For First Time, Career-Track Faculty Included in Survey About Job Satisfaction

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A survey is being conducted to collect input about how well UA colleges and departments are serving their faculty, and administrators hope it will help identify the needs of those working off the tenure track, as well as those in tenured and tenure-track positions.

The Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey is being administered in partnership with the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education, or COACHE, a center at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The survey has been open for about a month and will continue into April.

The survey asks faculty about how the University supports them in a variety of areas, including research, teaching, institutional leadership and shared governance, said Tom Miller, vice provost for faculty affairs.

"COACHE is a way to get feedback from faculty on what matters to them so that we can make sure the University is addressing their concerns as we move forward with strategic planning," Miller said. The results also will "help department heads and colleges improve support for career-track faculty as well as tenure-track faculty," he said.

The survey comes about a year after the Faculty Senate approved a change in nomenclature from nontenure-track faculty to career-track faculty. The change aimed to recognize the contributions that these faculty make to the University rather than define them by the fact that they aren’t eligible for tenure.

A review was conducted in the fall of the criteria and provisions used for annual and promotional reviews for career-track faculty to see if improvements could be made in regard to career advancement for those faculty, Miller said.

While that review involved gathering college policies on career-track faculty, the COACHE survey will be a much deeper look into ways to improve support for career-track faculty, he said.

COACHE’s Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey was used in the fall of 2013 to assess the support of tenure-track faculty and continuing-status professionals, but did not seek responses from career-track faculty. This time around, the survey will seek responses from all faculty who have been at the UA for less than a year, including those not on the tenure track, Miller said.

Responses are sent directly to COACHE and respondents' identities are kept confidential.

"This is a chance for faculty to tell us how we can support their success," said Allison Vaillancourt
, vice president for business affairs and human resources. "We made a number of changes in response to the last COACHE survey and look forward to additional insights about how to make the University of Arizona an especially desirable place to build a career."

Administrators hope to get between 1,500 and 2,000 responses, or about half of all faculty. The 2013 survey garnered a response rate of more than half, Miller said, adding that administrators are optimistic of hitting that target again.

"It's absolutely essential that we get half the faculty to respond so that we can make sure we have a broad sense of their needs," Miller said. "If faculty want their needs addressed, they need to make them known."

The results from the survey will first be shared with Acting Provost Jeffrey B. Goldberg and President Robert C. Robbins.

College deans and department heads will see the anonymous survey responses from faculty in their units. Department heads who oversee fewer than 10 faculty will not see the responses in order to preserve respondents' anonymity.

After that, administrators will work with Faculty Senate leaders to consider how to prioritize the concerns that have come up in the survey.

"We hope this will provide baseline data for campus leaders to shape our priorities," Miller said.

Source URL: https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/first-time-career-track-faculty-included-survey-about-job-satisfaction

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