collaborative on academic
careers in higher education

James Madison University

2024-25

Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey

Report Preview

Acknowledgements:
Many people and organizations are responsible for making the COACHE project possible. We would especially like to thank the following:

The Ford Foundation
The Atlantic Philanthropies
Harvard Graduate School of Education
All of our partner institutions

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Introduction

You are holding in your hands a preview of the COACHE Chief Academic Officer Report. The CAO Report data and design are the culmination of our work since 2003 with faculty focus groups, two pilot studies (for pre-tenure and tenured faculty), and ongoing dialog with academic leaders at our partner institutions.

While there are many approaches to report design, our choices at COACHE leverage our comparative data to help you, your leadership team, and your faculty move more swiftly from survey results into dissemination, engagement and action.

To the uninitiated, the CAO Report can be daunting. However, just a few minutes spent with the Results at a Glance and Benchmark Dashboard will unlock the broad themes of your survey results and the areas deserving of immediate scrutiny.

Your faculty's strengths and concerns will be revealed, layer by layer, as you follow the blue, grey, and red colors of your CAO Report. These colors illustrate your faculty's attitudes relative to peers of your own choosing and to a larger, labor-market cohort (e.g., women to women, associate professor to associate professor). The yellow and orange colors will identify gaps between groups within your own institution (e.g., women and men, associate and full professors).

This preview is just a glimpse of what lies within your CAO Report —a beginning, not the end. The digital files that follow this preview contain item-level analysis, faculty's qualitative opinions coded by survey theme, results disaggregated by school/college and discipline, and more tools for understanding the conditions faculty need in order to do their best work.

You are about to discover that many faculty concerns can be dealt with immediately and inexpensively, while others present themselves as opportunities for broad involvement in designing collaborative solutions.

The questions at the end of this preview should help you get this process of inquiry underway. Yet, at COACHE, we have learned that the most important analysis has yet to occur. Analysis is a social process of engagement with your colleagues and—most importantly—your faculty. The COACHE partners who succeed do so by inviting faculty to be agents of institutional improvement.

As you embark upon the next steps of "collective sensemaking" and action, we have many examples to share. Your research-practice partnership with COACHE continues beyond this report delivery for many months of advice and networking. Allow us to develop your capacity for evidence-driven leadership in the academy.

Your Cohort and Peers

Based on the number of James Madison University faculty and other organizational characteristics, your comparison "cohort" includes 85 COACHE partners who identify as generally similar. The complete list is available in the CAO Report's appendices. You selected five comparison institutions – "peers" in the report – to represent those most similar to you in the faculty labor market. They are listed at the right.

- California State University - Fullerton (2022)
- Illinois State University (2022)
- Old Dominion University (2023)
- Rutgers University-Camden (2023)
- University of North Carolina Wilmington (2024)

Response Rates

Your report summarizes the findings from *46%* of your eligible faculty. Given an average survey completion time of 51 minutes, this report constitutes approximately *369* hours of your faculty's time and, more importantly, their candor.Your response rate is *lower* than your peers by approximately *3.4* percentage points.

Differences in rates of response between demographic groups matter, as well. The table below summarizes response rates by tenure status, rank, gender, and race. As you read this preview and the complete CAO Report, keep in mind how large or small these subgroups' representation is among your survey responses.

	Response Rates		
	You	Peers	Cohort
All Faculty	**46%**	**49%**	**40%**
Tenured	47%	51%	43%
Pre-Tenure	54%	52%	41%
Non-tenure Track	39%	44%	36%
Full Professor	47%	51%	44%
Men	96%	46%	36%
Women	94%	51%	45%
White	95%	51%	43%
Faculty of Color	94%	50%	36%
Asian/Asian-American	94%	46%	32%
Underrepresented Minorities	94%	54%	42%

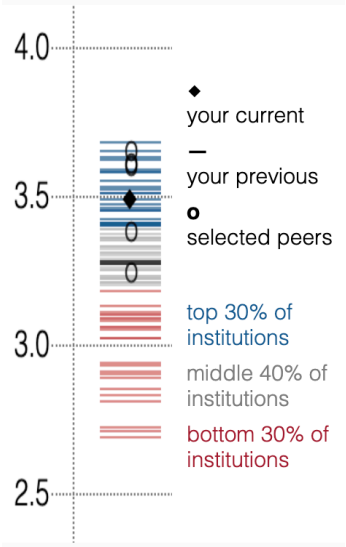
[1] "Faculty of color" are, for the purposes of this report, those individuals not categorized as White, non-Hispanic.

