

Spring 2018 COACHE Faculty Satisfaction Survey Overall Results: Summary, Peer Comparisons, and Trends

Introduction

The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Survey is a national survey administered by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, designed to collect information on a wide range of issues identified as critical to faculty satisfaction and engagement, and therefore, to recruitment and retention. The survey consists of about 200 questions, which are categorized into 25 different benchmark areas.¹ When appropriate, questions are tailored specifically for sub-groups of faculty (e.g., only for full professors, only for pre-tenured faculty). A copy of the questionnaire is available on the OIRP website for the project.

NC State has participated in the COACHE Survey every three years since Spring 2006, most recently in Spring 2018. Of the over 2,000 tenure track and professional track faculty invited to participate in the survey in Spring 2018, 989 did so, for a response rate of 49%. More information about the survey administration is available online in the Introduction and Research Methods report.

This document provides results from the AY17-18 COACHE Survey for faculty overall. Specifically, it includes a summary of what faculty identify as going well and where there are opportunities for improvement, NC State faculty results compared to those of our COACHE peers, and a comparison of the results of the AY17-18 survey to those when we participated in AY14-15. Other reports available on the website focus on detailed results for each benchmark area, and on results for various demographic groups (e.g., by gender, by race/ethnicity, by rank).

Summary: What's Going Well and Opportunities for Improvement

Just under three-fourths of faculty overall indicate they are either “very satisfied” (27%) or “satisfied” (43%) with NC State as a place to work, while just over 10 percent indicate they are dissatisfied. Faculty are more likely to be “very satisfied” with their department as a place to work (34%), with another 37 percent saying they are satisfied. Almost 15 percent, however, are dissatisfied with their department as a place to work. That said, only five percent said they would not recommend their department as a place to work, while 52 percent would “strongly recommend” it. Two-thirds of faculty agree that if they had to do it over again, they would choose to work at NC State, but 13 percent disagree they would do so, and another five percent were not sure. The most common reasons faculty give for leaving NC State, other than for retirement, are to improve their salary and benefits, and to find an employer who provides more resources in support of their work.

When asked to identify the best aspects of working at NC State from a list of 26 possibilities, faculty were most likely to select things related to their colleagues (e.g., “quality” and “support” of colleagues, “opportunities to collaborate with colleagues”), the geographic location of NC State, the quality of our graduate and undergraduate students, and “academic freedom.” Average ratings given to specific aspects of their job support this latter finding, with among the most favorable ratings of the approximately 200 items included on the survey being given to “discretion over course content,”

¹ Responses to all questions included in the benchmarks were based on a 5 point scale, where a “1” represents the least favorable response (e.g., “strongly disagree,” “very dissatisfied,” “not at all interested,” “very unimportant”), and a “5” the most favorable response option (e.g., “strongly agree,” “very satisfied,” “extremely interested,” “very important”). Responses also included a “don’t know,” “not applicable” and/or “prefer not to answer” options, which have been excluded from the analyses.

“influence over focus of research,” and “level of courses taught.” Pre-tenured faculty also are also given among the highest ratings, specifically for their “intellectual vitality” and “scholarly productivity.” Tenured faculty give high ratings to various aspects of promotion, while pre-tenured faculty give high ratings to the clarity of expectations for tenure, particularly as related to scholarship. Faculty overall give positive evaluations to support for and commitment to diversity and inclusion. Faculty give especially high ratings to “library resources.” One item related to personal and family policies, “meeting times compatible with personal needs” also receives top ratings. Finally, large majorities of faculty believe that mentoring is fulfilling.

When asked to identify the two worst aspects of working at NC State from a list of 26 possibilities, one-third of the faculty selected “compensation.” Also selected by sizable number of faculty were “too much service/too many assignments” (14%), “quality of the facilities” (12%), and lack of support for research/creative work” (12%). Faculty consistently indicate benefits, family and personal policies, lack of resources, and appreciation and respect as areas that NC State should work on in order to improve their satisfaction working here. Average ratings given to various specific family and personal policies (e.g., tuition waivers, childcare, housing, eldercare, and spousal/partner hiring programs [some of which NC State does not offer]) are among the least favorable of all areas asked about. Various aspects of support and recognition for interdisciplinary work also get among the least favorable ratings, as does support for faculty to be good mentors. Items related to governance, specifically important decisions not being made until there is consensus and the institution regularly reviewing the effectiveness of governance, also get especially low ratings. Also ranked among the least favorable aspects of work is the availability of course release for research.

