How Investing in Faculty Well-Being Is Investing in Your Institution

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Webcast | How Investing in Faculty Well-Being Is Investing in Your Institution

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Panelists:

R. Todd Benson,
Executive Director of the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) at Harvard University
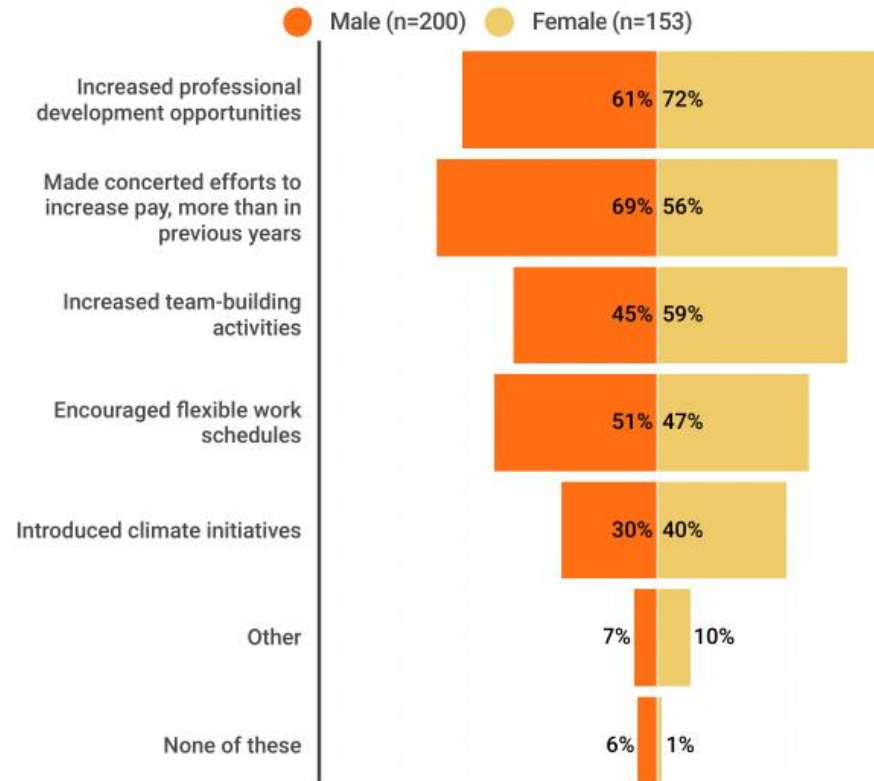
Adrianna Kezar,
Director of the Pullias Center for Higher Education, Dean's Professor of Leadership & Wilbur-Kieffer Professor of Higher Ed at the University of Southern California

Joya Misra,
Distinguished Professor of sociology and public policy at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Aditi Pai,
Special Assistant to the Office of the Provost, professor of biology & co-director of the Teaching Resource and Research Center at Spelman College

IHE Inside Higher Ed

IHE Presidents and Provosts Survey Insight

Male and female presidents who say they've introduced the following step(s) in the last 12 months to increase employee retention and morale (multiple selections allowed):

Male (n=200)   Female (n=153)

	Male	Female
Increased professional development opportunities	61%	72%
Made concerted efforts to increase pay, more than in previous years	69%	56%
Increased team-building activities	45%	59%
Encouraged flexible work schedules	51%	47%
Introduced climate initiatives	30%	40%
Other	7%	10%
None of these	6%	1%

—*Inside Higher Ed'*s and Hanover Research's 2024 Survey of College and University Presidents (left) and *Inside Higher Ed'*s and Hanover Research's 2024 Survey of Chief Academic Officers (right)

- **35%** of provosts say institution offers no leadership training on supporting faculty, staff mental health

- **60%** of provosts agree or strongly agree that recruiting faculty members now is more challenging than prior to the pandemic

- About a third of provosts each say they're seeing higher-than-usual faculty turnover **(35%)** and retirement **(30%)** rates

- **39%** of provosts say their institution is doing more now to retain and engage faculty members than it was prior to the pandemic

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'Addressing Burnout: Radical Cultural Shift'

"Addressing burnout and low morale requires committed effort on the part of institutions. These suggestions look to change how colleges and universities operate and treat their faculty and staff by creating workplaces that are humane and that support employees' personal and professional lives. This effort comes through rethinking where and how work can be performed, and it must be done by leadership. … Working in higher education used to be highly sought out. Let's change the culture so that it has that reputation once again."

—ACE, 'Addressing Burnout Through Cultural Change' report, 2023

Problems & What Leaders Can Do

Salary concerns ➡️ pay transparency, COLA, competitive pay, promote benefits

Lack of meaningful work ➡️ build jobs around the strengths of employees, think like a tech company

Increasing workload and unfilled positions ➡️ limit communication during non-working hours, explore a four-day work week, rethink meetings

Preference for remote and hybrid schedules ➡️ adopt hybrid schedules, allow remote teaching

'Well-Being is Not Just an Individual Issue'

"The big takeaway is that this is not an individual-level problem, one for which faculty and staff members simply need to manage their calendar and work responsibilities more effectively to solve. Institutions must also ask themselves hard questions, such as: In what ways are our institutional infrastructures compounding the problem? What can we as institutional administrators do to ensure more equitable workloads for faculty and staff? What policies, practices and action steps must be created, implemented and assessed to establish boundary-setting and people's well-being as core institutional values?"