[2] "Underrepresented minorities" are individuals who identify as neither White, non-Hispanic nor Asian/Asian-American.

Understanding the COACHE Benchmarks

The following five pages offer a view of your faculty from 10,000 feet. Each survey theme is summarized by a "Benchmark," the mean of several five-point Likert-scale survey questions that share a common theme. A Benchmark score provides a general sense of how faculty feel about a particular aspect of their work/life at your institution; your CAO Report delivers results for Benchmarks and for specific survey items.

In this preview, we compare your Benchmark scores, shown as diamonds, to the scores of other COACHE partners, represented as horizontal lines. Blue lines represent the top 30 percent of institutional means, red lines represent the bottom 30 percent, and grey lines represent institutions in the middle 40 percent. The circles locate the five institutions your team selected as most nearly competing with yours (or resembling yours) in the market for faculty. The black line represents your prior results from your last year participated.



Your Strengths and Concerns

As shorthand, COACHE defines as an "area of strength" any Benchmark where your institution scores first or second among your selected comparison group and in the top 30 percent (the blue section) of the cohort. Conversely, an "area of concern" is where your faculty rating of a Benchmark falls fifth or sixth among your peers and in the bottom 30 percent (the red section) of the cohort. The survey themes at the right met these criteria for james-madison-university.

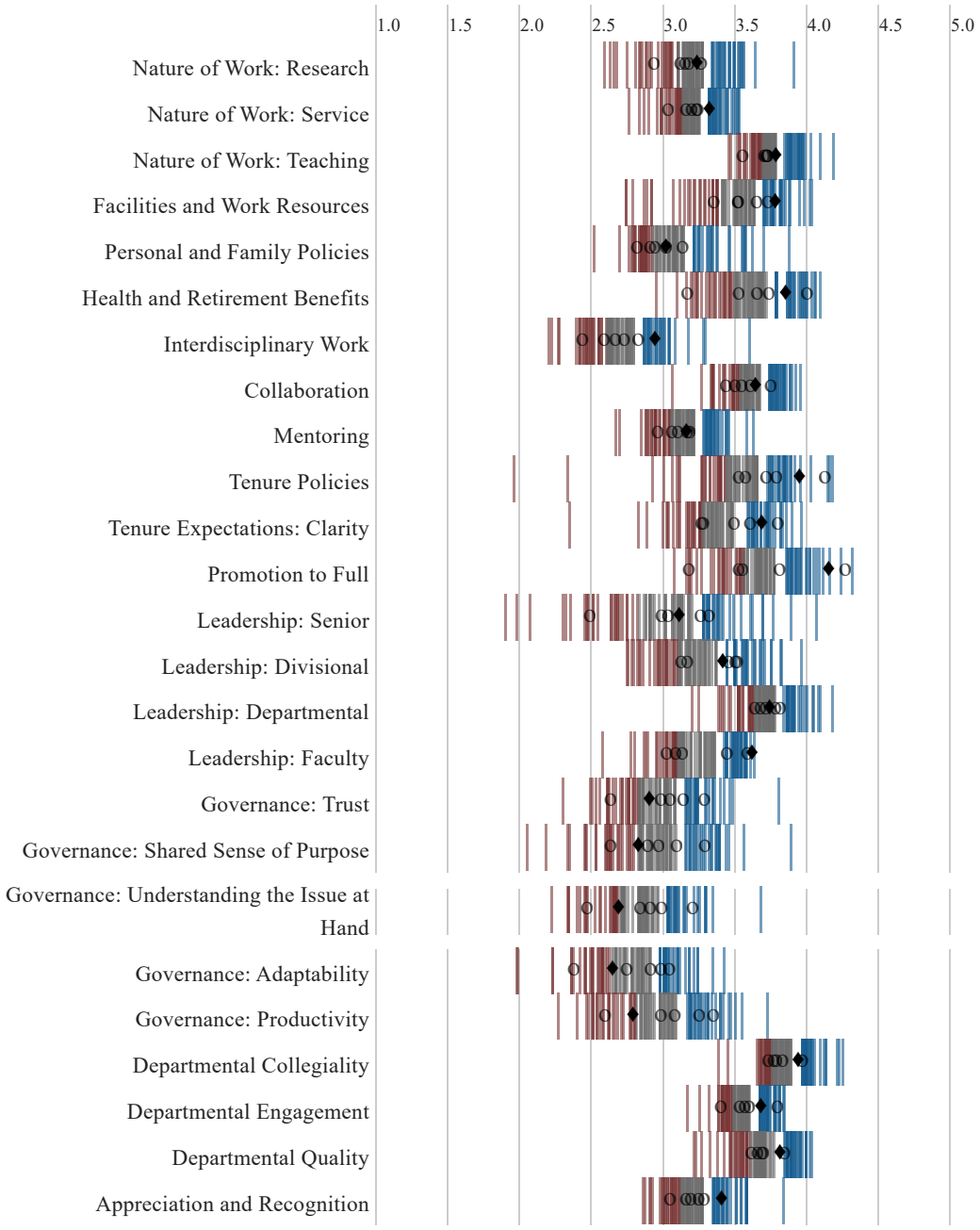
Note that between-group differences could alter your conclusions about these aspects of academic life on your campus—and suggest tailored approaches to improving them. Keep this in mind as you consider, after the overall results, the subsequent charts for pre-tenure faculty, for associate professors, for women, and for faculty of color. Look to your CAO Report for other subgroups and more detailed displays.

