

Report of the Results of the 2004-2005 BGSU Full-Time Faculty Survey and Interview Results

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of the BGSU Faculty Survey completed in 2004-2005 by BGSU full-time faculty. It provides information on the faculty's view about their roles in the University, their perceptions about the institution, the level of familiarity they had with the BGSU Academic Plan, the activities that they would like to be involved as part of their job, the stress they had during the past two years, and the satisfaction level they feel with their job. The report also describes the results of interviews done with a sample of faculty members in the same time period. The interviews asked about faculty members' knowledge of the academic plan, their thoughts about the effectiveness of faculty rewards and incentives, their views on alternative approaches to faculty allocation of effort, the faculty role in student retention, their ideas about progress that the University has made in assessment of student learning, and their views about the

adequacy of faculty input into the decision process. The results of the survey and interviews, together with the report of Staff Survey, could be used to determine how well the University is successfully building community in the face of change.

Readers are cautioned to remember the 40% response rate when interpreting the survey results and to keep in mind that the interviews were designed to provide in-depth information from a sample of faculty members whose views may not be reflective of those of all BGSU full-time faculty members.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY: SURVEY

The Office of Institutional Research conducts the Faculty Survey once every three years in order to update information about the faculty's activities, perceptions, and concerns. The instrument we used between 1995 and 2001 was the UCLA Faculty Survey - a commercial survey that has been available to the public since 1972. Due to the desire to improve the response rate, a shorter locally developed tool – the BGSU Faculty Survey, was used for the latest data collection.

The BGSU Faculty Survey was distributed to 886 full-time faculty members, at the Bowling Green and Firelands campuses, in Fall 2004. A total of 358 surveys were received for a response rate of 40%. This rate is higher than the one in 2001(35%)* and in 1998(39%)*.

To examine how representative the survey respondents were of the population, the demographic characteristics of the survey participants were compared to all Fall 2004 full-time faculty (see table next page). There was a high degree of gender and racial background similarity between the respondents and the population. Survey respondents by college roughly mirrored the distribution of population. The largest difference between the survey respondents and the population was the under-representation of instructor among the participants. This limitation and the low response rate require that all results from this survey be interpreted with some caution.

The results were analyzed by noting the percentage of participants who answered each of the items. Percentages may not always sum to 100 due to rounding. Group differences (e.g., gender, ethnicity, rank and college) were also examined and significant differences are noted where they occurred. In addition 2004 responses were compared with those 2001 and 1998 full time faculty responses.

* The 1998 and 2001 survey was distributed to all faculty members including full-time and part-time faculties as well as administrators. The 2004 survey was distributed only to full time faculty members.

	Survey Respondents	Population
Gender:		
Female:	44%	43%
Male	56%	57%
Race:		
Minority	14%	15%
European American	86%	84%
Rank:		
Professor	24%	19%
Associate Professor	33%	29%
Assistant Professor	27%	24%
Instructor	13%	23%
Lecturer	4%	4%
College:		
Arts and Sciences	52%	54%
Business Administration	9%	10%
Education and Human Development	18%	15%
Firelands	3%	5%
Health and Human Services	4%	3%
Musical Arts	8%	6%
Technology	2%	5%
University Libraries	4%	2%

RESULTS: SURVEY

1. Familiarity with the BGSU Academic Plan

There are six questions related to how familiar faculties are with the BGSU Academic Plan. The answers are shown below.

I am familiar with the BGSU Academic Plan

Strongly Agree: 13%
 Agree: 45%
 Neutral: 20%
 Disagree: 17%
 Strongly Disagree: 5%

I am familiar with the Leadership in Learning theme of the BGSU Academic Plan

Strongly Agree: 8%
 Agree: 30%
 Neutral: 27%
 Disagree: 23%
 Strongly Disagree: 12%

I am familiar with the Embracing the Arts theme of the BGSU Academic Plan

Strongly Agree:	10%
Agree:	28%
Neutral:	24%
Disagree:	24%
Strongly Disagree:	15%

I am familiar with the Critical Thinking about Values theme of the BGSU Academic Plan

Strongly Agree:	21%
Agree:	45%
Neutral:	18%
Disagree:	12%
Strongly Disagree:	5%

I am familiar with the Understanding Cultures and Nations theme of the BGSU Academic Plan

Strongly Agree:	11%
Agree:	33%
Neutral:	24%
Disagree:	22%
Strongly Disagree:	10%

I am familiar with the New Media and Emerging Technologies theme of the BGSU Academic Plan

Strongly Agree:	11%
Agree:	32%
Neutral:	25%
Disagree:	22%
Strongly Disagree:	10%

Fifty-eight percent of the survey respondents indicated that they were familiar with the BGSU Academic Plan and 66% of them claimed that they were familiar with the Critical Thinking about Values theme of the BGSU Academic Plan. Only 44% or less of them, however, pointed out that they are familiar with the other four themes of the Plan.

Associate professors were most likely to report that they were familiar with the BGSU Academic Plan, followed by professors, assistant professors, instructors, and lecturers. While faculty in University Libraries and the College of Musical Arts were most likely to claim that they were familiar with the Embracing the Arts theme of the BGSU Academic Plan, faculty in the College of Technology were least likely to say so.

