Perceptions of Pre-Tenure Faculty: Findings of the COACHE Survey
What is COACHE?

• The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Survey is conducted by the Harvard Graduate School of Education
• Intensive focus on pre-tenure faculty
• Measures institutional experiences and job satisfaction
• Provides national and peer benchmarks
  • Over 8000 respondents from 104 universities nationwide
COACHE Survey Overview

• 307 tenure-track faculty hired at Virginia Tech before Jan 2009 were surveyed in fall 2009

• Results provide:
  • Descriptive statistics and significant differences within institution by gender and race; descriptive statistics by academic area
  • Ranking compared to 5 selected peer institutions; percentile relative to 104 universities
COACHE Survey Overview

• Survey questions focus on 10 major themes (number of items per theme):
  • Tenure practices (10)
  • Tenure expectations: clarity (6)
  • Tenure expectations: reasonableness (6)
  • Nature of work: overall (6)
  • Nature of work: teaching (10)
  • Nature of work: research (6)
  • Climate, Culture, and Collegiality (17)
  • Work and home (13)
  • Compensation and benefits (3)
  • Global Satisfaction (4)
Selected Peer Institutions

Virginia Tech chose five peer institutions to compare survey results:

- Iowa State University
- North Carolina State University
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- University of Missouri at Columbia
- Washington State University
# Population Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Virginia Tech</th>
<th>All Universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Color</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Areas of Strength at Virginia Tech
(1\textsuperscript{st} or 2\textsuperscript{nd} among peers, top quartile of universities)

• Nature of the work overall
  • Quality of facilities
  • Amount of access to TA’s, RA’s, etc.

• Work and home
  • Stop-the-clock
  • Paid/unpaid personal leave
  • Institution makes having children and tenure-track compatible

• Climate, culture, collegiality
  • Peer reviews of teaching or research
Areas of Concern at Virginia Tech
(5th or 6th among peers, bottom quartile of universities)

• Clarity of tenure expectations regarding:
  • Teaching
  • Departmental colleague
  • Campus citizen
  • Member of the community

• Work and home
  • Ability to balance between professional and personal time

• Climate, culture, collegiality
  • Formal mentoring
  • Amount of professional interaction with colleagues
  • How well you fit
  • Intellectual vitality of tenured colleagues
Virginia Tech Trends: 2006 vs. 2009

• Improving
  • Institution makes having and raising children compatible with tenure-track
  • Chief Academic Officer cares about quality of life for pre-tenure faculty

• Worsening
  • Compensation
Differences by gender

• Female faculty at Virginia Tech rated the following survey dimensions at least 10 percent lower than male faculty:
  • Quality of facilities
  • Clerical/administrative services
  • Research services
  • Amount of professional interaction with tenured colleagues
Differences by race/ethnicity

- Faculty of color at Virginia Tech rated the following survey dimensions at least 10 percent lower than white faculty:
  - Professional assistance for improving teaching
  - Modified duties for parental or other reasons
  - Informal mentoring
  - Opportunities to collaborate with tenured faculty
  - Value faculty in your department place on your work
  - Amount of personal interaction with tenured colleagues
  - Participation in governance of department
  - Would again choose to work at this institution
Tenure policies and practices
Junior faculty find what’s expected of them as a scholar to be relatively clear and reasonable.
Clarity of Tenure Expectations

Is what’s expected of you in order to earn tenure CLEAR to you regarding your performance as a:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>% Clear*</th>
<th>% Unclear*</th>
<th>Peer Rank</th>
<th>National %tile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleague in the department</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus citizen</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of the community</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentage does not equal 100% due to respondents who selected neither clear nor unclear
Transparency of the Tenure Process

Junior faculty believe tenure decisions are made based on performance but report mixed messages from colleagues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Agree*</th>
<th>% Disagree*</th>
<th>Peer Rank</th>
<th>National %tile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have received consistent messages from senior colleagues about the requirements for tenure.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my opinion, tenure decisions here are made primarily on performance-based criteria (e.g., research/creative work, teaching, and/or service) rather than on non-performance based criteria (policies, relationships, and/or demographics).</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentage does not equal 100% due to respondents who selected neither agree nor disagree
## Transparency of the Tenure Process

VT is low among its peer group, but at about the mean for all participating universities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Clear*</th>
<th>% Unclear*</th>
<th>Peer Rank</th>
<th>National %tile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I find the tenure process in my department to be</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find the tenure criteria (what things are evaluated) in my department to be</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find the tenure standards (the performance threshold) to be</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find the body of evidence that will be considered in making my tenure decision</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sense of whether or not I will achieve tenure is</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentage does not equal 100% due to respondents who selected neither clear nor unclear
Disciplinary Differences on Tenure Questions

• Faculty in the biological sciences, social sciences, engineering/math/comp sci, physical sciences, and business had higher mean scores on clarity of what is expected for tenure.

• Faculty in architecture/bldg construction, education, visual and performing arts, and humanities had relatively low scores on tenure questions.
College Differences in Tenure Clarity

I find the tenure process in my department to be

- **CNR**: Very Clear
- **CLAHS**: Very Clear
- **CVM**: Very Clear
- **COS**: Very Clear
- **COE**: Very Clear
- **PCOB**: Very Clear
- **CAUS**: Very Clear
- **CALS**: Very Clear
Work/Life Policies
Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance

- Both men and women struggle to balance personal and professional life

![Bar chart showing satisfaction levels for men and women.](chart.png)
## Perceptions of Work-Life Balance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Agree*</th>
<th>% Disagree*</th>
<th>Peer Rank</th>
<th>National %tile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My departmental colleagues do what they can to make <em>having</em> children and the tenure track compatible.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My departmental colleagues do what they can to make <em>raising</em> children and the tenure track compatible.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My colleagues are respectful of my efforts to balance work and home responsibilities.</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentage does not equal 100% due to respondents who selected neither agree nor disagree*
Satisfaction with Work-Life Policies

VT is ranked very favorably (95th percentile; 2nd among peers) on institutional support for balancing children and tenure track.

