

COACHE Faculty Survey FAQ - 2011

(1) What is The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE)?

COACHE is a collaboration of colleges and universities committed to gathering the **peer diagnostic and comparative data** academic administrators need to recruit, retain, and develop faculty members, who are critical to the long-term future of their institutions. The core element of COACHE is an electronic survey specially designed for full-time faculty like you to provide information about your experience at your institution. The COACHE Survey asks faculty members to assess their experiences regarding promotion and tenure, the nature of their work, policies and practices, and the general climate, culture and level of collegiality on their campuses. The survey has a national scope in that your institution is one of more than 200 colleges and universities from different parts of the country that have participated in the survey. However, the main reason your institution is participating is that it wants to learn more about how faculty members feel about their job so it can improve the quality of the work/life for them. The COACHE Survey also provides participating faculty members with a powerful tool to share their thoughts on work/life with academic administrators. Each question in the survey is built to generate a report of not simply "interesting" data, but actionable diagnoses that your institution can use to improve the quality of life of its faculty members.

REASONS TO PARTICIPATE

(2) Why should I complete a COACHE Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey?

Simply stated, your institution needs to know what you think of your work experience - the level of support you are receiving at work, the reasonableness of your performance expectations, and the kinds of policies that are important to your success at your institution. Without this information, it is not very easy for academic administrators at your institution to identify the areas that can and should be improved. And because the survey directly addresses issues that can impact policies and strategic planning in your institution, it is imperative that you make your views known. This will, possibly for the first time, give your academic administrators an answer to the question: "How well are faculty members doing at our school?" Unlike many other surveys, the COACHE Survey has a real chance of making a difference in terms of how academic administrators at your institution use the information. There is great interest in your survey responses for two reasons. First, your institution paid to participate in the survey. This means there are leaders in your institution who want to see the results. Your answers to the questions in the survey will pinpoint areas that need immediate attention at your institution. Second, there are thousands of faculty members around the country getting the same survey. Your answers - after they are compared with those of faculty at peer institutions - will identify areas that are particularly important to your campus in the context of nationwide results. Ultimately, your answers will not only help improve your institution, but many others as well.

(3) Are you surveying my institution only?

Over 200 colleges and universities across the nation have been involved in COACHE. A list of the current and previous participating institutions can be found on the COACHE web site.

(4) How did you get my name?

When your institution got involved in this project, it gave us a data file with the names and email addresses of all faculty members that fulfill our participation criteria. If your institution is surveying tenure-track faculty, this includes all full-time, tenure-track faculty who have been at

the institution for at least six months. If your institution is surveying tenured faculty, this includes all full-time, tenured faculty with the rank of Associate or Full Professor. A small number of institutions are also piloting a study of full-time non-tenure-track faculty.

(5) I get surveyed all the time. How is this survey different?

The COACHE Survey offers institutions three different modules based on faculty tenure status.

If you are a tenure-track faculty member, the COACHE Survey will differ from most others you get because it focuses specifically on tenure-track faculty. An important purpose of COACHE is to learn what tenure-track faculty have to say. Our experiences and studies indicate that neither the concerns nor the opportunities to express them candidly are the same for junior and senior faculty. In a broader survey, the voice of junior faculty will be lost, and institutions will be no better informed to improve the quality of work/life for the next generation of scholars. COACHE designed the tenure-track module through a process that included extensive research, discussions with focus groups, and pilot studies at numerous and varied colleges and universities. The result is a survey "by junior faculty, for junior faculty," in which every question is designed to produce an actionable policy response.

If you are a tenured faculty member, your COACHE Survey is a direct outcome of COACHE's work with pre-tenure faculty. After years of studying the experiences of pre-tenure faculty, we determined that the relationships and perceptions of tenured faculty are a central component of pre-tenured faculty satisfaction. However, the experiences of tenured faculty are quite different from their counterparts. So, rather than simply revising the tenure-track faculty module, COACHE went through the same rigorous process of reviewing the literature, conducting focus groups, administering extensive cognitive interviews and piloting the instrument. As with the pre-tenure module, the module for tenured faculty is a product of dialogue with faculty about what matters and what institutions can do to improve the quality of their professional life.

Institutions continue to rely on non-tenure-track faculty for a host of responsibilities. As the number of non-tenure-track faculty grow, COACHE hopes to remain on the leading edge of faculty issues. With this in mind, COACHE has developed a module for non-tenure-track faculty that combines some of the questions asked of tenure-track and tenured faculty with others specific to non-tenure track faculty.

(6) Why don't you ask someone else?

The COACHE Survey takes a census approach to eligibility, so it is important that all eligible faculty members invited to participate go on to complete the survey. To have confidence in the results, your institution is counting on as many faculty members as possible to participate. Each response can make a difference in the survey results.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

(7) Is there a paper version of the survey available for submission?

The COACHE Survey is administered electronically; all respondents must complete the survey online. If, for some reason, you are unable to complete the survey online, please contact the COACHE administrator at your institution. To find out who is responsible for administration of COACHE at your campus, please send an email message to COACHE

(coache@gse.harvard.edu), whose staff will give you the name of your institution's responsible official.

(8) How long will the survey take?

While survey duration varies somewhat by respondent, it typically takes approximately 25 minutes to complete.

(9) How long will I have access to the survey?

It is best for you to start and complete the survey as soon as you receive your invitation. However, you will have access until the survey closes on January 13, 2012.

(10) I had to stop in the middle of completing my survey. Do I have to restart the survey all over again?

