Educational Goals: What Does the Faculty Find Most Important?
A Targeted Analysis of the 2004-05 HERI Faculty Survey

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Executive Summary

With the committee on the Characteristics of a Fresno State Graduate forming to determine what the most valuable traits of California State University, Fresno graduates should be, this study examined full-time undergraduate faculty ratings of 16 educational goals on the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey conducted in Spring 2005. Responses were analyzed by academic rank, gender and race/ethnicity. The rating scale was 1-4 where 1 equals "not important" and 4 equals "essential."

Findings

All academic ranks agreed on the level of importance of the goals asked about in the survey. Those considered most important (rating 3.0 or above) for undergraduates are:

- Developing the ability to think critically
- Mastering knowledge in a discipline
- Ability to write effectively
- Preparing for employment

Secondarily (rating at least 2.5 but less than 3.0) important goals are:

- Prepare for graduate education
- Develop moral character
- Help develop personal values
- Enhance self-understanding
- Prepare for responsible citizenship
- Enhance knowledge of racial/ethnic groups
- Develop creative capacities
- Instill appreciation of liberal arts

Women are more likely than men to find the following educational goals important.

- Enhance self-understanding
- Enhance knowledge of racial/ethnic groups
- Instill appreciation of liberal arts
- Promote ability to write effectively

Faculty of color are more likely than white faculty to find these educational goals important.

- Prepare for graduate education
- Develop moral character
- Instill commitment to community service
- Enhance knowledge of racial/ethnic groups
- Develop creative capacities

Introduction

With the committee on the Characteristics of a Fresno State Graduate forming to determine what the most valuable characteristics of California State University, Fresno graduates should be, full-time undergraduate faculty responses to the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey conducted in Spring 2005 were examined to provide a base for discussion. Faculty were asked to rate the importance of sixteen educational goals for undergraduates, on a scale of one to four, from "not important" to "essential." Responses were analyzed by academic rank, gender and race/ethnicity.

Methodology

The following analysis is based on data collected in the Spring 2005 administration of the HERI faculty survey. The 2005 response rate was 29% (N=304). The overall margin of error for the entire sample was 5.7%. The margin of error for the full-time undergraduate faculty subpopulation was 6.7%. The full-time undergraduate faculty (N=213) population is the subject of this study.

As is common, the sample did not adequately match its population (Tables 1A, 1B, 1C). Based on academic rank, gender and race/ethnicity, the full-time undergraduate faculty sample overrepresented full-time Lecturers and women and under-represented Professors. The sample was weighted to match its population.

Table 1A
Comparison of Faculty Population and HERI Survey Sample by Academic Rank

	Population		Survey Sample		FT Faculty Population		FT Faculty Survey Sample	
2004-05	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
LECTURER	577	51.70	109	36.1	115	19.0	60	28.2
ASSIS PROF	135	12.10	57	18.9	134	22.1	50	23.5
ASSOC PROF	91	8.15	45	14.9	88	14.5	41	19.2
PROFESSOR	313	28.05	91	30.1	269	44.4	62	29.1
2004 Total	1116	100.0	302	100	606	100	213	100

Table 1B
Comparison of Faculty Population and HERI Survey Sample by Gender

	Population		Survey Sample		FT Faculty Population		FT Faculty Survey Sample	
2004-05	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Female	501	42.2	152	50.2	252	38.7	102	48.1
Male	687	57.8	151	50.2	400	61.3	110	51.9
2004 Total	1188	100	303	50	652	100	212	100

Table 1C
Comparison of Faculty Population and HERI Survey Sample by Race/Ethnicity

	Population		Survey Sample		FT Faculty Population		FT Faculty Survey Sample	
2004-05	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Am Ind	8	0.7%	10	3.3%	3	0.5%	7	3.2%
Asian	102	8.8%	24	7.9%	70	10.7%	19	8.6%
Af. Am.	37	3.2%	6	2.0%	26	4.0%	5	2.3%
Hispanic	110	9.5%	23	7.5%	54	8.3%	15	6.8%
Non-White	35	3.0%	0	0.0%	15	2.3%	0	0.0%
White	860	73.9%	227	74.4%	483	74.1%	167	75.9%
Other	6	0.5%	10	3.3%	1	0.2%	7	3.2%
Unknown	6	0.5%	5	1.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
TOTAL*	1164	100%	305	100%	652	100%	220	100%

