

**Executive Summary**  
**UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN**  
**FACULTY WORK-LIFE STUDY REPORT**  
Conducted by  
Researchers from  
**The Center for the Study of Higher and  
Postsecondary Education and  
The Center for the Education of Women**  
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Faculty members are a key strength of a university. Thus, any higher education institution aiming for excellence must foster a work environment in which faculty can perform well and prosper. For this reason, a team of researchers sought to determine what conditions lead to satisfactory careers for instructional faculty at the University of Michigan.

A research team composed of a senior faculty member and several graduate students from the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education (CSHPE), in collaboration with the director of the Center for the Education of Women (CEW), conducted the study. We hoped to discover the ways in which the University was helping faculty to succeed and to identify actions the University might take to enhance professional development, satisfaction and retention.

The University of Michigan Faculty Work-Life Study survey was mailed to 2,624 individuals—all University of Michigan-Ann Arbor faculty who held at least half-time instructional appointments; who had been at U-M for at least one year; who were either tenured or in tenure-track appointments; or who were clinical II faculty or lecturers. The number of overall respondents was 1,167, a response rate of 44%. Recognizing the importance of such an investigation, the Office of the Provost provided financial support. The study itself, however, was designed, conducted, and analyzed entirely by the research team from CSHPE and CEW. We are also thankful for the assistance we received from a distinguished group of faculty advisors.

**TENURED AND TENURE-TRACK FACULTY**

We first analyzed the data for trends among the tenured and tenure-track faculty overall, then by rank; by gender, controlling for rank; by race, controlling for rank; and by division. In general, the findings of the study indicate that U-M faculty work hard, are very

productive, are relatively satisfied and would choose to come to U-M again. Selected findings from the study are highlighted below.

### **Faculty Workload and Productivity (excluding Medical School faculty)**

- U-M faculty responded that they work an average of 57 hours per week. Women and faculty of color at all ranks generally reported working slightly more than the average number of hours.
- Faculty at all ranks reported spending similar proportions of time on teaching activities. Assistant professors reported spending a slightly greater percentage of their time than did associate and full professors on advising students and working on their scholarship and research. On the other hand, assistant professors reported spending less time than did their senior colleagues on service activities.
- Female assistant professors reported spending higher percentages of their time per week performing internal university service activities than did male assistant professors. In addition, a larger proportion of female assistant and associate professors reported that they confer and consult with students on a daily or weekly basis.
- Given the differing nature of the disciplines, it is not surprising that specific aspects of work and research productivity varied by division. Nevertheless, on average, U-M faculty members reported teaching eleven credit hours during the academic year they were surveyed. In addition, they reported that over a two-year period, on average, they submit six and publish five articles in refereed journals, review eleven articles for professional journals, present five conference papers, submit three external grant applications, chair two dissertation committees, serve on five additional dissertation committees, and serve on four departmental and two college/university committees.

### **Faculty Self-Assessments**

- Asked the amount of influence they perceived they have in their units on nine different items, faculty reported that they have the most influence in selecting new faculty members, making curriculum decisions, and securing facilities and equipment for their work. Faculty reported having the least influence in the size of their salary increases. Faculty members' reported influence generally increased with rank.
- Slightly over half of the faculty felt that their salaries are appropriate in relation to others of comparable rank within their units. Women assistant

professors were less likely than their male peers to believe that their salaries are appropriate.

- Nearly one quarter of the faculty reported that they have improved their salaries through outside job offers.

### **Organizational Structures, Policies and Resources**

- Four out of five faculty members believed that tenure decisions within their units are based on the quality of their research and that tenure decisions are heavily influenced by outside evaluations. At the same time, less than half of the faculty believed that good teaching is important in tenure decisions, and less than one in five believed that strong student interaction and advising influence tenure decisions.
- Assistant professors were less likely than their tenured colleagues to believe that tenure procedures within their units are clearly defined and understood. Women assistant professors were more likely than their male counterparts to believe that tenure decisions depend heavily on one's area of research.
- Nearly one quarter of all assistant professors reported that they have never discussed tenure criteria with their department heads. Women were less likely to report having had such conversations.
- Slightly more than half of the faculty believed that their units' resources and support services are distributed evenly. Women at all ranks were less likely than men to believe that resources and other support services are equitably distributed.