You do not need to start the survey all over again. If you choose to suspend the survey to take a break, if your computer shuts down, or if you lose your Internet connection, you will be able to resume where you left off.

Simply log back in using the link you received in the email we sent you. You will be offered a link on the welcome page that lets you resume where you left off, or you may start your survey over by clicking the "Continue" button at the bottom of the welcome page. If you start over, you'll see that responses to the questions you've already answered have been preserved. To change a prior response, simply select a different answer choice before proceeding to the next screen.

Please be sure to complete your survey before the deadline listed above. After the close date, you will no longer have access to the survey.

(11) I am having trouble opening the survey link. What should I do?

If clicking directly on the survey link in your email does not open the survey for you, you may find it easiest to simply copy and paste the link into the address bar of your web browser and then hit the "Enter" key on your keyboard.

Sometimes, problems may be caused by your browser's pop-up blocker. Although our survey is designed not to be hindered by the default settings of such pop-up blockers, the more stringent blockers have caused a problem like the one you are describing.

To temporarily disable your pop-up blocker, hold down the CTRL button as you click the link that begins the survey. If you are still having problems, disable your pop-up blocker in your browser's "Tools" menu, under "Pop-up Blocker" (if using Internet Explorer), or under "Options" (if using Firefox). If you are using a third-party pop-up blocker, such as Google Toolbar, you will have to temporarily disable that, too.

(12) I am worried about my answers not being anonymous. Can my identity be determined in any way?

Confidentiality and anonymity is assured in all COACHE analyses and reports. Your name and email addresses are retained solely for the sake of reminding respondents to begin or to complete their survey. **When we submit the survey report to your institution, only the aggregate data is shown in the report. No identifiers are matched to reported responses, and no disaggregated data will be presented for any subgroup with fewer than five**

respondents. For some institutions, administrators have requested unit-record data in addition to the report. If your institution has done so, that choice is disclosed on the first web page that you see upon clicking the unique link emailed to you. The unit-record data (without your name or email address) will be sent to a representative in your institution, who signed a statement of confidentiality legally guaranteeing that the unit-record data received by him/her will not be individually shared with any individuals who are in a position to make or influence personnel decisions about individual subjects, and that only aggregate data, with no cells smaller than five respondents, will be shared with broader audiences at their institution. If you wish to receive further information about the representative assuming responsibility for the data at your institution, click please send an email message to COACHE (coache@gse.harvard.edu), whose staff will give you the name of your institution's responsible official.

Please note that at the end of the survey, we may ask to retain your contact information for further studies. If you allow us to keep your contact information on file, COACHE will strictly protect the privacy and confidentiality of your personal information. The future studies would not be used for individual campus analysis and no one at your campus will be notified of your participation in future studies.

(13) I am at an institution which opted for unit-record data - how do I know my anonymity is safe?

Your institutional representative has signed a confidentiality agreement stating that only aggregate data with no cells smaller than five respondents will be shared with broader audiences at your institution, and that no individuals in a position to make or influence individual faculty personnel decisions will have access to the record-level data. If you wish to receive further information about the institutional official assuming responsibility for the data at your institution, please send an email message to COACHE (coache@gse.harvard.edu), whose staff will give you the name of your institution's responsible official.

DATA REPORTING

(14) What will you do with the data?

The information from this survey will be used in several ways. First, your answers will be combined with those of others colleagues at your institution, analyzed and summarized in the aggregate. COACHE will generate a survey report that provides a compilation of all quantitative findings from your institution. The report will also compare survey results from your institution with five other COACHE institutions that were pre-selected by your institution as peers. Each report is several hundred pages long, with question-by-question summaries that highlight major findings relative to peer institutions. Differences by race and gender are also highlighted when sample sizes allow for it. This is extremely valuable information because most institutions need reliable data about what faculty members value and think of their institution. With this information, it is possible for academic administrators and others in your institution to identify areas where the professional lives of faculty might be improved.

To raise awareness of issues related to faculty members, COACHE also uses the data to compile reports highlighting major findings and trends. These reports are available for download from the COACHE web site, www.coache.org.

(15) What will my institution do with the data?

Institutions will use the information from the COACHE Survey in different ways. Most will share the results in summary form with board members, academic administrators, and other groups that need to understand what it's like being a faculty member at your college or university. Some institutions will analyze information from the survey report and use it in their long range institutional planning. Your institution may also share the results with others to help recruit new faculty members. Perhaps the most important use is for your institution to learn about you and your colleagues, and where it should focus attention and resources to make improvements in job satisfaction.

(16) Will individual respondents be apprised of the results of the survey, and if so, when and how?

The results will be compiled in a report for your institution a few months after the close of the survey. The COACHE report will be directed to your institution's leadership; your access to the results is a matter to be discussed with your institution's administrators.

(17) Is research data stored securely? What data will be destroyed at the end of the study?

Names and email addresses are retained only for the sake of reminding respondents to begin or to complete their survey, except in cases where respondents specifically permit COACHE to retain contact information for future studies. Otherwise, at the conclusion of the survey, we remove any links between the address and its associated responses.

For two reasons, the research data itself will be stored beyond the conclusion of the study on the secure servers of an approved technology subcontractor. First, storing such data allows the principal investigators on this study to conduct cross-institutional analysis, thereby allowing better perspective/analysis to participating institutions. This research data will be used (in an anonymous or otherwise "safe" manner) in publications and presentations, primarily for the benefit of participating institutions who request on-campus visits from the COACHE staff. Second, and more importantly, storing this data will form a baseline for future administrations of the COACHE Survey, a factor of significant value to participating institutions.