To determine if there were differences "between" academic ranks, One-Way ANOVA was used. Tukey's HSD was the post hoc comparison test used to distinguish which groups differ from each other. T-Tests were used to analyze differences between genders and racial/ethnic groups. Because the number of respondents in specific racial/ethnic categories of non-white faculty was too small for analysis, the race/ethnicity variable was recoded into "white" and "of color."

The specific survey question tested was "Indicate the importance to you of each of the following educational goals for undergraduate students." The response scale was:
1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=very important, 4=essential.

Findings
There were no significant differences between the academic ranks on the importance of the 16 educational goals in the survey. Regardless of rank, the full-time faculty believes that the most important educational goals for undergraduates are developing the ability to think critically, mastering knowledge in a discipline, the ability to write effectively, and preparing for employment. (Table 2). These are the only goals that rate above 3.0 on a 4 point scale.

Goals that score above 2.5 (but less than 3.0) include:
- Prepare for graduate education
- Develop moral character
- Help develop personal values
- Enhance self-understanding
- Prepare for responsible citizenship
- Enhance knowledge of racial/ethnic groups
- Develop creative capacities
- Instill appreciation of liberal arts.

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Table 2

Educational Goals 2005

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	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Develop Ability to Think Critically	208	3.82	0.416
Prepare for Employment	209	3.06	0.799
Prepare for Graduate Education	209	2.74	0.703
Develop Moral Character	209	2.80	0.898
Provide for Emotional Development	209	2.34	0.903
Help Develop Personal Values	208	2.55	0.913
Enhance Self-understanding	206	2.69	0.878
Instill Commitment to Community Service	208	2.39	0.813
Prepare for Responsible Citizenship	207	2.93	0.808
Enhance Knowledge of Racial/Ethnic Groups	208	2.90	0.937
Help Master Knowledge in Discipline	209	3.58	0.589
Develop Creative Capacities	209	2.91	0.804
Instill Appreciation of Liberal Arts	208	2.58	0.855
Enhance Spiritual Development	206	1.72	0.850
Promote Ability to Write Effectively	209	3.47	0.629
Facilitate Search for Meaning/Purpose	208	2.26	0.941

Scale:
1=not important, 2=somewhat important
3=very important, 4=essential

Women are more likely than men to find the following educational goals important.
- Enhance self-understanding
- Enhance knowledge of racial/ethnic groups
- Instill appreciation of liberal arts
- Promote ability to write effectively

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Table 3

Educational Goals 2005 by Gender

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	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Enhance Self-understanding	Male	122	**2.56	0.882
	Female	84	2.89	0.838
Enhance Knowledge of Racial/Ethnic Groups	Male	124	***2.71	0.926
	Female	84	3.17	0.888
Instill Appreciation of Liberal Arts	Male	123	*2.47	0.804
	Female	84	2.74	0.906
Promote Ability to Write Effectively	Male	125	**3.37	0.638
	Female	84	3.62	0.588

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Faculty of color are more likely than white faculty to find these educational goals important.
- Prepare for graduate education
- Develop moral character
- Instill commitment to community service
- Enhance knowledge of racial/ethnic groups
- Develop creative capacities

Table 4
Educational Goals 2005 by Race

	Race	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Prepare for Graduate Education	White	153	*2.67	0.708
	Of Color	56	2.93	0.658
Develop Moral Character	White	153	**2.70	0.934
	Of Color	56	3.06	0.736
Instill Commitment to Community Service	White	153	**2.30	0.810
	Of Color	55	2.65	0.773
Enhance Knowledge of Racial/Ethnic Groups	White	153	*2.80	0.951
	Of Color	56	3.15	0.852
Develop Creative Capacities	White	153	*2.84	0.844
	Of Color	56	3.09	0.654

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001