

Grinnell College
HERI Faculty Survey Results
2004-2005

In fall 2004 Grinnell College participated in the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey. The survey previously was administered in 1998. The purpose of the survey is to provide information about “the attitudes, experiences, concerns, job satisfaction, workload, teaching practices, and professional activities of collegiate faculty and administrators” (HERI, 2005). The HERI survey has changed since 1998 but a number of questions have remained the same allowing some analysis of trends to be made. This report will highlight the results of the HERI survey.*

Faculty Demographics

Slightly fewer faculty members completed the survey in 2004 than in 1998 (82 vs. 84), but there is more equal representation of men and women in 2004 (44 men, 38 women) than in 1998 (54 men and 30 women). In 2004, the male/female ratio mirrors the larger faculty population. A majority (95.1) indicated that they were white/Caucasian and 2.4% indicated they were African American/Black, Asian American/Asian, or Latino. Over the 6-year period, these figures illustrate a slight increase in the proportion of faculty of color who completed the survey. For 2004, the respondent sample is less ethnically/racially diverse than the general faculty. In the general faculty population, approximately 86% of the faculty were white/Caucasian. However, differences may occur since the HERI survey permits faculty members to indicate more than one ethnicity. Approximately 71% of the faculty are married, 22% are single, and 7% are unmarried, living with a partner. In 2004, a larger proportion of faculty members (37.8%) were at the rank of associate professor as compared to 1998 (29.8%) and a smaller proportion of faculty members (29.3%) were at the rank of professor in 2004 than in 1998 (39.3%). Representation at the assistant professor level was similar in 2004 and 1998 (32.9% vs. 31%). In 2004 and 1998, approximately two-thirds of the faculty members were tenured.

Table 1: Faculty Demographics

Gender	2004	1998	Faculty Rank (%)	2004	1998
Male	44	54	Professor	29.3	39.3
Female	38	30	Associate	37.8	29.8
Total Number	82	84	Assistant	32.9	31.0
Ethnicity (%)*	2004	1998	Tenure Status (%):	2004	1998
White/Caucasian	95.1	96.4	Tenured	64.6	66.7
African American/Black	2.4	0	On tenure track, but not tenured	26.8	33.3
Asian American/Asian	2.4	0	Not on tenure track	8.5	0
Latino	2.4	2.4			
Other	1.2	1.2			
*Respondents could indicate more than one ethnicity.					
Marital Status (%)	2004	1998			
Married	70.7	82.1			
Single	22.0	13.1			
Unmarried, living with partner	7.3	4.8			

*This report highlights some of the key findings of the HERI survey but does not include a complete listing of all questions on the HERI. For more information, please contact Ann Gansemer-Topf in Institutional Research at gansemer@grinnell.edu.

Faculty Attributes

Personal Goals

Faculty members were given a list of personal goals and were asked to rate those that they thought were “very important” or “essential.” Personal goals most frequently cited as important or essential were: a) being a good teacher, b) being a good colleague, c) serving as a role model to students, d) helping others who are in difficulty, e) raising a family, f) developing a meaningful philosophy of life, and g) helping to promote racial understanding. Personal goals least cited were: a) influencing the political structure, b) becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment and c) being well off financially. These results are fairly consistent with the 1998 results with a few exceptions. In 2004, a higher percentage of faculty members rated “helping others who are in difficulty,” and “influencing the political structure” as important and a lower percentage of faculty members rated “raising a family,” “developing a meaningful philosophy of life,” and “obtaining recognition from colleague” as important (see Table 2).

Stress

The HERI survey asked faculty members to identify sources of stress during the past two years. The most frequently reported sources of stress were: a) self-imposed high expectations, b) lack of personal time, c) research or publishing demands, d) managing household responsibilities, e) teaching load, and f) faculty meetings. Over half of the faculty indicated that committee work, institutional procedures and “red tape”, personal finances, physical health, and keeping up with technology were sources of stress. A higher percentage of faculty reported that faculty meetings, research/publishing demands, managing household responsibilities, teaching load, personal finances and physical health were a source of stress in 2004 than in 1998. A lower percentage of faculty indicated that lack of personal time, committee work, institutional procedures, and keeping up with information of technology were sources of stress in 2004 than in 1998.

