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1999 Western Washington University Faculty Survey: a Sampling of Findings

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1999 WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY FACULTY SURVEY: A SAMPLING OF FINDINGS

Prepared by Gary R. McKinney, Joseph E. Trimble, and Evelyn Albrecht

INTRODUCTION

In the fall and winter quarters, 1998 and 1999, the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) conducted a national survey of college and university faculty. Western also participated in the HERI Faculty Survey, but the administration ran later, in the spring of 1999. Because it ran behind, Western's data was not included among the 33,785 responses from full-time college and university faculty at 378 two-year colleges, four-year colleges, and universities. Nonetheless, Western received not only its own results, but also normative results, including a breakout of "peer" institutes. As defined by HERI researchers, Western fell under the category of "4-year College"—in other words, a non-doctoral granting institution of higher education. In the 1998-99 HERI Faculty Survey, there were 146 such institutes. In this report, when Western findings are compared to national findings, it is with findings from these 146 institutes. Also, Western researchers, unfortunately, had access to only a frequency distribution of national data, not the actual dataset. This made statistical manipulations such as multivariate analysis impossible for national findings.

There were approximately 550 FTE faculty working at Western in the spring of 1999. There were 251 participants in the survey. Of these, 207 were full time. For this report, only responses from these 207 were utilized. The findings presented in this report are not, nor are even remotely intended to be, exhaustive. A

number of themes were noted and highlighted, and comparisons were made to the above mentioned "peers" in order that the findings not exist in a vacuum. To further add perspective, tests of significance of difference between two proportions were run. This test factors in the number of participants and the proportions the findings report. Each test produces a result identified as z . A z having value greater than or equal to 1.96 or less than or equal to -1.96 is considered significant at the .05 level using a two-tailed test. A significant z indicates that the two proportions are significantly different. For this report, if the z is significant, it will be reported in parentheses as either Western's figure being higher ($z = +x.xx$) compared to national findings, or Western's figure being lower ($z = -x.xx$).

Finally, the data are available as hard copy and/or as electronic files to those appropriate individuals, departments or units interested in pursuing further research, or in simply delving into the findings further.

DEMOGRAPHICS

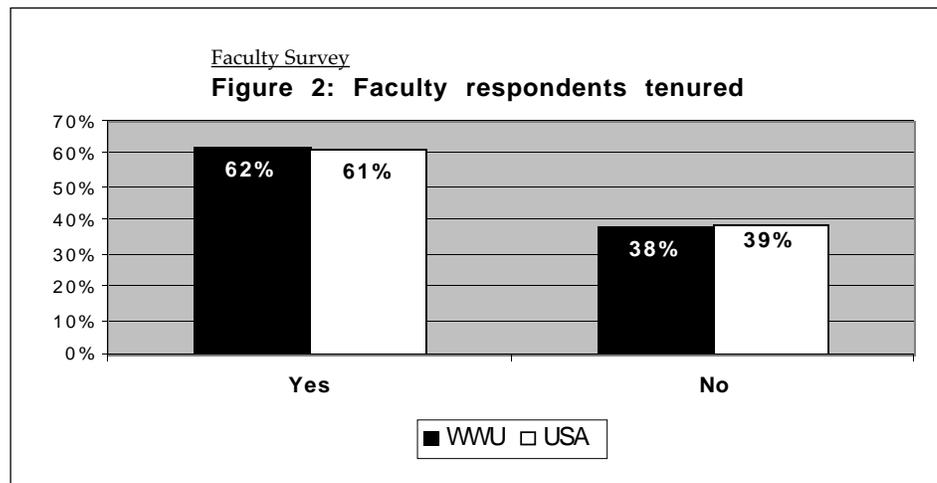
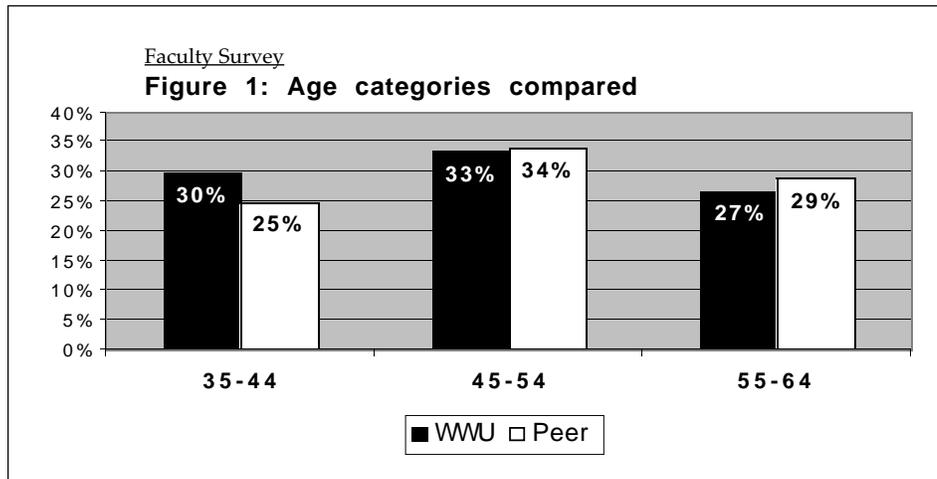
SIMILARITIES

About the same percentage of Western and peer faculty survey participants were male (68% WWU; 64% peers). About the same percentage were white (91% for both), although there was a slightly higher percentage of American Indian faculty participants at Western (4.0% WWU; 1.7% peers; $z =$



