

THE 2012 BC AAP FACULTY SURVEY REPORT

During the fall, 2012 semester the Boston College Chapter of the AAUP performed its third survey of all faculty in all schools to ascertain opinion concerning the faculty's role in university affairs. As in the 2010 and 2011 surveys the quantitative (closed-ended) questions covered the areas of **Governance and Administration, the Faculty Handbook, Physical Environment, Community, and Professional Responsibilities and Compensation**. We also added two new sections, concerning **Faculty Retirement** and experience with **Bullying**. Finally, as in the past, we invited faculty to "comment on any **specific concerns or elaborate on any responses**" to the strongly agree/disagree questions. And, we asked respondents to identify **the issues on which the BC Chapter of AAUP should be focusing attention**.

This survey summary is divided into three parts: 1) respondents; 2) findings; and 3) implications going forward.

1) Respondents.

One-hundred seventy-seven faculty responded to this year's survey, about equally divided between men and women. Part-time faculty were under-represented among the respondents; they comprised 13% of those answering the survey (but about 23% of faculty overall). Assistant Professors were also under-represented. They comprise about 12% of the total of respondents for this survey (but 23% of faculty overall).

A greater percentage of faculty from the College of Arts and Sciences answered this survey (69% of respondents) than their actual proportion of the university faculty (about 60% overall). About 31% of respondents work in the professional schools. Nursing was somewhat over-represented, comprising 20% of professional school respondents (but 15% of professional school faculty).

Again this year we looked carefully at the possibility of a "self-selection bias" in the survey results. That is, do we have any reason to believe that the respondents differ in any significant way from those who did not respond? The answer patterns summarized in the findings from the quantitative questions indicate that response bias was negligible. The survey did not appeal only to those faculty with complaints! Respondents provided an informed, balanced, and nuanced view of the faculty's role in university affairs. Although it is likely that many respondents took this survey who did not participate in previous years, general faculty sentiment is consistent from the 2010 survey to the present.

It is more difficult to assess the open-ended responses because not all respondents gave them. Given the terms of the question it is not surprising that "concerns" make

up the bulk of responses. Some comments suggest that an individual faculty member is quite satisfied with his/her situation, e.g.,

...the responsibilities for junior faculty are reasonable and the campus facilities, both instructional and research, are excellent. ... there are ample opportunities for community-building ...

University administration has been doing well with finances and campus development (building and landscape) ...

However, the bulk of the qualitative comments offer criticism, most of it constructive, some of it impassioned.

Many of the open-ended answers are summarized below, following the quantitative findings. They indicate an intensity of feeling as well as the sentiments underlying the closed-ended responses.

2) Findings.

Decision-Making at BC –

We asked a series of closed-ended questions concerning **faculty satisfaction with participation in decision-making**. Again this year there was a clear pattern in the responses. Faculty are most satisfied with decision-making in their departments. Sixty-six percent are satisfied at the department level. At the school level, 27% expressed satisfaction with their role in decision-making. Only 19% are satisfied with the faculty role in decision making at the university level.

The great majority of comments advocate for more of a faculty role in decision-making.

The last NEASC accreditation visit was appalled that there was no faculty governance. How did we ever get re-accredited?

Decisions that affect faculty should not be made by administrators alone.

Faculty do not have enough input into policies and procedures that concern them.

I do not feel comfortable with the top down power structure that reminds me of the way decisions are made in the Catholic Church as opposed to the practice at a number of highly related ranked secular universities.

[The] Provost Advisory Council . . . is not a senate. The Provost filters what gets on the agenda and members give advice which he ignores.

. . . there seems no way to let the board of trustees know what is really going on at the university. They are shielded by filtered information from the very people who are decreasing the faculty's voice.

Far too much is micro-managed by the provost. The pretense of faculty input is just that.

. . . committees are normally only ADVISORY. Hence there is no real decision-making authority on the part of committees. (Shows lack of trust in faculty governance.)

[As a part-time faculty member] I have no voice in any decision-making, even when such decisions affect me directly. I am not even given the courtesy of being informed of any decisions regardless of their nature.

I think it is important that we treat non-tenure track faculty as equal participants in the life of the university...clearly NOT for tenure decisions, but [they] should absolutely have a voice in general curriculum work, governance [and] hiring votes . . . we can't expect them to be fully vested professionals unless we treat them as such.