Table 2: Personal Goals and Sources of Stress

Personal goals:	2004	1998
Being a good teacher	98.8	98.8
Being a good colleague	91.5	92.9
Serving as a role model to students	85.2	----
Helping others who are in difficulty	70.7	61.9
Raising a family	70.7	76.2
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	65.9	72.6
Helping promote racial understanding	61.0	62.7
Achieving congruence between my own values and institutional values	48.8	----
Becoming an authority in my field	42.7	45.2
Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contributions to my special field	40.2	48.8
Influencing social values	39.0	38.6
Integrating spirituality in my life	33.3	44.0
Being well-off financially	28.0	31.0
Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	24.4	26.2
Influencing the political structure	17.1	14.3

Table 2: Personal Goals and Sources of Stress (cont.)

Factors noted as source of stress during past two years:	2004	1998
Self-imposed high expectations	90.1	---
Lack of personal time	87.8	89.2
Research or publishing demands	79.3	75.9
Managing household responsibilities	79.3	77.1
Teaching load	74.4	71.1
Faculty meetings	65.9	48.2
Committee work	64.6	75.6
Institutional procedures and “red tape”	64.6	66.3
Personal finances	58.5	47.0
My physical health	54.9	51.8
Keeping up with information technology	51.9	60.2

Faculty Activities

Professional Activities

The majority of faculty listed “teaching” as the principal activity in their current position. Almost 80% of the faculty stated their primary interests were in teaching, whereas approximately 21% reported that they were leaning more toward research than teaching. Faculty also were asked questions related to professional activities and teaching methods used in the classroom. Compared to 1998, in 2004 a higher percentage of faculty member indicated that they worked with undergraduates on a research project, placed or collected assignments on the Internet, taught an interdisciplinary course, taught a service learning course and engaged in paid consulting outside of Grinnell. In 2004, a lower percentage of faculty stated that they participated in a faculty development program, developed a new course, and considered early retirement than in 1998. The percentage of faculty who considered leaving academe remained the same between 1998 and 2004.

Class discussion remains the most frequent teaching method used with 86.6% of the faculty reporting that this method was used “most often.” Other teaching methods used often included: student presentations, cooperative learning, essay mid-term and/or final exams, term/research papers, multiple drafts of written work, and group projects. Faculty reported using these active teaching methods more frequently in 2004 than in 1998.

Personal Activities

Faculty members were given a list of items and asked to indicate if these described them to “a great extent.” The majority of respondents cited that they: engage in self-reflection, feel that their work adds meaning to your life, feel good about the direction in which their life is headed, experience close alignment between work and personal values, experience joy in their work, and eat a well-balanced diet. Less than half of the respondents stated that they: get adequate amounts of sleep, achieve a healthy balance between personal life and professional life, consider themselves a religious person, feel that they have to work harder than colleagues to be perceived as a legitimate scholar, seek opportunities to grow spiritually, and engage in prayer/meditation. This section of the survey was new in 2004.

Table 3: Faculty Professional and Personal Activities

Principal activity in current position	2004	1998
Administration	0	0
Teaching	97.5	100
Research	0	0
Other	2.5	0
Do your interests lie primarily in teaching or research?	2004	1998
Very heavily in teaching	11.0	15.5
In both, but leaning toward teaching	68.3	63.1
In both, but leaning toward research	20.7	20.2
Very heavily in research	0	1.2
Faculty activities in the past two years:	2004	1998
Worked with undergraduates on a research project	89.9	85.2
Participated in a faculty development program	79.7	87.8
Developed a new course	75.3	83.1
Taught a first-year seminar	62.0	-----
Placed or collected assignments on the Internet	60.8	40.0
Taught an interdisciplinary course	55.4	50.6
Engaged in public service/professional consulting without pay	52.4	-----
Taught a service learning course	36.1	33.3
Considered leaving this institution for another	39.0	-----
Received funding for your work from foundations	29.1	-----
Considered leaving academe for another job	26.8	26.8
Engaged in paid consulting outside of your institution	25.6	18.1
Considered early retirement	23.2	28.9
Teaching Methods Used Often	2004	1998
Class discussions	86.6	77.4
Student presentations	69.5	50.0
Cooperative learning	64.6	50.0
Essay mid-term and/or final exams	63.4	53.1
Term/research papers	50.0	42.9
Multiple drafts of written work	45.1	23.8
Group projects	45.1	26.2
Personal Activities	2004	1998
Engage in self-reflection?	80.5	-----
Feel that your work adds meaning to your life?	74.4	-----
Feel good about the direction in which your life is headed?	70.7	-----
Experience close alignment between your work and your personal values?	69.5	-----
Experience joy in your work?	65.4	-----
Eat a well-balanced diet?	58.5	-----
Engage in regular exercise?	39.0	-----
Consider yourself a spiritual person?	36.6	-----
Engage in academic work that spans multiple disciplines?	30.5	-----
Feel that the training you received in graduate school prepared you well for your role as faculty mentor?	26.8	-----
Get adequate amounts of sleep?	24.4	-----
Achieve a healthy balance between your personal life and your professional life?	22.0	-----
Consider yourself a religious person?	20.7	-----
Feel that you have to work harder than your colleagues to be perceived as a legitimate scholar?	19.5	-----
Seek opportunities to grow spiritually?	11.1	-----
Engage in prayer/meditation?	11.0	-----

Faculty Attitudes

Faculty members were asked about their personal attitudes as well as attitudes toward their profession, the institution, and students.