### **Institutional and Unit Climate**

- In rating their units' climates on nine dichotomous adjectives, faculty gave highest ratings to descriptors of their climates as friendly and respectful. White males generally gave the highest ratings to the nine descriptors; women of color, the lowest ratings. The ratings of white women and men of color fell between the other groups.
- Most faculty reported that they have adequate opportunities to interact and collaborate with their colleagues, although women faculty at all ranks generally reported less opportunity to do so.
- Faculty reported that their colleagues accord them and their research moderate degrees of respect, recognition, and value. Women assistant professors reported receiving lower levels of respect, recognition, and value for their work than did their male colleagues at the same rank.

- More than two-thirds of assistant professors reported having one or more mentors, most of whom are in their units. White faculty and male faculty were more likely to have mentors in their own units. A larger proportion of women than men had mentors in other U-M units, and a larger proportion of faculty of color than white faculty had mentors outside of U-M.
- One out of seven faculty reported experiencing discrimination and one out of eight reported experiences of harassment. At all ranks, women faculty and faculty of color were far more likely to report such experiences.

### **Career Satisfaction and Retention**

- Faculty reported being relatively satisfied with their positions. In general, satisfaction increased with rank. At the assistant professor level white faculty reported being more satisfied than faculty of color; in general, men and women were equally satisfied with their positions.
- When asked if they would choose to be faculty members at U-M again, approximately two-thirds of the faculty said they would; slightly more than one-quarter would have second thoughts; and only a small proportion said they would not choose U-M again. Faculty of color at the assistant professor level were more likely to report they would not choose to be faculty members at U-M again.
- As a whole, tenured and tenure-track faculty members ranked *maintaining personal integrity, enjoying their work, and working with intellectually stimulating colleagues* as the three of seventeen attributes they most need to feel satisfied with their careers.
- From a list of twenty-one items related to their current levels of career satisfaction, faculty reported being most satisfied with their *sense of being valued as a mentor or advisor by their students*, with their *sense of being valued as a teacher by their students*, and with their *opportunity to mentor students*.

### **Family Work-Life Issues**

- Half of all faculty members reported that their partners are employed full time; one quarter reported that their partners work part time; and one quarter reported that their partners are not employed. Men at all ranks were more likely to have spouses/partners who are not employed outside the home or who work only part time.
- Slightly less than half of the faculty reported having no children living at home. Male assistant professors were more likely than women at the same rank to have children living at home. The children of these men were more likely to be six years old or younger. On the other hand, the children of women assistant professors were more likely to be between the ages of seven and eighteen. These data suggest that women assistant professors were more likely than men either to

have had children prior to beginning their academic careers or to have delayed child bearing and/or rearing until after they receive tenure or until they are well established in their careers.

- On most measures, faculty with and without children living at home were equally satisfied with their professional development. However, faculty without children living at home were more satisfied with their current levels of productivity and with the balance between their professional and personal lives. Faculty with children living at home were more satisfied with their opportunities to collaborate with other faculty.

## **NONTENURE-TRACK FACULTY**

Some of the findings for lecturers include the following:

- The number of students the lecturers taught in a year ranges from twelve to nearly thirteen hundred.
- More than three-quarters of the lecturers reported that they have published articles in professional journals over the span of their careers. One quarter reported having published a book or monograph as a sole author; nearly a third, as a co-author.
- Lecturers reported being relatively satisfied with their positions. They identified several items that are particularly important to their achieving career satisfaction: *enjoying their work and colleagues; sparking interest in students; receiving respect from their peers for their teaching; maintaining personal integrity; and achieving a good balance between career and personal life.*

Some of the findings for clinical II faculty include the following:

- More than four out of five clinical faculty indicated that they have published articles in professional journals over the course of their careers, and close to half reported having published five or more articles.
- Clinical faculty reported slightly higher levels of satisfaction with their positions than did either lecturers or tenured and tenure-track faculty. They identified several items that are particularly important to their achieving career satisfaction: *enjoying their work and the people they work with; maintaining personal integrity; achieving a balance between professional and personal life; and sparking interest in students.*

The full text of the Faculty Work-Life Study report gives details for additional items in the questionnaire, including such information as perceptions of valued faculty, professional and social interactions with colleagues, issues affecting retention, further analyses of the experiences of associate professors, and other questions not discussed in this brief summary.

The tables in the report display differences in responses by rank, gender, race and division. The complete report of the study is available at [www.umich.edu/~cew/research](http://www.umich.edu/~cew/research).

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### **University of Michigan Faculty Work-Life Study Team**

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