

## Spring 2024 COACHE Faculty Satisfaction Survey Introduction, Research Methods, and Response Rates

### Introduction

The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Faculty Satisfaction Survey is a national survey developed and administered by the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University. The COACHE Faculty Satisfaction Survey has been administered triennially at NC State University since 2005-2006, most recently in Spring 2024.<sup>1</sup> The survey is a comprehensive and confidential assessment tool designed to collect information regarding faculty satisfaction with a wide range of work experiences. Divisions across NC State use the data to determine where the institution is doing a good job in meeting faculty needs and expectations and to identify areas where NC State could implement improvements.

The rest of this introductory report provides an overview of the survey research methodology, the questionnaire, and response rates. Additional public reports, including a “Fast Facts” infographic of key findings, an executive summary, narrative reports, and interactive data dashboards, can be found on the Institutional Strategy and Analysis (ISA) [website](#).

### Research Methodology

The COACHE Faculty Satisfaction Survey population consists of all eligible tenured, tenure-track, and professional track faculty at NC State University. In order to be eligible, faculty must meet the following criteria:

- Full-time (0.75 of a full-time equivalent or higher)
- Hired prior to January 1, 2023
- Not in terminal year after being denied tenure
- Not in a senior administrative position

A total of 2,102 faculty members met the criteria and were invited to participate in the survey. This includes 288 pre-tenure, 1,108 tenured, and 706 professional track faculty (i.e., contract faculty such as librarians and lecturers).

At NC State, the Office for Faculty Excellence (OFE) and the survey team in ISA lead an advisory committee comprised of faculty and administrators to plan and prepare for the administration of the 2024 survey. In Fall 2023, the committee developed a communication strategy that included a dedicated informational website about COACHE

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<sup>1</sup> Comparisons between satisfaction ratings from 2021 to other years should be interpreted with caution, as 2021 scores were likely influenced by the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

at NC State, drafts of email and verbal announcements, and briefs to share with key stakeholders.

The survey was live from February 5 to April 5, 2024. On February 5, ABT Associates on behalf of the COACHE organization emailed a survey invitation to all eligible faculty. Faculty also received a post-launch email, sent over the provost's name, elaborating on the importance of the study and asking faculty to take time to complete the survey. Throughout the spring semester, up to five email reminders were sent to non-respondents. Two additional requests for participation were sent in late February and late March by the Associate Vice Provost of OFE and the Assistant Vice Provost for Survey Research and Analysis of ISA.

To increase participation rates, COACHE advisory committee representatives spoke with college and department leadership and presented at faculty group meetings to promote awareness of and interest in the survey. During the live administration period, OFE and ISA maintained an informational website and tracked response rates by college/unit.

Approximately three months after the survey closed, Harvard sent the cleaned and deidentified data to ISA, where the data are stored on a secure server to comply with COACHE data security standards and confidentiality agreements. COACHE also provided ISA with an online Chief Academic Officer (CAO) Report that covered response rates, means and frequencies for most questionnaire items, and benchmark visualizations, broken out by demographic characteristics, job classifications, and discipline. Using information and data from these sources, ISA was responsible for preparing publicly available reports and dashboards as well as college-specific data tables that were distributed to college leadership.

## **Questionnaire**

The COACHE Faculty Satisfaction Survey, which has remained generally consistent over the years, has a total of almost 300 questions. The first section of the survey (over 30 questions) includes screening and demographic background questions. Responses to the questions in this section regarding current tenure status and professor rank determine the subsequent survey path for participants. Although there are over 250 questions in the main body of the survey, respondents frequently skip questions or sections that are tailored for specific subpopulations (e.g., only pre-tenure, tenured, or professional track faculty, or only associate or full professors). Therefore, no single faculty member responds to all the questions on the survey.