Leadership in the University, Schools and Departments -

We also asked about **faculty satisfaction with the leadership of academic administrators** at the university, school and department levels. At the university level, 50% of respondents were dissatisfied with leadership and administration. At the school level, about 26% expressed some dissatisfaction. At the department level, only 15% of those responding said that they were dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied.

Senior administration seems to often be at odds with the faculty, the educative and research missions of the school, and I often have a difficult time discerning what body they represent.

One of the problems I have with the upper administration is that when asked a question, if the answer is negative, they often just don't respond at all. I will get yes answers quickly, but no one wants to talk to you if your request is denied.

I realize that it is an uphill battle, but I think that deans should be anonymously reviewed by their faculty. As faculty, we receive anonymous reviews by students.

The BC administrators, especially Fr. Leahy and Provost Garza, are among the most authoritarian and non-transparent administrators I have known . . . I do not think they appreciate the extent to which this, ironically, undermines their ability to govern.

As long as we perform within a hierarchical system in which we serve at the whim of an apparently unaccountable President of the University, I don't see much hope of change or much use in raising one's voice.

Faculty Handbook -

We next asked a series of questions concerning the **Faculty Handbook**. A majority of faculty responding (54%) indicated that they were familiar or very familiar with the University By-Laws and Statutes. Sixty-four percent of respondents said that they were aware that the faculty rights and duties listed in the on-line Faculty Handbook have legal status. Again this year faculty did overwhelmingly agree (86% of respondents) that an elected faculty committee "should explain, evaluate, and publicize" all proposed changes to the Faculty Handbook prior to posting.

Handbook is often opaque, even on essential issues

I am very upset that the statutes specifically related to the review of deans is being ignored by the Provost and the President . . .

I received a Faculty Handbook 13 yrs ago. Has it ever been revised?

Retirement Planning -

This year for the first time in the AAUP survey, we asked faculty about their understanding of the university's retirement policies. There is widespread confusion about these policies. Sixty-four percent of respondents either do not know or are unsure whether faculty can negotiate *emeritus* status. Sixty-eight percent either do not know or are unsure whether faculty can negotiate office space after retirement. When it comes to negotiating library privileges, about 42% either don't know or are unsure. About 69% are unclear regarding health insurance for retirees. About 56% of respondents either did not know or were unsure about negotiating salary for courses taught after one retires. Finally, an overwhelming 95% of faculty responding either do not know or are unsure whether there is a standard retirement agreement in their school or department.

I am near retirement and am quite concerned that I don't know exactly what my rights are and what I should or can be entitled to, beyond the basic health care options.

I have no idea about whether there are early retirement incentives, or whatever provisions.

I have served BC for OVER 20 YEARS as an adjunct, and I don't have a retirement plan, nor any means to contribute to one on my own. That's IMMORAL.

Physical Environment -

We asked about the **physical environment and classroom facilities**. Most faculty responding consider this attribute of the BC environment to be a strength. About 51% agreed or strongly agreed that “classroom facilities are well suited” to their teaching style and strategies. However, there was some dissent.

I do wish we had input into the layout and facilities in the new buildings. Some administrators on this campus are high-handed and arbitrary in the decisions they make.

The physical environment for what I teach is by far the largest problem I have. The facilities are very inadequate for my field. High schools that students come from have better arts facilities than we do. It is terrible.

Community -

We next inquired about **collaboration across disciplines** within the university. Faculty is almost equally divided (37% / 40%) as to whether there are “sufficient opportunities to interact and collaborate with colleagues across disciplines.” However, there is stronger sentiment on the issue of the university’s role in facilitating and encouraging collaboration. Only 26% agreed or strongly agreed that the university does enough to encourage collaboration.

...the university fosters many [interdisciplinary programs] but I also feel that many of them are dominated by the Jesuit mission. This is fine as one option. I would appreciate more options.

My courses do not seem to be cross-listed with other departments or programs even though they easily could be.

We next asked about the trajectory of **faculty morale**. Fifty-seven percent of respondents (exactly the same as in 2011) believe that morale has declined in recent years. Only 14% think that morale has been improving.

The Deans have very little power in the decision-making process, hence cannot be strong advocates for the faculty, WHICH IS A MAJOR FACTOR FOR LOW FACULTY MORALE.