Attitudes – Personal

“If you were to begin your career again, would you still want to be a college professor?”

Over half of the faculty members answered “definitely yes” almost 30% answered “probably yes”, 12.5% were “not sure”, 2.5% responded, “probably no” and 1.2% responded “definitely no.” These figures are slightly different than the faculty responses in 1998. A higher percentage of faculty members reported “definitely yes” “not sure” and “definitely no” in 2004 than in 1998.

The HERI also asks faculty members to report their political views. The majority of faculty members indicated that they were liberal or far left, 23% were “middle of the road”, and 5.4% indicated that they were “conservative”. The political views of the faculty have changed slightly since 1998. There is a higher percentage of faculty who reported that they were “middle of the road” and “conservative” in 2004 than in 1998 and a higher percentage of faculty who indicated that they were “far left.”

Attitudes – Professional/Academic

Faculty members were asked to rate aspects of their job that were very satisfactory or satisfactory. The aspect most highly rated was autonomy and independence. Other top rated aspects were: office/lab space, quality of students, competency of colleagues, salary and fringe benefits, overall job satisfaction, professional relationships with other faculty, opportunity to develop new ideas, and prospects for career advancement. Overall, in 2004 faculty reported a higher degree of satisfaction with their work environment than in 1998.

Table 4: Faculty Attitudes: Personal/Professional

If you were to begin again, would you still want to be a college professor?	2004	1998
Definitely yes	55.0	47.0
Probably yes	28.7	39.8
Not sure	12.5	8.4
Probably no	2.5	4.8
Definitely no	1.2	0
Political views	2004	1998
Far left	10.8	7.1
Liberal	60.8	69.0
Middle of the road	23.0	20.2
Conservative	5.4	3.6
Far right	0	0
Aspects of your job noted as very satisfactory or satisfactory	2004	1998
Autonomy and independence	98.8	92.8
Office/lab space	93.9	69.9
Quality of students	90.2	75.9
Competency of colleagues	86.4	80.7
Salary and fringe benefits	85.4	79.5
Overall job satisfaction	85.0	77.1
Professional relationships with other faculty	76.8	77.1
Opportunity to develop new ideas	76.5	80.7
Prospects for career advancement	76.1	----

Attitudes – Institutional

Several items were related to faculty members' attitudes regarding the purposes and environment of the institution. Faculty members were asked to indicate issues they believed were of high importance at Grinnell College. Almost the entire faculty (96.3%) indicated that there is a priority to "promote intellectual development of students." Based on the faculty ratings, other priorities were focused on creating a more diverse community, enhancing the reputation of the institution, developing leadership abilities in students, and mentoring new faculty. In comparing the results of 2004 with 1998, a few changes in priorities are evident. In 2004, fewer faculty felt that enhancing the institution's image was a high priority but more faculty felt that developing leadership ability among students and developing a sense of community was a priority.

Institutional attributes were provided and faculty members noted those which were "very descriptive" of their institution. Over 90% of the faculty felt that it was easy for students to see faculty outside of office hours and no faculty members felt that students are treated like "numbers in a book." A majority of faculty (65%) felt that faculty was respected although less than 40% believed that faculty members are rewarded for being teachers or that there is respect for the expression of diverse values and beliefs. Approximately 21% of the faculty felt that faculty are typically at odds with administration.

In another section of the survey, faculty members were asked to indicate if they agreed "strongly" or "somewhat" with a list of statements. On this section over 90% of the faculty agreed with the statements: a diverse student body enhances the educational experience; faculty are interested in student's academic problems; there is adequate support of faculty development; colleges should encourage community services; institution takes responsibility for educating underprepared students, teaching is valued; students are committed to community service, and the criteria for promotion and tenure are clear.

Less than one-third of the faculty agreed that with the following: colleges' should be concerned with developing students' spiritual dimension; including community service in a course is a poor use of resources; promoting diversity leads to the admission of underprepared students; an individual can do little to bring about change; colleges should ban speakers with extreme views; and the chief benefit of college is to increase one's earning power.