Benchmarks

COACHE categorized the approximately 200 specific items on the survey into 25 different benchmark areas, and calculated average ratings for each of the individual benchmarks. Average ratings for NC State faculty overall ranged from a high of 3.88 (on a 5-point scale) to a low of 2.94. The complete list of benchmarks, along with NC State faculty overall rating on each, is found in Figure 1. Benchmarks with the most favorable ratings were:

- Promotion to Full (mean = 3.88) (*tenured faculty only*)
- Nature of work: teaching (3.84)
- Department collegiality (3.84)
- Collaboration (3.82)
- Leadership: departmental (3.77)
- Departmental quality (3.74)
- Facilities and work resources (3.72)
- Tenure policies (3.69) (*pre-tenured faculty only*)
- Departmental engagement (3.59)
- Tenure expectations: clarity (3.5) (*pre-tenured faculty only*)

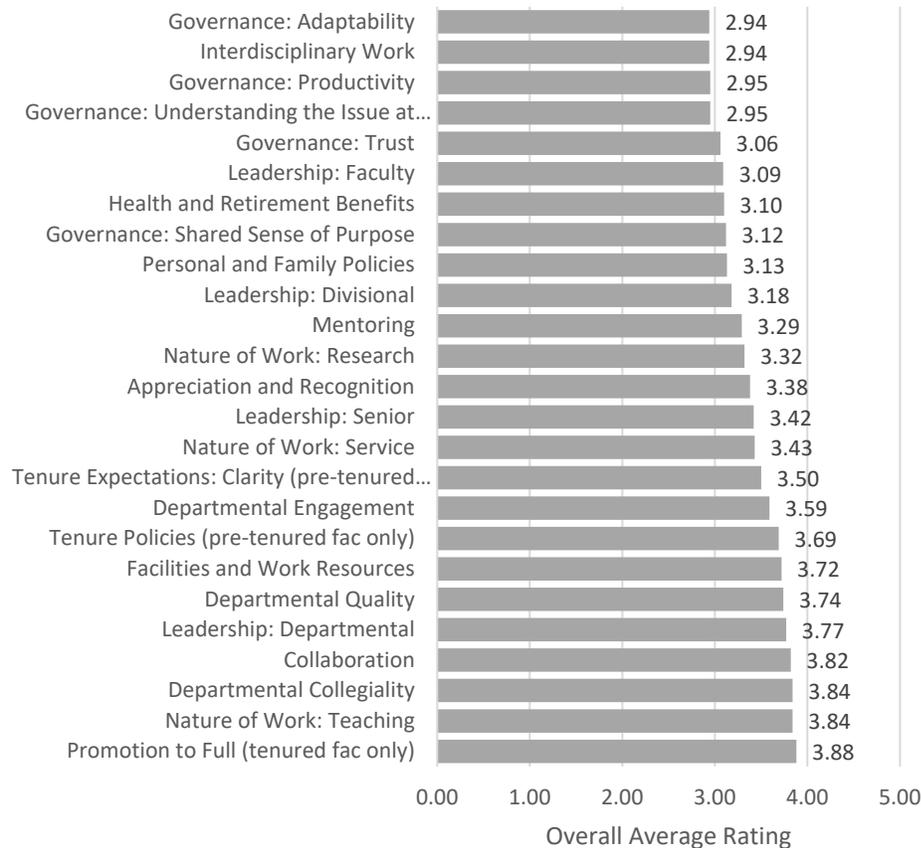
Benchmarks with the least favorable ratings were:²

- Governance: adaptability (mean = 2.94)
- Interdisciplinary work (2.94)

² An example of an item included in the “governance: adaptability” benchmark is *this institution regularly reviews the effectiveness of governance*. An example of “productivity” is *there is public recognition of progress*. An example of “understanding the issue at hand” is *faculty and administration have equal say in decisions*.

- Governance: productivity (2.95)
- Governance: understanding the issue at hand (2.95)

Figure 1: NC State Faculty Overall Average Ratings on Benchmark Measures



Specific Question Items

Average ratings from faculty overall on the approximately 200 different specific aspects of their work they were asked to evaluate ranged from 4.36 to 2.29 (on the 5-point scale). NC State faculty overall give the most favorable ratings to the following:

- Library resources (mean = 4.36)
- Discretion over course content (4.30)
- Being a mentor is fulfilling (4.25)
- Influence over focus of research (4.21)
- Intellectual vitality of pre-tenured faculty (4.20)
- Meeting times compatible with personal needs (4.19)
- Scholarly productivity of pre-tenured faculty (4.11)
- Teaching effectiveness of professional track faculty (4.11)
- Level of courses taught (4.10)
- Teaching schedule (4.07)
- Department is collegial (4.06)
- Clarity of promotion process (4.05; *tenured faculty only*)
- Department culture encourages promotion (4.04; *tenured faculty only*)