The reason BC has acquired a sour feel and reputation is that major decisions are made over the heads of faculty.

I strongly feel that we need more faculty governance to articulate intellectual vision and to counter what I perceive as the increasing tendency among top level administrators to approach student-teacher relationships using cost/benefit analysis.

Although I very much enjoy my work here at BC, there is a growing sense that full-time non-tenure track professors are not valued or really part of the school, which makes it hard to envision a long term career here. Without full-time 'teaching' faculty, the research tenure-track faculty would have to teach a lot more - there is a role for everyone, we need to figure out how to value and respect teaching in balance with research.

[We need] more art on the campus. More gathering places for creative life . . . Less bureaucratic look. More chances for students to gather and perform and create without drinking being involved. . . . Positive programs for female students . . . stronger women's and gender studies program (with significant university support). . . we have made some progress but need to go much further in supporting LGBT students and faculty, who should also have positive programs available to them.

Gay students and faculty should be embraced for their sexuality, not just tolerated.

The effort to set and promote a specific intellectual and spiritual tone interferes with more open support for the expression of all points of view . . . bean counters and ideologies exert too much influence in academic matters.

The increasing prominence given to religion . . .offends my sensibilities as an academic. . .Overall, a little less piety and a bit more scholarship would make BC a better place.

The University [needs] to make a clear that faculty at BC have the freedom to express their own personal views on a variety of issues that are hot button issues for the Catholic Church . . .

Bullying

In this year's survey we added several questions on bullying. Twenty-three percent of respondents reported personal experience with bullying in their school or department. Of those responding positively, 75% reported bullying from their department chair; 50% reported bullying from other administrators.

Thirty-two percent of respondents said they have witnessed or heard about bullying (of someone else) in their schools or departments. Most of these faculty members reported that no action was taken to resolve the problem.

There should be some sort of education of all new employees with regard to bullying and discrimination based on gender or of any other kind.

I do not want the following repeated to the college community at large unless my gender is changed . . . and my age is changed, since I fear being identified. I have been threatened by deans and chairs . . .

During my first 6 years at BC, I was bullied by the department chair. I was often told not to talk during department meeting (s) . . .

I'm afraid to make additional comments in case it would reveal my identity and elicit a reprisal.

We have a faculty member in the department who is a bully. He has a long history of bullying although he has withdrawn from most departmental activities now. He has not bullied me.

[I received a] letter of reprimand, with copy to dean, for speaking forcefully at [a] department meeting.

Our Dean is very overpowering and shows obvious favoritism.

There is a pervasive lack of awareness and will to understand systemic oppression (racism, sexism, classism) in my department and school.

I have been ejected from my department and, effectively, have not been a member of any Department since early 2006.

The department chair belittled . . . my contributions to the department . . . When I tried to speak with him, he dismissed my inquiries. . . I decided that silence was the only alternative to simply quitting.

The bullying was done by a senior colleague in my department. I brought it to the attention of university administrators and he was told to back off.

. . .bullying is present, and I have seen it directed towards colleagues and also towards myself. I would have felt like a poor sport, disloyal, or a destroyer of the apparent collegial surface harmony, had I taken steps to discuss it elsewhere or to report it.

I work in an extremely hostile environment in which I and my colleagues are subjected to ongoing petty harassment.

In all cases I have witnessed first-hand or heard about from more than one source, the story is the same: the person who caused the problem (the bully, harasser, offending party) is permitted to continue and in some cases, is rewarded, while the person who was victimized is ostracized, faces more retaliation and often punished, especially in cases where the person has refused to stay silent and dares to ask for accountability.

Compensation -

Faculty were asked to respond to several items concerning **the work they do and compensation**. Again this year the survey noted significant discontent in this area. Less than half (42%) reported that they were satisfied with the compensation they were receiving. About the same percentage (43%) said they were dissatisfied with the way their own performance was measured. Moreover, only 23% of respondents believe that they are being fairly compensated for their additional administrative and advising responsibilities. However, about 62% of faculty responding do agree that they have the resources to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

Most faculty are satisfied with course scheduling in their departments. Seventy-five percent report that they have input concerning teaching times and schedules. And,

63% say that are satisfied with the course load policy in their school or department; On the issue of faculty input in determining the course load policy in schools and departments, 41% indicated dissatisfaction.

