

Needs Assessment Survey Fall 2008
Summary of Basic Patterns
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One hundred twenty five responses were collected with the online survey offered through Survey Monkey. The demographics show that most respondents are newer and also mid-career: roughly half are between 40 and 55 years old; just under 50% have been here 7 years or fewer, 40% are assistant professors and 20% full professors, and the schools are represented as one would expect.

The main set of questions named a large set of resources that our Center might provide, categorized as teaching, scholarship/creative, balance, and leadership. Examples include course design and assessment as “teaching resources,” scholarship of teaching as “scholarship support,” career development as “balance concerns,” and reviewing faculty as “leadership.” The full text is attached. For each of the topic stems, respondents had three response areas: **should** our center include this; **would** I participate; and the **priority** of this area.

Teaching Resources:

All of the 9 areas of teaching resources received more than half “yes, it should provide” responses. The range was wide, though. Nearly all respondents said it should provide support for teaching skills, course design, pedagogical innovations, and technology enhancement; while just over half said it should support advising, legal and policy issues, or curriculum development.

When asked whether they themselves would participate, fewer responded unequivocally “yes” to the choice of “Yes, Maybe, At a different career stage, and Probably not.” The areas in which the dominant response was “yes” were teaching skills, technology enhancement, pedagogical innovation, and teaching conferences (support to attend.) Over 40% responded “Probably not” to support on advising, curriculum development, and legal/policy issues. To my surprise, few responded with the choice of “at a different career stage.”

The pattern of responses to the question of whether the resource should be a top, middle, or low priority followed a comparable pattern and two-thirds said teaching skills should be a top priority. Surprises were that more than half thought course design and assessment was a top priority while only 28 thought they would certainly use it. In the other direction, people were likely to say they would use support in pedagogical innovation or to attend teaching conferences, while most saw those as middle to low priorities.

Scholarship/Creative work support:

The pattern was similar in the area of support for scholarship and creative work. More than half responded that our Center should support each of the five areas, with the highest percentages for funding/grants and scholarship of teaching and learning and the lowest response to writing assistance or help with work process.

The only area in which most people said they themselves would participate is support strategies (funding/grants) and most did not think they would participate in writing assistance. The

priorities followed this pattern: most thought support strategies in general, and SoTL as well, should be a top priority and the other areas were rated a middle priority.

Balance concerns:

The resources in this area included ones in the general area of activities that fall outside teaching or scholarship. More than three quarters said our center should include resources in the areas of successful reviews, resources for part-time faculty, and integration of retired faculty. Responses to the other three areas were almost evenly divided with one half saying our center should and should not support community engagement, career development, or work/family issues. Interestingly, the largest number of respondents said they would probably not participate in any of these areas, except perhaps for the successful reviews topic.

Institutional leadership:

Four items dealt with this general area: leadership possibilities, skills development, reviewing faculty, and support for chairs/coordinators. The majority of respondents thought our center should include them. However, fewer than one third said they would definitely participate in any of them and they indicated them as “middle” priority for our center.

How our Center might provide support:

A final section asked people to rate different approaches to providing services, such as individual consultations, workshops, online communication, or serving as a conduit to administration. Individual consultations were seen as very valuable by nearly two thirds of the respondents and workshops were seen as very valuable by a bit under one-half. In the other categories, roughly half saw them as moderately valuable. Interestingly, newsletters and library were seen as least valuable overall.

Summary and next steps

This preliminary report presents only the percentages who responded in certain ways. The next step in analyzing this data will be to examine patterns within the data. Are some resources particularly likely to be valued by new or mid-career faculty? Which resources are seen as very important even if the respondent will probably not actually use them? Are there clusters of areas in which support is generally high, or generally low? Those are questions we can answer soon.

The overall pattern is that people perceive a possible center as primarily about classroom teaching but also about supporting scholarship. They believe it should help in multiple aspects of the review process and integrate part time and retired faculty members. Categories that indicated a center would provide resources in the form of funding or time were viewed particularly favorably. The respondents did not seem to have a strong view on *how* resources and support might be provided, though individual teaching consultations was identified as very valuable by more than half.

The question stems for responses were:

WHAT might be provided through a center? Each category included 3 sets of choices: should/should not; would/would not use it; and priority level.

- Teaching
 - Research on Learning (learning styles, identity issues, brain science, etc.)
 - Course Design and Assessment (syllabus, assignments, grading, etc.)
 - Teaching Skills (classroom management, active learning, discussion etc.)
 - Technology Enhancement (smart classrooms, communication, course management, etc.)
 - Advising (developmental, exploratory, career, etc.)
 - Innovations (service learning, problem-based learning, etc.)
 - Curriculum Development (program development/revision, APC process, etc.)
 - Legal and Policy issues (emergency preparedness; privacy; sexual behavior; disabilities, etc.)
 - Teaching Conferences (support to attend and present, etc.)
- Scholarship/Creative Work
 - Support strategies (funding, grants, etc.)
 - Getting it done (priority-setting, writing groups, etc.)
 - Writing assistance (editing help, ESL support, research assistance, etc.)
 - Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (design, support, outlets, etc.)
 - The Center as a venue for presentations (faculty / staff research; regional conference; online presence, etc.)
- Balance
 - Community engagement (service guidance, etc.)
 - Work/family (life course research; policies; strategies, etc.)
 - Successful reviews (strategies; models; draft review, etc.)
 - Career development/stages (research; groups; seminars, etc.)
 - Resources for part time faculty members
 - Integration of retired faculty (teaching consultation; writing support, etc.)
- Leadership in Place (faculty in institutional leadership)
 - Leadership possibilities (what exists; how to explore, etc.)
 - Skills development (committee member; committee chair; searches, etc.)
 - Reviewing faculty (peer review of teaching; goal-setting; communication, etc.)
 - Chair/coordinator support (managing peers; legal issues; budget savvy, etc.)

HOW might it be provided? Our Center should provide support through..... Each stem had a choice of 1-3 (very valuable, moderately valuable, not valuable)

- Individual teaching consultations; class observation, confidential assessments
- Workshops (workday; weekend; break/summer, etc.)
- Informal exchanges in the center (reading groups; brown bags, etc.)
- Online networking (blogs, wikis, etc.)
- Visits to departments or groups to consult
- Newsletters; subscriptions; library
- Subsidies for editing or writing support
- Policy development, serving as a conduit between faculty and administration