Areas of strength (all faculty combined)

- *Appreciation and Recognition*
- *Departmental Collegiality*
- *Departmental Engagement*
- *Departmental Quality*
- *Facilities and Work Resources*
- *Health and Retirement Benefits*
- *Interdisciplinary Work*
- *Leadership: Faculty*
- *Nature of Work: Service*
- *Promotion to Full*
- *Tenure Expectations: Clarity*
- *Tenure Policies*

Areas of concern (all faculty combined)

- *Governance: Adaptability*
- *Governance: Productivity*
- *Governance: Shared Sense of Purpose*
- *Governance: Understanding the Issue at Hand*



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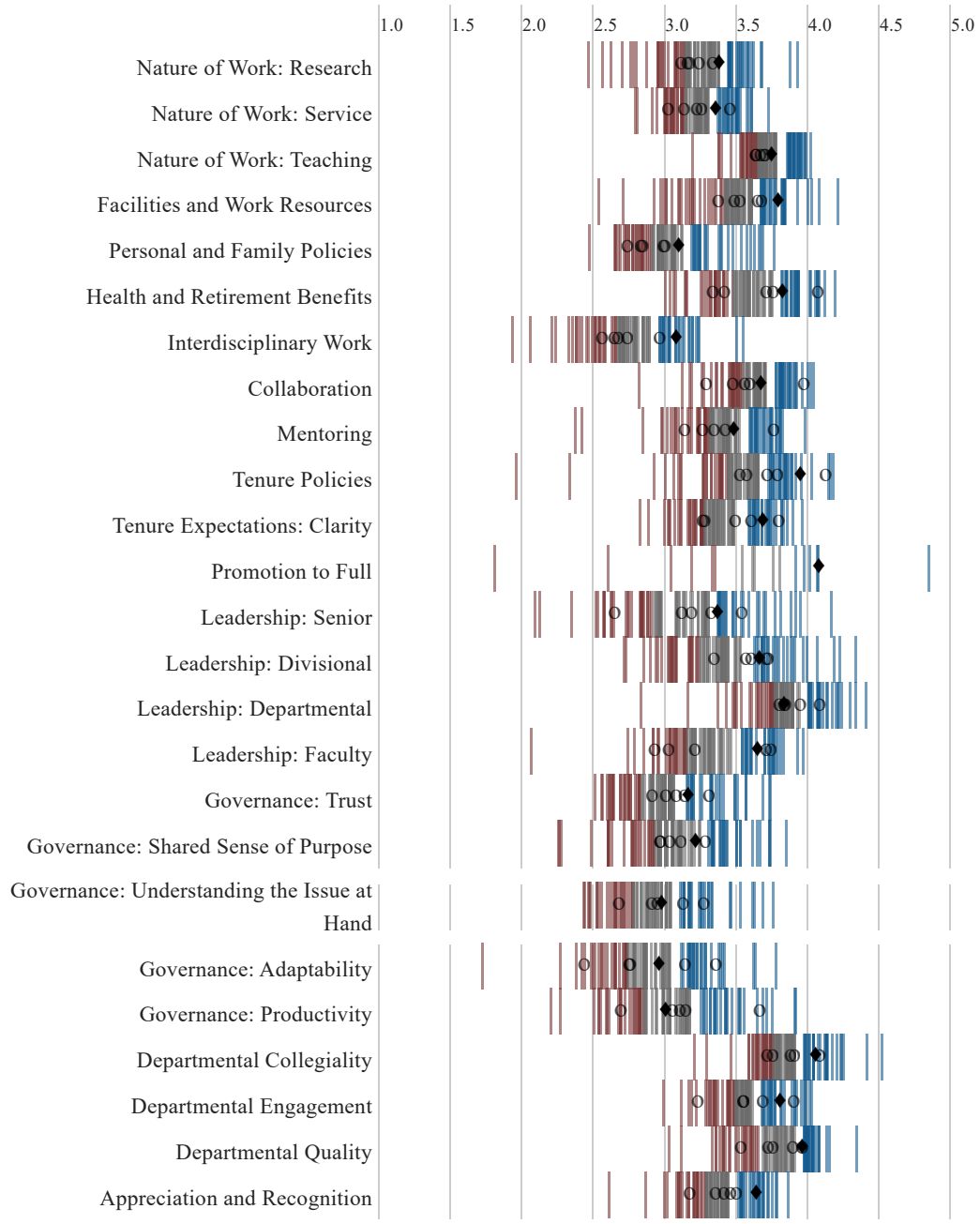