—Vicki L. Baker is the E. Maynard Aris Endowed Professor in Economics and Management and chair of the economics and management department at Albion College, *Inside Higher Ed,* 3.13.2024

Recommended institutional actions:

#1. Clarify the purpose of the "Ask."

#2. Conduct pulse surveys.

#3. Avoid performance punishment.

'Equity-Minded Faculty Workloads'

"It may seem challenging to address the realities of the existing faculty work environment, but academic leaders, departments and faculty members can take action to create better, fairer, equity-minded workloads. New policies and practices can be put in place to 'script,' or guide, faculty and their institutions toward more equitable outcomes, especially for women faculty members and faculty members from historically minoritized identity groups. Academic leaders and departments can be more accountable for fair divisions of labor."

—ACE, "Equity-Minded Faculty Workloads" report, 2022

Recommendations for departments:

Transparency: Have widely visible information about faculty work activities available for department members to see

Clarity: Have clearly identified and well-understood benchmarks for faculty work activities

Credit: Recognize and reward faculty members who are expending more effort in certain areas

Norms: Commit to ensuring faculty workload is fair and put systems in place that reinforce these norms

Context: Acknowledge that different faculty members have different strengths, interests and demands that shape their workloads and offer workload flexibility to recognize this context

Accountability: Put mechanisms in place to ensure that faculty members fulfill their work obligations and receive credit for their labor

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Employee Value Proposition

What is an Employee Value Proposition (EVP)?

Five levers in a higher education EVP

1. Total compensation
2. Work-life balance
3. Professional development and learning
4. Culture and community
5. Mission and purpose

An EVP:

- Clearly conveys an organization's comparative advantages as an employer
- Serves as a differentiator in recruitment and retention
- Takes a holistic approach focused on employees' needs and expectations, extending well beyond salary
- Can be adjusted for targeted employees who matter most given institutional goals at a particular point in time

"Balancing your EVP's elements is an art. An EVP should be a living document, adjusted based on changing circumstances both internal and external to the institution. An EVP can give your institution a distinct advantage for building and maintaining your workforce by conveying the compelling rewards, benefits and attributes that position you as an employer of choice. Early movers in higher education stand to benefit from developing an EVP ahead of their peers."

—TIAA Institute's Employee Value Proposition (2023)

Additional Supports/Areas for Investment

Faculty writing groups ⬇️ and mentoring programs ➡️

"I realized one, the value of blocking that time on my calendar, but then, sometimes, I could not work on what I was working on for six hours. I could not do that, so it made me learn a little bit better how to manage doing two projects at once or being able to step away from something and come back to it."

—Study participant quoted in "Faculty Writing Groups: The Impact of Protected Writing Time and Group Support," International Journal of Education Research Open, 2021

NCFDD Mentoring Map
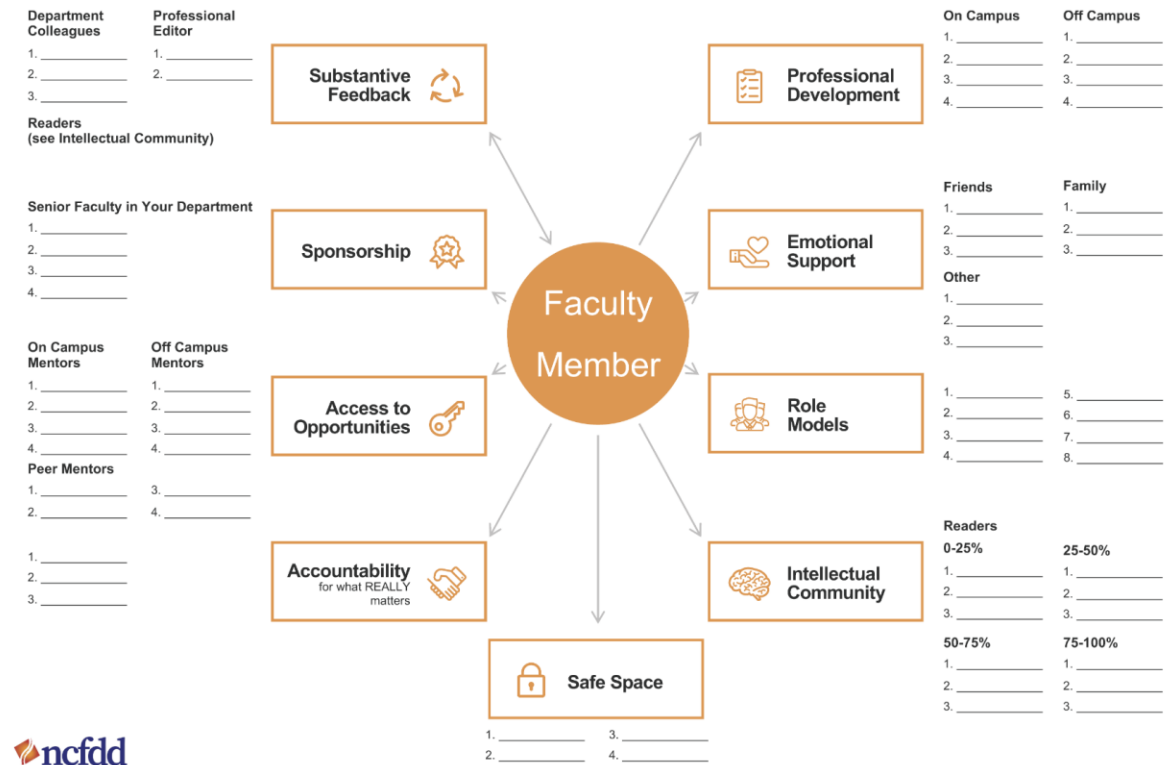
Case Study: Healthy Excellence at Harvey Mudd College

