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## News

### Shifting Faculty Mission

March 5, 2009

Every three years, education researchers at the University of California at Los Angeles release a national survey of faculty attitudes and norms, and various categories show movement of a few percentage points. This year's survey, being released today, finds significant shifts in several categories related to social change:

- 75.2 percent of professors now say that they work to "enhance students' knowledge of and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups." That is a gain of 17.6 percentage points in the three years since the survey was last done.
- 55.5 percent of professors consider it "very important" or "essential" to "instill in students a commitment to community service," an increase of 19.1 percentage points since the last survey.
- 71.0 percent believe that colleges should be "actively involved" in solving social problems, up 4.1 percentage points in three years.

While the above data reflect an apparently broad view of the social responsibility of higher education, other findings suggest that professors are more likely to embrace instruction and assessment methods that focus on students' individual needs. Compared to three years ago, faculty members were more likely to believe it is part of their job to "help students develop personal values" (66.1 percent, an increase of 15.3 percentage points over 2004–05), "enhance students' self-understanding" (71.8 percent, a 13.4 percentage-point increase), "develop moral character" (70.2 percent, a 13.1 percentage-point increase) and "provide for students' emotional development" (48.1 percent, a 12.9 percentage-point increase).

While about one third of professors in the survey use multiple-choice exams, the latest survey found

gains for those more likely to use short-answer questions (45.5 percent vs. 36.9 percent three years ago) and those more likely to use term/research papers (44.3 percent vs. 34.7 percent).

These figures come from "The American College Teacher: National Norms for the 2007–08 HERI Faculty Survey," which is issued by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program at the [Higher Education Research Institute](#) at UCLA. The results reported are based on the responses of 22,562 full-time college and university faculty members at 372 four-year colleges and universities nationwide. The responses are weighted to provide an accurate profile of the teaching population at four-year colleges.

On political leanings, the survey is largely consistent with the last one, in finding that academics are more likely to consider themselves on the left of the political spectrum than the right, although there is a very slight gain for the left, and also a slight gain among those on the far right. The gains on the left were more notable between 2001-2 and 2004-5, but those gains held in the more recent survey.

### Professors' Political Leanings Over 3 Surveys

	2007-8	2004-5	2001-2
Far left	8.8%	8.7%	5.9%
Liberal	47.0%	46.5%	45.1%
Middle of the Road	28.4%	27.4%	32.3%
Conservative	15.2%	16.9%	16.3%
Far right	0.7%	0.5%	0.3%

A key note about all of the figures in the survey and cited in this article is that they are for full-time faculty members at four-year colleges and universities, excluding community college faculty members entirely, and part-timers at four-year institutions. In past years, the survey has included community colleges, whose faculty members tend to be more centrist politically and who differ on a range of issues from their counterparts at four-year institutions. This year, UCLA officials said, participation at community colleges was too low to provide valid data. All of the comparisons above for past years are only of four-year colleges and universities, so the shifts are not skewed by the lack of community college professors this year.

Community colleges are not the only type of college where different political leanings may be found. At the university level, faculty members at private institutions are more likely than those at publics to be conservative (17.2 percent vs. 12.3 percent) and less likely to be liberal (44.7 percent vs. 50.3 percent).

At four-year colleges, consistent with past years, the greatest concentration of conservative professors may be found at colleges that are religious, but not Roman Catholic.

### Professors' Political Leanings by Sector at Four-Year Colleges, 2007-8

	Public	Private, non-religious	Catholic	Religious, non-Catholic
Far left	8.8%	10.9%	7.6%	6.8%

Liberal	45.5%	50.8%	46.2%	37.6%
Middle of the Road	30.1%	23.4%	31.1%	28.8%
Conservative	15.1%	14.2%	14.5%	25.9%
Far right	0.5%	0.7%	0.6%	0.8%

The survey also features data on college faculty members' job satisfaction, which it generally finds to be high -- although the fact that this pool excludes the growing part-time ranks should be noted here. Just under 75 percent of those in the survey reported that they were satisfied with their careers. Men are more likely than women to be satisfied by their careers, and men are also more likely than women to be satisfied by their pay (48.9 percent vs. 41.9 percent).

[Numerous surveys](#) in recent years have pointed to the satisfaction gaps between men and women in academe, but many of them have focused on women entering the profession, those who have not yet won tenure and who may be facing that challenge while also trying to juggle family responsibilities. In the new survey from UCLA, the largest gaps between men and women were at the rank of full professor -- those who have won not only tenure, but a subsequent promotion. Among these women, in the area of scholarly pursuits, 50.6 percent reported satisfaction, compared with 66.0 percent of men. Female full professors are also less likely to be satisfied than their male counterparts with their teaching loads (53.2 percent vs. 66.2 percent) and their prospects for career advancement (58.1 percent vs. 66.9 percent).

Linda DeAngelo, a UCLA researcher involved with the study, said that she was both surprised and concerned by the level of frustration of senior faculty women. "They are at the pinnacle of the profession, and yet they are just not satisfied with their careers in the way we would hope," she said, urging colleges and universities to consider how policies or practices may be affecting this gap.