The main body of the survey contains items that fall within the following topical areas, each of which constitutes a “benchmark”:

- Nature of Work – Service
- Nature of Work – Teaching
- Nature of Work – Research

- Facilities and Work Resources
- Personal and Family Policies
- Health and Retirement Benefits
- Interdisciplinary Work
- Collaboration
- Mentoring
- Tenure Policies
- Tenure Expectations: Clarity
- Promotion to Full
- Leadership: Senior
- Leadership: Divisional
- Leadership: Departmental
- Leadership: Faculty
- Governance: Trust
- Governance: Shared Sense of Purpose
- Governance: Understanding the Issue at Hand
- Governance: Adaptability
- Governance: Productivity
- Departmental Collegiality
- Departmental Engagement
- Departmental Quality
- Appreciation and Recognition

Overall benchmark scores are calculated from the means of all the five-point Likert Scale items associated with that topic area. On their own, the benchmark scores provide a helpful summary of faculty ratings for each topical area (*1=low rating, 5=high rating*). In addition, the benchmark statistics provide valuable insight into subgroup comparisons, peer comparisons, and historical trends at NC State.

There are several supplemental questions asked of faculty that don't fit neatly into a benchmark score but nonetheless reveal important information about faculty opinions. This includes questions asked of professional faculty regarding the clarity of contract renewal and promotion processes and of all faculty's global satisfaction. When applicable, these items are reported on in the means and frequency tables and narrative reports.

The NC State COACHE advisory committee opted to develop and have COACHE administer an additional fifteen "local" items that address institution-specific areas of interest not covered by the main COACHE questionnaire. Local question items in Spring 2024 addressed collaborative spaces, faculty and student mental health, workload, and satisfaction with department. A copy of the questions can be found on the ISA [website](#).

### **Subgroups, Peers, and Trends**

A key benefit of participating in the COACHE survey is the ability to compare results among faculty subgroups, with NC State's COACHE peer institutions, and across trend

data at NC State. These data are utilized across academic and administrative units to assess satisfaction and engagement on a broad range of work-related experiences and opinions.

Breaking down survey results by faculty subgroups—such as tenure status, rank and gender—is essential for identifying and addressing differing experiences and needs among faculty. Subgroup analyses can reveal variations in satisfaction levels that may be obscured in aggregate results. Subgroup classification is primarily based on self-reports from the background and demographic questions on the survey. If survey responses are not provided, participants' NC State records are used to fill in missing data.

Peer comparisons provide valuable context for survey results, offering insight into how NC State faculty experiences align with those at comparable institutions. For the 2024 survey, NC State selected five peer institutions as a comparison group.<sup>2</sup> These institutions, along with the year of their survey participation, are:

- Georgia Institute of Technology (2024)\*
- Rutgers University – New Brunswick (2023)\*
- University of Arizona (2024)\*
- University of Massachusetts – Amherst (2024)
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (2023)\*

Finally, examining trend data – specifically, by comparing results from 2024 to 2021, 2018, and earlier - provides critical insight into progress over time and enables data users to identify emerging challenges or opportunities for initiatives that align with the university's goals. Since 2011, the survey has been administered to pre-tenure, tenured, and professional track faculty; results from earlier COACHE surveys of just pre-tenure faculty are available on the ISA [website](#).

## Response Rates

Of the 2,102 NC State faculty invited to take the survey, 682 submitted a valid response for an overall response rate of 32.4 percent. This is a modest increase from Spring 2021 (29%), but it is still a decline in participation rates from past years.

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<sup>2</sup> For the 2024 COACHE Faculty Satisfaction Survey, NC State selected these five institutions to make up the COACHE peer group based on 1) their inclusion in NC State's "Official Peer Universities" group, and/or 2) the recency with which they competed in the survey. "Official" peers are noted with an asterisk.