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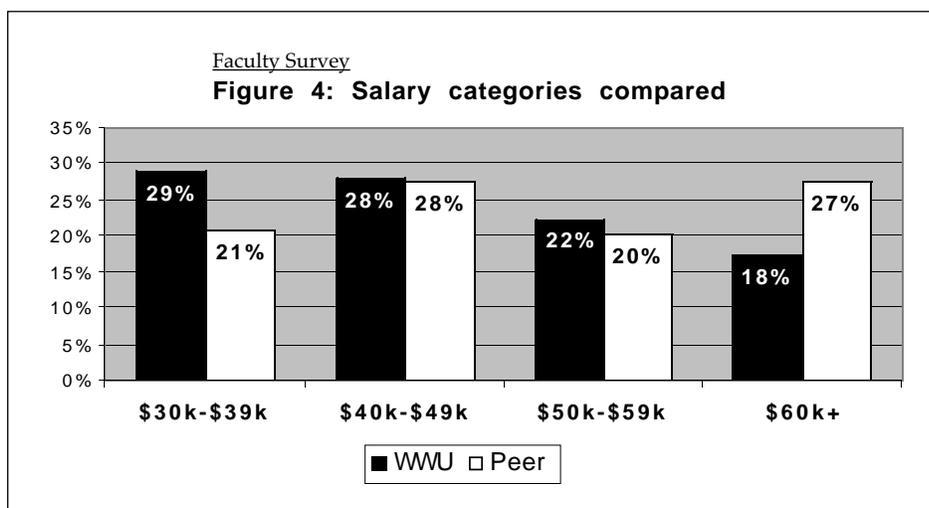
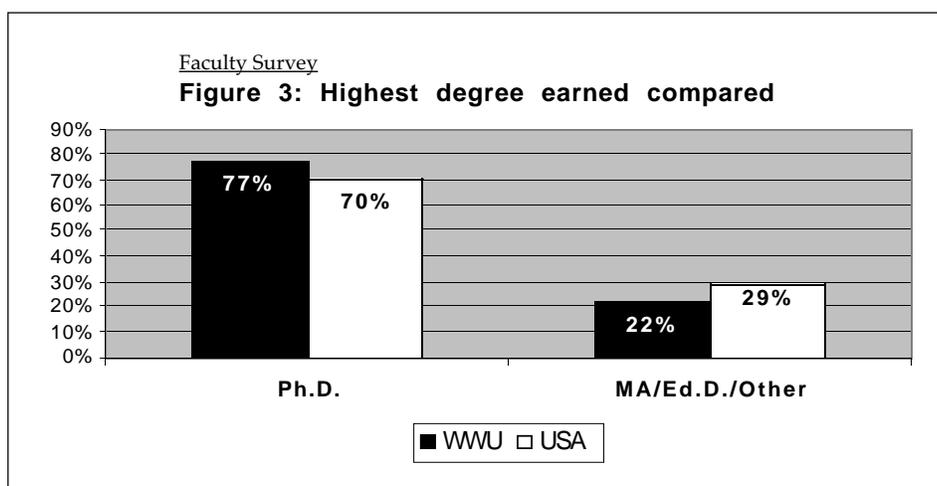
+2.49). Western faculty participants were about the same age as their peer participants, and about the same percentage of Western and peer faculty survey participants were tenured (62% WWU; 61% peers). Both at Western and nationwide, nearly all survey participants listed “teaching” as their principal activity (91% WWU; 93% peers). (See Figures 1 and 2.)



DIFFERENCES

Slightly more Western participants were department chairs (11% WWU; 8% peers). There were slightly more associate professors represented at Western than at their peer institutes (34% WWU; 28% peers), but slightly fewer professors (32% WWU; 35% peers). A higher percentage of Western faculty participants listed Ph.D. as their highest degree earned (77% WWU; 70% peers; $z = +2.18$), while a higher percentage of peer institute faculty participants listed Master's, Ed.D., or other (22% WWU; 29% peers; $z = -2.20$).

Regarding remuneration, a higher percentage of Western faculty survey participants reported earning between \$30k-\$39k than did their peer faculty (29% WWU; 21% peer; $z = +2.78$). About the same percentage reported earning between \$40k-\$49k (28% at each). A higher percentage of Western faculty reported earning between \$50k-\$59k (22% WWU; 20% peer). A higher percentage of peer faculty reported earning \$60k or more (18% WWU; 27% peer; $z = -2.89$). (See Figures 3 and 4.)



FINDINGS

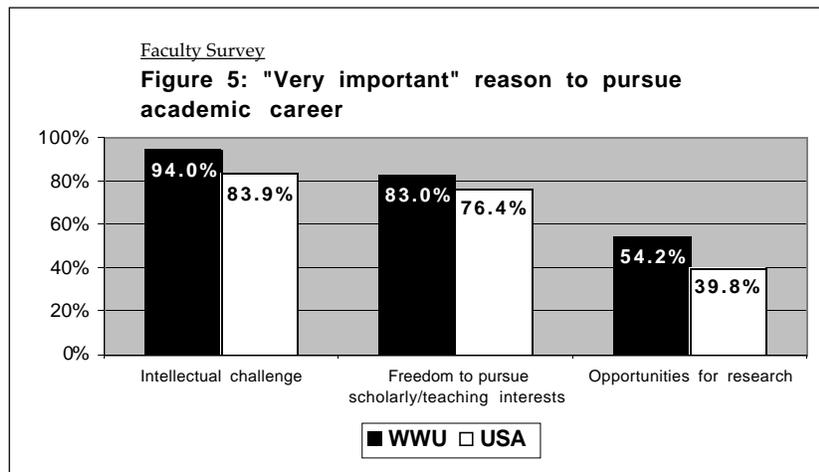
WHY AN ACADEMIC CAREER

Regarding why faculty pursued an academic career, the “intellectual challenge” received the highest percentage of “very important” responses from both Western and peer faculty, with Western faculty even more likely to note this reason (94% WWU; 84% peer; $z = +3.90$). Also important was the “freedom to pursue my scholarly/teaching interests”. Again, more Western faculty noted this as a reason (83% WWU; 76% peer; $z = +2.34$). Also of interest—since the Western/peer comparisons are for institutions not traditionally considered “research universities”—is that a higher percentage of Western faculty than peer faculty noted “opportunities for research” as a very important reason they pursued an academic career (54% WWU; 40% peer; $z = +4.06$). (See Figure 5.)