The most striking shifts overall, DeAngelo said, were in the significant gains in percentages of faculty members taking diversity education as a key part of their responsibility. While the survey is typically scrutinized especially for the political statistics on faculty members, DeAngelo argued that these should be viewed as "separate issues."

She said that the growing faculty interest in diversity and social values generally reflected what colleges are hearing from those who will hire their graduates. "The fact of the matter is that employers want employees that understand how to work with people who are different from them, and that's become a major thrust of the faculty role," she said. Faculty members are appropriately "providing that ability" because their students "are always going to be working in groups with people different from themselves."

Neil Gross, a professor of sociology at the University of British Columbia, who has conducted numerous studies on faculty political leanings (and who argues that professors are generally [more centrist than people believe](#)), said he wasn't surprised by the left-leaning findings in the UCLA analysis. The most survey was conducted at a point when the U.S. electorate was shifting to the left, so Gross said that there would be no reason to think academe would move in the opposite direction.

In fact, one theory he has -- which he calls "intriguing" but not one he can yet demonstrate -- is that professors' political identity may be affected in part by a "backlash effect," in which academics are so frustrated by the "conservative criticism of the liberal professoriate that they cling to their identities

as leftists even more fervently than they would otherwise."

Critics of the way colleges focus on diversity said that they were concerned by the findings. Peter W. Wood, president of the National Association of Scholars, a group that has questioned affirmative action policies and urged more of an emphasis on a traditional college curriculum, said that he doesn't think professors are becoming more supportive of diversity. He thinks they are just becoming more open about their support for diversity efforts. "I think something that was in the closet is now more open than it used to be," he said. Wood said he rejected the idea that colleges need to teach students to get along with members of different groups -- even while he believes that people should get along in a diverse society.

"Americans have been working with people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds for centuries," he said. "It's never been something that required a college degree to overcome your biases."

Mark Bauerlein, an English professor at Emory University who has written about black and civil rights history, but also has criticized higher education as too focused on diversity, said he was also concerned about the growing percentages of faculty members who embrace teaching about various groups as a key part of their job. Bauerlein said that when scholars' research leads them to minority history or culture, it makes perfect sense to pursue those topics. But he said that diversity in higher education has become "a fetish or fixation," with professors expressing more and more interest in it just as the United States is making notable progress toward equality, as evidenced by the election of President Obama among other developments. Many on campus, he said, "have an investment in racism" because "their jobs are combating racism."

Here are some of the other results from the survey:

During the present term, how many hours per week on average do you actually spend on:	
Scheduled teaching	
--None	0.6
--1 to 4	13.4
--5 to 8	31.2
--9 to 12	35.1
--13 to 16	12.1
--17 to 20	4.7
--21 to 34	2.3
--35 to 44	0.3
--45 +	0.2
Preparing for teaching (including reading student papers and grading)	
--None	0.3
--1 to 4	10.3
--5 to 8	23.9
--9 to 12	24.5
--13 to 16	15.8
--17 to 20	13.8

--21 to 34	8.7
--35 to 44	2.1
--45 +	0.7
Advising and counseling of students:	
--None	3.9
--1 to 4	55.8
--5 to 8	28.4
--9 to 12	8.0
--13 to 16	2.3
--17 to 20	1.1
--21 to 34	0.4
--35 to 44	0.2
--45 +	0.1
Committee work and meetings:	
--None	5.0
--1 to 4	57.2
--5 to 8	26.5
--9 to 12	7.5
--13 to 16	2.3
--17 to 20	1.0
--21 to 34	0.3
--35 to 44	0.1
--45 +	0.0
Other administration:	
--None	30.0
--1 to 4	39.0
--5 to 8	14.6
--9 to 12	7.2
--13 to 16	3.3
--17 to 20	3.1
--21 to 34	2.1
--35 to 44	0.6
--45 +	0.2
During the present term, how many hours per week on average do you actually spend on:	
Research and scholarly writing	
--None	15.5
--1 to 4	32.3
--5 to 8	20.2
--9 to 12	12.5

--13 to 16	6.6
--17 to 20	6.2
--21 to 34	4.2
--35 to 44	1.6
--45 +	0.8
Other creative products/performances	
--None	50.8
--1 to 4	29.5
--5 to 8	11.0
--9 to 12	4.4
--13 to 16	1.8
--17 to 20	1.4
--21 to 34	0.7
--35 to 44	0.2
--45 +	0.2
Consultation with clients/patients	
--None	80.8
--1 to 4	12.2
--5 to 8	3.9
--9 to 12	1.3
--13 to 16	0.7
--17 to 20	0.6
--21 to 34	0.4
--35 to 44	0.1
--45 +	0.1
Community or public service	
--None	37.3
--1 to 4	49.1
--5 to 8	10.1
--9 to 12	2.5
--13 to 16	0.6
--17 to 20	0.3
--21 to 34	0.1
--35 to 44	0.1
--45 +	0.0
Outside consulting/freelance work	
--None	67.7
--1 to 4	23.9
--5 to 8	5.7