- Clarity of body of evidence for promotion (4.03; *tenured faculty only*)
- Visible leadership for support of diversity (4.03)
- Clarity of expectations for tenure: scholarship (4.01; *pre-tenured faculty only*)
- Colleagues are committed to diversity and inclusion (4.00)

NC State faculty overall gave a rating of 3.0 or lower on about 50 of the specific items asked about. Lowest average ratings were given to the following:

- Childcare (mean = 2.29)
- Housing benefits (2.43)
- Health benefits for family (2.57)
- Important decisions are not made until there is consensus (2.58)
- Support for faculty to be good mentors (2.61) (*tenured and professional track faculty only*)
- Eldercare (2.61)
- Tuition waivers, remission, or exchange (2.65)
- Department addresses sub-standard performance (2.75)
- Mentoring of NTT faculty in department (2.77) (*professional track faculty only*)
- Public recognition of progress (2.80)
- Budgets encourage interdisciplinary work (2.80)
- Spousal/partner hiring program (2.80)
- Interdisciplinary work is rewarded in promotion (2.82) (*tenured and professional track faculty only*)
- Availability of course release for research (2.84)
- Institution regularly reviews effectiveness of governance (2.85)
- Interdisciplinary work is rewarded in merit (2.86)

Peer Comparisons

When compared to the entire cohort of universities participating in COACHE, NC State faculty are among the most satisfied on a wide range of aspect of their jobs. Average ratings are in the top 30 percent of all participating universities for half of the approximately 200 specific areas asked about, including the benchmark areas of:

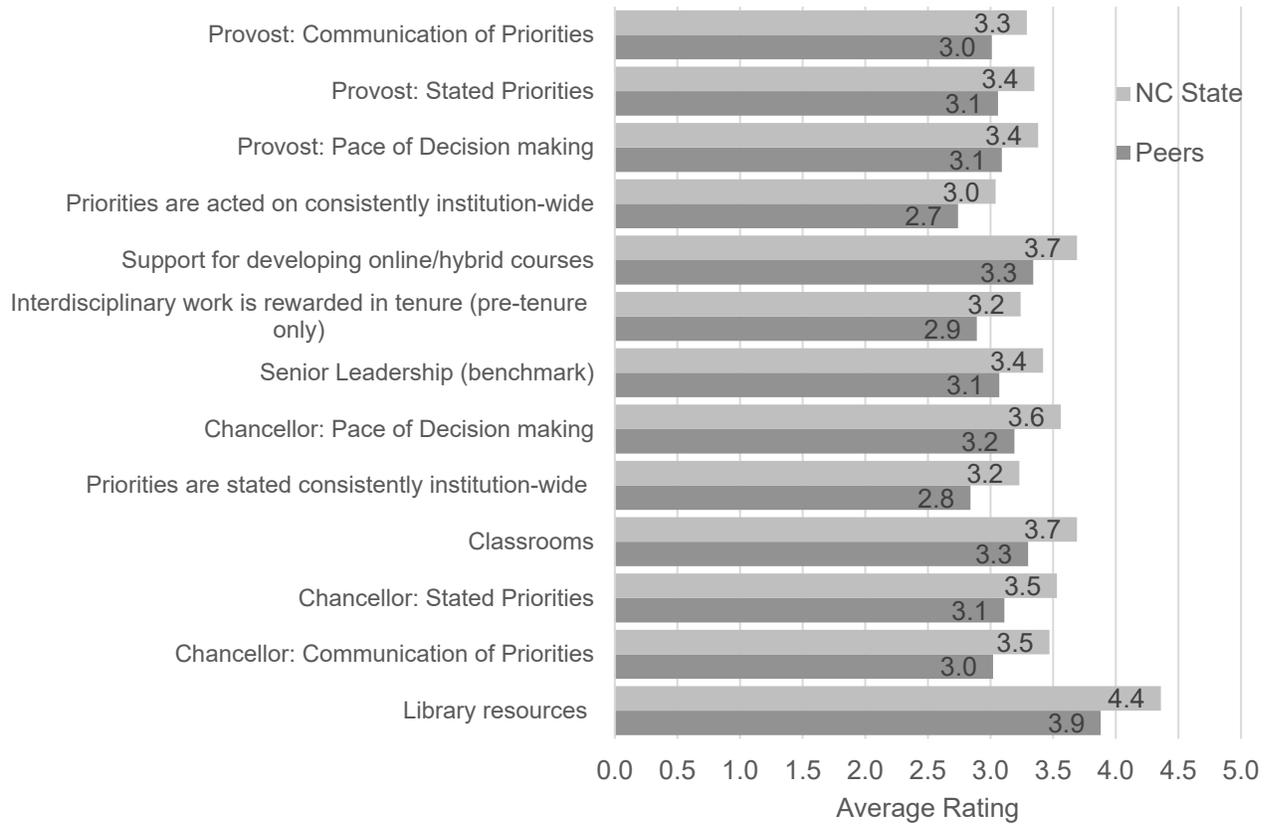
- Nature of work: research
- Nature of work: service
- Nature of work: teaching
- Facilities and work resources
- Interdisciplinary work
- Collaboration
- Mentoring
- Tenure policies
- Promotion to full
- Leadership: senior
- Departmental Quality
- Appreciation and recognition