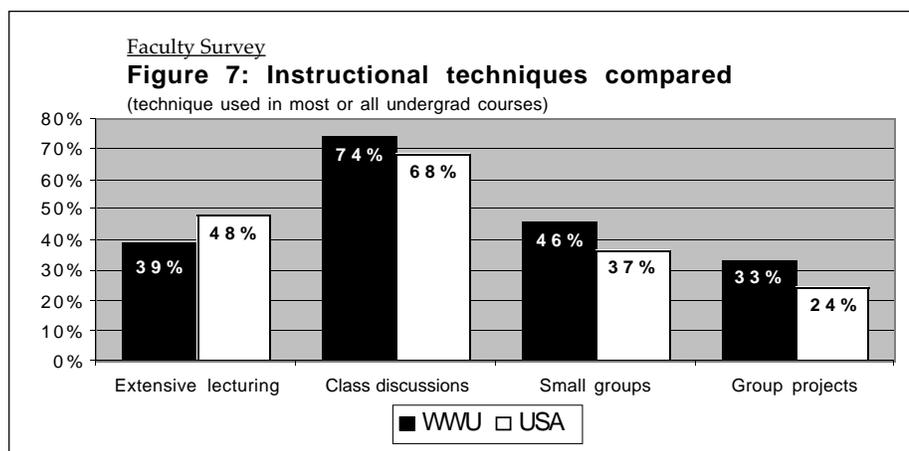
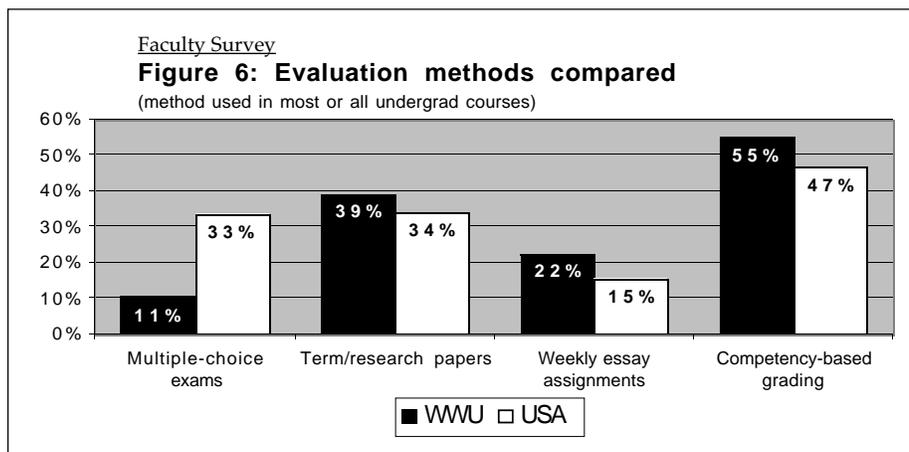
COURSE TYPES, EVALUATION AND INSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES

Faculty were asked which of a list of course types they were teaching (during the quarter in which the survey was administered). For Western faculty, the load was fairly well spread out among “general education,” “other BA/BS undergraduate courses,” and “graduate courses.” Since the findings make no distinction between quarter-based and semester-based institutions, comparisons between Western and peer faculty are too misleading to highlight. However, a higher percentage of Western faculty reported teaching an interdisciplinary course than did peer faculty (39% WWU; 34% peer), while a higher percentage of peer faculty reported teaching an honors class (7% WWU; 17% peer; $z = -3.81$).

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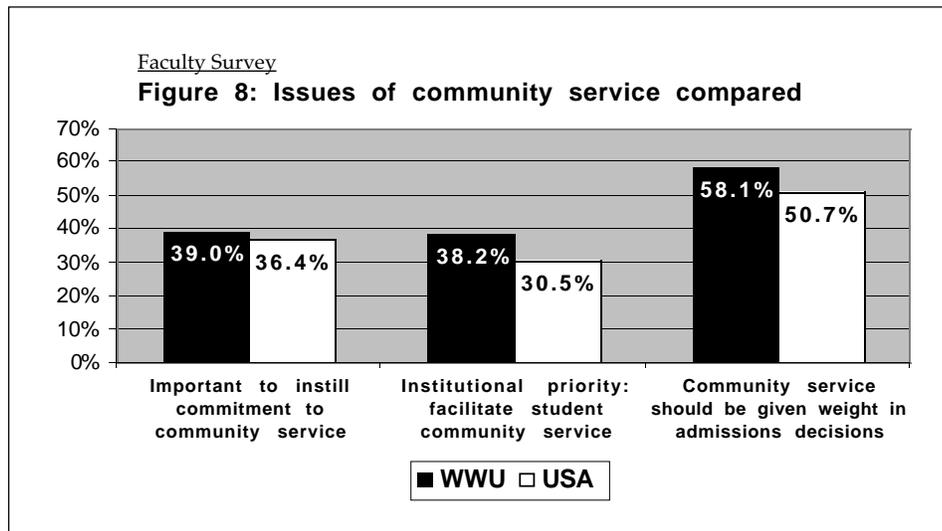
Regarding evaluation methods, most faculty reported using competency grading rather than grading on a curve, although a higher percentage of Western faculty reported using competency grading ($z = +2.28$), while a higher percentage of peer faculty reported grading on a curve. Most faculty reported using class discussions, but Western faculty were more likely to use term/research papers (no significant difference) and weekly essay assignments ($z = +2.77$), while peer faculty were more likely to use multiple-choice tests ($z = -6.68$). Finally, a higher percentage of Western faculty reported using cooperative learning ($z = +2.65$) and group projects ($z = +2.99$), while a higher percentage of peer faculty reported using "extensive" lecturing ($z = -2.56$). (See Figures 6 and 7.)



