COACHE Executive Report

OCTOBER 2021

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From Data to Action: Ensuring Faculty Input and Inclusion

Task Force on Faculty Satisfaction
Final Report
October 14, 2021

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Executive Report Overview

COACHE Faculty
Job Satisfaction Survey

Harvard University's **Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE)** faculty job satisfaction survey was administered for the first time at Baylor University in Spring 2020. Under the leadership of Dr. Nancy Brickhouse, Provost and Chief Academic Officer, a Task Force comprised of faculty and staff from across campus[1] administered the survey to benchmark faculty satisfaction across ten areas of faculty work-life.[2] Consistent with Baylor faculty's high engagement in campus life, 63 percent of eligible, full-time faculty completed the anonymous survey, a record response rate among participating institutions.[3]

In Fall 2020, the task force completed the initial data analysis and shared with the campus a significant preliminary finding: *Baylor faculty are among the most satisfied faculty of all COACHE participants in the areas of teaching, research, and service.*[4] Notably, 80% of Faculty support and connect with Baylor's Christian Mission.

RESEARCH	TEACHING	SERVICE
BAYLOR-55%	BAYLOR-85%	BAYLOR-68%
PEERS-45%	PEERS-80%	PEERS-59%
COHORT-50%	COHORT-79%	COHORT-56%

The task force identified four areas that, if developed, would enhance faculty experiences and position Baylor to achieve the goals of *Illuminate*:

- Underrepresented Minority Faculty Experiences
- Decision-Making Across All Levels
- Mid-Career Uncertainty
- Barriers to Interdisciplinary Research and Teaching

Faculty engagement in institutional governance, support for professional achievement, and a sense of belonging are essential elements of Baylor's historic commitment to faculty excellence. In addition, Baylor's aspiration to become a preeminent Christian institution necessitates developing initiatives that respond to faculty feedback and cultivate a diverse, high-performing, and mission-driven faculty community. The COACHE Survey demonstrates the Provost's commitment to data-driven initiatives that ensure faculty input and inclusion at Baylor University for years to come.

Working Group Findings & Charge

Campus-wide working groups were formed in Spring 2021 to conduct additional data analysis and identify strategies to improve faculty experiences.[5] Dr. Brickhouse charged the working groups with creating ***2-3 practical, impactful, actionable initiatives that align with the priorities of Illuminate.*** These groups worked throughout the spring and summer to develop high-priority recommendations. Working group executive summary reports are available on the COACHE webpage: **www.baylor.edu/provost/coache**

Working Group Recommendations

A synthesis of the Working Group Reports reveals four areas for institutional growth.

Faculty Inclusion

All faculty should experience a strong sense of belonging within the Baylor community without encountering unique barriers to inclusion and acceptance. We recognize that that is currently not the case.[1] Underrepresented and marginalized faculty members must be regarded and treated as inherently valuable persons and respected members of the faculty body. Baylor needs to begin the process of making meaningful cultural change to create a more inclusive environment. First, Baylor needs to provide more opportunities for leadership development and faculty enrichment for current and future faculty from underrepresented groups. Second, the University needs to conduct the research to understand where this inequity comes from in order to help all faculty understand it and develop specific strategies to combat it. Third, there needs to be more visible leadership at the departmental, college and university level for people from underrepresented minority groups. The task force supports the creation of a vice provost for diversity provided the position has the necessary authority and resources.

Leadership Development

The University should invest in faculty who perform leadership roles, from committee chairpersons to academic leaders, by offering training and mentorship. The training would allow leaders to better appreciate the need for clarity in decision-making processes, learn new ways to foster faculty input into decision-making, and understand the value of communicating decisions openly. In addition, well-equipped leaders are positioned to help early and mid-career faculty experience more rewarding careers and address the significant cultural issues that impact URM faculty.

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1 While COACHE defines diversity in representational terms as underrepresented minority (non-white, non-Asian) faculty members, Baylor recognizes the value of diversity in many forms, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, sex, and ability.

Finally, trained leaders can model and cultivate best practices for evaluating emerging, collaborative areas of research and interdisciplinary endeavors and assess innovations in teaching and research that advance the goals of *Illuminate*.

Transparent Processes

The University should foster transparent decision-making processes, policies, and practices at all levels. Clarity in governance would promote greater unity across campus and encourage healthy discussions between faculty and administrators. Clear promotion guidelines and procedures would empower faculty to plan for and secure advancement while also supporting the vision of *Illuminate*. The most critical need for transparency is likely at the departmental level as departmental operations have the most significant, ongoing impact on faculty lives. Each department should, therefore, write by-laws and policies to ensure equitable and consistent practices across academic units.

