

FSS Qualitative Analysis

Spring 2019 survey

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As with most open-ended questions in these types of surveys, a significant portion of responses focus on “areas of improvement” or issues that individual respondents have with a particular area. When conducting qualitative analysis, we focus on general trends that seem to be consistent between multiple responses. While they may not have used the exact words, the analysis focuses on the general sentiment of the responses. The following is a basic summary of the findings from the 2020 Faculty Satisfaction Survey conducted in the Spring of 2020. Each of the 7 subsections of the survey will be briefly summarized and a final summary of “Overall Trends” will be given. Please note that some comments in a section pertain more directly to questions in other sections. In these cases, the data was applied to the appropriate area of analysis.

1. Job Satisfaction

Academic Quality vs. “Everyone Can Succeed” – concern about pressure to lower academic standards to maintain and recruit students. Recruitment needs to be more focused and increased. Student Expectations – decrease in the quality of students and an attitude of “if I show up, I should pass.”

Research Agenda – lack of support for active research agendas in the form of time and resources. Expectations for research are not in-line with reality of everyday time management. This seems especially true for non-tenured and younger faculty.

Internal Division between Junior and Senior Faculty – Many of the above stated concerns seem to be amplified between faculty at different stages of their professional career. This difference is supported in the qualitative analysis in the subsections.

Salary Equability and “Fairness” – Many feel there is a large issue with salary. This is either underpay or inconsistency within and between departments/divisions. Promotional compensation is inadequate.

2. State of the Institution

Reactive vs. Proactive – while generally qualified with statements such as “in unprecedented times” or “in these unique times,” there is a sentiment that there is a lack of clear goals, unifying message or emphasis on “unique” qualities of the university.

Communication between various Divisions/Offices/Departments – while most are satisfied with those, they are in direct relation too (department, supervisors, etc.), there is concern about lack of communication, cooperation and collaboration between Divisions/Offices/Department and Administration. Seems to be an issue of “siloeing”

Grade Inflation – as well as being mentioned in Job Satisfaction section grade inflation is a concern. Feeling pressure to “bow to the wishes of students” in regard to grads and GPS’s is a concern.

Marketing – general concern on perceived lack of consistency in message for marketing and recruitment

3. State of the Faculty

Three previously mentioned concerns were voiced in this section: 1) Division, lack of Cohesion between Division/Offices/Departments, 2) Salary Inequity and Underpay and 3) Grade Inflation. In addition, there is concern about recruiting and Retaining Jr Faculty.

4. Professional Support

Many respondents expressed limited interaction with specific offices on campus. This is particularly true for adjunct or part-time instructors. Three areas of concern did solidify: 1) Academic Support – specifically understaffing in key areas (IT, CLC, Career Services, Disability Services/Mental Health) specifically staff feeling they understand procedures and or know who to refer students too. 2) Marketing – lack of support and understanding of what MSU and divisions

offer. Stated it feels like to fall to the faculty to recruit students. 3) Library – resources for research is lacking, especially journal access and data bases.

5. Faculty Governance

Respondents expressed concern with a “cult of personality.” With many of the same people being chosen for committees or work based on personality and not ability to contribute. Concern voiced on the conflict of interest with Chairs/Ex. Council. Redundancy in committee tasks without communication between them. Specifically, FS – response in timely manner and getting decisions clearly communicated to other faculty. Lack of responsiveness from Administration to recommendations and decisions of FS.

6. Curriculum

Limited responses. Many decisions driven by financial and enrollment concerns and not “best practices” in the areas.

7. Tenure and Promotion

There is a clear distinction between those that have received tenure and those that have not. Respondents indicated dissatisfaction with the Dual process for Tenure and Promotion and the separation between the two processes. Focus was given on the committee make up and how that seems to be influential to receiving T/P rather than the process. Inconstancy in definition of “scholarship” and lack of understanding of those requirements in different disciplines. Scholarship expectations are excessive when combined with teaching and service expectations.

8. What Liked Most

People. Size. Great Potential of University, students and the like. Autonomy of faculty to peruse creative teaching, content and interests.

9. What You would Change

Clearer Understanding of Mission/Goals/Long Term Planning. Pay Equity. Communication. Research Opportunities. Marketing/Recruiting. Resistance to change and thinking “outside the box.” Same faculty doing the majority of work – committees, etc.

10. “Overall Trends”

Adjuncts seem reluctant to give input as they feel “many of the questions don’t apply to me as an adjunct.”

General dissatisfaction, at all ranks, with levels of workload. Lower ranking faculty are more dissatisfied with research expectations and service requirements than higher ranking faculty. There is a perception that only a small number of the faculty are committed to service and professional development.

Pay Equity and Fairness is mentioned in a number of areas. Tying directly in with an increase demand for faculty to take on more and more responsibility. This seems to be disproportionately mentioned by younger faculty.

Dissatisfaction directed towards Marketing and Recruiting.

Please note: As with most surveys of this type – there is more negative or “dissatisfied” comments, however, the fact that the majority of the trending from the quantitative analysis is in a positive trend is overall good. While there are a number of concerns and issues expressed in the open-ended questions, the overall analysis of the data indicates that most faculty are optimistic in the future of MSU.