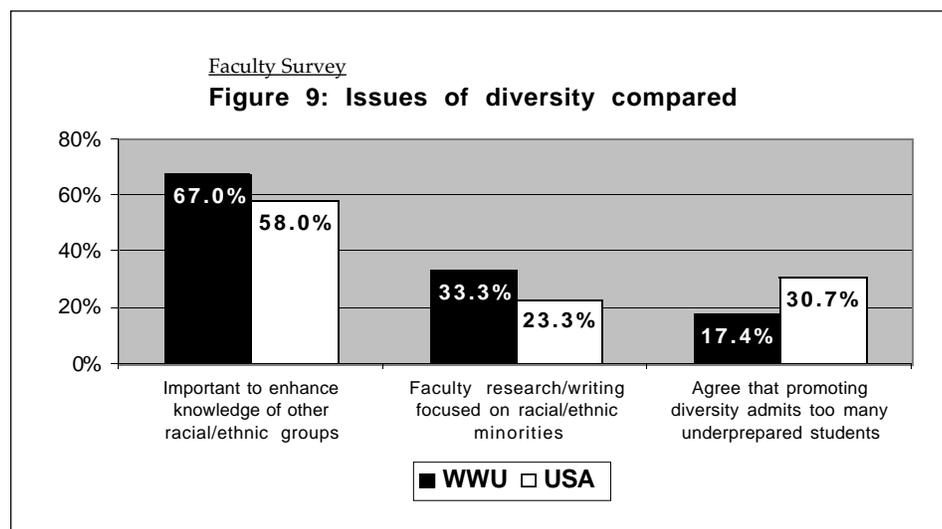
WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

EDUCATIONAL GOALS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

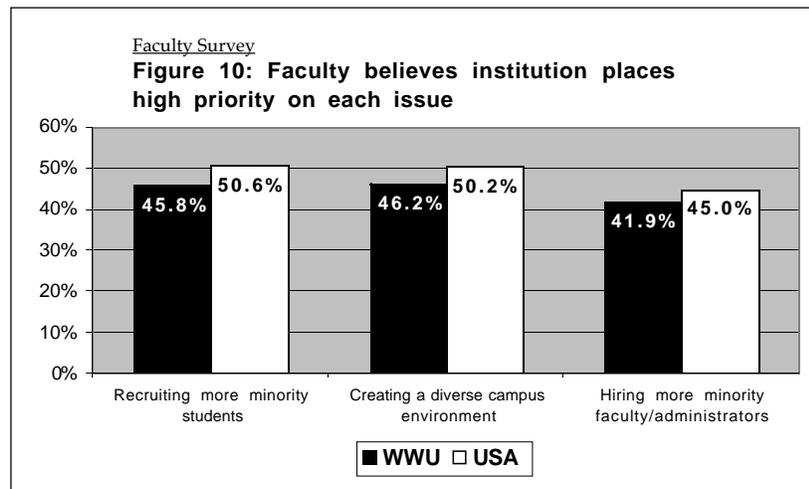
As a goal of undergraduate education, a higher percentage of Western faculty than peer faculty considered it important to instill in students a commitment to community service (39% WWU; 36% peer). Relatedly, a higher percentage of Western faculty than peers indicated that their institution placed a high priority on facilitating student involvement in community service (38% WWU; 31% peer; $z = +2.15$); moreover, a higher percentage of Western faculty agreed that “community service should be given weight in college admissions decisions” (58% WWU; 51% peer; $z = +1.99$). (See Figure 8.)



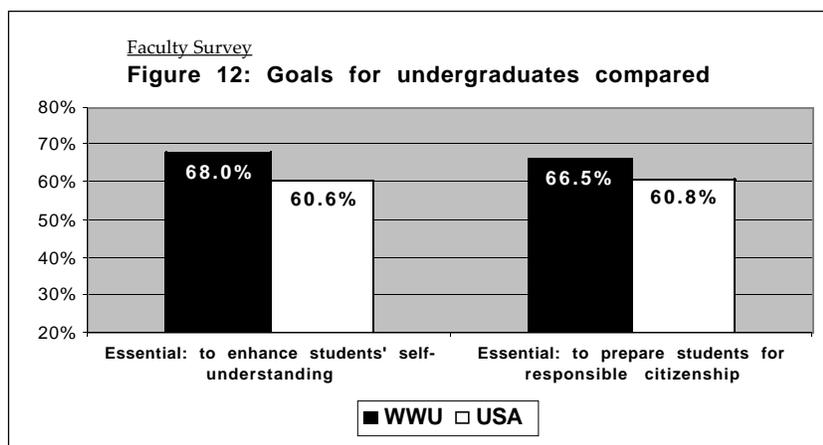
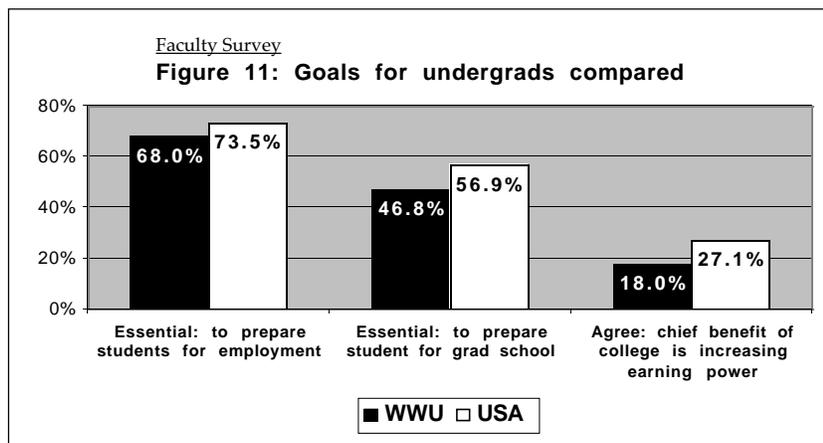
Additionally, a higher percentage of Western faculty considered it important to enhance students’ knowledge of and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups (67% WWU; 58% peer; $z = +2.59$). Relatedly, more Western faculty than peers indicated their research or writing had focused on racial or ethnic minorities (33% WWU; 23% peer; $z = +3.37$), while fewer agreed that “promoting diversity leads to the admission of too many underprepared students” (17% WWU; 31% peer; $z = -4.32$). Oppositely, a lower percentage of Western faculty than peer faculty thought that their institution placed a high priority on recruiting more minority students (46% WWU; 51% peer), or on creating a diverse, multi-cultural campus environment (46% WWU; 50% peer); moreover, fewer Western faculty thought their institution placed a high priority on hiring more minority faculty and administrators (42% WWU; 45% peer). (See Figures 9 and 10)