2. Roles at the University

I fell that I have am important role to play in student recruitment

Strongly Agree:	10%
Agree:	35%
Neutral:	27%
Disagree:	19%
Strongly Disagree:	9%

I fell that I have am important role to play in student retention

Strongly Agree:	16%
Agree:	51%
Neutral:	20%
Disagree:	8%
Strongly Disagree:	5%

I fell that I have am important role to play in student advising

Strongly Agree:	19%
Agree:	39%
Neutral:	25%
Disagree:	9%
Strongly Disagree:	9%

I feel that I have input into important issues within my department or school

Strongly Agree:	23%
Agree:	45%
Neutral:	14%
Disagree:	11%
Strongly Disagree:	8%

I feel that I have input into important issues within my college

Strongly Agree:	10%
Agree:	27%
Neutral:	24%
Disagree:	22%
Strongly Disagree:	18%

I feel that I have input into important issues at the university level

Strongly Agree:	4%
Agree:	15%
Neutral:	27%
Disagree:	28%
Strongly Disagree:	26%

BGSU faculty were more likely to feel that they have an important role to play in student retention and advising than in student recruitment, and that they have input into important

issues within their department or school rather than at the college or university level. European American faculty members were more likely than minority faculty to report that they have contributed into important issues within their college. Firelands and Libraries faculty were more likely than the faculty in other colleges to feel that they have contributed their ideas at both college and university level.

Compared with faculty in the other colleges, faculty in the College of Health and Human Services, the College of Musical Arts, and the College of Technology were more likely to indicate that they have an important role to play in student recruitment; faculty in the College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Education and Human Development, the College of Health & Human Services, and the College of Technology were more likely to say they have an important role to play in student advising. Faculty members in the College of Business Administration were least likely to feel that they have an important role to play in student retention.

3. Perceptions about the University

Most students are well-prepared academically compared to my expectations

Strongly Agree:	1%
Agree:	19%
Neutral:	27%
Disagree:	39%
Strongly Disagree:	15%

Most students are engaged academically compared to my expectations

Strongly Agree:	1%
Agree:	22%
Neutral:	27%
Disagree:	37%
Strongly Disagree:	13%

Women faculty are treated fairly at BGSU compared to my expectations

Strongly Agree:	18%
Agree:	39%
Neutral:	25%
Disagree:	12%
Strongly Disagree:	6%

Faculty of color are treated fairly at BGSU compared to my expectations

Strongly Agree:	16%
Agree:	37%
Neutral:	34%
Disagree:	9%
Strongly Disagree:	4%

I feel that BGSU has a strong vision for new academic initiatives

Strongly Agree: 8%
Agree: 35%
Neutral: 30%
Disagree: 16%
Strongly Disagree: 11%

More than half of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that women faculty and faculty of color are treated fairly at BGSU. Forty four percent of them feel that BGSU has a strong vision for new academic initiatives. Only around 20% of them agreed that most students are well-prepared and engaged academically according to their standards.

Male faculty and European American faculty were more likely than their counter parts to agree that women faculty and faculty of color are treated fairly at BGSU. Faculty in University Libraries, the College of Education and Human Development, and the College of Musical Arts were more likely than the faculty in the other colleges to say that most students are well-prepared and engaged academically according to their standards. Faculty members in the College of Technology were least likely to agree that BGSU has a strong vision for new academic initiatives.

4. Job Satisfaction

Faculty members were asked how satisfied they were with 14 aspects of their jobs at BGSU. As shown on Table 1 below, more than half of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with most of the items listed on the survey.

Table 1. Aspects of the Job Noted as Satisfactory or Very Satisfactory*

	1998	2001	2004
	%	%	%
Autonomy and independence	85	82	85
Professional relationships with other faculty	73	73	79
Job security	73	67	71
Overall job satisfaction	69	66	71
Competency of colleagues	70	68	70
Opportunity to develop new ideas	72	74	65
Office/lab space	NA	62	60
Social relationships with other faculty	55	59	60
Teaching load	62	61	59
Opportunity for scholarly pursuits	60	62	58
Benefits	NA	NA	56
Relationships with administration	50	53	49
Quality of students	33	33	41
Salary	NA	NA	40
Salary and Fringe benefits	37	39	NA

Compared with the faculty in 1998 and 2001, faculty of 2004 were more likely to report that they are satisfied with the quality of students as well as the professional relationships with other faculty, but less likely to claim that they are happy with the opportunities to develop new ideas.