NC State faculty satisfaction ranks in the bottom 30 percent of all participating universities on just one benchmark measure and 13 of the 200 specific areas asked about, most notably those related to health and retirement benefits. Those areas where we rank in the bottom 30 percent are:

- Health and retirement benefits (*benchmark*) (mean = 3.10)
- Faculty leaders: ensuring faculty input (2.17)
- Childcare (2.29)
- Health benefits for family (2.57)
- Eldercare (2.61)
- I understand how to voice opinions about policies (2.91)
- Faculty leaders: communication of priorities (3.04)
- Health benefits for self (3.15)
- Family medical/parental leave (3.29)
- Retirement benefits (3.36)
- Discussions of undergraduate student learning (3.55)
- How well you fit (3.61)
- Amount of personal interaction with tenured faculty (3.63)
- Amount of interaction with pre-tenured faculty (3.68)

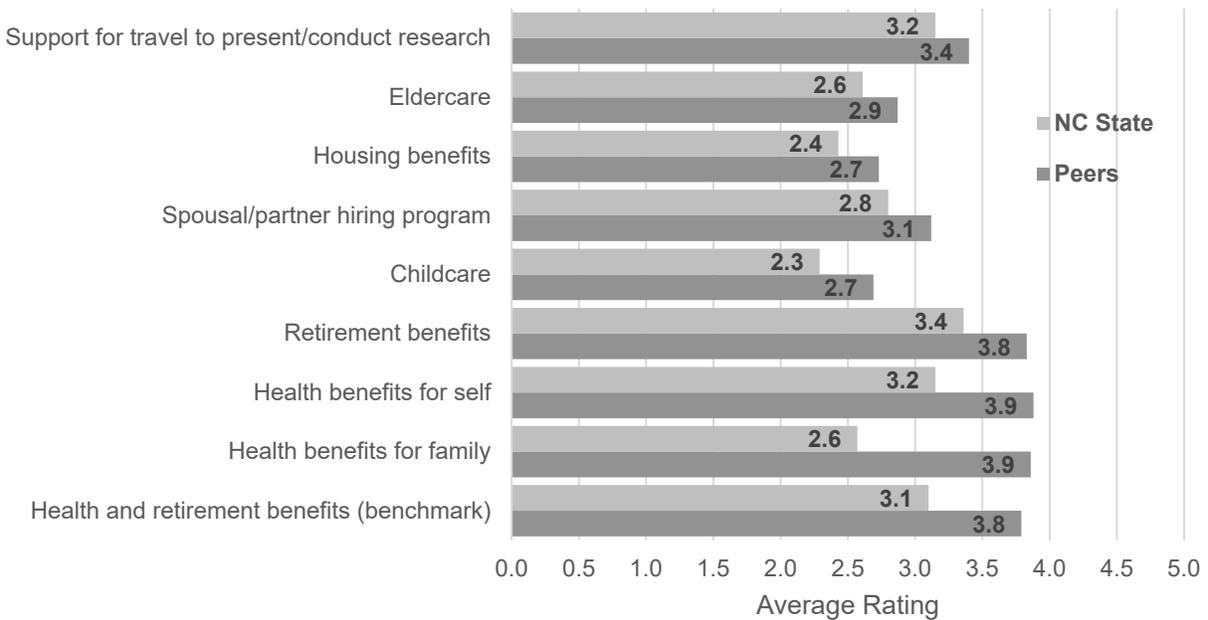
There are relatively few differences in average ratings between NC State pre-tenured and tenured faculty and those of our aggregated select peer group (i.e., Georgia Tech, Iowa State, Purdue, UC-Davis, and Virginia Tech). As seen in Figure 2, NC State faculty give much more favorable ratings than our peers to library resources. NC State faculty are also more favorable than our peers regarding various aspects of our senior leadership; priorities being stated and acted on consistently across the institution; classrooms; support for developing online/hybrid courses; and for pre-tenured faculty only, interdisciplinary work being rewarded in tenure.

