



2014 COACHE Survey Results: Interdisciplinary Work, Collaboration, and Mentoring

Overview

The focus of this area is on collaboration, mentoring and interdisciplinary activities. The survey results indicate that FSU faculty member satisfaction varies across these three areas and vary both positively and negatively when compared to average responses from our five peer institutions and those of the overall 2014 COACHE cohort¹.

In the following, the survey items and results for each topic will be presented separately, followed by a brief summary highlighting strengths and opportunities for improvement in this focus area of the survey. For parsimony, this report will use “faculty” to refer to responses of participating faculty, “peers” to denote the average responses from the five selected peers in the footnote, “all universities” to identify response averages from the participating universities and “rated or ratings” to represent average ratings.

Interdisciplinary Work

Interdisciplinary work appears to be a challenge at all universities, but FSU’s ratings were below that of all universities and tied for the lowest in the peer group. In addition, FSU faculty had less than average confidence that their department knows how to effectively evaluate faculty involvement in interdisciplinary work compared to all universities. Relative to our peer institutions, FSU faculty feel more strongly that departments not only do a poor job of evaluating interdisciplinary work, but they also don’t reward this work in promotion or merit considerations.

Most observations are fairly consistent across the various faculty subgroups as seen below with the exception of faculty of color who appear to have a more positive view of interdisciplinary work than their peers at other institutions.

	mean	overall	tenured	pre-ten	full	assoc	men	women	white	foc
Benchmark: Interdisciplinary work	2.59	◀▶	◀▶	◀▶	◀▶	◀▶	◀▶	◀▶	◀▶	▶◀
Interdiscip. work is rewarded in tenure	2.73	▶◀	N/A	▶◀	N/A	N/A	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀
Dept. knows how to evaluate interdiscip. work	2.67	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀
Facilities conducive to interdiscip. work	2.67	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀
Budgets encourage interdiscip. work	2.55	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀
Interdiscip. work is rewarded in promotion	2.53	▶◀	▶◀	N/A	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀
Interdiscip. work is rewarded in merit	2.48	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀

¹ **Rating Key:** 1 – Very Dissatisfied 2 – Dissatisfied 3 – Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied 4 – Satisfied 5 – Very Satisfied
Left-facing triangles ◀ represent relative ratings as compared to five designated peer institutions (Indiana University – Bloomington; North Carolina State University; University of California, Davis; University of Kansas; University of Missouri - Columbia); right-facing triangles ▶ represent all institutions that participated in the 2014 COACHE cohort. Green triangles ▶◀ indicate areas of strength; red triangles ▶◀ indicate areas of concern; grey triangles ▶◀ mean no difference. Group comparisons: tenured/pre-tenure, full/associate professor, men/women, and white/faculty of color.

Collaboration

FSU faculty are in the top 30% of institutions in their satisfaction with the level of collaboration in their work, however, most of the peer group scored higher. Our faculty had a more positive view of collaborative opportunities outside the institution compared to all universities, but were less positive about opportunities to collaborate outside the department than our peers.

The relatively high level of collaboration is consistent for Carnegie Research Universities with Very High Research Activities (RU/VH). Less than 25% of the participating institutions are classified as RU/VH so what constitutes collaboration may differ at the different types of institutions. FSU's patterns of satisfaction were fairly consistent across the various faculty categories with the one outlier being full professors who on average held a less positive view of opportunities outside of the institution.

	mean	overall	tenured	pre-ten	full	assoc	men	women	white	foc
Benchmark: Collaboration	3.64									
Opportunities for collab. outside inst.	3.78									
Opportunities for collab. within dept.	3.75									
Opportunities for collab. outside dept.	3.38									

Mentoring

All survey participants seem to agree that being a mentor is a fulfilling activity. However, FSU's overall average was the highest of our peer group as were responses to most mentoring related items. While the effectiveness of mentoring within the department and the mentoring of pre-tenure faculty seems to be generally satisfactory at FSU, there appears to be room for improvement with respect to mentoring of associate professors and support for faculty to be good mentors. Nevertheless, FSU faculty still rated these items somewhat more favorably than their peers.

The only aspect that was rated lower than peers by FSU faculty is the effectiveness of mentoring outside the department, indicating that mentoring support at the college or university appears to be perceived as lacking. These findings are consistent with the ratings of interdisciplinary activities and collaboration outside the department.

	mean	overall	tenured	pre-ten	full	assoc	men	women	white	foc
Benchmark: Mentoring	3.20									
Being a mentor is fulfilling	4.17			N/A						
Effectiveness of mentoring within dept.	3.77									
Mentoring of pre-tenure faculty	3.47									
Effectiveness of mentoring outside dept.	3.34									
Mentoring of associate faculty	2.63			N/A						
Support for faculty to be good mentors	2.50			N/A						

Other Items

Four related survey items were not viewed as statistically consistent with other benchmark measures in this areas so they are reported separately. You can see below that there is little consistency in these response patterns. The importance of mentoring within the department is rated highly but several subgroups rated it lower than the average of our peers and or the full group of participating institutions. Conversely, FSU faculty consistently rated the effectiveness of mentoring outside the university as higher than both peers and all universities. The same cannot be said about the perceived importance of mentoring outside the department, where FSU faculty consistently rated this lower than the other cohorts. Results for the importance of mentoring outside the institution were average to low with associate professors proving to be a positive outlier.

	mean	overall	tenured	pre-ten	full	assoc	men	women	white	foc
Related survey items										
Importance of mentoring within dept.	4.15	◀▶	◀▶	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀
Effectiveness of mentoring outside the inst.	4.02	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀
Importance of mentoring outside inst.	3.72	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀
Importance of mentoring outside dept.	3.29	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀	▶◀

Summary

- ✓ FSU respondents rated collaboration overall more positively than respondents from other participating institutions in the cohort.
- ✓ FSU respondents feel more positively about opportunities for collaboration outside the institution than respondents from other participating institutions in the cohort.
- ✓ FSU respondents rated mentoring overall more positively than respondents from the five peer institutions and other participating institutions in the cohort.
- ✓ FSU faculty rated mentoring higher than their peers on five of the six mentoring-related survey items.
- ✗ Interdisciplinary work was rated below satisfactory on average by all participating institutions, but the average of FSU's responses were tied for the lowest of the peer institutions.
- ✗ FSU faculty appear to feel less confident that their department knows how to evaluate interdisciplinary work as compared to respondents from other participating institutions in the cohort.
- ✗ FSU respondents rated reward for interdisciplinary work lower than their colleagues from the five peer institutions.
- ✗ FSU respondents rated collaboration outside the department lower than their colleagues at the five peer institutions.