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As an educational goal, a higher percentage of peer faculty than Western faculty considered it important to prepare students for employment after college (68% WWU; 74% peer), and to prepare students for graduate/advanced education (47% WWU; 57% peer; $z = -2.87$). Additionally, more peer faculty agreed strongly or somewhat with the idea that "the chief benefit of a college education is that it increases one's earning power" (18% WWU; 27% peer; $z = -2.89$). In contrast, more Western faculty considered it important to enhance students' self-understanding (68% WWU; 61% peer; $z = 2.04$), and prepare students for responsible citizenship (67% WWU, 61% peer). (See Figures 11 and 12.)



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PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

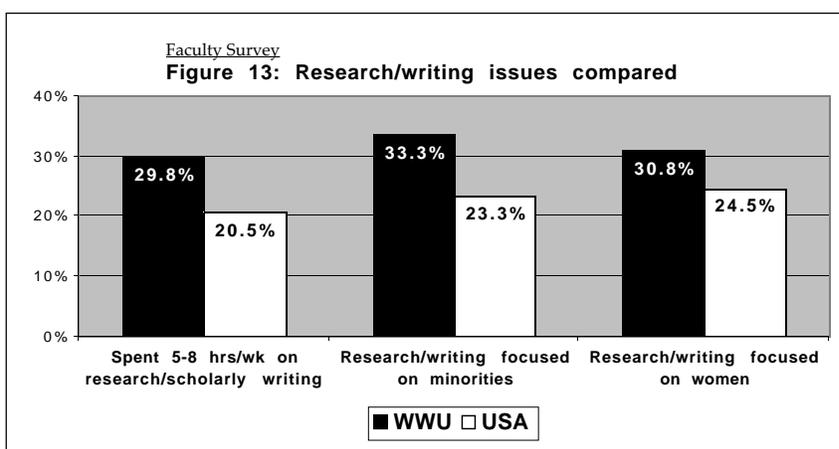
Generally, Western faculty appear to publish more than their peer faculty. A higher percentage of Western faculty reported they had published between 3-10 articles in academic or professional journals ($z = +2.35$), chapters in edited volumes ($z = +2.77$), and books, manuals, or monographs. On the other hand, Western faculty were about as likely to publish alone, or with others, as were peer faculty. (See Table 1.)

Relatedly, while 30% of Western faculty reported spending 5-8 hours a week on research and scholarly writing, only 21% of peer faculty reported the same ($z = +3.13$). Western faculty were also more likely to have focused their research or writing on women (31% WWU; 25% peer; $z = +1.97$), and, as mentioned, on racial or ethnic minorities (33% WWU; 23% peer; $z = +3.37$). (See Figure 13.)

A higher percentage of Western faculty than their peers indicated they had developed a new course (81% WWU; 71% peer; $z = +3.14$). And, while a little more than a third of both Western and peer faculty reported having held an academic administrative post (37% WWU; 36% peer), a higher percentage of Western faculty indicated they had served as paid consultants (44% WWU; 40% peer).

Table 1: How many of the following have you published?

	none		1 - 2		3 - 10		11 +	
	WWU	USA	WWU	USA	WWU	USA	WWU	USA
Journal articles	8%	18%	16%	19%	45%	37%	32%	26%
Chapters in edited volumes	44%	58%	32%	25%	22%	15%	3%	2%
Books, manuals, or monographs	45%	57%	35%	28%	17%	13%	3%	2%



Few faculty (Western or peer) thought their institution “rewarded (them) for being good teachers” (8% WWU; 12% peer). Yet less than a quarter thought they were “typically at odds with administrators” (20% WWU; 21% peer). Moreover, only just over a quarter thought “faculty here respect each other” (28% WWU; 29% peer). In other words, while faculty don’t appear to feel any particular animosity towards school administrators, neither do they feel respected by their immediate peers, nor do they feel they are rewarded for teaching well.

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FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF WESTERN

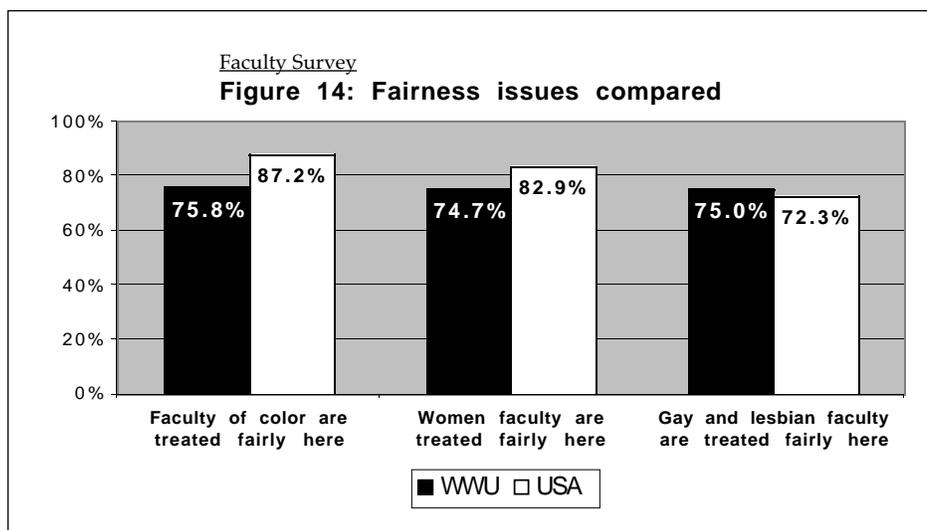
Interestingly, while fewer Western faculty thought their institution placed a high priority on developing “a sense of community among students and faculty” (36% WWU; 45% peer; $z = -2.57$), more Western faculty thought their institution placed a high priority on facilitating “student involvement in community service” (38% WWU; 31% peer). In other words: community *service*, yes; a *sense* of community, no. Moreover, fewer Western faculty than their peers thought it very descriptive of their institution that “it is easy to see faculty outside of regular office hours” (39% WWU; 43% peer), an issue that might be further complicating Western’s ability to create a sense of community.