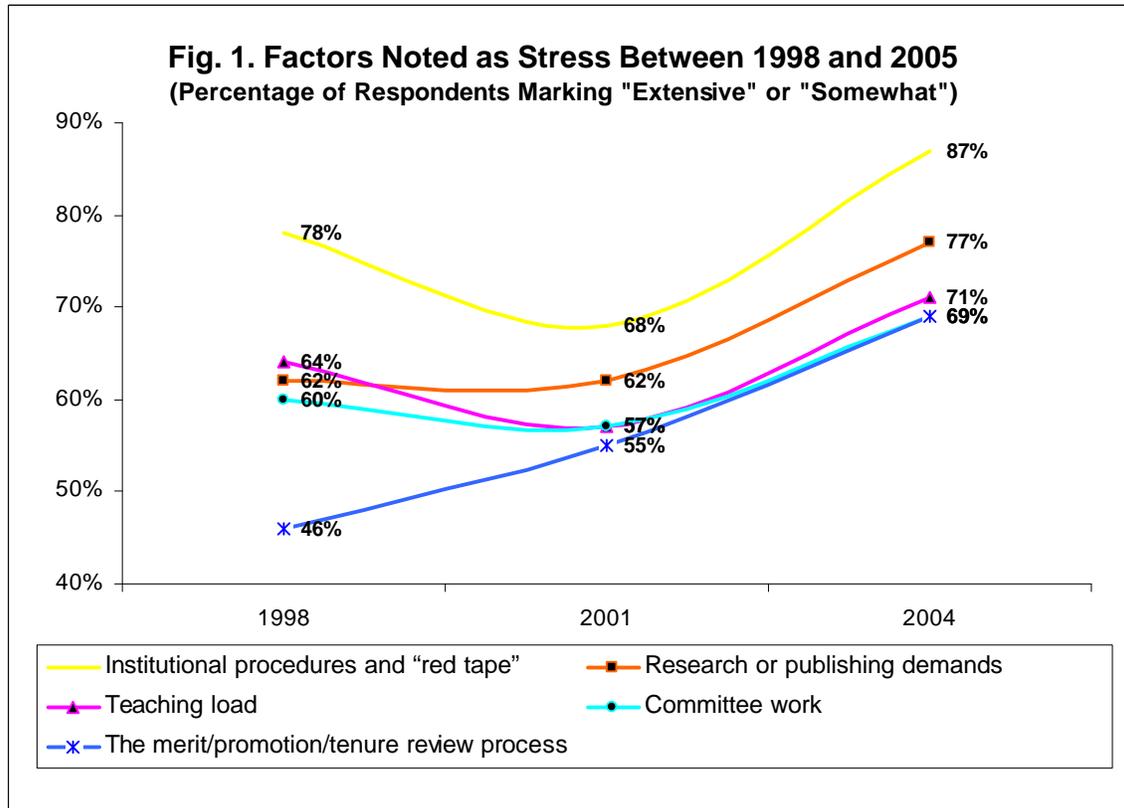
Male faculty members were more likely to be satisfied than female faculty with the opportunity for scholarly pursuits and job security. European American faculty members were more likely to say that they are satisfied with competency of colleagues, quality of students, and job overall than were minority faculty. While lecturers were least likely to be satisfied with the opportunity for scholarly pursuits and instructors were least likely to be satisfied with their job security, they both were more likely to be satisfied with competency of colleagues than were faculty in other ranks.

Compared with the faculty who worked in academic colleges, faculty who worked in University Libraries were more likely to express their satisfaction with their relationships with administration as well as the quality of students and job security. Faculty in Firelands and the College of Health and Human Services were more likely to be happy with their teaching loads than were faculty in other colleges and University Libraries.

5. Sources of stress

**Table 2. Factors Noted as Sources of Stress During the Last Two Years:
(Percentage of respondents marking "Extensive" or "Somewhat")**

	1998	2001	2004
	%	%	%
Time pressures	89	84	92
Institutional procedures and "red tape"	78	68	87
Budget cuts	NA	NA	84
Lack of personal time	81	77	78
Research or publishing demands	62	62	77
Teaching load	64	57	71
Committee work	60	57	69
The merit/promotion/tenure review process	46	55	69
Household responsibilities	75	71	68
Keeping up with information technology	66	66	64
Personal finances	61	63	64
Colleagues	63	50	58
My physical health	56	52	48
Interacting with students	NA	NA	45
Time pressures	89	84	92



Most faculty experienced considerable stress during the last six years, either from their work place or home (see Table 2 and Fig.1 above). Moreover, the percentage of faculty who feel that they have been stressed by the merit/promotion/tenure review process increased constantly between 1998 and 2004, from 46% in 1998 to 55% in 2001 and 69% in 2004 (see Fig.1 and Table 2). 2004 faculty were also more likely than the faculty in 2001 and 1998 to express their stress in the areas of institutional procedures and "red tape," teaching load, committee work, and research or publishing demands.

Female faculty were more likely than male faculty to report that the merit/promotion/tenure review process as well as managing household responsibilities were sources of stress. Minority faculty members were more likely than European-American faculty members to point out that research or publishing demands were the source of stress.

Among the faculty in different ranks, lecturers were most likely to indicate keeping up with information technology as a source of stress; instructors were least likely to consider lack of time, teaching load, committee work, budget cuts, and institutional procedures and "red tape" as the sources of stress. While instructors and lecturers were less likely to see their colleagues as a source of stress, assistant professors and associate professors were more likely to see the merit/promotion/tenure review process as a source of stress.

Among the faculty in University Libraries and the seven colleges, Technology and Musical Arts faculty were more likely than others to feel the stress of institutional

procedures and "red tape." Firelands faculty members were least likely to feel the stress that caused by lack of personal time as well as research and publishing demands.

