

# 2023 COACHE

## Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey

### Taskforce Report

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#### Overview and Summary

The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education is a research-practice partnership with Harvard Graduate School of Education that studies Faculty job satisfaction. It is a tool used by universities interested in building Faculty-driven action plans that enhance Faculty leadership and retention. COACHE results rank Faculty job satisfaction in comparison to five similar institutions or peers, and 86 COACHE partners or cohort identified as generally similar. Lehman participated in COACHE survey in 2015 and 2019, leading to identification of key areas for improvement and successful intervention in specific areas of concern.

The COACHE Taskforce was formed in early Fall 2022, with representation of Faculty and Administrators from across schools and divisions. It designed and implemented an internal communications strategy about the *why*, *when* and *what* of the survey. The Taskforce met on a bi-weekly basis to discuss survey implementation, progress, and results. The survey was launched in early Spring 2023.

Overall, 52% of Faculty participated in the survey, or 175 responders of a population of 335. 130 responders were tenured; 36 were pre-tenured; and 9 were non-tenured Faculty. Responders fell into the following categories: Full Professors, Associate Professors, Men, Women, White, Faculty of Color (FOC), Asian, and Under-represented Minorities (URM). The survey contained 165 Likert scale questions, and 31 related questions. The survey results compared Faculty's mean scores relative to mean scores of 2019 survey; ranks Faculty's mean scores relative to those at our peer institutions; and ranks Faculty's mean scores relative to all participating COACHE institutions.

The Report summarizes the areas of concern and recommendations identified by Taskforce Faculty members based upon survey results. We are confident our Report will be useful to Administrators and CAOs in developing and implementing a Faculty-driven action plan that addresses Faculty's concerns and enhances Faculty's strengths.

## Areas of Concern

- 1 Compensation
- 2 Teaching
- 3 Research
- 4 Service

### *Key Highlights*

**22% of Faculty said compensation is worst aspect of the job**

**Women are less satisfied than men in all aspects of the job.**

**Faculty of Color have lowest level of satisfaction than all other groups in compensation and research.**

## Compensation

All survey questions on compensation consistently revealed that Faculty does not underplay poor pay. Compensation was identified as "worst aspect of working at Lehman" by 22% of the faculty surveyed across all categories: 33% of pre-tenure Faculty surveyed; 18% of Associate Professors surveyed; 20% of Women Faculty surveyed; and 27% of Faculty of Color. Only 2% of Faculty surveyed responded that compensation was one of the "best aspects of working at Lehman." The low percentage was the tendency across all categories, as follows: 6% of pre-tenure Faculty surveyed; 2% of Associate Professors surveyed; 1% of Women Faculty surveyed; and 0% of Faculty of Color surveyed.

The survey results revealed that compensation was the motivation for searching for outside job offers. In the last five years, 20.2% of surveyed Faculty "actively sought an outside job offer," with 69.4% seeking to leave the institution and not just use outside job offer for leverage in salary negotiations.

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## Teaching

### Balancing Teaching/Research/Service

Mean Score = 2.98

Faculty satisfaction with balancing teaching/research/service declined from the 3.05 mean score for 2019 survey. Faculty satisfaction with teaching ranks 3rd among peers, and in the bottom 30% of our cohort group. Faculty satisfaction is very low in all areas of teaching, namely: support for assessing student learning; support for teaching diverse learning styles; quality of graduate students to support teaching; level of courses taught; quality of students taught; and number of courses taught. Women and Faculty of Color satisfaction with "ability to balance teaching/research/service" ranks very low when compared to other groups, and in the bottom of our cohort group for Faculty of Color.

Overall, 19% of Faculty surveyed cited teaching load as "one of the worst aspects of working at Lehman," including 22% of tenured and 6% pre-tenured Faculty.

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## Research

Mean score = 2.85

Faculty satisfaction with research declined from the 2.95 mean score for 2019 survey. Faculty satisfaction with research ranks 3rd among peers, and in the bottom 30% of our cohort group. Faculty satisfaction is very low in all surveyed areas of research, namely: support for securing graduate student assistance; availability of course release for research; support for research; support for grants, obtaining and maintaining; and support for travel to present/conduct research.

Overall, 19% of surveyed Faculty responded that research was "one of the worst aspects of the job."

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## Service

Mean Score = 3.20

Faculty satisfaction with service declined from the 3.22 mean score for 2019 survey. Faculty satisfaction with service ranks 3rd among peers, and in the bottom 30% of our cohort group. Faculty satisfaction is very low in all areas of service, namely: number of student advisees; support for being a good advisor; support for Faculty in leadership roles; time spent on service; time spent on administrative tasks.

Overall, 21% of surveyed Faculty responded that "too much service/too many assignments" was "one of the worst aspects of the job." The disparity by gender is striking. 27% of Women and 11% of Men cited this aspect as the worst aspect of the job.

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## Additional Areas of Low Faculty Job Satisfaction

Taskforce Faculty members focused on four areas of concern that directly impact Faculty job satisfaction, retention and leadership. However, the 2023 survey results indicate that the Senior Leadership and Governance are aspects that also require attention.

1 Faculty satisfaction with senior leadership, defined as President/Chancellor and CAO, declined from 2019 survey. Faculty satisfaction with senior leadership ranks 5th among peers, and in the bottom 30% of our cohort group. Faculty dissatisfaction is alarmingly high in all surveyed areas of Senior Leadership, namely: President/Chancellor pace of decision making; President/Chancellor stated priorities; President/Chancellor communication of priorities; CAO pace of decision making; CAO stated priorities; CAO: communication of priorities.