Unlike faculty nationwide, most Western faculty very clearly do not think WWU has experienced significant change over the past decade. Regarding four areas, approximately three-quarters of Western responded that no change had occurred: overall mission/purpose ($z = -7.11$); general education ($z = -6.35$); faculty role/reward ($z = -3.75$); and governance ($z = -4.07$). (See Table 2.)

Table 2: During the past decade has your institution experienced significant change in any of the following areas?

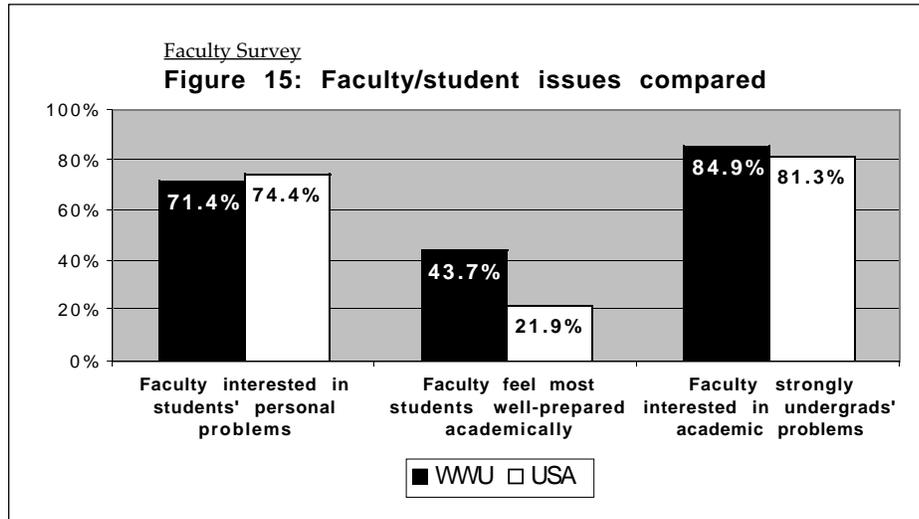
	Yes		No	
	WWU	USA	WWU	USA
Overall mission/purpose	24%	49%	76%	51%
General Education	20%	42%	80%	58%
Faculty role/reward	29%	42%	71%	58%
Governance	26%	40%	74%	60%

While Western faculty agree that “faculty are committed to the welfare of this institution,” (88% WWU; 82% peer; $z = +2.23$), they are not as convinced as their peers that their institution treats faculty of color fairly (76% WWU; 87% peer; $z = -4.61$), nor women faculty fairly (75% WWU; 83% peer; $z = -3.06$). Yet they are slightly more likely than their peers to think that their institution treats gay and lesbian faculty fairly (75% WWU; 72% peer). (See Figure 14.)



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Most Western faculty agree that they are “interested in students’ personal problems” (71% WWU; 74% peer), as well as “the academic problems of undergraduates” (85% WWU; 81% peer). Furthermore, a considerably higher percentage of Western faculty than their peers agree that “most students are well-prepared academically” (44% WWU; 22% peer; $z = +7.49$). (See Figure 15.)



PERSONAL ISSUES

The three most frequently cited sources of stress among Western faculty were: time pressures (91% WWU; 85% peer; $z = +2.40$); lack of personal time (89% WWU; 79% peer; $z = +3.51$); and institutional procedures and ‘red tape’ (80% WWU; 76% peer). Also receiving fairly high percentages were: Managing household responsibilities (77% WWU; 70% peer; $z = +2.18$), teaching load (77% WWU; 67% peer; $z = +3.01$), and keeping up with information technology (74% WWU; 68% peer). Yet when asked “if you were to begin your career again, would you still want to be a college professor,” most Western faculty indicated they would (73%). (See Figures 16 and 17.)

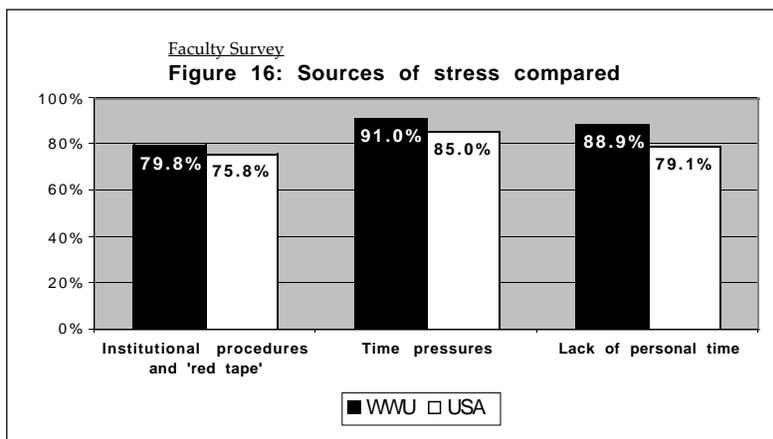
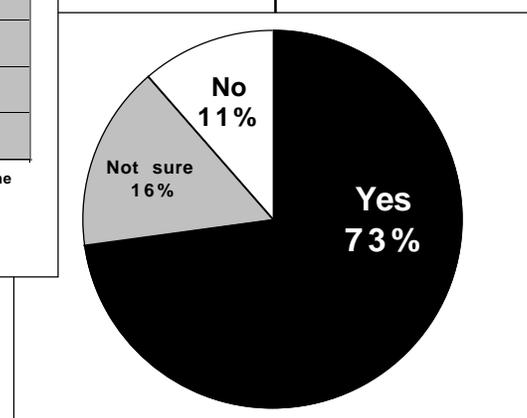


Figure 17: If you were to begin your career again, would you still want to be a college professor?