6. Activities in Which Faculty Would Like to be Involved

Table 3. Please indicate the extent to which you would like each of the following to be part of your job as a faculty member at BGSU

	Very Important (%)	Somewhat Important (%)	Not Important (%)
Carrying out research, scholarship, and creative activities	74	24	3
Teaching undergraduate students	72	21	7
Teaching graduate students	65	22	13
Scholarly writing	61	28	11
Providing service to my department and college and to the university	47	48	5
Providing service to my scholarly/professional association(s)	31	57	13
Being involved in grant and sponsored program activities	29	48	23
Teaching in the summer	27	37	36
Being involved in community service/outreach activities	22	47	30
Performing academic advising	20	43	37
Being involved in assessment of student learning	19	45	36
Being involved in student retention activities	13	50	37
Being involved in student recruitment activities	13	42	45
Teaching web-based classes	7	24	69

As we can see from the table above, it is very important for the majority of the survey respondents to teach undergraduate and graduate students as well as carry out research, scholarly writing, and creative activities. In terms of time and methods of teaching, 64% of them indicated that it is important or somewhat important to teach in summer, and 69% of them claimed that it is not important to teach web-based classes. In addition to teach and research, most of the faculty were also likely to be involved with activities such as providing service to the school, the community, and their professional association(s).

Male faculty members were more likely than female faculty to report that it is very important to teach graduate students and conduct research and scholarly writing. While European American faculty were more likely to say that it is very important for them to teach undergraduate students, minority faculty were more likely to feel that it is very important for them to be involved in grant and sponsored program activities, to provide service to their scholarly/professional association(s), and to teach web-based classes.

Compared with instructors and lecturers, professors, associate professors and assistant professors were more likely to indicate that it is important, as a member of the BGSU faculty, to teach graduate students, carry out research activities and scholarly writing, be involved in grant and sponsored programs, and provide services to their scholarly and professional association(s). While professors were least likely to feel that it is important for them to teach web-based classes, instructors were most likely to say it is important for them to be involved in assessment of student learning.

Compared with faculty in other colleges, faculty in University Libraries, Firelands, the College of Education and Human Development, the College of Health and Human Services, the College of Technology were more likely to report that it is important to be involved in assessment of student learning; faculty in University Libraries and the College of Musical Arts were less likely to feel that it is important for them to do academic advising and to teach summer classes. Firelands faculty were least likely to say that it is important for them to conduct scholarly writing and to teach graduate students. They were, however, most likely among the faculty in all colleges to claim that teaching undergraduate students is an important job. While Musical Arts faculty were most likely to be involved with student recruitment activities, faculty in University Libraries were least likely to do so.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY: INTERVIEWS

The interviews were carried out using qualitative research methods since the research questions are descriptive and open-ended in nature, require somewhat lengthy responses from a small group of persons with particular viewpoints, and the results were analyzed inductively (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). Techniques of naturalistic inquiry were employed, which affected research design and data analysis (Patton, 1990).

A group of eighty participants was chosen, representing ten percent of BGSU's full-time faculty members who have served for at least one year. Stratified random sampling was carried out from among all continuing full-time instructional and Library faculty members so that participants proportionately represented the entire population in terms of college, academic rank, gender, and race/ethnicity. Four of the initially identified participants declined to participate and contact could not be made with an additional twenty-three. Five rounds of additional stratified random sampling were carried out until eighty participants were identified and interviewed. Additionally, the leaders of faculty advisory groups of each college were contacted by the researcher, who requested that the groups also respond to the same interview questions. Group interviews were carried out with three of the eight groups.

Structured interview questions were developed to further illuminate faculty members' responses to selected items of the 2004-2005 BGSU Faculty Survey and after discussions with the President, Provost, and Deans. Individual interviews lasted between 15 and 90 minutes. Participants' verbal responses were manually recorded by the researcher and

later typewritten. The identities of individuals and members of groups who were interviewed were not known to anyone other than the researcher.

The researcher maintained a reflective journal in order to record observations made during the research process. The reflective journal, analysis of the results of the 2004-2005 BGSU Faculty Survey, and analysis of interview transcripts served as methods of triangulation (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998).

Data analysis yielded two types of findings: detailed descriptions of each case, which were used to document uniqueness, and shared patterns that emerge across cases (Patton, 2002). Data analysis involved breaking material into small units of observation, developing initial themes or categories within the findings, and considering alternative interpretations that either confirmed the initial themes or lead to the creation of new ones. A peer debriefer was used to test themes and alternative conclusions (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Differences in responses were noted where they were found across disciplinary, longevity, gender, or race/ethnicity dimensions. Preliminary conclusions were shared with participants for their confirmation and elaboration; this constitutes a member check (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). An audit trail of study materials serves to provide for dependability and confirmability.

RESULTS: INTERVIEWS

1. Knowledge of the BGSU Academic Plan

In parallel with the findings of the 2004-2005 Faculty Survey, faculty members' knowledge of the BGSU Academic Plan may be described as partial. Twenty-eight faculty members replied that they were aware of the Academic Plan, and twelve of them replied that they had read it and could access it if necessary, but that they were not clear on the details. Thirteen people said that they had no knowledge at all about the Academic Plan. Eight participants noted that the Academic Plan had been discussed in department or college meetings and an additional four persons knew about the Academic Plan as a result of their role on various University committees (e.g., Undergraduate Council or the Committee on Academic Affairs). One individual noted that the flyer was particularly helpful in understanding the Academic Plan.

Three people stated that their departments or colleges clearly have a place in the Academic Plan, while six stated that this was not the case. One faculty member said that she has tried to directly tie the Academic Plan to her teaching, while another noted that he had referenced it in a grant application. Three participants noted that their college strategic plans are explicitly tied to the Academic Plan. Four persons said that they did not understand the process whereby the Academic Plan was developed and/or they felt the process was top-down or not representative. Another four faculty members, however, suggested that the process was inclusive and appropriate.

