

**Leaving the University of Minnesota:
Results of an Exploratory Survey of Departed Faculty, 1997-2000***

December 2001

* This project was conducted at the request of the University of Minnesota Faculty Development Working Group. The primary contributors to the report are James C. Hearn, Susan K. Jensen, and Karin L. Gustafson. The authors gratefully acknowledge the helpful suggestions of Carole Bland, Carol Carrier, Darwin Hendel, and Virginia Seybold on earlier versions of this report.

**Leaving the University of Minnesota:
Results of an Exploratory Survey of Departed Faculty, 1997-2000**

Executive Summary

Recognizing the need for better information on faculty research productivity at the University of Minnesota, the University Senate and the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Personnel initiated a task force to address this concern. The task force began its work in the 2000-2001 academic year. As part of that effort, the task force requested an exploratory survey of tenure-track and tenured faculty who had voluntarily left positions at the institution for other academic positions in recent years. The request from the task force was in keeping with an earlier recommendation from the Board of Regents that the administration more aggressively examine the reasons for faculty departures from the university. The goal of the survey was to examine the factors associated with faculty leaving the university and to glean from the findings potential policy and practice implications for the university. Forty-three faculty who departed in 1997-2000 responded to the survey. Among the most significant findings were the following:

- Although there is very little published research on faculty departures in higher education, many institutions (including Penn State, Michigan State, and Iowa) conduct regular exit interviews or surveys of their departing faculty, and well-established models exist for these efforts.
- Given the opportunity, former University of Minnesota, Twin Cities faculty will respond to requests that they provide information on the circumstances of their departures.
- Departing University of Minnesota, Twin Cities faculty for the period 1997 to 2000 reported mean overall satisfaction scores just above "moderately satisfied."
- Individual considerations, such as salary and course assignments, were of moderate importance and satisfaction to departing faculty.
- Departmental factors, such as the perceived social climate, management effectiveness, and sense of collegiality in the unit, were very important to departing faculty and were the greatest source of dissatisfaction among respondents.
- University and college policies and practices, such as the perceived commitment to disciplinary and interdisciplinary areas, were very important to departing faculty, but had only moderate associations with faculty satisfaction levels, and the university/college items that did have such associations were those most connected to individual departments and disciplines.
- Departing faculty were very satisfied with community life in the Twin Cities and these factors did not seem to be critical in decisions to depart.
- A majority of departed faculty reported having received a retention offer from the university before leaving the institution.

The findings of this analysis must, of course, be viewed very cautiously. Only tenured or tenure-track faculty leaving for tenured or tenure-track positions elsewhere were in the sample. There is no simple way to discern in these data which faculty among those leaving the institution were most valued and productive and which faculty were encouraged to leave the university and perhaps were better suited for positions at other institutions. Analysis of the most productive faculty leaving the university would be more useful than aggregate analysis across all departing faculty. One major college chose not to provide forwarding information for its departed faculty. The survey was sent as much as six months to three years after departure, rather than simultaneously with departure. Only faculty from the

Twin Cities campus were included, so no generalizations to other campuses of the University of Minnesota are warranted. The small size of the sample precluded separate analyses for significant subgroups (e.g., faculty of color, faculty from individual colleges). The sample was too small for intensive multivariate analysis, so descriptive data and simple correlations drive the conclusions, without adequate controls for confounding factors. Thus, causation cannot be inferred from the data presented here. Finally, although every effort was made to increase the validity and reliability of the responses, there is no assurance that individuals' responses reflected accurately the full reasons for their departures. For all of these reasons, the findings do not lead definitively to recommendations for administrative actions at either the unit or the central levels.

The analysis here was exploratory, and many limitations apply. Nevertheless, the early evidence presented here can ideally help guide further investigations of ways the university can do a better job in retaining its most valued faculty.

Leaving the University of Minnesota: Results of an Exploratory Survey of Departed Faculty, 1997-2000

Colleges and universities can benefit from examining why their faculty members leave for similar jobs in other institutions. Some faculty leave for personal reasons unrelated to and unaddressable by the institution. Also, some faculty departures are desirable from an institutional standpoint and signal no underlying problems for administrative attention. Others, however, are based in significant, and perhaps avoidable, institutional problems. Unit leadership, research infrastructure, salary levels, and other factors are among the frequently cited factors in departures from academic positions (Burke, 1991). Problems in these areas, once uncovered by empirical analysis, can be addressed by thoughtful policy making and decision making, with the goal of reducing departure rates among valued faculty members. Unfortunately, knowledge about the circumstances and rationales behind the departures of valued faculty members is seldom obtained. Such information could inform efforts to improve faculty retention and productivity on a campus.