Fully 69% of faculty responding to the survey either did not know or disagreed that there is an annual evaluation of non-tenure track faculty in their departments.

Faculty and staff should not have to pay to go to the gym (this is general health and fitness). The university should . . . find another way to contribute to the college costs of children of faculty and staff. Currently, the only real option is BC, which is very hard to get into and may not be the proper school for all faculty or staff children. [It] does not recognize the increasing diversity of our faculty and staff in terms of what kinds of colleges might make the most sense for their children. . . Many of our faculty and staff do not even earn an annual salary equal to a year of tuition and room and board at a college as good as BC.

Faculty salaries should be transparent. There should be much less range in any given department, and we should be higher than we currently are, given the salaries of our local peer institutions and the cost of living in our area.

Part-time faculty should be better compensated and given health insurance much faster.

I am a part-time adjunct faculty member and feel invisible most of the time. There is no annual evaluation of my teaching, no one from my department has even come in to observe one of my classes . . .and there is no departmental or university support for any work that I do outside of teaching

[We need] more support for international research/faculty research budgets; sufficient conference funds for more than 1.5 domestic conferences per year . . .

The situation of adjunct full time professors needs to be addressed. I was pleased to see that recently there was a meeting to open a discussion. The access to University funds for fellowships etc. for adjunct faculty needs to be reconsidered --the adjunct faculty are often the most active professionals in their department and closing them out of any source of [university] funding is indefensible.

I find it really ironic part-time faculty are entrusted with summer orientations, academic advising, and a plethora of first-year courses yet we're no longer allowed to teach in Courage to Know OR more

than two courses per semester. We are expected to nurture, but the university relegates us to the status of second-class citizens, with no regard for whether or not we can earn a living wages. Furthermore, most part timers are forced to hold one, two or more additional jobs to make ends meet.

I just do not like the policy that a part-time instructor can teach only two classes per semester. I am not eagerly seeking a full time teaching position. However, teaching only two classes is not sufficient for living. If College let us teach three classes per semester, then I would be still happy even if I do not have any benefits.

As a part-time faculty member, I am powerless and invisible at Boston College except when I enter the classroom and do the same job for which other faculty members receive twice or three times as much compensation as I do

The non-tenure faculty, while unusually well compensated and supplied with benefits at BC, has incredibly little information about their position. I didn't know we were eligible for promotion until last year (it's my 5th year here). I don't know for sure what my rehiring reviews are based upon, I don't know what recourse I have for grievances, and so on. This needs to be clarified.

I wish there could be a study about what a socially just compensation should be for the clinical faculty supervisors at the Lynch School. We are highly educated and experienced teachers who work one on one with each student in their practicum placement.

The pay scale for junior faculty is such that living in proximity to campus, in order to take advantage of those opportunities, is completely unrealistic unless one is married to someone wealthy.

BC says it cares about teaching, but teaching is not a factor in our pay. Bad teachers (unless they are coming up for tenure or promotion) are not held accountable. Good teachers end up doing MUCH MORE WORK because students seek them out more in office hours and ask them for recommendation letters and course registration advice more than bad teachers

I . . . deeply deplore administrators' approach to compensation. I am referring here to the tacit encouragement we receive to prove our 'market value' by soliciting job offers from other institutions merely in order to receive fair compensation for our current service. I want to be able to declare love and loyalty to my institution and be paid fairly rather than have to threaten to leave. I refuse to put myself on the

auction block and will not waste the time or resources of other universities simply because I want a raise. I believe this practice is unethical and demoralizing.

AAUP Issues -

The last few survey questions asked about the AAUP and the possibility of creating a BC Faculty Senate. Sixty-Nine percent of respondents favor the establishment of a Faculty Senate. Only 7% of respondents opposed it. If a Senate were established, 41% of respondents indicated a willingness to serve as a representation of their department or school.

Thank you, BCAAUP, for doing these surveys.

BCAAUP should be explicitly recognized by the highest level of administration at Boston College!

We sorely need a Faculty Senate.

I did once serve on a faculty senate that existed years ago and lapsed. There was no point, since nothing we did was binding on the administration. We were a purely advisory body and eventually no one wanted to waste their time, since our recommendations were mostly ignored.

