutional support for scholarly inquiry	62
Working in a collegial environment	61
Opportunity to educate students	56
Opportunity to advance knowledge in field	56
Teaching load	54
Attractive salary and benefits package	52
Quality of students	46
Reputation of institution	44
Reputation of department	41
Opportunity to work independently	62
Flexible work schedule	60
Job security	58
Opportunity for professional recognition	27