

2023 COACHE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COACHE Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey

Under the leadership of Chancellor Mauli Agrawal and Provost Jenny Lundgren, Harvard University's Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) faculty job satisfaction survey was administered for the fourth time at UMKC in the Spring of 2023. The AY2022-2023 COACHE survey that was launched included TT, Tenured, ranked non-tenure track, as well as clinical faculty in the UMKC School of Medicine. Benchmarks for the survey, compared to both the full COACHE cohort and the five peers selected by UMKC (University of Cincinnati, University of Louisville, University of Missouri-Columbia, University of North Carolina-Charlotte, Wichita State University) were provided.

In August of 2023, COACHE completed the initial data analysis and shared with the campus significant preliminary findings: 58 percent of eligible, full-time faculty completed the anonymous survey, a notably higher percentage compared to other institutions that completed the survey at around the same time. UMKC faculty are among the most satisfied faculty of all COACHE participants in the areas of Departmental Collegiality and Engagement, Leadership at the Divisional level, Nature of Work: Service and Nature of Work: Teaching, as well as Personal and Family Policies. Similarly, UMKC faculty scored first or second among selected comparison groups and in the top 30 percent of the cohort. All of these were areas where UMKC faculty have expressed continued satisfaction over the years. The two areas where UMKC faculty were the least satisfied, relative to all the COACHE participants were Tenure Expectations-Clarity and Tenure Policies, scoring fifth or sixth among selected peers and in the bottom 30 percent of the cohort.

Steering Committee Findings & Charge

A COACHE Steering Committee comprised of faculty from across the UMKC campus was formed to conduct additional data analysis and identify emerging themes. The committee was then divided into working groups charged with creating 2-3 practical, impactful, actionable initiatives based on those themes, that align with the priorities of the institution. The steering committee identified five areas that, if developed, would enhance faculty experiences at UMKC:

- Pre-Tenured Faculty Experiences
- Tenure Policy and Expectations
- Senior Leadership
- Compensation and Benefits
- Facilities and Resources

The groups worked throughout the spring 2024 semester to develop high-priority recommendations.

Steering Committee Recommendations

A synthesis of the Steering Committee Reports reveals five areas for institutional growth.

* Steering committee executive summary reports are posted on the Provost's website.

Tenure policy and expectations:

Dissatisfaction with tenure policies and expectations remains a consistent concern of UMKC faculty. The outcomes of the most recent COACHE survey should be examined within the content of campus-wide initiatives that were taking place prior to and during the survey period. It should also be noted that there were limited responses to questions about tenure policy and expectations and that those responses were not representative of all units at UMKC. Key recommendations include:

- The creation of university-wide administration led initiatives that promote **consistency** of communication, transparency and administrative support across all units which includes identification of units not adhering to Chancellor's Memorandum #35.05.
- Create initiatives to support the use of MyVita.
- The implementation of a mentorship program that uses trained faculty members to provide assistance and guidance for faculty navigating the tenure process. *Full report posted.

Pre-tenured faculty:

UMKC had a higher response rate from pre-tenured faculty compared to our peer and cohort institutions. There was dissatisfaction expressed amongst pre-tenured respondents across multiple domains. Key recommendations include:

- Monitor the outcome of the P & T benchmarking process recently implemented.
- Provide scheduled office hours rather than open office hours through the Office of Faculty Affairs for faculty to discuss P&T questions.

*Full report posted

Senior Leadership (Chancellor/Provost level)

The COACHE survey revealed lower confidence in UMKC's senior leadership compared to cohort institutions as well as the prior COACHE (2017) survey. Dissatisfaction with senior leadership is not widespread but rather concentrated with certain units. Key recommendations include:

- Conduct a study of the state of faculty participation in committees and governance (at the campus and unit levels) to assess opportunities faculty have for involvement in decision-making.
*Full report posted.

Compensation and Benefits

Dissatisfaction with compensation and benefits is the most identified theme for institutions that participate in the COACHE survey. This theme has surfaced repeatedly in the previous COACHE surveys in which UMKC faculty have participated. Key recommendations include:

- Improve communication and transparency to include:

- Conducting more open forums in each unit soliciting the specific needs of faculty in their respective disciplines.
- Increase communication to the faculty about the process used to address faculty salaries. This could include a page on the provost's website describing the process.
- Allow Dean input in the selection of unit specific comparison institutions.
- Expand ways to recognize and reward faculty accomplishment. *Full report posted.

Facilities/work resources:

With recent efforts to move UMKC to a R1 university, it is no surprise that satisfaction with facilities and work resources was noted by a high number of faculty at UMKC. Physical spaces and support were noted as the main concerns amongst faculty. Key recommendations include:

- Clearly communicate plans for addressing deferred maintenance across campus with impacted faculty.
- Provide increased support for new tenure track faculty to help them identify how to use start up funds to maximize work resources and research effort.

*Full report posted.

Under several of the identified themes it was noted that additional insights would be valuable to identifying actions items and ensuring that all faculty voices are being heard. With that in mind, it is recommended:

- A COACHE Faculty Engagement Series be planned. These Faculty Engagement conversations would focus on faculty subgroups and themes. Specific faculty groups such as female faculty, faculty of color, underrepresented minority faculty, pre-tenured faculty, faculty in the Conservatory, School of Education, and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences would be included. These specific faculty groups reported greater dissatisfaction across several themes that include senior leadership, promotion and tenure, and facilities and work resources. The opportunity to engage in conversations will work to provide greater insight into faculty job satisfaction at UMKC and work to improve morale among these subsets of faculty.

In addition to identifying themes relative to reported dissatisfaction among UMKC faculty, it was also noted that dissatisfaction was not expressed uniformly across campus. There were several units that reported higher levels of faculty satisfaction than others. The COACHE Steering Committee felt it would be beneficial to explore what efforts supported these higher levels of satisfaction.

The following initiatives were identified as promoting faculty satisfaction:

- Increased efforts to create a collegial and friendly atmosphere.
- Prioritized transparency that encourages strong faculty governance.
- Elimination of distinctions between TT and NTT faculty.
- Investment in professional development of faculty.

*Full report posted.

UMKC's aspiration to become a R1 institution necessitates developing initiatives that respond to faculty feedback and that cultivate a diverse, high-performing, and mission-driven faculty community. The COACHE Survey demonstrates UMKC's commitment to data-driven initiatives that ensure faculty input and inclusion at UMKC for years to come.