

2023 COACHE Best Practices Summary Report

Committee Members:

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ISSUE ADDRESSED AND WHY

The Theme Six Working Group explored policies and cultural practices in the three units that reported the highest levels of faculty satisfaction. Those units are Pharmacy, Law, and Bloch. If the university is better able to understand the reasons for these higher levels of satisfaction, then it may be able to replicate the successes of Pharmacy, Law, and Bloch in other units.

DATA USED TO INFORM DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Theme Six Working Group conducted interviews with faculty members in Pharmacy, Law, and Bloch. These three schools were selected as a result of the data presented in the COACHE Survey. Faculty in these three schools appeared to be the most satisfied overall. These faculty members shared their perspectives on the policies and/or cultural practices that have resulted in strong faculty satisfaction.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WOULD LIKELY STRENGTHEN FACULTY SATISFACTON

1. **Increase efforts to create a collegial and friendly atmosphere** – Faculty members in Pharmacy, Law, and Bloch report that their work environments are very collegial. Faculty members get along well with each other and with unit leadership. Unit leadership supports this atmosphere by: (a) encouraging faculty members to collaborate on teaching and research; (b) hosting monthly workshops or brown bag lunches focused on teaching and research; (c) hosting annual or biannual retreats; and (d) hosting social gatherings (e.g., Thanksgiving lunches, holiday parties) and team-building activities.
2. **Prioritize transparency and encourage strong faculty governance** – Faculty members in Pharmacy, Law, and Bloch report that unit leadership has been very intentional about remaining transparent when making important decisions that will affect the unit. They also report that unit leadership expects and encourages faculty input regarding important issues. Moreover, faculty in these units enjoy a great deal of autonomy in terms of course selection, course content, research specialties, and service activities.
3. **Eliminate distinctions between non-tenure track and tenured/tenure-track faculty** – While Pharmacy, Law, and Bloch employ both non-tenure track (NTT) and tenured/tenure-track (T/TT) faculty, unit leadership has worked to eliminate unnecessary distinctions between these groups. In Law for example, the faculty amended its bylaws to ensure that NTT and T/TT faculty have the right to vote on all new faculty hires, including T/TT candidates.

4. **Invest in professional development of faculty** – Faculty members in Pharmacy, Law, and Bloch report that unit leadership is willing to invest in professional development opportunities for faculty members, even when those opportunities are not directly connected to research. These opportunities include certifications, courses, or conferences.

HOW RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD IMPROVE FACULTY LIVES/JOB SATISFACTION

These initiatives will improve faculty job satisfaction in various ways. The recommendations concerning collegiality and greater autonomy will likely improve faculty members' general happiness at work. Additionally, a greater focus on transparency in unit leadership and strong faculty governance will likely cause faculty members to feel more invested in the unit. Efforts to eliminate distinctions between NTT and T/TT faculty will topple hierarchies that often create feelings of inequality and second class citizenship. Finally, investment in the professional development of faculty will demonstrate that unit leadership values its faculty members and desires to retain them as long-term employees of the university.

Leadership in other units should review the recommendations listed above in order to determine which might be incorporated in an effort to increase faculty job satisfaction.