--9 to 12	1.7
--13 to 16	0.4
--17 to 20	0.3
--21 to 34	0.1
--35 to 44	0.1
--45 +	0.1
During the present term, how many hours per week on average do you actually spend on:	
Household/childcare duties	
--None	12.2
--1 to 4	18.0
--5 to 8	25.3
--9 to 12	16.3
--13 to 16	8.3
--17 to 20	7.8
--21 to 34	5.7
--35 to 44	2.9
--45 +	3.5
Communicating via e-mail	
--None	0.4
--1 to 4	28.8
--5 to 8	40.1
--9 to 12	18.2
--13 to 16	7.2
--17 to 20	3.4
--21 to 34	1.3
--35 to 44	0.3
--45 +	0.3
Commuting to campus	
--None	6.0
--1 to 4	61.5
--5 to 8	23.0
--9 to 12	8.0
--13 to 16	1.0
--17 to 20	0.3
--21 to 34	0.1
--35 to 44	0.0
--45 +	0.1
Other employment, outside academe	
--None	87.0

--1 to 4	6.8
--5 to 8	3.1
--9 to 12	1.5
--13 to 16	0.7
--17 to 20	0.4
--21 to 34	0.3
--35 to 44	0.2
--45 +	0.1
Including all institutions at which you teach, how many undergraduate courses are you teaching this term:	
None	0.0
One	21.7
Two	28.8
Three	25.8
Four	15.4
Five	5.2
Six or more	3.2
For up to four of the undergraduate courses mentioned above, how many students are enrolled in:	
Course No. 1	
--10 or fewer	12.0
--11 to 20	27.1
--21 to 30	26.2
--31 to 50	20.8
--51 to 100	9.1
--More than 100	4.8
Course No. 2	
--10 or fewer	16.9
--11 to 20	31.5
--21 to 30	26.7
--31 to 50	17.9
--51 to 100	5.0
--More than 100	2.1
Course No. 3	
--10 or fewer	24.9
--11 to 20	32.8
--21 to 30	24.9
--31 to 50	13.8
--51 to 100	2.7
--More than 100	1.0



Course No. 4	
--10 or fewer	31.7
--11 to 20	31.6
--21 to 30	23.2
--31 to 50	11.1
--51 to 100	1.8
--More than 100	0.6
How many of the following courses are you teaching this academic year?	
General education courses	
--None	56.0
--One	17.5
--Two	12.2
--Three	6.1
--Four	3.9
--Five or more	4.2
Developmental/remedial	
--None	94.6
--One	3.0
--Two	1.2
--Three	0.5
--Four	0.4
--Five or more	0.3
Other undergraduate	
--None	18.0
--One	20.4
--Two	23.1
--Three	16.0
--Four	9.9
--Five or more	12.5
Graduate courses	
--None	63.4
--One	22.4
--Two	8.7
--Three	2.9
--Four	1.5
--Five or more	1.1
Vocational/technical	
--None	97.4
--One	1.0

--Two	0.6
--Three	0.4
--Four	0.3
--Five or more	0.3
Non-credit courses	
--None	95.0
--One	3.5
--Two	1.0
--Three	0.2
--Four	0.1
--Five or more	0.2
Have you engaged in any of the following professional development activities at your institutions?	
Workshops focused on teaching:	
--Yes	70.1
--No	27.5
--Not eligible	0.2
--Not available	2.2
Paid workshops outside the institutions focused on teaching:	
--Yes	24.6
--No	70.6
--Not eligible	0.8
--Not available	3.9
Paid sabbatical leave:	
--Yes	28.7
--No	54.6
--Not eligible	13.4
--Not available	3.2
Travel funds paid by institution:	
--Yes	78.9
--No	18.1
--Not eligible	1.4
--Not available	1.6
Association/membership dues paid by institution	
--Yes	28.9
--No	55.0
--Not eligible	2.6
--Not available	13.4
Tuition remission	
--Yes	14.4

--No	77.5
--Not eligible	3.5
--Not available	4.6
Internal grants for research	
--Yes	46.8
--No	49.2
--Not eligible	2.1
--Not available	1.9
Training for administrative leadership	
--Yes	13.2
--No	76.4
--Not eligible	2.7
--Not available	7.6
Goals for undergraduates noted as "very important" or "essential"	
Develop ability to think critically	99.6
Prepare students for employment after college	81.5
Prepare students for graduate or advanced education	75.5
Develop moral character	70.2
Provide for students' emotional development	48.1
Prepare students for family living	21.2
Teach students the classic works of Western civilization	34.7
Help students develop personal values	66.1
Enhance students' self-understanding	71.8
Instill in students a commitment to community service	55.5
Enhance students' knowledge of and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups	75.2
Study a foreign language	54.2
Help master knowledge in a discipline	95.1
Develop creative capacities	81.5
Instill a basic appreciation of the liberal arts	72.8
Promote ability to write effectively	96.4
Help students evaluate the quality and reliability of information	97.2
Engage students in civil discourse around controversial issues	72.4
Teach students tolerance and respect for different beliefs	82.5
Encourage students to become agents of social change	57.8

— Scott Jaschik