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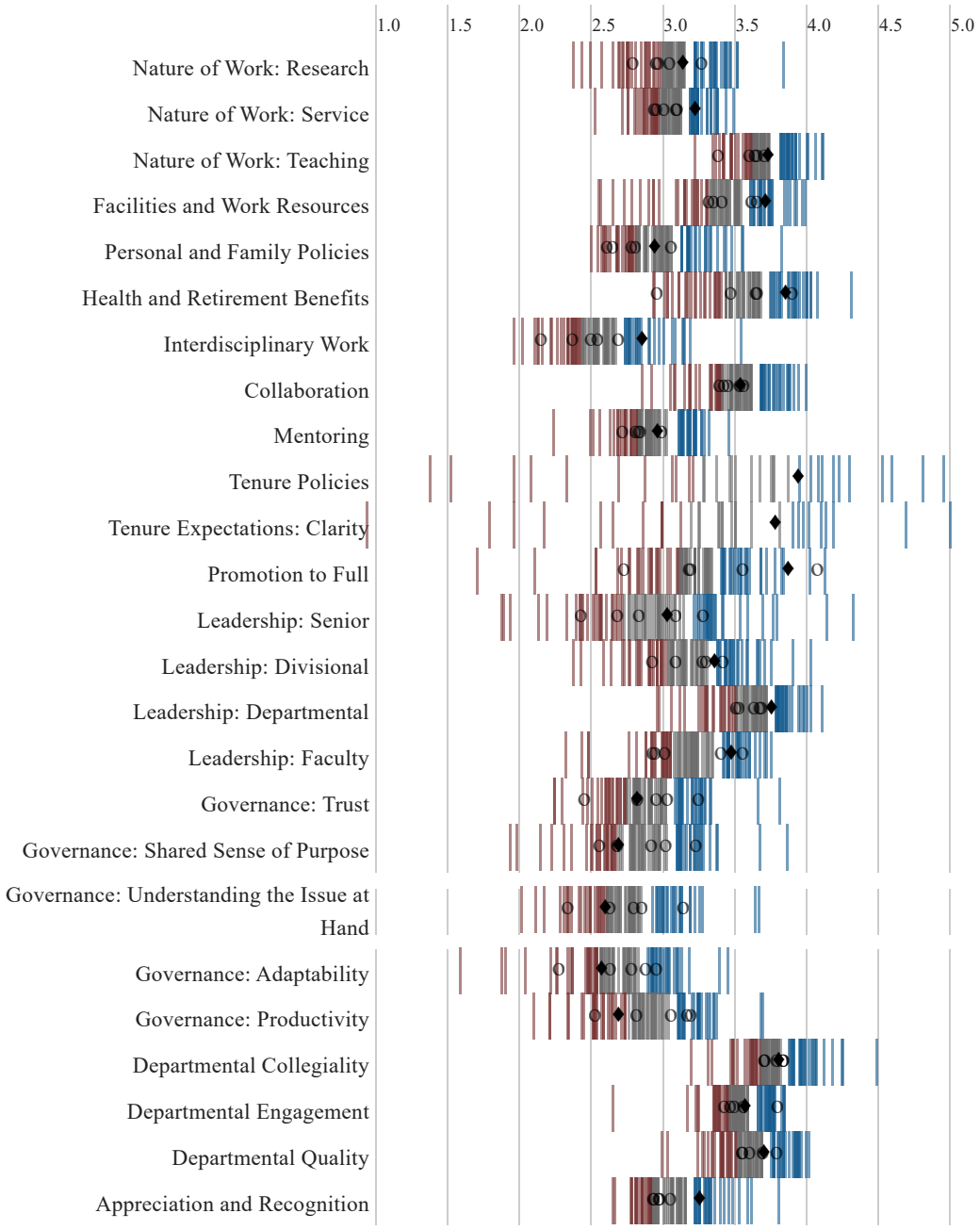