Professional Support

Faculty seeking to advance in their careers—from Lecturer to Sr. Lecturer as well as through the ranks of assistant, associate, and full professor—should receive mentoring, support, and encouragement from academic leaders and faculty colleagues. A visibly supportive institutional culture would motivate faculty to pursue professional development and, ultimately, strive for career advancement. An inclusive and equitable institutional culture would also assist faculty in managing their workloads and remediate barriers to faculty success. Mentoring across faculty ranks and academic units would better equip faculty to lean into collaborative opportunities, including leadership roles and academic endeavors. Finally, comprehensive faculty evaluation processes are designed to reward faculty investments in institutional priorities, including interdisciplinary research, mentoring, and each *Illuminate* pillar.

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1 COACHE Task Force members include Jason MacGregor, co-leader, Lenore Wright, co-leader, Lauren Barron, Andrea Dixon, Derek Dodson, Karen Kemp, Horace Maxile, Kathleen Morley, Jon Singletary, James Stamey, Meaghann Wheelis, and John Wood. *Ex-officio* Members include Lori Baker, Matt Cordon, Coretta Pittman, and Brian Raines.

2 The ten COACHE Survey subject areas are (1) Appreciation & Recognition, (2) Department Engagement, Quality & Collegiality, (3) Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, (4) Institutional Leadership & Shared Governance, (5) Interdisciplinary Work, Collaboration, & Mentoring, (6-8) Nature of Work (Research, Teaching, and Service), (9) Resources and Support, and (10) Tenure, Promotion, and Renewal.

3 110 institutions comprise the comparison cohort for the 2020 COACHE Survey. Baylor's select peer institutions are Emory University, Georgetown University, St. Louis University, Tulane University, and Vanderbilt University.

4 As noted above, Baylor's COACHE survey cohort consists of 110 institutions.

5 Baylor's four faculty working groups and their respective members are as follows.

Decision-Making Across all Levels
Matt Cordon, leader
Andy Arterbury, Andrea Dixon, Tisha Emerson, Kendra Gagnon, Jennifer Good, Emily Hunter, Elissa Madden, Gary Mortenson, Anne-Marie Schultz, DeAnna Toten Beard, Doug Weaver, and Gaynor Yancey.

Mid-Career Uncertainty
Theresa Kennedy, leader
Dave Bridge, data advisor
Chris Wynveen, Ian Gravagne, Rishi Sriram, Antonio Macias, Kathy Hillman, Jeffrey Olafsen, Barbara Purdum-Cassidy, Laine Scales, Stacy McCracken, Debbie Shirey, Rosalie Barrera, Katie Binetti, Trey Cade, Joe Coker, and Ivy Hamerly.

Underrepresented Minority Faculty Experiences
Patricia Wilson, leader
Carlos Cardoza, Rosario Colchero, Malcolm Foley, Julia Hejduk, Ronald Johnson, Heidi Marcum, Mia Moody-Ramirez, Kathryn Osteen, Lakia Scott, Matthea Williams, and George Yancey.

Barriers to Interdisciplinary Research and Teaching
Peter Klein, leader
Francis Beckwith, Gary Carini, Marie Hastings-Tolsma, Heather Hudson, Leah Jackson-Teague, Richard Jordan, Forest Kim, Paul Martens, Kelsey Ragan, Carol Schuetz, and Kelly Ylitalo.

Underrepresented Minority Faculty Experiences

What issue did your group address?

The **Underrepresented Minority (URM) Faculty Experiences** working group addressed the disparity in satisfaction between URM and non-URM faculty. Specifically, the COACHE Survey reveals that URM faculty, defined by COACHE as non-Asian and non-white faculty, are less satisfied than non-URM faculty with their overall Baylor experience. URM faculty are especially concerned about Baylor's relatively low number of diverse faculty and the institution's ostensible lack of awareness of the unique challenges URM faculty face.

What data informed the working group's discussions and recommendations?

The URM Faculty Experiences working group analyzed COACHE findings, conferred with relevant academic leaders, and solicited anecdotal accounts of Baylor experiences from URM faculty. The working group concluded that URM faculty experience lower levels of satisfaction regarding review, promotion, tenure processes, and balancing work and family obligations. URM faculty also perceive greater formal and informal service expectations and encounter less support for maintaining teaching assignments in their areas of expertise and preserving their scholarly agendas.

At a high level, what 2-3 initiatives might strengthen URM faculty satisfaction and advance the goals of *Illuminate*?

First, to cultivate a culture that supports faculty diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), **we recommend a Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.** The VP for Faculty DEI would have responsibility for overseeing DEI efforts that affect faculty life, including faculty programming, training, and recognition for DEI achievements. The VP for Faculty DEI would also collaborate with HBCUs, HCIs, and DEI-recognized institutions to learn and promote best practices in DEI and evaluate the University's efforts to strengthen DEI.

