Report of Survey Results, AAUP UW Chapter

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**AAUP survey reveals views of UW faculty on leadership, satisfaction and policy priorities**

The University of Washington chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) conducted a survey of UW faculty in December, 2013, and January, 2014, to assess their satisfaction and concerns. This is a report of the results.

### Abstract.

In a first-ever survey of University of Washington faculty, the UW chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has learned UW faculty feel state higher education financing is the top policy goal of the institution. Further, fully two thirds said UW officials are not satisfactorily advocating for higher education in the state legislature. The majority of respondents felt faculty involvement in governance was insufficient. More than half (57%) said they were very or somewhat satisfied with the performance of the UW president, and an even higher proportion (66%) said they were satisfied with the Provost. About one in four faculty members said they were dissatisfied with their deans, with that dissatisfaction a little higher for the medical school. The typical faculty member raises almost one-fourth of his or her salary through grant-writing, although among those who raise at least some of their salary that way (59%), they are raising 60% of their own salaries. Only a third (35%) said they felt well-supported at the UW, while 24% said they didn’t feel at all well-supported and their morale was low. About a third said AAUP should explore forming a collective bargaining union, while another third were unsure about that (another third said no to unionization). Nearly 600 respondents participated, with almost half (44%) at the full professor level and a third from the School of Medicine. Respondent demographics are broadly representative of the faculty as a whole.

### Methods.

The anonymous survey was constructed electronically using the UW’s Catalyst WebQ program, with the first distribution December 10, 2013. We sent one reminder email on January 12, 2014. By February 2, 2014, there were 595 respondents. We had hoped to distribute the survey to all UW faculty, although the UW administration declined to provide a list for this purpose. We distributed it manually to a list of 6100 names, at least 150 of which were returned as invalid emails. We also distributed it to the UW listserver for the UW AAUP, and the list of paid AAUP members. Aside from demographic questions, the questionnaire contained questions about governance, satisfaction with UW leadership, priorities for AAUP advocacy, unionization, compensation, and higher education financing. The survey url, available to all faculty with a UW net ID, is https://catalyst.uw.edu/webq/survey/hagopian/199647

### Respondents

Most respondents (79%) said their primary campus affiliation was the Seattle campus, with another 8% or so saying their offices were in the Seattle area, but off campus. 4% of respondents were from Bothell, and 5% from Tacoma. We didn't have a very good distribution list for those campuses. About a third of respondents were from the School of Medicine, with another 26% from Arts and Sciences. About 6% each came from Engineering, Environment, and Public Health. About 3% responded from the School of Business, and another 3% from Dentistry. More than half were men (57%), which corresponds to a 2009 UW estimate (<https://www.washington.edu/faculty/committees/fcwa/2009_women.pdf>, page 5) that men comprise 60% of all faculty at UW Seattle. Nearly one in four respondents said they taught courses in the Professional and Continuing Education (fee-based) program, although only 10% said PCE paid for most of their teaching time. A large proportion (44%) were full professors, while 29% were associate professors and 11% were assistant or acting assistant professors. The proportion of lecturers was 13%. Only 8 clinical faculty responded. (This compares to a Faculty Senate report from 2013 that indicates 39% of UW faculty are full professors, 24% associate, 19% assistant, and 19% lecturers.) Most (88%) work at least 75% time at the UW. The typical faculty member raises 22% of his or her own salary with grant-writing, but after eliminating the 318 who are completely paid on state dollars, the remaining 189 faculty members raise close to 60% of their own salaries.

Most respondents (66%) said they were not members of the AAUP, although a full 22% didn’t know if they were members or not. While nearly half (47%) were subscribers to the AAUP list server, only a third (32%) said they’d visited the AAUP website.

### Satisfaction with leadership and governance

The majority of respondents (55%) rated the level of involvement of UW faculty in governance decisions to be only fair, with 23% saying they thought faculty were appropriately involved in the important governance decisions on campus, and 22% saying faculty were pretty much left out of the decision making. The situation was slightly worse at the school level (where 29% said faculty were left out), but that finding was driven primarily by respondents from the School of Medicine, where fully one third (34%) of 185 respondents said they were left out of governance decisions. Things improved at the department level, where 46% said faculty were appropriately involved in governance, but dipped again at the program level (where only 38% said faculty were appropriately involved). While nearly half said they felt well represented by the Faculty Senate (46%), about a third said they didn’t know whether they were well represented there or not (35%).



**Generally** - How would you rate the level of involvement of UW faculty governance decisions generally?

**Campus** - How would you rate governance in your campus (Seattle, Bothell or Tacoma)?

**School** - In your school or college?

**Department** - In your department?

**Program** - In your program?

**Senate** - Do you feel that faculty interests are well represented in the faculty Senate?

Only about 12% of respondents said they were “very satisfied” with the job performance of the UW President, although 45% said they were “somewhat satisfied.” Nearly one in four (23%) said they were “unsure,” while 19% said they were not satisfied. Full and associate faculty members were more satisfied than those at lower ranks.

There was higher satisfaction with the Provost than with the President, with one-third saying they were “very satisfied,” and another one-third “somewhat satisfied.” Only 11% said they were dissatisfied, although 22% said they were unsure. Again, higher ranked faculty tended to be more satisfied, except that those in the “lecturer” rank were as satisfied as associate professors.