**Figure 1: NC State COACHE Faculty Satisfaction Survey response rates, 2011-2024**

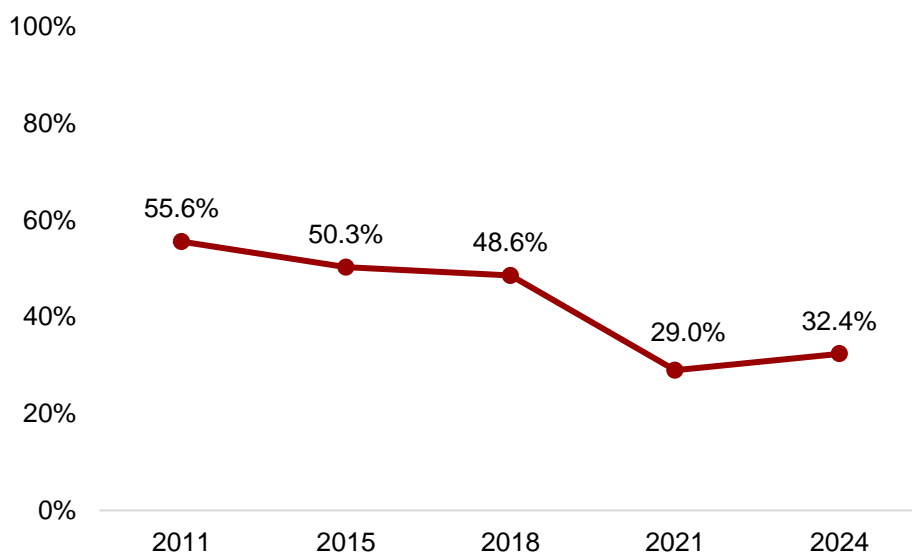


Table 1 shows NC State's 2024 participation rates compared to our selected COACHE peer institution group and all universities participating in the COACHE survey this year. Response rates in this table are further broken out by tenure track status and rank; breakouts by demographic subgroups can be found in Table 2.

Compared to the five COACHE peer institutions, NC State's response rate was approximately two percentage points lower, and compared to all participating universities, NC State's response rate was nine percentage points lower. However, NC State narrowed the gap between 2021 and 2024 (Table 3). Because faculty participation at peer institutions dropped by seven percentage points and NC State's response rate increased by three percentage points, NC State faculty's participation in 2024 was only slightly lower than the average of the COACHE peer group.

Comparisons of response rates amongst subgroups reveal that NC State faculty's participation generally mirrors national trends. Participation rates were remarkably similar across all tenure track status and rank groups at NC State, ranging from 32 to 33 percent (Table 1). Thirty-six percent of faculty who are women responded to the Spring 2024 survey, while 29 percent of men did the same, a gap of seven percentage points (Table 2). This trend is also consistent with the gender response rate gap in previous years (Table 4). Our COACHE peer institutions have historically experienced even larger gender gaps, with women's response rates exceeding men's by 12 to 13 percentage points. White faculty at NC State responded at higher rates than faculty of color, with a difference of 10 percentage points (Table 2). Asian faculty responded at the lowest rates, with only 23 percent completing the survey. Again, these results reflect the general trend at NC State and at peer universities over the past several survey administrations (Table 4).

**Table 1: 2024 response rates for NC State, peer, and all participating universities, overall and by tenure track status and rank**

		Overall	Tenure Track Status			Rank (tenured faculty)	
			Tenured	Pre-tenure	Professional Track	Associate	Full
<b>NC State</b>	population	2102	1106	290	706	505	829
	responders	682	360	93	229	169	265
	response rate	32%	33%	32%	32%	33%	32%
<b>COACHE Peers</b>	population	11468	4815	1372	5281	2364	3286
	responders	3867	1958	518	1391	923	1275
	response rate	34%	41%	38%	26%	39%	39%
<b>All Participating Universities</b>	population	94762	46322	13545	34895	25194	28655
	responders	39277	20696	5938	12643	11001	12959
	response rate	41%	45%	44%	36%	44%	45%

