

IRAP Brief

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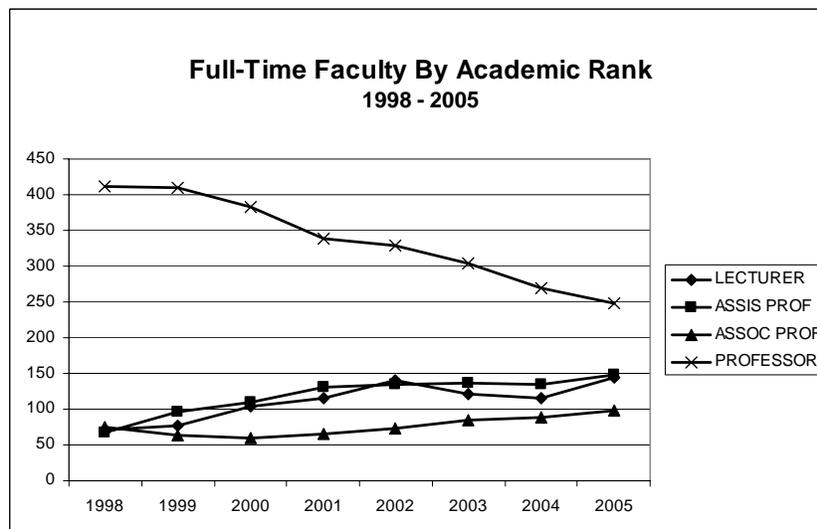
Faculty Satisfaction and Stress: What's Changed?

By ChrisTina Leimer

Director, Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning

In Fall of 1998 and Spring of 2005, California State University, Fresno faculty responded to the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey. To see how faculty life has changed during this approximately six-year period, I analyzed the two surveys separately and combined using T-tests and ANOVAs. This brief is intended to share highlights of the findings. The full methodology and report can be found at the url listed at the end of this paper.

The full-time faculty population, the group on which this study is based, changed considerably during this period. The number of FT instructional faculty declined by 3% and the proportion by rank shifted from 11.5% FT Lecturers to 19%, 10.7% Assistant Professors to 22.1%, 12% Associate Professors to 14.5%, and 65.8% Professors to 44.4%. (See *IRAP Data Book Academic Year 2005-2006* for details).



Source: *Data Book Academic Year 2005-2006*, IRAP

The HERI survey results from this time period show that satisfaction and stress between the ranks changed as well. In 1998, the differences were those that might be expected, i.e., the review/promotion process, research/publishing demands, committee work, faculty meetings, and personal finances. In 2005, these distinctions remained but teaching load, opportunity for scholarly pursuits, salary and benefits, and institutional “red tape” were some of the additional satisfaction and stress distinctions.

Some differences between the ranks that were not evident in 1998 but are now include (numbers in parentheses are mean scores with 1-4 for satisfaction, 4=very satisfied, and 1-3 for stress, 3=extensive):

- Assistant Professors are less satisfied with their salary and benefits than are Professors (1.98 to 2.64).

- Assistant Professors are less satisfied with their opportunities for scholarly pursuits than are Professors (1.95 to 2.55).
- In terms of overall job satisfaction, Assistant Professors are less satisfied than Professors (2.63 to 3.04).
- Assistant Professors are more stressed than Professors by their teaching load (2.33 to 1.96).
- Associate Professors are less satisfied with their teaching load than full-time Lecturers (1.81 to 2.38).
- Associate Professors are more stressed by institutional procedures and “red tape” than full-time Lecturers (2.29 to 1.83).
- Household responsibilities are more stressful for Associate and Assistant Professors than for Professors (2.15 and 2.10 to 1.72, respectively).
- Child care is more stressful for Assistants than Professors (1.75 to 1.25).
- Keeping up with information technology is more stressful for Professors and Lecturers than for Assistant Professors (1.76 and 1.84 to 1.43, respectively).

Life has differentially changed for each academic rank as well. Comparing Professors’ responses in 1998 to Professors in 2005 and making the same comparison for each rank shows that the most change has occurred for *Full Professors*. They are more satisfied with their salary and benefits than other faculty and their satisfaction increased between 1998 and 2005 (2.33 to 2.68). Professors are more satisfied with their teaching load now than in 1998 (1.68 to 2.03). In addition, they are more satisfied with:

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| • Quality of students | (1.68 to 2.03) |
| • Professional relations with other faculty | (2.70 to 3.10) |
| • Social relations with other faculty | (2.43 to 2.87) |
| • Competency of colleagues | (2.51 to 2.95) |
| • Relationship with administration | (2.21 to 2.52) |
| • Overall job satisfaction | (2.75 to 3.03) |
| • Opportunity to develop new ideas | (2.76 to 3.08) |

Professors are less stressed than they were in 1998 by their physical health (1.68 to 1.46), the review/promotion process (1.50 to 1.25) and keeping up with information technology (1.95 to 1.75).

Like Full Professors, *Associate Professors* are more satisfied with the quality of students (1.67 to 2.07). However, they are less satisfied with their teaching load (2.29 to 1.78).

Assistant Professors are less satisfied with their opportunity for scholarly pursuits (2.58 to 1.94) and find the review/promotion process (1.89 to 2.29) and committee work more stressful (1.58 to 2.04).

Full-time Lecturers are more satisfied with their salary and benefits (1.93 to 2.28) than they were six years ago. They are “more” stressed by their physical health (1.41 to 1.70) but “less” stressed by the review/promotion process (1.80 to 1.33), subtle discrimination (1.49 to 1.18) and personal finances (2.02 to 1.75).

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See the full report, including methodology and changes in faculty satisfaction and stress by gender and race/ethnicity, at the IRAP website: csufresno.edu/ir/data_research/reports_studies.shtml