Second, to improve the experiences of URM faculty, **we recommend the development of DEI advancement and mentoring opportunities for URM faculty.** Faculty fellowships and grants focused on DEI objectives, shadowing, training, and development opportunities for URM faculty, mentoring programs for non-promoted faculty members, and increased recognition of faculty who have overcome barriers to achieve distinction would elevate the status of URM faculty and enhance DEI culture.

Third, to understand the factors that inform URM faculty experiences, **we recommend additional quantitative and qualitative research through COACHE and appropriate Baylor mechanisms.** We encourage research that seeks to determine the nature of URM faculty experiences in tenure and promotion, workload allocation and course assignments, university service, and work-life balance.

If successful, how would your recommended initiatives improve faculty lives?

Dedicating resources, programming, and research for DEI will enrich the culture of belonging at Baylor by supporting faculty flourishing across faculty differences. DEI initiatives, coupled with efforts to increase faculty diversity, will also remediate barriers to URM faculty success and inclusion and signify the university's missional commitment to the diverse body of Christ.

Mid-Career Uncertainty

What issue did your working group address?

The **Mid-Career Uncertainty (MCU)** working group addressed the reported uncertainty mid-career faculty (associate professors and senior lecturers) feel about the next phase of their professional lives. Baylor faculty report lower satisfaction than select peers with promotion-related processes, guidelines, and support.[1] The least satisfied mid-career group is associate professors with female associate professors reporting the most dissatisfaction. Lecturers and Senior lecturers also express dissatisfaction with advancement opportunities.

What data informed your working group's discussions and recommendations?

COACHE's nine promotion-related questions address the **perceived clarity** of promotion-related processes and procedures, the **perceived support** for promotion, and the **perceived reasonableness** of promotion expectations. Baylor scored lower then participating institutions, including select peers, on all nine questions. Associate Professors report the greatest uncertainty about promotion. Their uncertainty ranges across the promotion process from promotion standards to requisite bodies of evidence and established timeframes for pursuing promotion. Tenured faculty also report

uncertainty about whether their units will support their advancement and whether they will succeed at achieving promotion.

The MCU working group analyzed Baylor's mean survey scores, participated in a webinar on navigating mid-career transitions, and discussed literature on obstacles to promotion.

At a high level, what 2-3 initiatives might mitigate mid-career uncertainty and advance the goals of *Illuminate*?

First, to equip associate professors for promotion to full, **we recommend an associate professor mentorship program that consists of large-scale workshops, small group networks, and one-on-one mentoring.** COACHE demonstrates a need for Baylor to build on its laudable commitment to teaching development by dedicating resources and programming to faculty development more broadly. Relatedly, we recommend mentoring opportunities for lecturers and an exploration of promotion tiers and ranks beyond senior lecturer.

Second, to clarify promotion guidelines and resolve faculty uncertainty about departmental support, **we recommend a scaffolded promotion-to-full process.** A scaffolded process would involve making promotion materials accessible electronically, training chairs on best practices in faculty promotion, requiring chairs to communicate early and often with associate professors about promotion, and engaging full professors in mentoring conversations and coaching roles.

Third, to ensure the fair application of promotion guidelines, **we recommend the adoption of a two-year grace period for associate professors who declare an intention to apply for promotion prior to a sudden change in promotion guidelines.** The grace period would give faculty intent on pursuing promotion time to meet new departmental standards.

If successful, how would your recommended initiatives improve faculty lives?

Mid-career faculty will be better positioned to advance professionally in the face of clear and accessible promotion guidelines and standards, visibly supportive institutional and departmental cultures, and fair and reasonable promotion expectations and practices. Ultimately, if these initiatives succeed, MCU faculty will be better equipped to plan and secure their advancement and shape the trajectory of their departments.

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1 110 institutions comprise the comparison group for the 2020 COACHE Survey. Baylor's five selected peers are Emory University, Georgetown University, St. Louis University, Tulane University, and Vanderbilt University.

Barriers to Interdisciplinary Research & Teaching

What issue did your working group address?

The **Barriers to Interdisciplinary Research and Teaching (BIRT)** working group addressed impediments to research, teaching, and professional activities that draw upon two or more academic disciplines. While Baylor faculty are highly interested in interdisciplinary teaching and research, they encounter institutional barriers that hinder collaborative, multidisciplinary activities across academic units.

What data informed your working group's discussions and recommendations?