I think we should work to establish a Faculty Senate because I believe in faculty governance, but considering that faculty worked very hard to establish a senate only to see it squashed by our provost, I don't want to waste time doing that again. This place is so anti-democratic that it's hard to see a scenario in which a faculty senate would be able to happen.

3) Implications Going Forward.

The results of the AAUP survey performed in 2010 and 2011 established a baseline from which to gauge changes in faculty opinion in response to initiatives from both the BC administration and the faculty going forward. Because the concerns and priorities of faculty as uncovered in this year's survey show remarkable consistency over time, these results suggest some areas for examination and action on the part of BCAAUP and the university as a whole:

1. Faculty Handbook

The most significant finding concerning the Faculty Handbook was a consensus that an elected faculty committee should explain, evaluate, and publicize all proposed changes to the Faculty Handbook prior to posting. Faculty leadership should collaborate with the administration to plan this initiative. As the following comments emphasize, **BCAAUP should advocate:**

(that) the Faculty Handbook should primarily be written by the faculty -- not largely by the Provost's office.

a strong faculty presence on a committee that reviews /maintains/updates the Faculty Handbook.

2. Facilities

Although a slight majority of faculty agreed that “classroom facilities are well suited” to their teaching style and strategies, a significant minority (about 35%) did *not* agree. A case can be made that this figure is too high. **BCAAUP should advocate appropriate classroom environments in order to maximize learning and to provide educational value to students.** Planning of future renovations is now underway. Satisfying the classroom needs of *all* faculty is a worthy goal and target for future planning.

3. Collaboration

A significant portion of the faculty (71%) clearly believes that the administration is not doing enough to foster collaboration across disciplinary lines. This opinion reflects the dynamic and changing nature of scholarship and the need for cross-disciplinary approaches that inform public policy and enrich academic discourse in the 21st century. The recently announced revisions to the Core Curriculum acknowledge these trends. **BCAAUP should encourage collaboration between departments and schools to break down the academic silos** that are rapidly disintegrating in organizations outside of academe.

4. Compensation

The fact that less than half of respondents reported that they were satisfied with the compensation they were receiving, and that only about 23% believe that they are being fairly compensated for their additional administrative and advising responsibilities is cause for concern. **BCAAUP should advocate for a revitalized Compensation Committee. There should be:**

- **transparency in faculty salaries and annual raises**
- **a much stronger role for the Faculty Compensation Committee, e.g., more access to key financial data.**

5. Morale

For the past two years we have asked a survey question about the trajectory of morale among faculty. The pattern of responses calls for our urgent attention. Fifty-seven percent of respondents believe that morale has declined in recent years. Only 14% think that morale has been improving.

Almost a quarter of all respondents reported personal experience with bullying, and almost one-third said they have witnessed or heard about bullying (of someone else) in their schools or departments

It is likely that productivity, retention of talented faculty, and ultimately BC's reputation could be negatively impacted by these community issues. How can faculty and administration focus on these concerns? **BCAAUP should participate in a more extensive assessment of faculty morale and ways of improving it. We should raise awareness of bullying and help to develop strategies to stop it.**

6. Retirement Issues

Survey data clearly reflect faculty's lack of knowledge and confusion regarding BC's retirement policies and options available to retirees. **BCAAUP should advocate for transparency and, as much as possible, uniformity in these policies.**

7. Part-time and Contingent Faculty

Qualitative comments from the survey clearly indicate that part-time faculty responding feel marginalized and frustrated. They often find it difficult to figure out how to advance and plan their careers. **BCAAUP should advocate for positive changes in the status and prospects of contingent faculty.**

8. Decision-Making

Faculty are clearly most satisfied with their role in decision-making, and with academic administrative leadership, in the areas closest to where they work. In decision-making, departments receive relatively high marks compared to the school and university-wide levels. At the university level a sizable majority of faculty responding expressed concern over their role in decision-making. What steps can be taken at both the school and university-wide levels, to ensure that faculty who serve on existing committees are perceived as being representative of faculty sentiment? How can leaders at all levels develop patterns of consistent transparency and accountability? **BCAAUP should advocate for the creation of additional opportunities for faculty input in decision-making, including a Faculty Senate with formal powers and responsibilities.**

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