Satisfaction with deans was lower than with the Provost, with only 27% saying they were “very satisfied” with their dean, and 23% saying they were dissatisfied. As with governance, however, the lower satisfaction was primarily driven by respondents from only a few schools. While almost a third (28%) of the 186 Medicine respondents said they were unsatisfied with the leadership of their dean, only 13% were unsatisfied among 146 Arts & Sciences faculty respondents. A third of College of the Environment respondents weren’t satisfied with their dean, either, but total respondents totaled only 36 from that school. By contrast, however, none of the 35 respondents from engineering said they were dissatisfied with their dean. In one comment, a faculty member said, “It is odd that faculty cannot talk regularly with deans, who wield a lot of power and influence.”

With regard to program directors, almost half respondents said the question was not applicable to them, but among the remaining who had program directors, about a third (32%) were very satisfied and 15% were somewhat satisfied. Unlike for other leadership levels, lower ranked personnel tended to be more satisfied than professors with their program directors.

### AAUP issues and priorities

The questionnaire provided respondents an opportunity to comment on the importance of the goals in the AAUP strategic plan. Respondents overwhelmingly (85%) said improving the state’s higher education financing scheme should be the highest priority. Support for this top goal did not vary by respondent type.

Only one in three respondents said they felt the UW administration was effectively advocating for higher education in the state legislature, and this didn’t vary much by school or tenure status of respondent. Those who don’t subscribe to the AAUP list server were more likely to say they didn’t know the answer to the question, but subscribers didn’t otherwise differ from those who don’t subscribe.

One respondent suggested legislators be invited regularly to campus, and another said, “…the UW doesn’t really know how to make an effective case to the legislature.” Another said, “Legislators respond favorably to informed faculty presentations and groups of concerned faculty members. Delegations of faculty … should go to Olympia to meet with legislators (or)…on campus.” Another respondent from Medicine said simply, “The declining state support for UW is alarming.”

The goal receiving the next highest priority was to “repair the UW’s faculty salary policy,” with 81% saying this should be a high priority. Support for this goal didn’t vary much by type of respondent, although significantly more women named it as a higher priority than men. Fewer than half (45%) said they felt adequately compensated for the work they do.

Improving conditions for contingent faculty was a high priority for more than half (51%) of respondents, although it was a higher priority for lecturers, women, non-health sciences and AAUP members and list server subscribers than other respondents. Nearly half of respondents (44%) noticed the AAUP’s forum on contingency faculty last May, and more than a third (35%) felt it was a good start towards addressing the problem.

A significant number (44%) said it was a high priority to ensure UW leadership searches are open to faculty participation. This was important to all ranks of faculty, but more important to list server subscribers and AAUP members than others.

Another reasonably highly-rated goal (41% said it was a high priority) was to examine the shared governance issues associated with the UW’s move towards an on-line learning undergraduate degree completion program.

Advancing the concept of academic freedom in the UW faculty code (a recently-accomplished goal) was named a high priority by 39%, and was important to all types of faculty, but especially AAUP members and list server subscribers.

Other goals were to ensure faculty intellectual property rights are protected, while maintaining the public’s interest in investments in higher education (37%), and to repair the UW’s faculty grievance adjudication system (34%). Finally, about 13% felt it was a high priority to provide better oversight to unpaid internships.

About 25% of respondents felt it was a high priority for the AAUP to explore faculty unionization, again more important to AAUP members and list server subscribers. In a separate question, however, 35% of respondents said AAUP should explore forming a collective bargaining (union) organization at the UW, while 30% said they didn’t know. Only about a third (35%) thought it should not be explored. While 23% of full professors felt unionization was worthy of exploration, 39% of lecturers supported possible unionization.

More than half of respondents (59%) said they were meeting their career goals at the UW, although 11% said they were unsure. Only a third (35%) said they felt supported at the UW, though, while 24% said they didn’t feel at all well supported and their morale was low. While some seemed very satisfied (“I had a wonderful career at the UW for which I am very grateful”), others did not (“It’s an impossible job. I have been diagnosed with sleep deprivation, I simply have to work 70 hours a week.”)



The UW chapter of the AAUP has the following goals in its strategic plan for 2013/2014. Please indicate whether you agree this is a priority item.

**Contingent faculty** - Improve conditions for contingent faculty.

**Financing** - Improve the state’s higher education financing scheme.

**Unionization** - Explore the advantages and disadvantages of faculty unionization.

**Governance** - Examine the shared governance issues associated with the UW's move towards an online learning undergraduate degree completion program.

**Property rights** - Support the faculty Senate's committee on intellectual property to ensure faculty rights are protected while maintaining the publics interest in its investments in higher education.

**Salary** - Support the joint faculty/administration salary policy committee in its efforts to repair the UW's faculty salary policy.

**Adjudication** - Work to repair the UW's faculty grievance adjudication system.

**Academic freedom** - Advance the concept of academic freedom in the UW faculty code.

**Internship oversight** - Work to increase the capacity of faculty to provide better oversight to unpaid internships and ensure they are academically valid.

**Leadership searches** - Ensure future university administrative position searches are open to faculty participation.