Figure 2: NC State average ratings more favorable than those of our COACHE peer group



NC State faculty on average gave notably lower ratings than our COACHE peers to only a few areas asked about on the survey. Most notably, rating for health and retirement benefits were much lower than those given by faculty at our peer institutions. NC State faculty also gave less favorable ratings to personal and family policies, and to support for travel to present/conduct research.

Figure 3: NC State average ratings less favorable than those of our COACHE peer group

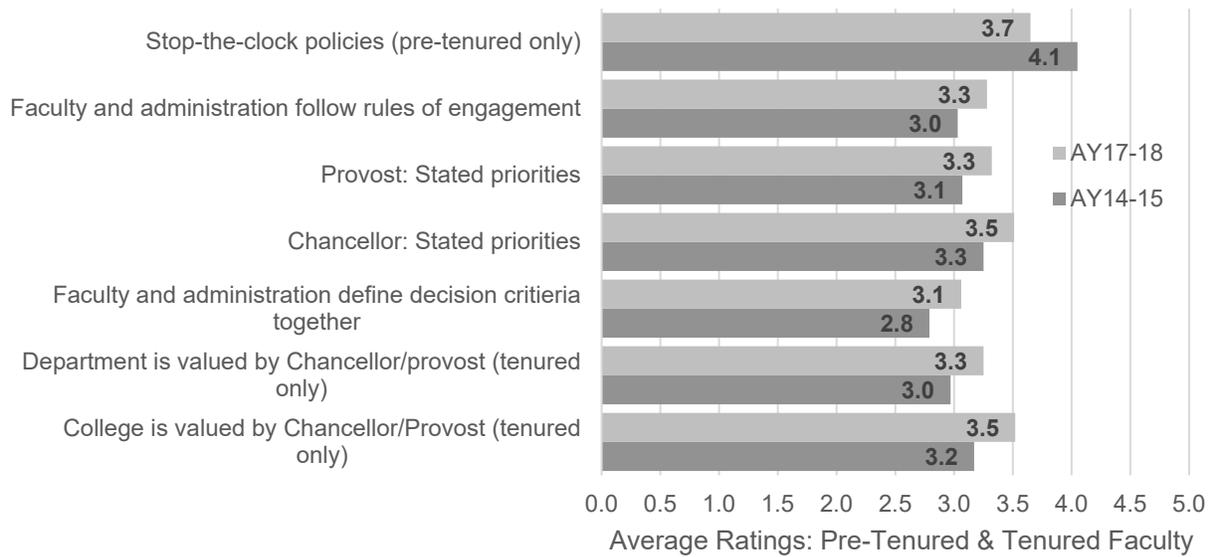


Trends: AY17-18 vs AY14-15 COACHE

Results from the AY14-15 COACHE survey were provided separately for tenure track faculty and those not on the tenure track.

Tenure track faculty: Average ratings given by pre-tenured and tenured faculty (combined) to the vast majority of individual items asked in the AY17-18 COACHE survey were consistent with those given in the AY14-15 survey. A small number of items received notably more favorable ratings in AY17-18 compared to AY14-15, including those related to senior leadership (i.e., the chancellor’s and provost’s stated priorities); governance (i.e., faculty and administration defining decision criteria together and following the rules of engagement); and the department and college being valued by the Chancellor and provost (tenured faculty only). Only one item had a less favorable rating in AY17-18 than in AY14-15: stop-the-clock policies (pre-tenured faculty only).

Figure 4: Noteworthy difference in ratings from AY14-15 to AY17-18, Tenure track faculty only



Average ratings for professional track faculty participating in the AY17-18 COACHE survey were also similar to those found in the AY14-15 survey. Ratings improved over time for various aspects of mentoring; faculty and administration having an open system of communication; support for securing graduate student assistantship; and the Provost caring about faculty of my rank. Professional track faculty evaluations for only three of the 200+ specific areas declined over time: health benefits for self; number of student advisees; and eldercare.

Figure 5: Noteworthy difference in ratings from AY14-15 to AY17-18, Professional track faculty only