**Table 2: 2024 response rates for NC State, peer, and all participating universities, by gender and race/ethnicity**

		Gender		Race/Ethnicity*			
		Men	Women	White	FOC	Asian	URM
<b>NC State</b>	population	1227	867	1471	555	295	260
	responders	359	316	528	146	69	77
	response rate	29%	36%	36%	26%	23%	30%
<b>COACHE Peers</b>	population	6607	4004	7004	2999	1549	1450
	responders	2051	1740	2737	1018	467	551
	response rate	31%	43%	39%	34%	30%	38%
<b>All Participating Universities</b>	population	50275	39970	61341	27495	13960	13535
	responders	19113	19263	28043	10620	4768	5852
	response rate	38%	48%	46%	39%	34%	43%

\*'Faculty of color' includes all those who identify as Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic, Native American, and/or Pacific Islander. 'Underrepresented minority' consists of this same group minus those who identify as Asian.

**Table 3: Response rates for NC State and peers, 2018-2024, overall and by tenure track status and rank**

		Overall	Tenure Track Status			Rank (tenured faculty)	
			Tenured	Pre-tenure	Professional Track	Associate	Full
<b>NC State</b>	2024	32%	33%	32%	32%	33%	32%
	2021	29%	30%	30%	27%	31%	30%
	2018	49%	48%	55%	46%	50%	48%
<b>COACHE Peers</b>	2024	34%	41%	38%	26%	39%	39%
	2021	41%	45%	47%	32%	39%	50%
	2018	48%	47%	47%	52%	48%	48%

**Table 4: Response rates for NC State and peers, 2018-2024, by gender and race/ethnicity**

		Gender		Race/Ethnicity*			
		Men	Women	White	FOC	Asian	URM
<b>NC State</b>	2024	29%	36%	36%	26%	23%	30%
	2021	26%	33%	31%	22%	21%	23%
	2018	46%	53%	51%	42%	41%	42%
<b>COACHE Peers</b>	2024	31%	43%	39%	34%	30%	38%
	2021	36%	48%	45%	35%	30%	43%
	2018	43%	56%	50%	43%	37%	54%

\*'Faculty of color' includes all those who identify as Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic, Native American, and/or Pacific Islander. 'Underrepresented minority' consists of this same group minus those who identify as Asian.

Participation rates varied widely by college. The Libraries and the Wilson College of Textiles experienced the highest response rates, at 67 and 61 percent respectively (Table 5). Both enjoyed much greater response rates from the 2021 survey administration: the Libraries increased by 30 percentage points, while Textiles increased by 28 percentage points. Other colleges that experienced notable increases in participation between 2021 and 2024 are University College (by seven percentage points) and Agriculture and Life Sciences (by six percentage points) (in data not shown here).

In 2024, Poole College of Management and the College of Design were the two colleges with the lowest response rates (at 23.2% and 20.9% respectively). Given its size and relatively low response rate (24.4%), the College of Engineering is slightly underrepresented among respondents.

**Table 5: 2024 NC State response rates, by college**

College/Division	Population		Respondents		Response Rate
	N	% of Pop	N	% of Resps	
<b>Agriculture and Life Sciences</b>	351	16.7%	119	17.4%	33.9%
<b>Design</b>	67	3.2%	14	2.1%	20.9%
<b>Education</b>	100	4.8%	30	4.4%	30.0%
<b>Engineering</b>	406	19.3%	99	14.5%	24.4%
<b>Humanities and Social Sciences</b>	354	16.8%	96	14.1%	27.1%
<b>Libraries</b>	87	4.1%	58	8.5%	66.7%
<b>Management</b>	95	4.5%	22	3.2%	23.2%
<b>Natural Resources</b>	95	4.5%	36	5.3%	37.9%
<b>Sciences</b>	300	14.3%	106	15.5%	35.3%
<b>Textiles</b>	46	2.2%	28	4.1%	60.9%
<b>University College</b>	47	2.2%	23	3.4%	48.9%
<b>Veterinary Medicine</b>	154	7.3%	51	7.5%	33.1%
<b>Total</b>	2,102	100.0%	682	100.0%	32.4%