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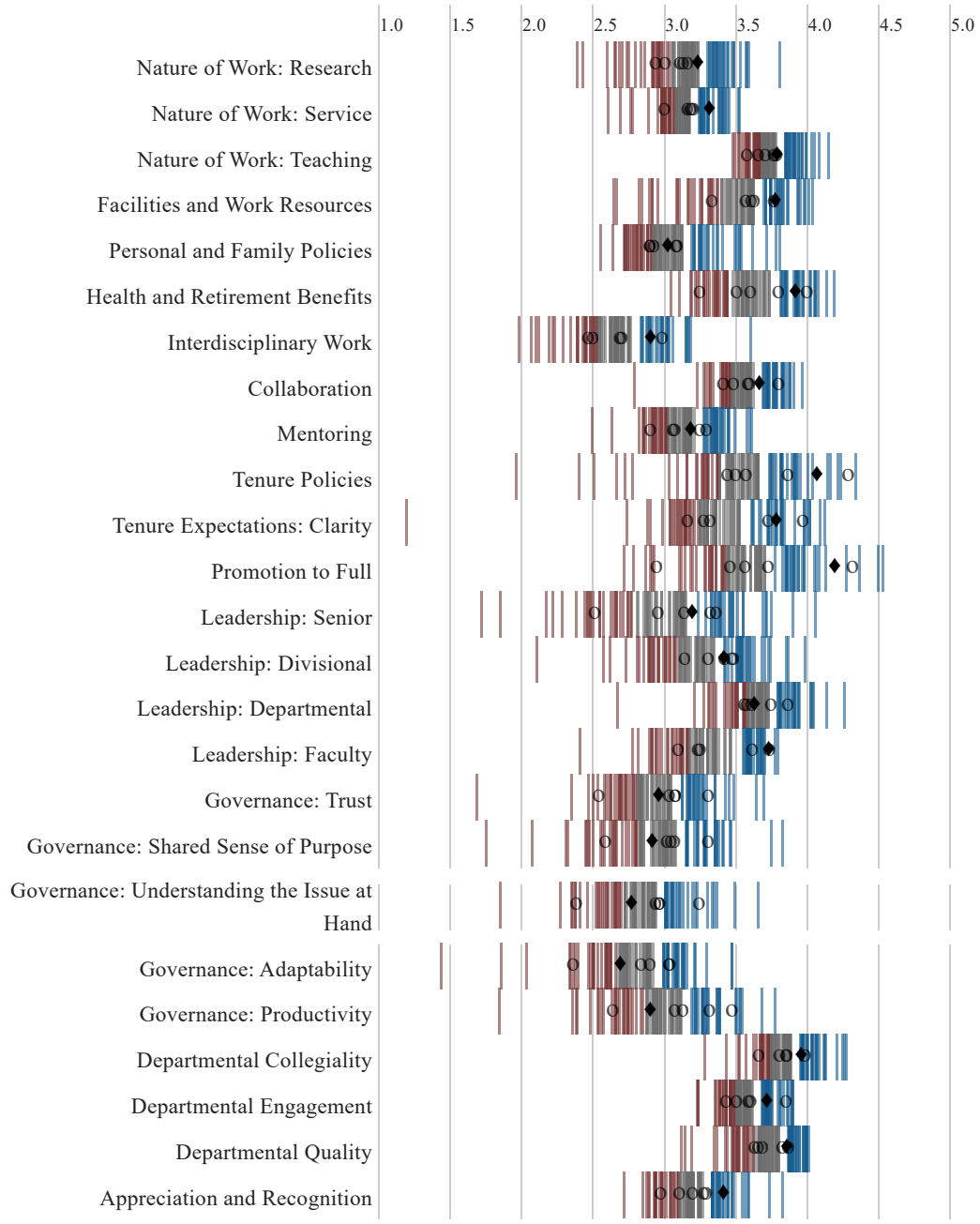