Faculty responded to questions regarding the goals for undergraduates. All surveyed faculty members indicated that the ability to think critically was an important goal for undergraduates. Other goals that were noted as important were: a) promote ability to write effectively, b) help master knowledge in a discipline, c) instill a basic appreciation of the liberal arts, d) prepare students for graduate or advanced education, e) prepare students for responsible citizenship, and f) develop creative capacities.

Table 5: Faculty Attitudes: Institutional

Issues you believe to be of “high” or “highest” priority at your institution	2004	1998
To promote intellectual development of students	96.3	95.2
To recruit more minority students	86.6	81.9
To create a diverse multi-cultural campus environment	80.5	85.5
To increase the representation of minorities in the faculty and administration	76.5	74.7
To enhance the institution’s national image	74.1	86.7
To develop a sense of community among students and faculty	72.0	66.3
To help students learn how to bring about change in American society	56.1	43.4
To promote gender equity among faculty	50.0	53.0
To develop leadership ability among students	50.0	38.6
To mentor new faculty	45.7	----
To pursue extramural funding	42.5	----
To increase the representation of women in faculty and administration.	38.5	52.9
To create and sustain partnerships with surrounding communities.	18.1	----
To provide resources for faculty for community-based teaching/research.	15.9	----
To hire faculty “stars”	8.5	2.0
Attributes noted as being “very descriptive” of your institution		
	2004	1998
It is easy for students to see faculty outside of regular office hours	92.7	89.3
Faculty here respect each other	67.1	60.7
There is respect for the expression of diverse values and beliefs	39.5	----
Faculty are rewarded for being good teachers	39.0	51.2
Faculty are typically at odds with administration.	20.7	----
Most students are treated like numbers in a book.	0	0
Agree “strongly” or “somewhat”		
	2004	1998
A racially/ethnically diverse student body enhances educational experience	97.5	100
Faculty here are strongly interested in the academic problems of undergraduates	95.1	98.8
There is adequate support for faculty development.	92.7	----
Colleges should encourage students to be involved in community service	92.5	84.5
The institution takes responsibility for educating underprepared students.	91.0	----
My teaching is valued by faculty in my department.	90.2	----
Most students are strongly committed to community service.	90.2	64.2
The criteria for advancement and promotion decisions are clear.	90.1	----
Faculty feel that most students are well-prepared academically	89.0	68.7
Faculty are interested in students’ personal problems.	87.8	83.1
There is adequate support for integrating technology in my teaching.	86.6	----
Colleges have a responsibility to work with communities to address local issues.	85.0	----
My research is valued by faculty in my department.	84.0	79.3
Tenure is essential to attract the best minds to academe	77.2	78.3
My values are congruent with the dominant institutional values.	74.4	----
My department does a good job of mentoring new faculty.	73.2	----
Colleges should be actively involved in solving social problems.	67.5	66.7
Racial and ethnic diversity should be more strongly reflected in the curriculum.	61.7	----
Western culture and civilization should be the foundation of the curriculum.	43.0	60.7
The spiritual dimension of faculty members’ lives has no place in the academy.	41.8	----
Colleges’ should be concerned with developing students’ spiritual development	20.3	----
Including community service as a part of a course is a poor source of resources.	17.7	----
Promoting diversity leads to the admission of too many underprepared students	17.5	14.3
Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in society.	17.5	----
Colleges have the right to ban persons with extreme views from campus.	15.0	19.0
The chief benefit of a college education is to increase one’s earning power.	6.3	16.7

Table 5: Faculty Attitudes: Institutional (cont.)

Goals for undergraduates noted as “very important” or “essential”	2004	1998
Develop ability to think critically	100	100
Promote ability to write effectively	98.8	----
Help master knowledge in a discipline	89.0	----
Instill a basic appreciation of the liberal arts	80.5	----
Prepare students for graduate or advanced education	78.0	62.2
Prepare students for responsible citizenship	65.9	67.9
Develop creative capacities	59.8	----
Enhance knowledge and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups.	57.3	65.9
Enhance students’ self-understanding	51.2	58.7
Develop moral character.	49.4	32.9
Prepare students for employment after college	45.1	39.0
Help students develop personal values	40.2	50.0
Facilitate search for meaning/purpose in life	39.0	----
Instill a sense of community service	31.2	35.4
Provide for students’ emotional development	30.5	19.5
Enhance spiritual development	12.3	----