"Reaccreditation is not always that kind of vehicle, but in this particular case, the team, in one of its very earliest meetings, stumbled on a theme, which was healthy excellence. It proved a key to unlocking an entire set of initiatives around improved work-life balance for faculty and staff, a better understanding of work commitments in the classroom for students."

—Former Provost and Dean Lisa Sullivan (currently at Mount Holyoke College), COACHECast Season 1, Ep. 4 (left), diagram from Harvey Mudd's Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation, 2019 (right)
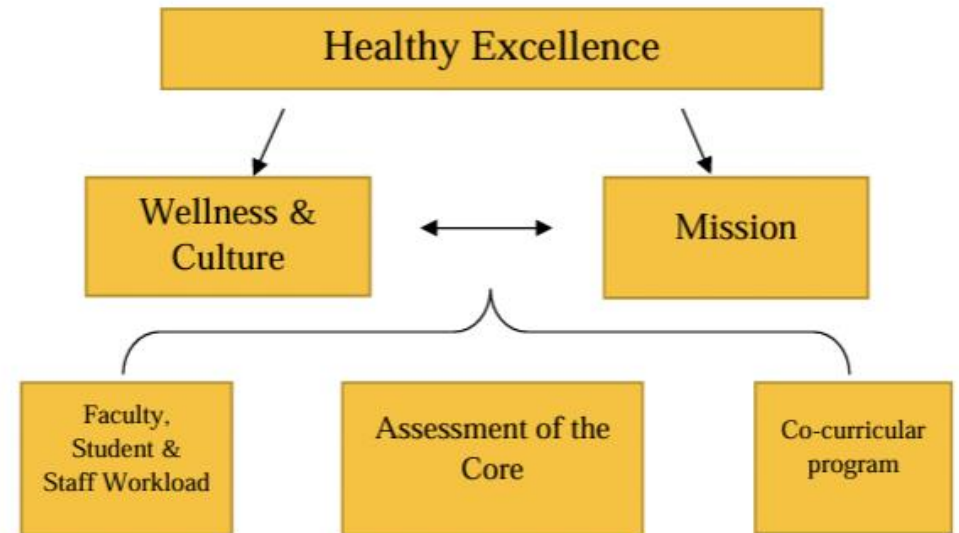
Panel Discussion

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Sponsor Chat

ncfdd

Erin Furtak, Professor of STEM Education, School of Education at the University of Colorado at Boulder

Doug Lederman, Editor and Co-Founder at *Inside Higher Ed*

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Audience Q & A

Thank you!

Helpful Links

- https://www.cupahr.org/blog/the-top-predictor-of-higher-ed-employee-retention-may-surprise-you-2023-09-12/

- https://www.insidehighered.com/news/governance/executive-leadership/2024/02/29/presidents-survey-finds-optimism-amid-uncertainty

- https://www.insidehighered.com/news/governance/executive-leadership/2024/04/16/provosts-survey-shows-need-ai-policies-speech

- https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Addressing-Burnout.pdf

- https://www.insidehighered.com/opinion/career-advice/2024/03/13/how-colleges-can-and-must-help-support-employees-well-being

- https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Equity-Minded-Faculty-Workloads.pdf

- https://www.tiaa.org/content/dam/tiaa/institute/pdf/data-brief/2023-11/2023_tiaa_institute_evp_infographic.pdf

- https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666374021000704

- https://www.ncfdd.org/ncfddmentormap

- https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2021/03/18/colleges-should-develop-formal-programs-mentoring-not-leave-it-individual-faculty

- https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2023/03/30/equitably-recognizing-and-rewarding-women-faculty-color-opinion

- https://coache.gse.harvard.edu/lisasullivan

- https://www.hmc.edu/institutional-research/wp-content/uploads/sites/42/2019/07/Thematic-Pathway-for-Reaffirmation_Sent.pdf

- https://www.insidehighered.com/news/student-success/college-experience/2023/07/13/five-components-college-student-thriving

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