Eleven faculty members noted that the goal of the Academic Plan is to shape the future directions of the University. Many participants related (or perhaps confused) the Academic Plan with other University initiatives such as the scholarship of engagement (15), the BG Experience initiative (8), BGSU's vision of becoming the premier learning community on Ohio and one of the best in the Nation (5), the interest in increasing sponsored research (4) the University's Core Values (3), undergraduate and general education (3), assessment and program review (2), and emphases on teaching and learning and the state Third Frontier initiative (1 each).

Participants were likely to relate elements of the Academic Plan to their disciplinary areas. Four persons discussed the Academic Plan's new media and emerging technologies theme, three each noted the emphasis on embracing the arts and understanding cultures and nations, and one discussed the inquiry, achievement, and engagement dimensions of the Academic Plan. An additional six faculty members named and discussed all five themes.

Two persons stated that faculty members generally buy into the Academic Plan. One characterized it as short sighted. Another called it too administration-centered. One person said that her colleagues view the Academic Plan as detracting from their teaching and research. Two described the Academic Plan as too general to allow their departments to focus. Another saw the Academic Plan as a threat to the sustainability of the graduate program in his department. Two faculty members volunteered that they were unsure of the current status of the Academic Plan and an additional two noted that implementing it is likely going to be more difficult than developing it. One individual felt that the indicators for the Academic Plan were not done well, although she acknowledged that this is a work in progress. One person stated that the Academic Plan is related to the availability of resources. One faculty member described the Academic Plan as student-centered and value-centered.

2. Faculty Rewards and Incentives

Thirteen faculty members said that rewards and incentives are appropriate, particularly given the University's financial position. An equal number felt that they are not appropriate or effective. Thirteen persons stated that monetary compensation does not affect faculty behavior or that the amount available is inadequate to do so; they stated that they are internally motivated.

Eight participants were concerned about the differences between their salaries and those of their colleagues and disciplinary averages. Six faculty members stated that salaries are fine (they were mostly, but not exclusively, in the College of Business Administration and in the sciences). Also, five people were troubled by salary differences across disciplines at BGSU. One individual discussed gender imbalance in salaries. Five discussed salary compression and inversion issues. One participant noted that faculty members can only get significant salary increases if they threaten to leave, while another noted that the only way to get a significant increase is through market adjustments. Two

persons wished faculty salaries would include a cost of living component instead of being entirely merit-based.

Twenty-six people suggested that the merit process needs to be changed, that the definition of what constitutes meritorious activity is too narrow, that the process does not meaningfully distinguish between faculty members who are truly meritorious and those who just do enough to get by, and that the merit process is too complex and time consuming for relatively small rewards. One faculty member noted that all rewards are individually-based; it would be good to have group rewards for collaborative activities. Seven persons stated that the merit process is fine. One person said that the three year rolling average approach makes it difficult to anticipate the amount of merit one will receive. A department chair indicated that he does not have sufficient options to allow him to be creative in offering rewards and incentives. It was noted that instructors and lecturers do not have access to all of the rewards and incentives as do other faculty members.

Eleven participants stated that scholarship is better rewarded than teaching, although (as some noted) this is contrary to some University and department priorities. Two people hoped that the University will do a better job of emphasizing quality over quantity in evaluating and rewarding faculty members for scholarship. Four individuals said they wish the University would more adequately support and reward scholarship.

Three individuals felt that benefits are fine, while two described health care benefits as inadequate. It was noted that Firelands faculty members do not have easy access to all of the benefits (e.g., the Recreation Center, various events) as do those of colleagues at the Bowling Green campus. Three people wished the University would make a positive decision about domestic partner benefits. Three also wished that use of the Recreation Center was entirely free for faculty members. One participant noted that she would like to be able to donate sick days to other university employees who need them. Another expressed a desire to donate her dependent tuition waiver to someone who is not a family member since she has no children. One person said she felt that the amount of the University's health care contribution for single people versus those with families is inequitable.

Five faculty members stated that funds are available and adequate for professional development, while six said that they were not, particularly funding for travel. The ability to teach small classes, working with good students, support for spousal employment, flexibility in work schedules, the availability of small grants, and stipends for summer teaching and participation in the BG Experience program were cited as incentives. Lack of replacement of faculty positions, lack of clerical staff, the inability to increase one's compensation as a result of obtaining grants, obsolete desktop computers, lack of meaningful rewards for teaching distance classes and for developing new classes, no additional compensation for overloads for faculty on twelve-month contracts, lack of encouragement for participation in interdisciplinary activities, and large classes were cited as disincentives. Three participants stated that it remains to be seen if participation in engagement activities will be rewarded.

Seven faculty members noted that expectations and workload continue to increase at a fast pace, while rewards do not. Lack of sufficient time to do one's best work was discussed as a disincentive. One participant expressed this idea as "We spend a lot of time making bandages." One individual was concerned that faculty time is not viewed as the valuable commodity that it truly is; she stated that "Faculty time is the golden goose of the institution." Nine persons indicated that non-monetary rewards, such as appreciation and inclusion, would significantly improve faculty morale. One participant stated that she wished compensation decisions were made more public.