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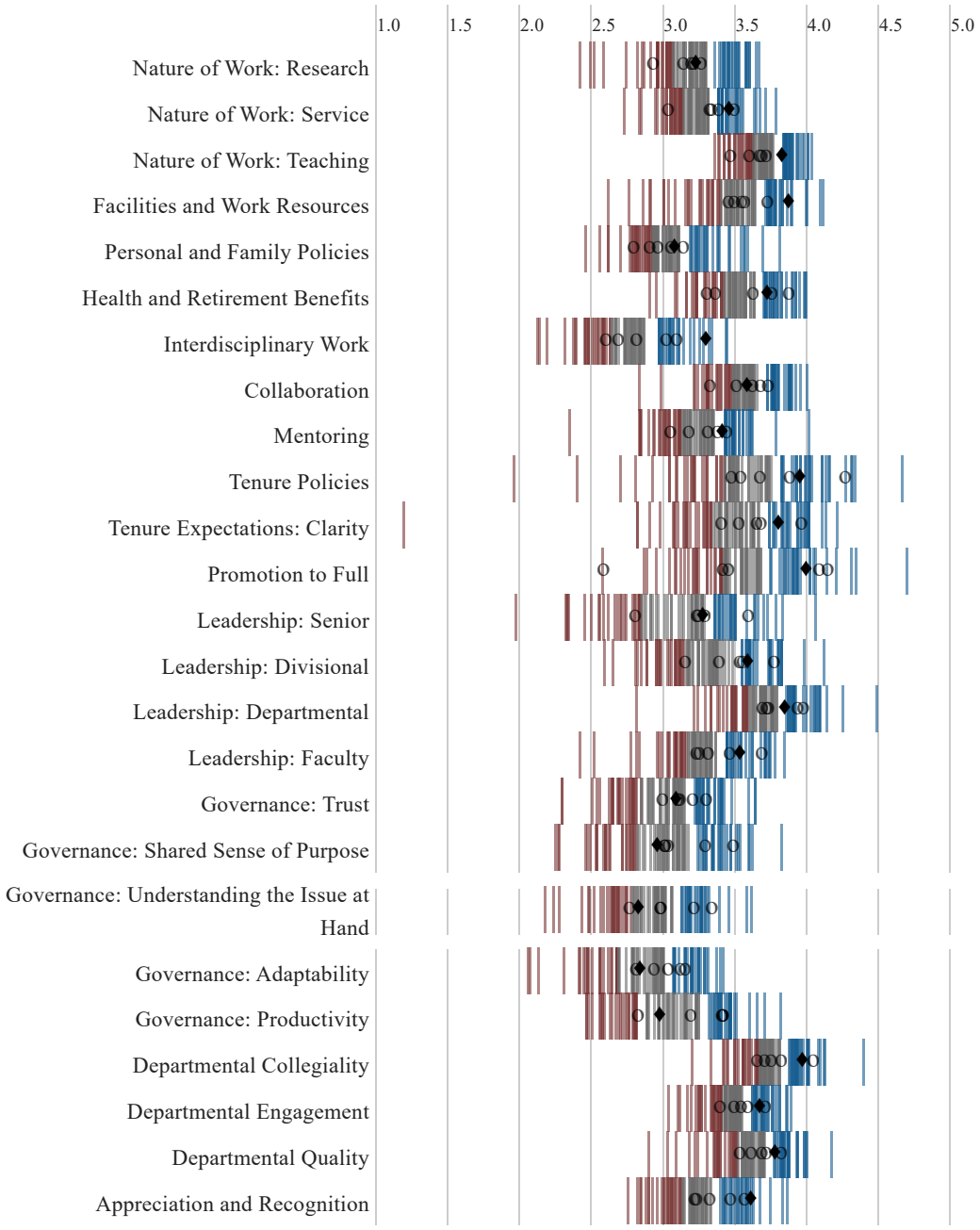


Data are masked in instances where your institution or a peer institution has insufficient data for reporting.

Near the conclusion of the survey, we ask faculty to think about the institution as a whole and identify those issues (both good and bad) that are most on their minds. Here, faculty are given the opportunity to select the two best aspects of working at your institution. Your CAO Report includes these results compared to peers and the COACHE cohort and, therefore, your competitive advantages in faculty recruitment and retention. The most frequently cited responses at your institution are highlighted in red.

