



WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY
THE FALL 2004-2005 HERI FACULTY SURVEY
FACULTY VIEWS ON EDUCATION

Office of the Provost

Tel 801.626.6006
FAX 801.626.7922

mvaughan@weber.edu

This report summarizes the findings from the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) faculty survey conducted in 2004-2005 on the WSU campus. The response rate for WSU faculty was 50.4 percent. Nationally, 40,670 faculty responded to the 2004-2005 HERI survey. There are over 481,000 full-time undergraduate faculty at the nation's colleges and universities.

Summary Facts

* WSU faculty strongly agreed that developing the ability to think critically was the most essential educational goal for undergraduates.

* WSU faculty are using a wide variety of teaching methods. Over half (52.5 percent) of the faculty use cooperative learning methods. Over two-thirds (70.1 percent) of WSU faculty place and collect assignments on the internet, and 37.9 percent have taught a class exclusively on the internet. However, only 12.6 percent of the faculty members use online technology in most of their classes.

* Class discussion remains the most prevalent instructional technique used by faculty across the country in "all" or "most" of the courses they teach (81.2 percent of faculty at public 4-year institutions) and this is especially so for WSU faculty (83.9 percent).

* Instructional preferences varied by faculty gender. For example, female faculty reported more frequent use of cooperative learning methods in the classroom (62.4 percent for females and 46.4 percent for males) and males reported using extensive lecturing more often (67.6 percent males and 34.5 percent females). These gender differences are consistent with other public 4-year colleges.

* Writing is a common part of the undergraduate experience with 56.9 percent of the faculty at public 4-year colleges using essay mid-term and final exams as part of their method for evaluating students; this compares with 48.2 percent of WSU faculty.

Faculty's Goals for Undergraduate Students

Faculty were provided with a list of 16 goals (Table 1) and were asked to rate the importance of each goal for an undergraduate education. The possible ratings were: essential, very important, somewhat important or not important.

Of the 222 faculty who responded to the question, 221 faculty members agreed that developing students' ability to think critically was either essential or very important. This represents 99.5 percent of the faculty responding, indicating that WSU faculty view critical thinking as the most important goal for an undergraduate education.

Other goals the faculty rated as essential or very important were mastering knowledge in the discipline (96.4 percent), the ability to write effectively (91.5 percent), and preparation of students for employment (80.3 percent).

Faculty Involvement in Curriculum Activities

The majority of WSU faculty said they had been involved in some aspect of curriculum development over the past two years. During the past two years, 70.7 percent of the faculty indicated that they had developed a new course. Women were somewhat more involved in course development with 76.6 percent of the women and 67.2 percent of the men responding that they had developed a new course over the past two years

Engaging undergraduates in the research process is an important pedagogical tool as well one of WSU's strategic initiatives. Significantly over half, 62.9 percent, of WSU faculty reported having worked with undergraduates on a research project. There was evidence that the faculty involvement in undergraduate research varied by gender with 67.7 percent of the men and 54.7 percent of the women responding that they had been involved in undergraduate research .

Given WSU's strong commitment to online education, it is not surprising that 37.9 percent of the faculty responded that they had taught a course exclusively online. At other public 4-year colleges participating in the HERI survey, only 13.7 percent of the faculty had taught a course exclusively online.

Other activities many of the WSU faculty had engaged in during the past two years included advising student groups involved in service and volunteer work (51.0 percent), collaborating with the local community on research or teaching (47.9 percent), and team teaching a course (38.7 percent).

Faculty Use of Student-Centered Instructional and Evaluation Methods

Table 3 contains data regarding the faculty's preferences for selected instructional methods. Weber State University's faculty follow national trends regarding student-centered instructional methods. Class discussion remains the most prevalent instructional technique used by faculty across the country in "all" or "most" of the courses they teach (81.2 percent of faculty at public 4-year institutions) and this is especially so for WSU faculty (83.9 percent).

However, compared with previous years, faculty today use a wider variety of teaching methods. Over two-thirds (70.1percent) of WSU faculty place and collect assignments on the Internet. Over half (52.5 percent) of the faculty use cooperative learning.

Faculty are also incorporating more writing activities across the undergraduate curriculum, evidenced by the use of essay exams (48.2 percent) short-answer exams (33.2 percent), and term/research papers (30.9percent).

Student presentations are a popular form of evaluation as well, used in “all” or “most” classes by 47.8 percent of faculty. Although both men and women faculty use multiple teaching and evaluation methods, men remain more likely to use extensive lecturing, and women continued to be more likely to use student-centered instructional and evaluation methods.