3. Alternative Approaches to Faculty Allocation of Effort

Thirty-five of the participants responded that allowing individual faculty members to negotiate their division of effort between teaching, scholarship, and service would be a good idea; it would allow people to work toward their strengths, be more productive in their chosen areas, and be more satisfied and less stressed. It was stated that this could improve faculty recruitment and retention. Two participants noted that this would improve teaching and learning. Nineteen people discussed the need for the evaluation and reward system to change in parallel so that no one would be disadvantaged. Two stressed that faculty members should be given the opportunity to change emphases periodically.

Fifteen faculty members said that they were not in favor of this idea insofar that someone might not do any of the three activities, but that there was room for more flexibility in the relative contributions expected from each person. Some responses were even less enthusiastic: "It sounds like an extraordinarily bad idea. . . . The two tracks idea is a recipe for disaster." It was noted by eleven participants that teaching and scholarship are mutually reinforcing activities that should not be separated. One participant said: "Knowledge that is not shared is a waste; teaching not informed by research is stale." Three people said that this idea would put us at a disadvantage with other universities if BGSU adopted this policy unilaterally. One participant suggested that the best people do everything well. Two noted that, rather than implementing this idea, the University should recognize and reward a broader definition of scholarship. One suggested that BGSU should instead concentrate on rewarding group efforts. One person said that the idea has no merit since only scholarship really matters in terms of faculty reward. One stated that this possible approach could disrupt shared governance. A participant related the idea to the issue of faculty workload: "Future arrangements are constrained by past performance. You work more in order to do more prestigious and interesting work, not less work."

Twelve individuals stated that the idea would play out differently in different areas due to size and mission. Four people responded that the idea would be difficult to implement. Another four said that their departments do this now to some extent. It was noted that all faculty should be expected to do research in a doctoral department. It is also clear that, whatever the distribution of effort, the overall activities of a department need to get done. Faculty members should be expected to excel in their chosen emphasis and not use this

idea as an excuse to do less; as one participant stated; “Some people just don’t do much of anything!” The need for professional development for faculty members to get back up to speed when changing emphases (particularly from teaching to scholarship) was noted by four participants. Two individuals responded that considerable flexibility of effort might be extended to tenured faculty, but that tenure-track faculty should be expected to demonstrate their proficiency in all areas. Four people said that everyone would abandon the service commitment if given the opportunity; therefore, everyone should still be expected to do some amount of service. One participant agreed that it would be useful to try the idea on a pilot basis.

4. The Faculty’s Role in Student Retention

As was also noted in the results of the 2004-2005 BGSU Faculty Survey, nearly all of the participants stated that faculty members play a crucial role in student retention and that it is a legitimate part of faculty members’ responsibilities. Thirty-three people said that the primary role is to be a good teacher and engage students in their learning. Twenty-one also discussed the need for faculty members to be available and approachable. Ten remarked that faculty members’ role as academic advisors is critical. Additionally, nine participants stated that some degree of personal counseling is appropriate, but there is a point beyond which this role should be left to trained professionals. It was noted that the opportunity for faculty to facilitate student retention is related to class size and other workload factors. Others discussed the faculty role in student retention in terms of respecting students; acting as role models; getting students involved in their learning through activities such as special presentation and activities, clubs, etc.; giving useful feedback to students about expectations and academic performance; and referring students to services available on campus. Mid-term progress reports and other means of student feedback and intervention were cited by ten participants as positive, but a workload issue for them. Others, however, stated that the mid-term progress reports are not superior to, and perhaps detract from, the feedback and outreach they already provide to students. Nearly all participants noted that faculty members need to be adequately rewarded for their efforts in improving student retention and that this is generally not the case now. Several of those interviewed noted that retention would increase if teaching was valued more. One participant said that faculty members need to do a better job of coherently linking student learning experiences. It was noted that programs such as the learning communities, Academic Enhancement, the BG Experience, and the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program facilitate student retention.

Other faculty members addressed this issue in terms of student academic performance, preparation, and motivation, which many described as inadequate. This agrees with the findings of the 2004-2005 BGSU faculty Survey. The majority of participants, regardless of their view on the faculty role, stated that some students simply should not be retained and that the University and the students are not well served by lowering standards or following a “retention at all costs” approach. Two persons stated that they felt pressured to lower their standards in order to pass students. Twelve of those interviewed responded that the responsibility for student retention is fundamentally that of the students themselves and the administration, not the faculty. One asked: “How much burden

should be put on [faculty members] if students are not prepared academically?” Some participants noted that most students leave due to reasons such as finances and personal issues that can not be impacted by faculty. One person suggested that new tenure-track faculty must concentrate on their scholarship not on issues such as student retention. Six participants stated that faculty involvement in activities such as student move in and ice cream socials doesn't represent engagement, doesn't support retention, and is a waste of time.

5. Progress in Assessment of Student Learning

Twenty-five participants felt that BGSU had made good progress in assessment of student learning. Numerous assessment approaches were cited, including alumni surveys, senior papers, capstone courses, internships, portfolios, performance assessment, pre- and post-testing, use of certification and licensure exams, and tracking of graduate school placements. Four persons noted that accreditation has made assessment a priority. Six faculty members could cite specific examples of changes in curricula and pedagogy based upon assessment. Three stated that their departments had made substantial progress in assessment. One person suggested that the University Learning Outcomes and the rubrics that are under construction are great.