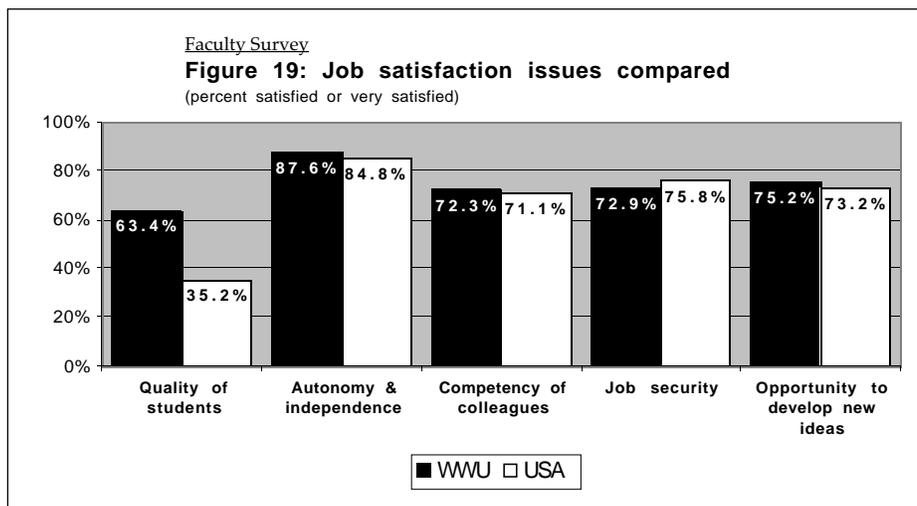
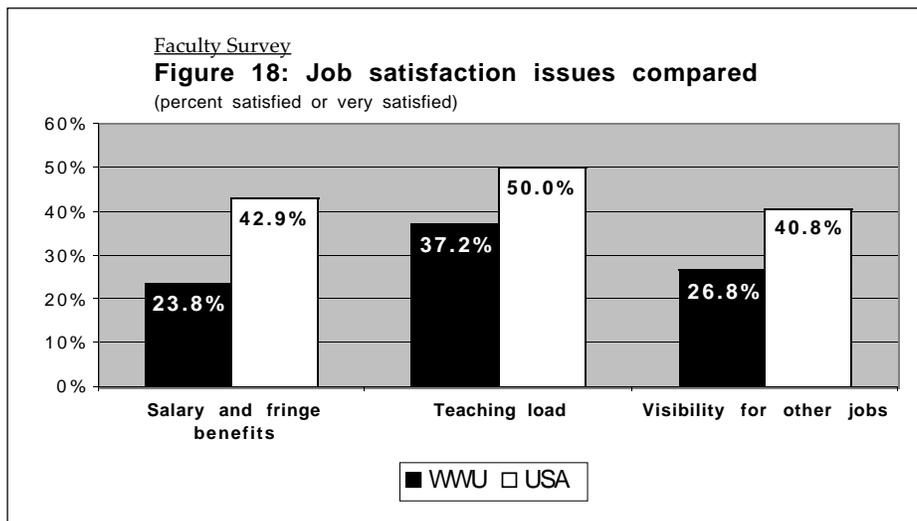


1999 FACULTY SURVEY

PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

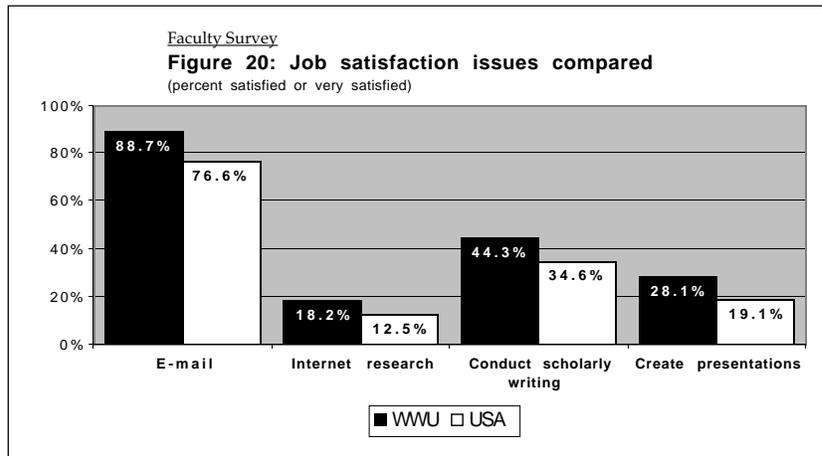
Western faculty were far less satisfied with their salary and fringe benefits than were their peer faculty (24% WWU; 43% peer; $z = -5.46$). Professionally, Western faculty felt remote, with fewer indicating they were satisfied with their “visibility for jobs at other institutions / organizations” (27% WWU; 41% peer; $z = -4.05$). Neither were many Western faculty satisfied with their teaching load (37% WWU; 50% peer; $z = -3.70$).

On the other hand, Western faculty were far more satisfied with the “quality of (WWU) students” (63% WWU; 35% peer; $z = +8.31$). Most were also satisfied with their professional “autonomy and independence” (88% WWU; 85% peer). Moreover, most Western faculty were satisfied with the “competency of (their) colleagues” (72% WWU; 71% peer), their “job security” (73% WWU; 76% peer), and the “opportunity to develop new ideas” (75% WWU; 73% peer). (See Figures 18 and 19.)