Table 1
Faculty's Goals for Undergraduate Students

Weber State University Full-time Undergraduate Faculty	Weber State University			Public 4-yr Colls		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Goals for undergraduates notes as “very important” or “essential”:						
Develop ability to think critically (3)	100.0	98.8	99.5	98.8	99.3	99.0
Prepare students for employment after college	75.4	88.2	80.3	74.0	79.7	76.3
Prepare students for graduate or advanced education	63.0	68.2	65.0	60.3	64.5	62.0
Develop moral character	56.9	68.2	61.3	54.0	60.9	56.7
Provide for students' emotional development	29.7	48.2	36.8	29.7	42.2	34.7
Help students develop personal values	48.6	55.3	51.1	46.0	54.8	49.5
Enhance students' self-understanding	53.6	67.1	58.7	53.7	66.1	58.6
Instill in students a commitment to community service	34.1	49.4	39.9	32.9	45.9	38.1
Prepare students for responsible citizenship	66.4	71.4	68.3	57.6	69.3	62.2
Enhance students' knowledge of and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups	52.9	82.4	64.1	50.0	74.4	59.7
Help master knowledge in a discipline (3)	97.1	95.3	96.4	94.5	96.2	95.2
Develop creative capacities (3)	68.8	78.8	72.6	68.6	66.8	67.9
Instill a basic appreciation of the liberal arts (3)	50.0	56.5	52.5	54.5	59.6	56.5
Enhance spiritual development (3)	19.1	21.2	19.9	15.6	18.8	16.9
Promote ability to write effectively (3)	89.1	95.3	91.5	86.8	93.0	89.3
Facilitate search for meaning/purpose in life (3)	32.8	44.7	37.4	32.6	37.2	34.5

Comparisons with results from earlier Faculty Surveys should be made with caution due to changes in item test, order of presentation, or response options in 2004. (3) This item included for the first time in 2004.

Table 2
Faculty Involvement in Curriculum Activities

Weber State University Full-time Undergraduate Faculty	Weber State University			Public 4-yr Colls		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Methods you use in “most” or “all” of the courses you teach:						
(1)						
Class discussion	80.6	89.4	83.9	77.9	86.3	81.2
Community service as part of coursework	4.3	14.1	8.1	5.2	11.6	7.7
Cooperative learning (small groups)	46.4	62.4	52.5	40.0	62.8	49.1
Essay mid-term and/or final exams	54.0	38.8	48.2	57.9	55.5	56.9
Extensive lecturing	67.6	34.5	55.2	64.7	42.2	55.8
Grading on a curve	21.7	5.9	15.7	23.1	10.7	18.2
Group projects	31.9	35.3	33.2	32.3	40.7	35.6
Multiple-choice mid-term and/or final exams	43.2	35.3	40.2	33.0	34.7	33.7
Multiple drafts of written work	16.5	29.4	21.4	23.5	32.2	27.0
On-line instruction (3)	10.1	16.5	12.6	14.0	17.7	15.5
Readings on racial and ethnic issues	11.5	16.5	13.4	15.1	29.5	20.8
Readings on women and gender issues	10.8	20.2	14.3	12.7	26.3	18.1
Recitals/Demonstrations	17.3	31.8	22.8	19.9	23.8	21.5
Reflective writing/journaling (3)	13.7	41.2	24.1	13.6	29.1	19.7
Short-answer mid-term and/or final exams	37.4	26.2	33.2	40.6	36.8	39.1
Student evaluations of each other's work	11.7	28.2	18.0	13.9	21.1	16.8
Student evaluations of their own work (3)	13.0	36.5	22.0	15.2	26.7	19.8
Student presentations	43.2	55.3	47.8	41.1	54.5	46.4
Student-selected topics for course content	12.3	16.5	13.9	12.5	18.3	14.8
Teaching assistants	0.7	5.9	2.7	6.3	4.1	5.4
Term/research papers	31.2	30.6	30.9	34.7	37.1	35.7

(1) Comparisons with results from earlier Faculty Surveys should be made with caution due to changes in item test, order of presentation, or response options in 2004. (3) This item included for the first time in 2004.

Table 3
Faculty Use of Student-Centered Instructional and Evaluation Methods

Weber State University Full-time Undergraduate Faculty	Weber State University			Public 4-yr Colls		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
During the <u>past two</u> years, have you engaged in any of the following activities?						
Taught an honors course	14.0	18.3	15.6	17.9	14.4	16.5
Taught an interdisciplinary course	27.6	30.1	28.6	36.0	34.8	35.6
Taught an ethnic studies course	6.7	11.8	8.6	7.9	11.4	9.3
Taught a women's studies course	0.9	16.2	6.5	2.4	14.3	7.2
Team-taught a course	31.5	50.7	38.7	29.1	34.5	31.3
Taught a service learning course	17.8	20.3	18.7	17.4	24.7	20.4
Worked with undergraduates on a research project	67.7	54.7	62.9	67.7	57.3	63.6
Placed or collected assignments on the Internet (1)	71.3	73.0	71.9	65.6	71.5	67.9
Taught a course exclusively on the Internet (1)	38.6	36.6	37.9	12.1	16.0	13.7
Participated in a faculty development program (3)	63.5	83.1	70.9	63.1	73.7	67.4
Advised student groups involved in service/volunteer work (3)	46.9	58.1	51.0	42.8	47.4	44.6
Collaborated with the local community in research/teaching (3)	45.5	52.1	47.9	48.1	52.5	49.8
Developed a new course	67.2	76.6	70.7	65.4	67.6	66.2
Conducted research or writing focused on: (3)						
International/global issues	21.6	23.5	22.3	26.5	23.5	25.3
Racial or ethnic minorities	6.2	23.9	12.8	15.5	24.3	19.0
Women and gender issues	9.6	16.9	12.3	10.6	26.2	18.2
Taught a first-year seminar (3)	17.8	17.6	17.7	17.5	19.7	18.4

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