Twenty-three of those interviewed stated that progress in assessment of student learning has not been sufficient. Most agreed that some progress had been made: learning outcomes were typically in place and data had been collected, but little inferences were drawn from the results and no tangible results could be identified. Seven participants characterized their departments' approaches as not systematic. “We have done a lot of assessment with little to show for it” was a sentiment expressed by eight faculty members. Five persons stated that assessment does not seem to be a priority of departments, colleges, and/or the University. Three said that no University-wide approach to assessment is apparent and two felt that the Student Achievement Assessment Committee is too prescriptive in its efforts. Four people hoped that faculty members would receive more training about assessment and two stated that the purpose of assessment had not been made clear. Three noted that there seem to be no rewards or consequences associated with assessment. Two people blamed faculty workloads for lack of progress in assessment. One stated that faculty members rarely think about teaching and learning beyond their own courses. Another suggested that a course release for someone to act as the departmental assessment coordinator would improve the situation. Three participants said that faculty members have not internalized the usefulness of assessment and respond with a bureaucratic compliance mentality. A faculty member noted that assessment results are not shared in his department. Someone else noted that her department receives no feedback about the adequacy of her department's assessment efforts. One person suggested that some faculty members feel threatened by assessment. Another made the statement that disciplinary accreditation does not facilitate assessment. Two stated that assessment has not improved student learning so far. Two participants felt that student learning outcomes in their areas needed to be improved and another noted that the learning outcomes that are most important are

the most difficult to measure. Another two said that assessment is particularly difficult to carry out in multidisciplinary programs.

Only two of the eighty participants disagreed with the premise that assessment is an inherently worthwhile activity. One stated that assessment is only done for public relations purposes, that exam grades are adequate as an assessment device, and that faculty members are dissatisfied and resentful over assessment. Another felt that too much emphasis has been given to assessment and that if faculty members are good teachers good results will simply follow.

Eleven of the participants stated that they are not involved in assessment activities and could not provide any responses in this area.

A few additional ideas were shared concerning assessment of student learning. One person stated that we should focus more on the skills that employers need. Another hoped that the strengthened emphasis on undergraduate research opportunities will improve assessment results. It was also suggested that student learning and assessment should be emphasized and explained more at Orientation and Registration. Five participants felt that graduate level assessment activities were better developed in their departments, while one felt that they were not as well developed.

6. Adequacy of Input into the Decision Process

As was the case with the findings of the 2004-2005 BGSU Faculty Survey, faculty members are most likely to report that they have adequate input at the level of their departments or schools, less likely to report that they have adequate input at the college level, and least likely to feel that their input is appropriate at the University level. Fifty-nine of the eighty participants felt that they had adequate input into decision making at the department level. Nine did not. Twenty-three said that they had adequate input at the University level, while eighteen did not, and fourteen did not wish to.

Seven people stated that the climate for collegiality is good in their departments or schools, and many of them complimented their chairs or directors. Six suggested that faculty members have more potential to have influence than they think they do, but they have to take the initiative. Three noted that lots of faculty members don't wish to be involved in decision making. One stated that "too many people are working in vacuums." Two noted that they "invest selectively" in providing input. Another two were concerned that tenure-track faculty are too intimidated to speak up. Two participants stated that there are too many University initiatives and it is hard to keep up. One person stated

At the University level, we seem to have a pattern of having an "issue of the year," appointing a task force to study it and quickly developing a report, and then moving on to the next issue without much real engagement. This doesn't fit in with true strategic planning. Examples are the current priority on community engagement and external funding. No one seemed to know these were coming

up. Why do we always react to external events, such as the CHEE report, instead of being future-oriented?

Another stated that

We can't seem to impact the dumping of initiatives on us by the administration. . . . Throwing another initiative at us every year leads to a lack of credibility."

Finally, another said "There are many conflicting messages, so we do what interests us and hope it is rewarded."

Two faculty members felt that the University administration is not interested in faculty members' input, while two others felt that it is. Additionally, two people said that the opportunity for faculty members to provide input has decreased in recent years, while another two believed that it had increased. Three persons said that there is too much faculty input in their departments; there are endless rounds of discussion and decision making is overly complicated. Two participants described leadership at the University as top-down, and another stated that faculty members and administrators have different values. One stated that faculty input should not be solicited for decisions that have already been made. Three people stated that Faculty Senate is not effective, and an additional two said that constituent groups such as Faculty Senate do not share information adequately with their members. Two participants discussed a lack of recognition of Firelands College by people at the Bowling Green campus, and another described a stigma of being a faculty member at Firelands. Two of the four individual interview participants in one college described the departmental structure there as leading to lack of understanding and recognition of individual faculty roles and responsibilities by colleagues. Three of the participants in another college had serious concerns about the leadership style and lack of collegiality on the part of their dean.