2 Faculty satisfaction with Governance, defined as Administrators and other stakeholders and excluding Faculty Senate, declined from 2019 survey. Faculty satisfaction with governance/trust ranks 5th among peers; and in the bottom 30% of our cohort group. Faculty satisfaction is low in all areas of governance. Faculty members expressed dissatisfaction with "bureaucratic," "top-down decision-making process." Faculty expressed their wish to have their voices heard and be actively involved in the decision-making process.

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## In Faculty's Own Words

The following commentaries summarize how Faculty feel about the job:

*"Improve our salaries!"*

*"Overall, increase salaries for Faculty, ask for Faculty participation and opinion, value Faculty, know your Faculty, support Faculty."*

*"At all CUNY colleges, more funding needs to be allotted for released time from teaching. Since junior and senior Faculty are expected to produce a significant number of publications, and serve on several committees towards promotion, the administration needs to institute a facile means of obtaining course release that doesn't necessary involve applying for grants -especially because the CUNY teaching load is particularly heavy. Faculty with prolific publications and/or award-winning publications should be granted course release as form of institutional recognition."*

*"Faculty are completely overworked. they need to hire more people or provide more course releases if they want us to do so much administrative work, it is getting completely out of hand."*

*"We need to decide what we want to be. A teaching college? An aspiring R1? An online institution? There seem to be too many competing visions for our future, and without some degree of consensus it is difficult for us to prioritize the allocation of scarce resources."*

*"I love Lehman, but my main complaint is it tries to be everything- we have high expectations for tenure and promotion, a high teaching load, advisement, service on committees and administrative roles...It's wonderful that we have such a high bar set, but the service, teaching and advisement loads are so high that it leaves little time for research or community outreach."*

*"Streamline administrative decision-making processes. Too much valuable faculty time is spent on forms and resubmissions to bureaucratic offices with unclear decision systems."*

*"Administrators should better share governance with tenured faculty and better include senior faculty in decisions about academic programs and structures."*

*"Listen to department chairs rather than maintain the top-down administrative structure of decision-making that is implemented without chair input."*



## Recommendations for Action in Areas of Concern

The following Taskforce Faculty members' recommendations seek to support Lehman Administrators and CAOs in the design of measurable policies that: effectively allocate institutional resources to support changes in Faculty work; strike the right balance between boosting Faculty job satisfaction and managing institutional costs and budget; and establish innovative, evidence-driven, long-term strategies for enhancing Faculty job satisfaction.

1 Design and implement monetary compensation opportunities that progressively address the current Faculty salary compression and inflation and cost of living, and strategically brings Lehman Faculty pay rate closer to innovative compensation practices of comparable institutions. Compensation opportunities can include bonuses for publications, organization of conferences and related events, and Faculty leadership and retention bonuses.

2 Design and implement teaching-load reduction program that closes the gap between current Lehman teaching load and teaching load in comparable institutions. This program can include grants for pedagogical development and innovation, and substantive awards that recognize excellence in the classroom in cooperation with the *Center for Teaching Excellence*.

3 Design and implement divisional course-release incentives to support ongoing Faculty research, in coordination with the current *Faculty Fellowship Publication Program*, as well course-release incentives to support Faculty service and administrative work.

4 Design, implement and evaluate a pilot "First Year Faculty Experience" program for newly hired Faculty that includes seminars, workshops, and information sessions on all aspects of the Lehman Faculty job, namely: CUNY and Lehman Governance; Faculty Senate; Faculty evaluation process; Lehman Foundation; student demographics; and all aspects related to "getting to know Lehman in the Bronx." The results of the "First Year Faculty Experience" program can inform CAOs about how best to foster and nurture Faculty skills, expertise, and leadership talents, build mechanisms for diverse Faculty to contribute to institutional development; adopt governance practices based upon Faculty participation; and build internal Faculty leadership. For this purpose, Lehman can identify and provide compensation to prospective "Faculty Mentors" in each School to work collaboratively with CAOs towards this program.



## Conclusion

The results of the 2023 COACHE survey allowed us an in-depth assessment of where we are as an institution compared to our peers and cohort. In general, Faculty satisfaction declined from the 2019 COACHE results. The lowest ratings and largest effect size are among pre-tenure, not tenure-track, Women, Faculty of Color, and Underrepresented Minorities.

The results are significant and should inform how we move forward as a community, and how we engage all groups to participate in this Lehman community in an equitable way. As such, we recommend creating a faculty led task force who will collect qualitative data to get a better understanding of the challenges and offer evidence-driven solutions that will address Faculty job satisfaction.

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## Final Reflections

Taskforce Faculty members wish to express gratitude to the Taskforce Administrator members who provided unconditional support for our deliberations and discussions and fostered a Faculty-driven endeavor. We recognize that creating a competitive Lehman Faculty job market in a time when institutions of higher education are increasingly under fire is indeed a big challenge. We are aware that financial pressures decisively impact institutional expectations. However, we believe we must seize opportunities for evidence-driven change afforded by COACHE survey. We hope our Report is useful for Administrators and CAOs to address Faculty's concerns, enhance Faculty's strengths, and implement a Faculty-driven Action Plan.