My institution does what it can to make having children and the tenure track compatible.

- **Agree**
- **Disagree**
- **Neither Agree/Nor Disagree**
Policies and Practices Related to Tenure and Work-Life

Several policies were viewed as *important and effective* among junior faculty.
Policies and Practice Related to Tenure and Work-Life

Junior faculty also identified several policies as important but not effective.
College differences in perceptions

My institution does what it can to make having children and the tenure-track compatible.
Climate, Culture, Collegiality
Climate, Culture, and Collegiality

On the whole, my institution is collegial.
Collegiality and Fit within Department

Relationships with senior colleagues in their department were concerns for junior faculty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your level of satisfaction with:</th>
<th>% Satisfied</th>
<th>% Unsatisfied*</th>
<th>Peer Rank</th>
<th>National %tile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>…amount of <em>professional</em> interaction with senior colleagues in your department</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…the amount of <em>personal</em> interaction with senior colleagues in your department</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…the intellectual vitality of senior colleagues in your department</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…how well you fit in your department/at your institution</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentage does not equal 100% due to respondents who selected neither satisfied nor unsatisfied.
Collegiality and Fit within Department

White faculty were more satisfied than faculty of color with some aspects of department climate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% satisfied or very satisfied with:</th>
<th>White Faculty</th>
<th>Faculty of Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...opportunities to collaborate with tenured faculty</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...value faculty in your department place on your work</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...amount of personal interaction with tenured colleagues</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...participation in governance of your department</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Faculty satisfaction with how well they fit varies somewhat by college.
Mentoring
Mentoring

Pre-tenure faculty see mentoring as important, but not particularly effective.
Some mentoring experiences are positive:

• “I have been helped by many tenured faculty members and have their assistance to be vital to my happiness and success!!”
• “Informal mentoring has been great, but I think I have just been lucky.”
• “My mentor has been fantastic! She has been an attentive, engaged, committed mentor who has done everything she can to help me be a better scholar and teacher.”
Others not so much:

• “My assigned mentors don’t agree with or like one another, putting me in a ‘no-win’ situation. For one of these assigned mentors, the mentor’s idea of mentoring is dumping undesirable work onto me…”

• “The mentoring advice I got sometimes make things worse.”
Mentoring varies by College

Effectiveness of Formal Mentoring Program

CNR: Very ineffective - Ineffective - Neutral - Effective - Very effective
CLAHS: Very ineffective - Ineffective - Neutral - Effective - Very effective
CVM: Very ineffective - Ineffective - Neutral - Effective - Very effective
COS: Very ineffective - Ineffective - Neutral - Effective - Very effective
COE: Very ineffective - Ineffective - Neutral - Effective - Very effective
PCOB: Very ineffective - Ineffective - Neutral - Effective - Very effective
CAUS: Very ineffective - Ineffective - Neutral - Effective - Very effective
CALS: Very ineffective - Ineffective - Neutral - Effective - Very effective
Mentoring varies by College

Effectiveness of Informal Mentoring

- CNR
- CLAHS
- CVM
- COS
- COE
- PCOB
- CAUS
- CALS

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

- Very ineffective
- Ineffective
- Neutral
- Effective
- Very effective

Virginia Tech
Invent the Future
Overall Satisfaction
Global Satisfaction

Majority of Virginia Tech faculty are satisfied, but not as satisfied as those at other universities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>% Satisfied</th>
<th>% Unsatisfied*</th>
<th>Peer Rank</th>
<th>National %tile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your <em>department</em> as a place to work</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the <em>institution</em> as a place to work</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you rate your institution as a place for junior faculty to work</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentage does not equal 100% due to respondents who selected neither satisfied nor unsatisfied; selected So-so for institution as a place for junior faculty to work*
Global Satisfaction by College

All things considered, how satisfied are you with your department as a place to work?

- CNR
- CLAHS
- CVM
- COS
- COE
- PCOB
- CAUS
- CALS
## Best and Worst

**Best aspects about working at Virginia Tech:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>White Faculty</th>
<th>Faculty of Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Freedom</td>
<td>★★☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of Colleagues</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Location</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sense of ‘fit’ here</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/creative work req’ts for tenure</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Living</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commute</td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>★☆☆☆☆</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Best and Worst

Worst aspects about working at Virginia Tech:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographic location</td>
<td>Compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spousal/partner hiring program</td>
<td>Geographic location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of others like me</td>
<td>Quality of grad. students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of diversity</td>
<td>Spousal/partner hiring program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>Absence of others like me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic location</td>
<td>Quality of grad. students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spousal/partner hiring program</td>
<td>Lack of diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of facilities</td>
<td>Compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of others like me</td>
<td>Lack of diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of assistance for proposals</td>
<td>Compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrelenting pressure to perform</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

White Faculty

Faculty of Color
Future Plans

Assuming you achieve tenure, how long do you plan to remain at your institution?
For more information:

- http://www.advance.vt.edu/Measuring_Progress/COACHE/COACHE.html
- http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=coache&tabgroupid=icb.tabgroup104863