	Overall	Pre-tenure	Associate	Women	FOC
Quality of colleagues	34%	33%	25%	31%	32%
Assistance for grant proposals	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Childcare policies/support/availability	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Spousal/partner hiring program	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Compensation	3%	1%	6%	3%	3%
Geographic location	19%	20%	20%	21%	13%
Diversity	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Presence of others like me	1%	0%	2%	2%	1%
My sense of "fit" here	7%	7%	7%	7%	8%
Protections from service/assignments	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Support of colleagues	25%	23%	21%	29%	28%
Commute	4%	4%	4%	5%	7%
Cost of living	6%	1%	8%	5%	8%
Teaching load	6%	4%	8%	6%	4%
Manageable pressure to perform	14%	10%	14%	12%	12%
Academic freedom	14%	16%	14%	13%	17%
Tenure/promotion clarity or requirements	7%	17%	10%	7%	7%
Opportunities to collaborate with colleagues	5%	7%	7%	5%	4%
Quality of leadership	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%
Patient care/client services	4%	NaN%	0%	6%	NaN%
Option for remote or hybrid work	4%	4%	5%	3%	1%
Quality of graduate students	3%	3%	1%	4%	0%
Quality of undergraduate students	15%	16%	13%	14%	16%
Quality of facilities	7%	6%	4%	6%	7%
Support for research/creative work (e.g., leave)	3%	4%	6%	3%	4%
Support for teaching	7%	9%	5%	8%	11%
Support for professional development	5%	4%	8%	6%	7%

Faculty are also asked to identify the two worst aspects of working at your institution. The worst aspects can be particularly helpful in narrowing down your priorities, especially when a review of your Benchmarks suggests many concerns to address: when everything needs fixing, we tend to fix nothing. In the CAO Report, these worst aspects are a heat map of your institution's competitive threats. The most frequently cited responses at your institution are highlighted in red.

	Overall	Pre-tenure	Associate	Women	FOC
Quality of colleagues	3%	4%	2%	2%	1%
Lack of assistance for grant proposals	2%	3%	4%	3%	3%
Childcare policies/support/availability (or lack thereof)	8%	7%	6%	7%	7%
Spousal/partner hiring program (or lack thereof)	6%	7%	6%	4%	9%
Compensation	35%	33%	31%	35%	32%
Geographic location	5%	7%	6%	4%	5%
Lack of diversity	8%	9%	9%	9%	14%
Absence of others like me	2%	4%	4%	2%	4%
My lack of "fit" here	1%	1%	2%	2%	3%
Too much service/too many assignments	17%	19%	21%	20%	7%
Support of colleagues	3%	0%	3%	4%	1%
Commute	3%	6%	3%	4%	3%
Cost of living	3%	7%	3%	5%	7%
Teaching load	11%	16%	12%	14%	18%
Unrelenting pressure to perform	4%	1%	2%	4%	4%
Academic freedom	2%	1%	2%	1%	3%
Tenure/promotion clarity or requirements	1%	0%	1%	1%	3%
Opportunities to collaborate with colleagues	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%
Quality of leadership	14%	13%	12%	9%	11%
Patient care/client services	4%	NaN%	0%	6%	NaN%
Lack of option for remote or hybrid work	2%	0%	2%	1%	0%
Quality of graduate students	1%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Quality of undergraduate students	7%	4%	8%	4%	5%
Quality of facilities	4%	3%	6%	4%	3%
Lack of support	21%	21%	23%	21%	20%
Lack of support for teaching	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Lack of support for professional development	3%	1%	2%	2%	3%

Global Considerations: In Your Faculty's Own Words

The final item in our survey is an open-text response to the prompt, "What is the one thing your institution could do to improve the workplace for faculty?" The comments from your faculty were reviewed by our team, redacted of identifying information, and coded according to the survey themes. The five most common themes in your faculty's responses were:

- *Facilities and Work Resources*: 43%
- *Culture*: 37%
- *Compensation and Benefits*: 29%
- *Departmental Quality*: 27%
- *Nature of Work: Teaching*: 22%

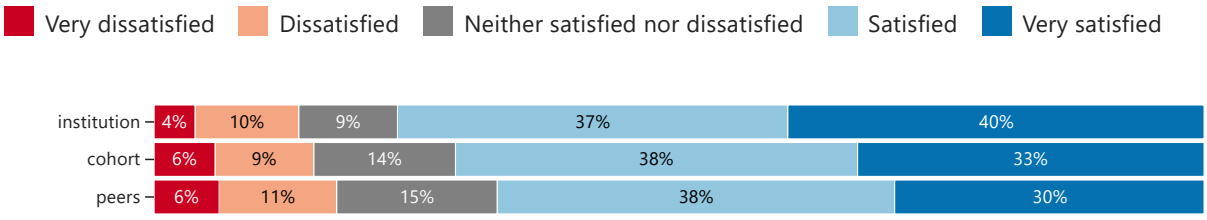
The complete and coded open-text responses in your CAO Report are a tool for prioritizing your results. By adding a dose of humanity to the quantitative results, these comments direct you and your team to be more sensitive to what is in the minds of your faculty. The mean and standard deviation for Tenure Clarity tell you which faculty are unclear about expectations for tenure. An open-text comment describes the impact on faculty's lives—their careers, their health, their families—and may even include helpful ideas on how to fix the problem.