WESTERN FACULTY AND TECHNOLOGY

More so than their peers, Western’s faculty appear computer savvy. On a daily basis, most Western faculty communicate with e-mail (89% WWU; 77% peer; $z = +4.07$). Western faculty are also more likely than their peers to use a computer to conduct scholarly writing (44% WWU; 35% peer; $z = +2.68$), create presentations (28% WWU; 19% peer; $z = +3.25$), and conduct research using internet resources (18% WWU; 13% peer; $z = +2.11$).

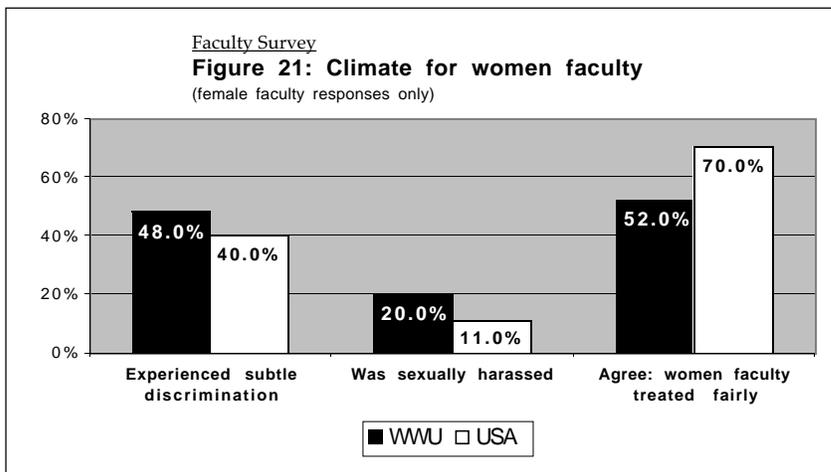


ACADEMIC CLIMATE FOR WOMEN FACULTY

Nationally, 40% of female faculty at Western’s peer institutions reported experiencing stress from “subtle discrimination.” At Western the figure was 48% ($z = +2.32$). In contrast, both nationally and at Western the figure for males was 20%. Western’s female faculty were also more likely to report being sexually harassed (female = 20% WWU, 11% peer; $z = +4.06$). Western’s female faculty were less likely than their peers to believe they were treated fairly (female = 52% WWU, 70% peer; $z = -5.56$). In contrast, few male faculty reported sexual harassment (male = 3% WWU, 4% peer), while most male faculty thought women faculty were treated fairly (male = 89% WWU, 90% peer). Moreover, Western’s tenured female faculty were more likely than non-tenured female faculty to report they were sexually harassed (34% of tenured female faculty versus 8% of non-tenured female faculty).

Additionally, women faculty—and Western women faculty especially—were more likely to report experiencing stress due to the job review and promotion process (female = 62% WWU, 59% peer; male = 52% WWU, 47% peer), less likely to be satisfied with job security (female = 65% WWU, 69% peer; male = 78% WWU, 80% peer), and more likely to consider leaving academe (female = 44% WWU, 41% peer; male = 37% WWU, 35% peer).

Women faculty also reported more stress in their personal lives than did their male counterparts. Though male and female faculty have about the same number of children, women were more likely to interrupt their career for health or family reasons (female = 30% WWU, 27% peer; male = 7% WWU, 5% peer), to experience stress from managing household and child care responsibilities (female = 89% WWU, 81% peer; male = 69% WWU, 65% peer), and to spend at least 17 hours a week tending to household and child care responsibilities (female = 31% WWU, 28% peer; male = 23% WWU, 14% peer).



For a more detailed analysis of these issues, see OIAT Report 2002-02, *Perceptions of Subtle Gender Discrimination, Hostility, and Sexual Harassment among Senior Women Faculty at Western Washington University.*

SUMMARY: FACULTY SURVEY FINDINGS

For this report, and many others, the fit between Western and its “peers” could be tighter. Location type—urban, suburban, rural—would be nice to factor in, as well as size; for instance, pairing Western up with schools in the 8,000 to 15,000 range. In the meantime, the definition given by the Higher Education Research Institute will have to suffice. While not exact, it is useful, and allows the findings to exist outside a vacuum.

Demographically, the faculty participants were all full-time, mostly white (91%), and in the majority male (62%). In these ways, they were similar to the faculty at the listed peer institutes. Western faculty were slightly younger than their peers, made slightly less money, but were slightly more likely to list Ph.D. as their terminal degree. Western faculty were much less satisfied with their salary and fringe benefits than their peers.

Western faculty were somewhat more likely to do research than their peers, as well as to publish, whether journal articles, chapters in edited volumes, books, manuals or monographs. Moreover, Western faculty were more likely to have focused their research or writing on women and/or racial minorities.

Western faculty were more likely to use competency grading than their peers, less likely to grade on the curve. Western faculty were more likely to use cooperative learning (small groups) and group projects, less likely to use “extensive” lecturing.

Issues of community service were slightly more important to Western faculty than to their peers. Additionally, Western faculty were more likely to consider it important to enhance students’ knowledge of and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups. Oppositely, Western faculty were less likely to feel their institution placed a high priority on recruiting more minority students, and on creating a diverse, multi-cultural campus environment.

Western faculty did not appear to feel any particular animosity towards school administrators, but were less likely to feel respected by their immediate peers than faculty at their peer institutes did. Western faculty were also less likely to feel they were rewarded for teaching well. Neither did Western faculty feel that WWU has experienced significant policy changes over the past decade.

The top three stress issues for Western faculty were time pressures, lack of personal time; and institutional procedures and ‘red tape’. Yet they were considerably more satisfied with the quality of WWU students than their peers were, and when asked if they were to begin their careers again would they still want to be college professors, most (73%) indicated they would.

Unfortunately, Western’s female faculty were less likely than their peers to indicate that the climate for women faculty at their institution was comfortable. Indeed, Western’s women faculty were less likely to agree that women faculty are treated fairly, more likely to report they had been sexually harassed, as well as more likely to report that they had felt stress due to subtle discrimination.



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