Interdisciplinarity is challenging for all institutions, including Baylor's select peers.[1]

Although Baylor faculty perceive institutional support for interdisciplinary teaching, research, and professional activities, COACHE reveals that Baylor faculty experience greater barriers to interdisciplinarity than peers in *opportunities*, *rewards*, and *resources* for collaboration:

- Baylor faculty perceive fewer opportunities for collaboration across departments.

- Baylor faculty have low expectations that interdisciplinary research will be rewarded for tenure.

- Baylor faculty are skeptical that budgets are adequate to advance interdisciplinary work.

At a high level, what 2-3 initiatives might reduce barriers to interdisciplinary research and teaching and advance the goals of *Illuminate*?

First, to resolve the perception of limited opportunities for collaboration across departments, **we recommend the promotion of interdisciplinary activities through diffuse, diverse, and deliberate forms of communication, marketing endeavors, and campus-wide missives.** Amplifying, advertising, recognizing, and rewarding interdisciplinary programs and projects can inspire new collaborations between departments and generate novel approaches to interdisciplinarity across diverse disciplines. Improved cross-campus communication should allow new interdisciplinary work to organically emerge.

Second, to mitigate the concern that interdisciplinarity is disadvantageous for earning promotion and particularly tenure, **we recommend the acknowledgment of interdisciplinary research and teaching in tenure guidelines and the dedicated training of tenured faculty on the evaluation of interdisciplinary teaching and research.** Additionally, we encourage departments to consider formulating interdisciplinary expectations for new and targeted faculty lines, expectations that could help normalize extant interdisciplinary programs and projects, minimize the perceived stigma against interdisciplinary teaching and research, and foster forms of innovation integral to Research 1 and Tier 1 institutions.

Third, to firm up resources for interdisciplinarity, **we recommend additional institutional support for interdisciplinary endeavors.** We envision a range of resources from an ad-hoc standing committee on interdisciplinarity to an endowed center of interdisciplinary studies. We further recommend the formulation of clear, transparent rules for resource allocation and the calculation of credit for interdisciplinary research, teaching, and outreach. Dedicated staff who assume responsibility for interdisciplinary training and programming would be a helpful first step.

If successful, how would your recommended initiatives improve faculty lives?

Breakthroughs in science and technology, as well as innovative scholarship and teaching in the humanities, necessitate expanded opportunities, rewards, and resources for academic endeavors at the boundaries between disciplines. If successful, these initiatives will increase faculty collaboration across departments and disciplines. Faculty will gain greater access to grant opportunities and collaborative work and potentially expand their professional achievements and scholarly reputations.

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Decision-Making Across the University

What issue did your working group address?

The **Decision-Making (DM) Across All Levels** working group addressed governance structures, policies, and practices across Baylor University. The COACHE Survey reveals that Baylor faculty are less satisfied than select peers with decision-making processes and procedures.[1] Faculty expressed particular concern with departmental and school-level decision-making around shared governance and transparency. Survey results also reveal concerns with broader institutional structures that preclude faculty from providing input before decisions are made.

What data informed your working group's discussions and recommendations?

COACHE devotes nineteen questions to decision-making processes and practices. Baylor scored lower than select peers on five elements of institutional governance:

- Soliciting joint input from faculty and administration.
- Adopting governance structures that ensure faculty input.
- Consulting with faculty before arriving at important decisions.
- Publicly recognizing institutional progress.
- Regularly reviewing the effectiveness of institutional governance.

At a high level, what 2-3 initiatives might strengthen faculty satisfaction with decision-making and advance the goals of *Illuminate*?

First, to better align Baylor's decision-making processes with select peers and create a more robust understanding and practice of shared governance, **we recommend a comprehensive review of the committee structure across campus.**[2]

Second, to better monitor current decision-making processes and develop institutional accountability measures, **we recommend that academic units and departments develop written by-laws and policies.**

Third, to better equip academic leaders to engage in shared governance, **we recommend training and ongoing professional development for department chairs, division directors, and University committee chairs.**

If successful, how would your recommended initiatives improve faculty lives?

If these initiatives prove successful, faculty will enjoy a more meaningful role in decision-making. Moreover, by reviewing committee structures, creating by-laws and departmental policies, and developing training protocols for academic leaders, faculty will understand who speaks into decisions, who monitors the decision-making process, who ensures faculty are included in the decision-making process, and who communicates a decision. Ultimately, these recommended initiatives will strengthen shared governance at Baylor by ensuring that decisions reflect faculty input and cascade through the institution.

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1 110 institutions comprise the comparison group for the 2020 COACHE Survey. Baylor's five selected peer institutions are Emory University, Georgetown University, St. Louis University, Tulane University, and Vanderbilt University.

2 We refer you to the Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities at **www.aaup.org/report/statement-government-colleges-and-universities**