

Every three years, the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA conducts a national survey of faculty members to measure their activities, satisfaction, and perceptions about their roles. GVSU faculty have participated in every edition of the survey in since its creation in 1989. What follows is a synopsis of areas in which GVSU faculty members’ responses were significantly different (on average) from those of faculty at comparable participating universities*.

Invitations to take the online survey were sent to all benefit-eligible GVSU faculty during the Winter 2017 semester. Of 1,195 invitees, 477 (40%) responded. Because participation is voluntary, the GVSU respondent population is not representative of the full GVSU faculty. In particular, tenured and tenure-track faculty members are over-represented, as are white and female faculty members. The Seidman College of Business is under-represented among respondents, while Kirkhof College of Nursing is over-represented.

Following are some broad themes that I perceive among the survey items where GVSU responses were statistically significantly different from peer responses. Unless they are expressed as percentages, the values given for GVSU and peer responses are means of ordinal survey scales, which makes them difficult to interpret at face value. However, an effect size is listed for each comparison, which can be interpreted as follows:

Interpreting Effect sizes

Values expressed as:	Ordinal Mean (e.g. 2.41)	Percentage (e.g. 29.2%)
Effect Size Statistic	d	ϕ
Interpreting the sign		
Positive value	GVSU value > Peer value	
Negative value	GVSU value < Peer value	
Rough cutpoints for size		
Small difference	0.20	0.10
Medium difference	0.50	0.30
Large difference	0.80	0.50

All comparisons shown are statistically significant differences ($\alpha=0.05$). The number listed under “location” is the row number for the detailed data on sheet 1A of the [“profile” spreadsheet](#). Readers are encouraged to consult the spreadsheet to see (a) the exact text of questions, (b) the response scales (c) the distribution of ordinal responses, and (d) disaggregated data by sex for all items on the questionnaire.

Satisfaction: GVSU respondents express significantly more satisfaction than peers with regard to the following:

	GVSU	Peers	Effect Size	Location
How satisfied are you with				
... Salary	2.74	2.41	0.37	1844
... Health benefits	3.05	2.99	0.15	1853
... Retirement benefits	3.10	2.99	0.13	1862
... Opportunity for scholarly pursuits	2.73	2.57	0.18	1871
... Teaching load	2.84	2.52	0.36	1880
... Quality of students	2.84	2.72	0.15	1889
... Autonomy and independence	3.34	3.24	0.13	1898
... Institutional support for work-life balance	2.71	2.59	0.13	1925
... Relative equity of salary and job benefits	2.54	2.28	0.28	1943
If you were to begin your career again, would you still want to come to this institution?	4.31	4.15	0.16	2148

There were two areas where GVSU respondents were less satisfied than their peers:

	GVSU	Peers	Effect Size	Location
How satisfied are you with				
... Leave policies (e.g., paternity/maternity leave, caring for a family member, stopping the tenure clock)	2.73	2.89	-0.19	1961
... Availability of child care at this institution	1.87	2.20	-0.25	2329

Pedagogy: GVSU respondents indicated less use of a variety of learning activities than peers:

	GVSU	Peers	Effect Size	Location
In your interactions with undergraduates, how often do you encourage them to:				
... support opinions with a logical argument	2.74	2.80	-0.14	937
... evaluate the quality or reliability of information they receive	2.62	2.69	-0.13	961
... recognize biases that affect their thinking	2.40	2.50	-0.16	1009
How often do you give least one assignment requiring students to:				
... write in the specific style or format of your discipline	2.50	2.58	-0.13	1017
... describe how different perspectives would affect the interpretation of a question or issue in your discipline	2.26	2.35	-0.13	1025
... discuss the ethical or moral implications of a course of action	2.19	2.28	-0.12	1033
How many of your courses include...				
... experiential learning / field studies	2.11 [†]	2.26 [†]	-0.14	1067
... performances / demonstrations	2.12 [†]	2.28 [†]	-0.14	1076

GVSU respondents indicated more use of “Cooperative learning (small groups)” (GVSU: 3.36; Peers: 3.21; E.S. = 0.16; location: 1058). They also report spending more time each week on “Preparing for teaching (including reading student papers and grading)” (GVSU: 4.57[†]; Peers: 4.37[†]; E.S. = 0.13; location: 797).

Relationships with Administration: There are several areas where GVSU respondents indicate better relationships with administration or less administrative burden than peer faculty members did.

	GVSU	Peers	Effect Size	Location
Time spent: Committee work and meetings	2.55 [†]	2.70 [†]	-0.13	821
This institution has effective hiring practices and policies that increase faculty diversity	3.04	2.94	0.13	1413
The faculty are typically at odds with campus administration	2.16	2.39	-0.27	1476
Perceived priority: Hiring faculty “stars”	1.55	1.70	-0.18	1629
Source of stress: Institutional procedures and “red tape”	1.83	1.94	-0.15	2051
Source of stress: Job security	1.33	1.42	-0.14	2075
Source of stress: Institutional budget cuts	1.46	1.80	-0.47	2099
Satisfaction: Autonomy and independence	3.34	3.24	0.13	1898

GVSU respondents were also less likely than peers to say that committee work is a source of stress to an “extensive” degree (GVSU: 6.9%; Peers 14.6%; ϕ = -0.10; location: 2019).

