

Survey Identifies Colleges That Know How to Keep Junior Faculty Members Happy

By ELYSE ASHBURN

Junior faculty members are generally a satisfied lot. But those at Davidson and Kenyon Colleges, Brown and Stanford Universities, and the Universities of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and of Virginia seem downright ecstatic about their jobs, according to a report released last week by the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education.

The tenure-track faculty members at those institutions were the most satisfied overall, according to a report based on a survey of about 5,000 faculty members at 42 colleges and universities.

"One surprise was the number of publics that came out on top because we often think, well, the privates can spend more money and provide better support," says Cathy A. Trower, a Harvard researcher who worked on the report, "[Top Academic Workplaces 2005-06](#)". "I think this speaks really highly for those public institutions."

The survey asked faculty members to rate their job satisfaction on a five-point scale on such concerns as the clarity of the tenure process and collegiality.

Twenty-one institutions, including the six with the highest overall satisfaction, rated exceptionally well in at least one work-life category. And Auburn University, Brown, Davidson, Ohio State University, Stanford, and the University of Illinois all scored high in four of the seven categories.

Over all, junior faculty members rated their job satisfaction as a 3.92. However, women were less satisfied than men (3.89 versus 3.94), members of minority groups were less satisfied than white faculty members (3.84 versus 3.94), and faculty members at research universities were less satisfied than those at liberal-arts colleges (3.90 versus 4.15).

Staff members of the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education, or Coache, plan to visit top-rated institutions to see how they keep faculty members satisfied.

Coache is conducting its second survey of junior faculty, with 27 participating colleges and universities. Results from that survey are scheduled to be released this summer.

COLLEGES WITH THE MOST-SATISFIED YOUNG PROFESSORS

This table lists alphabetically the two liberal-arts colleges, among 11, and the four universities, among 31, with the highest mean scores for each of seven themes. Institutions with scores less than 0.05 below that of the second-ranked college (or fourth-ranked university) were also included in the lists.

Theme	Liberal-Arts Colleges	Research/Doctoral Universities
Tenure clarity	Davidson College Kenyon College	Auburn U. Brown U. East Carolina U. North Carolina State U. Ohio State U. U. of Kansas
Nature of work	Davidson College Denison U. Goucher College Hamilton College (N.Y.)	Brown U. Dartmouth College Harvard U. Stanford U. U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Policy effectiveness	Denison U. Goucher College Macalester College	Auburn U. Ohio State U. U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign U. of Kansas
Compensation¹	Hamilton College (N.Y.) Macalester College	Dartmouth College Harvard U. Ohio State U. Stanford U.
Work & family	Davidson College Goucher College Wabash College Wheaton College (Mass.)	Auburn U. Dartmouth College Ohio State U. U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign U. of Virginia
Collegiality	Kenyon College Wabash College	Auburn U. Brown U. Stanford U. Tufts U. U. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill U. of Virginia
Global satisfaction	Davidson College Kenyon College	Brown U. Stanford U. U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign U. of Virginia

¹ Two universities qualifying as exemplars asked not to be named in this category.

NOTE: Only institutions that consented to be identified are included. Where an institution demurred, no additional institutions were included to take their places on this list.

SOURCE: Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education