7. Additional Information Concerning Faculty Satisfaction and Issues of Concern

Sixteen faculty members volunteered that fact that, overall, they are very happy with their jobs at BGSU. Eight suggested that the Administration is doing a good job. Seven stated that they felt a strong sense of community at the University. Participants' most often cited areas of concern corresponded well with the greatest sources of stress noted in the 2004-2005 BGSU Faculty Survey. Student academic performance was cited as a major concern by nine participants. Five noted their serious concerns about the institution's funding. Another five expressed strong dissatisfaction with faculty salaries that are too low. Four participants stated that they were unsure about the meaning, utility, implications, and longevity of the Scholarship of Engagement initiative. An additional four expressed strong concerns about heavy faculty workloads. Three persons felt that the University should focus on and provide greater support for research and graduate education. Three faculty members expressed the concern, also noted above, that too many University initiatives are in place and that they do not get followed up upon. Three people noted that it is important to give verbal recognition and thanks. Three participants spoke of the need for a suggestion mechanism, such as a faculty ombudsperson, to be put

in place. Three suggested that faculty members should have free use of the Recreation Center. Three faculty members expressed concern about the implications of the report of the Governor's Commission on Higher Education and the Economy. Two persons expressed a desire for the University to make a positive decision about domestic partner benefits. Two others discussed concerns over support for faculty members from under-represented groups. Two individuals discussed feeling stigmatized as instructors or lecturers.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

BGSU full time faculty in general are satisfied or very satisfied with the job they have at this University, especially in the areas of autonomy and independence (85%), professional relationships with other faculty (79%), job security (71), competency of colleagues (70%), and overall job satisfaction (71%). Although the percentage of faculty who said that they are satisfied with the quality of students climbed from 33% in 1998 and 2001 to 41% in 2004, the quality of students, together with salary and relationships with administration, remain the areas that less than half of the respondents feel happy about.

Despite the higher overall job satisfaction rate, most of the 2004 BGSU full-time faculty experienced a considerable amount of stress with 12 out of the 14 items listed on the survey, and much of which comes from constraints on their time, institutional procedures and "red tape," budget cuts, teaching and research demands, committee work, promotion process, updating information technology, and personal/household responsibilities. Moreover, the percentage of faculty who were stressed by the merit/promotion/tenure review process, committee work, as well as teaching load, publishing demanding, and institutional procedures and "red tape" increased significantly between 1998/2001 and 2004.

Fifty eight percent of the faculty indicated that they are familiar with the BGSU Academic Plan and 66% of them reported that they are familiar with the Critical Thinking about Values theme of the plan. Less than half of them, however, were familiar with the other four themes of the Academic Plan, and feel that BGSU has a strong vision for new academic initiatives.

More than half of the faculty agreed that women faculty and faculty of color are treated fairly at BGSU. Only around 20% of them thought that most students are well-prepared and engaged academically according to their standards.

It is very important for the majority of the BGSU full time faculty to teach students as well as to carry out research activities. Most of them are also willing to provide services/input within their department and school, and their professional association(s). In addition they'd like to play an important role in activities such as grant and sponsored program, community service, academic advising, and student retention.

Group differences are found in the survey results which demonstrate the diversity of faculty experiences and views as well as the changes occurring with BGSU.

Some important limitations must be considered when interpreting the survey results. First of all, there is a relatively low overall response rate (40%). Second, instructors are under-represented for this year's survey. Third, while survey participants were reflective of the BGSU full time faculty in general in terms of gender, race, and college, it is not known how the activities and perceptions of those participants can be generalized to the BGSU academic community as a whole. These limitations require that all results from the survey be interpreted with some caution.

The fact that eighty full-time faculty members made time in their busy schedules to offer insightful comments for this project attests to the fact that BGSU's faculty is comprised of dedicated and thoughtful people who are genuinely concerned with the welfare of the University, the students, and one another. The great majority of the participants were positive about their experiences at the University. Indeed, several persons referred to their positions as "the best job I ever had." Nevertheless, several concerns were noted. As one participant stated "This is a good university with a few significant problems." Those concerns most often noted in the interviews concerned student academic achievement, the merit process, resources (both at the department and University levels), salaries, workload, and some concerns about the adequacy of faculty input into the decision process. Surprisingly few differences in responses were found across disciplinary, longevity, gender, or race/ethnicity dimensions.

In terms of additional results of the specific interview questions, the following recommendations are provided:

1. The Provost's Office should continue its efforts to relay the specifics, implications, and current status of the Academic Plan to individual faculty members.
2. The University should continue to place a very high priority on faculty compensation, investigate creative approaches in light of the financial situation, and address individual and systemic problems where they identified.
3. With support of the University administration, academic units should continue to discuss the appropriateness of their merit procedures in light of the University's goals.
4. Creative and meaningful faculty rewards and incentives, particularly those requiring fewer resources, should be vigorously pursued.
5. The University should begin a dialog about possible changes to allocations of faculty effort and concomitant possible changes in faculty evaluation, recognizing the unique circumstances of academic units.
6. Faculty evaluation procedures should recognize the importance of efforts concerning student retention and the assessment of student learning.
7. The University community should recognize student academic achievement as a joint outcome and responsibility of students, faculty members, and staff. Meaningful dialog should take place to address ways to improve student academic

- success.
8. Ways must be found to support substantive improvements in assessment of student learning in identified areas and overcome barriers to progress in using assessment results to make improvements in student learning.
 9. Opportunities for faculty input into the decision process should be maintained and enhanced.

While the interview participants represented a proportionate sample of 10% of the full-time faculty, readers should keep in mind that their views may not be reflective of those of all BGSU full-time faculty members.

The Office of Institutional Research hopes that the interviews can be continued in future years and that the results can be used to support decision making and planning.

We welcome feedback concerning this and other studies and how they can continue to be improved.

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