Support for Faculty: GVSU respondents give mixed messages about how well they are supported in and valued for their work:

	GVSU	Peers	Effect Size	Location
My research is valued by faculty in my department	2.96	3.07	-0.13	1440
My service is valued by faculty in my department	3.20	3.31	-0.13	1458
There is adequate support for faculty development	3.06	2.89	0.20	1530
This institution takes mentoring into consideration in the promotion process	2.53	2.39	0.16	1548
Source of stress: Teaching load	1.33	1.42	-0.14	2059
Source of stress: Increased work responsibilities	1.88	1.98	-0.14	2091

Goals of Undergraduate Education: GVSU respondents were less enthusiastic than peers about several broad goals for undergraduate education. None of the goals that were included in the survey seemed to particularly resonate among GVSU respondents.

	GVSU	Peers	Effect Size	Location
Importance to you of the following goals for undergraduate students:				
... Encourage students to become agents of social change	3.05	3.16	-0.13	1269
... Prepare students for graduate or advanced education	3.42	3.51	-0.15	1287
... enhance students' knowledge and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups	3.12	3.26	-0.17	1323
The chief benefit of a college education is that it increases one's earning power	2.49	2.62	-0.15	1350
Institutional Priority: Increase or maintain institutional affordability	3.14	3.02	0.17	1584

Advising: On average, GVSU respondents reported less engagement in advising activities than peers did.

	GVSU	Peers	Effect Size	Location
Time spent: Advising or counseling of students	2.25 ⁺	2.40 ⁺	-0.16	809
Discussed academic performance with undergraduate advisees	2.37	2.49	-0.20	588
Helped undergraduate advisees to plan course of study	2.59	2.67	-0.15	580
Amount I mentor undergraduate students	3.78	3.93	-0.14	1767
Amount I mentor graduate students	2.02	2.27	-0.18	1777

Research and Research Funding: GVSU respondents report less research activity and perceive a lower priority for research than peers.

	GVSU	Peers	Effect Size	Location
Personal importance of research	2.90	3.07	-0.20	259
Received funding for your work from state or federal government	13.4%	24.0%	$\phi = -0.10$	508
My research is valued by faculty in my department	2.96	3.07	-0.13	1440
Perceived priority: Pursue extramural funding	2.22	2.36	-0.16	1692

However, GVSU faculty indicate above-average satisfaction with their opportunities for scholarly pursuit (GVSU: 2.73; Peers: 2.57; E.S. = 0.18; location: 1871).

Diversity: GVSU respondents seem relatively satisfied with the university's efforts toward personnel diversity and equity, but give some indications that they're less focused than peers on encouraging students' understanding of diverse viewpoints.

	GVSU	Peers	Effect Size	Location
It's important to enhance students' knowledge and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups	3.12	3.26	-0.17	1323
This institution has effective hiring practices and policies that increase faculty diversity	3.04	2.94	0.12	1413
Satisfaction: Relative equity of salary and job benefits	2.54	2.28	0.28	1943
Require students to describe how different perspectives would affect the interpretation of a question or issue in your discipline	2.26	2.35	-0.13	1025

GVSU faculty were also significantly less likely than peers to identify the promotion of gender diversity in the faculty and administration as a "low" priority at their institution (GVSU: 4.5%; Peers: 12.1%; E.S. $\phi = -0.09$; location: 1656).

Scholarly Productivity: Respondents from GVSU reported fewer publications and performances in some of the survey's categories.

	GVSU	Peers	Effect Size	Location
How many of the following have you published?				
... Articles in academic or professional journals	2.95 [†]	3.17 [†]	-0.14	662
... other, such as patents or computer software products	1.24 [†]	1.35 [†]	-0.12	698
In the past three years, how many exhibitions or performances in the fine or applied arts have you presented?	1.34 [†]	1.48 [†]	-0.11	710

Quality of Students: Compared to peers, GVSU respondents express higher regard for the capabilities of their students.

	GVSU	Peers	Effect Size	Location
Most of the students I teach lack the basic skills for college-level work	2.13	2.26	-0.16	1521
Satisfaction: Quality of students	2.84	2.72	0.15	1889

Community engagement: GVSU respondents express relatively weak personal and institutional commitment to students' involvement in the community.

	GVSU	Peers	Effect Size	Location
It's important to me to encourage students to become agents of social change	3.05	3.16	-0.13	1269
Institutional priority: Facilitate student involvement in community service	2.44	2.55	-0.13	1602

Online Instruction: GVSU respondents indicate less engagement in online education than peers.

	GVSU	Peers	Effect Size	Location
Taught an exclusively online course in last 2 years	13.4%	38.1%	$\phi=-0.20$	526
Use of online discussion boards in your courses	1.72	1.83	-0.14	1253

Curriculum Development: GVSU respondents reported less involvement in and support toward curriculum development.

	GVSU	Peers	Effect Size	Location
Participated in the development of curriculum (enhancing an existing course or creating a new course)	83.6%	90.3%	$\phi=-0.08$	535
Received incentives to develop new courses	10.7%	18.7%	$\phi=-0.08$	647

* The peer group includes 1,877 respondents from participating public 4-year colleges with high selectivity: Georgia College & State University, Southeast Missouri State University, Weber State University, Western Washington University, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, University of Michigan-Flint, Ramapo College of New Jersey

† This is an ordinal mean, not a direct measure of hours/articles/courses/etc.