Recognizing the need for better information on faculty research productivity at the University of Minnesota, the University Senate and the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Personnel initiated a task force to address this concern. The task force began its work in the 2000-2001 academic year. As part of that effort, the task force requested an exploratory survey of tenure-track and tenured faculty who had voluntarily left positions at the institution for other academic positions in recent years. The request from the task force was in keeping with an earlier recommendation from the Board of Regents that the administration more aggressively examine the reasons for faculty departures from the university. The goal of the survey was to examine the factors associated with faculty leaving the university and to glean from the findings potential policy and practice implications for the university.

Relevant Literature

The available literature on faculty departures in higher education is sparse (see Burke, 1991), and the published literature on exit interviews and surveys in higher education is virtually non-existent. Perhaps surprisingly, there is also very little high-quality published work on exit interviews and surveys in settings other than higher education. Although such interviews and surveys are undertaken by many public and private-sector organizations in response to significant voluntary professional departures (see Garretson and Teel, 1982), the techniques and results are rarely reported for public consumption, in good part for competitive reasons. What is more, corporations are apparently not especially open to systematic examination of the results by analysts outside the organization.

Below, we assay what literature there is on exit interviews and surveys in various settings, then highlight what we know about faculty satisfaction in higher education and at the University of Minnesota in particular.

The "Exit" Literature: Employee turnover is costly, and many organizations utilize exit interviews and surveys to help determine the causes and construct retention strategies for valued remaining staff. Informal contacts with top human-resources officers on campuses around the country suggest that many postsecondary institutions, especially larger research institutions, conduct exit interviews and surveys with their departing faculty. [11](#) To learn more, the Office of Human Resources recently conducted an informal e-mail poll of top human-resources officials at the CIC institutions.

Several CIC institutions responded. Indiana University, the University of Wisconsin, and the Ohio State University do not currently pursue exit interviews or surveys. An Ohio State official noted to us that the former effort there suffered from spotty participation and questionable representativeness. The University of Michigan does not pursue exit interviews or survey efforts at the central level but individual colleges and departments there do pursue interviews and surveys. The Pennsylvania State University and Michigan State University have long employed written exit surveys of departing tenure-system faculty who resign. Perhaps most ambitious is the University of Iowa, which sends out an exit survey (achieving a 55% return rate) and also asks emeritus faculty to conduct individual exit interviews. Thus, well-established models exist for exit interviewing and surveying in research institutions.^[2]

Perhaps understandably, however, universities do not often publicly present results from these efforts: there is very little published literature on exit interviews and surveys in higher education, and what there is tends to be largely hortatory and non-empirical. That conclusion applies to the exit literature from other organizational settings, as well.

The published literature can provide some guidance, however, on particular issues relating to exit interviews and surveys. For example, one concern immediately confronting those considering exit interviews and surveys is whether such efforts provide valid, useful information. An investigation of *Fortune 500* companies over twenty years ago (Hellweg and Phillips, 1981) found that aggregate data collected in exit interviews was rarely used and little follow-up was done after termination. Companies in the sample noted the principle weakness in these interviews was the difficulty of obtaining truthful responses from exiting employees. There are parallel findings from research conducted in other corporations (Hinrichs, 1975; Garretson and Teel, 1982) and in elementary and secondary schools (Harris, 1979), although the evidence is similarly dated. Harris (1979, p. 113), for example, suggests that among departing secondary-school teachers, the expressed reason for departures is often not the reason others involved view as most "true." Research on the validity of responses to exit interviews and surveys suffers from numerous methodological problems, however. Giacalone et al. (1997) conducted a more rigorous investigation that suggested that, while a number of factors do tend to lead respondents away from honest answers, there are ways data-gathering efforts can be designed to promote more truthful and helpful responses. Clearly, departing employees may not always want to share their full rationales, but thoughtful designs for exit interviews and surveys can help minimize dishonesty in responses.

We found no published evidence on the validity of information obtained in employee exit interviews and surveys in higher education in particular. Dworak (1983), writing about departures in higher education, notes the awkwardness of the occasion of an employee's departure and stresses that exit interviews should address not only a need for better information but also the desirability of the exiting employee leaving with a positive impression of the organization. Information collected from departing faculty and staff can be valuable in future administrative decisions, Dworak notes, if employers take the time to analyze the data. As in other settings, however, information on departing higher-education employees may not always be used by the institutions gathering it.