In the complete digital report, you may access these redacted comments all at once, coded thematically, and accompanied by a chart of theme frequencies. In addition, when a comment mentions a topic that is related to a Benchmark, your CAO Report attaches that comment to the appropriate section. With salient, open-text prompts associated with each theme, you will find it easy to incorporate them into your presentations and discussions with faculty. Doing so reinforces that you are listening and trying to understand—the first step toward improving the faculty workplace.

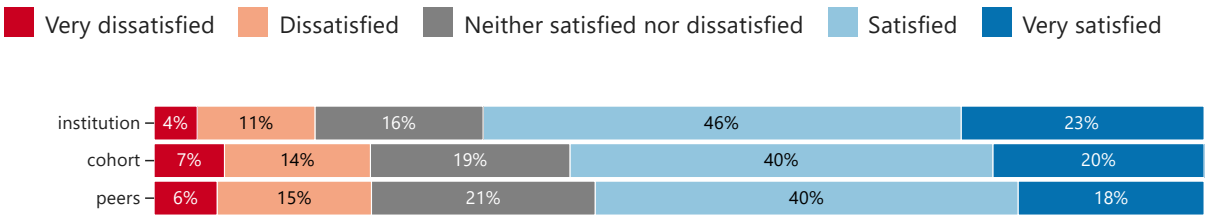
Global Considerations: The Department and Institution as a Place to Work

There are other "big picture" results in your report concerning overall satisfaction, intent to leave, and the likelihood that a faculty member would recommend her/his department as a place to work. For the purposes of this preview, we are sharing respondents' overall satisfaction with their departments and with their institution as a place to work.

Department as a place to work



Institution as a place to work



Next Steps: Distributed Leadership

While some are tempted to see these results and jump immediately to strategies for fixing problems, others know that institutional change is more effective and sustainable under models of distributed leadership. At COACHE, we have learned from our partners that analysis and sensemaking are a community process. Treat this document and the full report as a discussion guide, not a report card. Engage your faculty as partners in improving the workplace. Leverage their skills, expertise, and their personal experiences. Thoughtful, transparent engagement establishes trust among faculty. How you engage your faculty throughout this process is just as important as any policies or programs that result. Very few things can be accomplished in the academy without trust.

The remaining pages of this preview pose questions for you to consider, alone or with your team, as you begin this endeavor. In the coming months, COACHE will host several online events where you and your team can ask questions and engage with other teams. These events are free of charge to our partners and are designed to give every institution the opportunity to plan for a successful dissemination strategy. We will also share some additional materials, including:

- A series of video tutorials for navigating and interpreting your full report
- Sample meeting agendas
- Discussion guides for your team
- Promising practices from other partner institutions

Your CAO Report contains additional materials that describe how to dig deeper, build communication plans, disseminate broadly, take ownership, and engage with peer institutions. If you are ever in doubt about what to do, call us. COACHE succeeds only when you are equipped to create the conditions in which faculty do their best work.

What, if anything, surprises you about these results? Which results confirm your perceptions of your institution?

Based on these first few pages of analysis, what initial questions do you have about the results underlying them? What themes do you feel most warrant further scrutiny?

Which strategic priorities, faculty affairs initiatives, or other important institutional activities do your COACHE areas of strength support? Which might the areas of concern bring into play?

Which offices, governing bodies, and committees might relate to these findings? Consider, for example, a committee on the status of women/minorities, tenure and promotion committee, faculty governing body, center for teaching and learning, human resources, sponsored research, marketing and communications office...

Write the names of at least five administrators, staff, or faculty—beyond your immediate COACHE team—whose work might be informed by these results. For example, if your results indicate dissatisfaction among faculty of color, you might consider including the Chief Diversity Officer. If faculty provide lower ratings on the Benchmarks relating to shared governance, the Faculty Senate (or equivalent) might be constructively engaged in the next steps.

In what venues or through what channels might you share the results with them? Consider that the most effective strategies for engaging the results are those that pull faculty into a discussion rather than those that push data out.

Among the offices and individuals noted in the prior prompt, which might be allies? Which might feel threatened by the COACHE results?

How will their recommendations be received and considered?

What other information or data may help inform their interpretations of the COACHE report?

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