With that in mind, we combed the literature for information on the relative merits of different approaches to gaining information from exiting employees. In particular, institutions must consider the relative merits of interviews (with their potential for in-depth and open-ended discussion of factors in departure) versus surveys (with their potentially lower costs, more standardized indicators, and comprehensiveness). We were curious if there was evidence on the interview/survey choice, and on the related question of whether the use of surveys may lower employees' concerns about privacy and protection of their exiting responses. We found evidence from the corporate sector (Hinrichs, 1975) suggesting that interviews were less reliable and valid than surveys but, unfortunately, we found no evidence on these questions in higher education. Most published material has focused on exit interviews alone. We can infer, however, that surveys are especially suited for larger institutions. In campuses with only a handful of faculty leaving in any given year, survey data are likely to be skewed by individual case circumstances, unless the data are aggregated over a substantial number of years.

In all, the published research on exit interviews and surveys provided very little useful guidance for this project. This literature is relatively undeveloped, especially as it might apply to higher-education settings.^[3] With our knowledge (from the CIC "poll" and other sources) that exit interviewing and surveying are widespread in higher education and our discovery of so little information on the topic in the public domain, we concluded that what was published in analytic journals might not accurately reflect the realities of practice and policy on campuses. It is doubtful that major institutions like Iowa, Michigan State, and Pennsylvania State would continue to invest in such efforts if they were not

receiving some returns from the effort. For that reason, we looked to other sources for guidance. Specifically, we sought to integrate knowledge from the faculty-satisfaction literature into our inquiry on departing faculty at the University of Minnesota.

The Literature on Faculty Satisfaction: Faculty satisfaction is often unknown until a professor chooses to leave a position in search of a better setting for his or her professional work and personal situation. Evidence from national surveys suggests, however, that faculty satisfaction is heavily influenced by certain aspects of working conditions and rewards (Fairweather, 1996; Sax et al., 1996). Faculty members' satisfaction, and implicitly, their decisions to stay or leave, are influenced by a variety of factors. These factors may be categorized into four general domains: individual circumstances and background, departmental factors, factors at the college and university level, and factors relating to the community in which the university is located (Fairweather, 1996; Finnegan et al., 1996; Clark and Lewis, 1985).

In a 1995 national survey by the U.S. Department of Education, faculty across institutional types cited time pressures as the greatest source of stress in their working lives, followed by lack of personal time, household responsibilities, and their teaching loads (Sax et al., 1996). One area of significant potential dissatisfaction involves the possible disjunction between faculty expectations and rewards. Often, rewards and salary do not precisely align with job responsibilities. A variety of studies of faculty workloads suggest that, on average, faculty members across institutional types commit over 50 hours per week to teaching, research, service, and other responsibilities (Fairweather, 1996). In interviews and surveys, department chairs and faculty alike rate high-quality teaching strongly on their criteria for successful performance, but the reward structure sometimes sends faculty members the message that research is more valued; these disjunctions can cause stress and discontent regarding leadership and professional advancement (Clark and Lewis, 1985; Fairweather, 1996).

At the University of Minnesota, a 1997 Faculty and Staff Climate Survey (Hendel, 1999) noted that satisfaction overall was moderate among faculty: asked to respond to the statement that they were satisfied with their university employment, 62.1 percent agreed or strongly agreed, while 20.6 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. There was substantial variation by unit in levels of agreement with the statement. 56.1 percent of faculty agreed or strongly agreed that they would accept employment at the university again. Asked about opportunities for development and advancement, faculty were largely in agreement with the statements "My current administrator/supervisor supports and encourages me in my professional development" (64.7 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing), the statement "I feel that my University supervisor/administrator has the knowledge and skills necessary to perform the job effectively (60.0 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing), and the statement "I am satisfied with my departmental/unit leadership" (53.4 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing). Most striking was the finding that 90.6 percent of faculty agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment."

There were areas of concern in the findings, however. Only 44.8 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I am satisfied with opportunities for advancement at the University." While 26.2 percent expressed agreement or strong agreement with the statement that they had confidence in the university's direction, 43.2 percent disagreed or disagreed strongly with that statement. Also, relatively few faculty expressed satisfaction with their compensation and other rewards: only 33.2 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "As compared to others at this University, my compensation... is fair for the work I do" and only 18.9 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I feel that employees are adequately recognized and rewarded for their efforts and contributions here." It should be noted that this survey was conducted during the "tenure wars," a time of especially low morale at the University of Minnesota. Because of that timing, any generalizations from these survey results must be undertaken cautiously.

Conclusion: Although we found the literature on exit interviews and surveys scarce and not especially useful, we did find guidance in the broader literature on faculty satisfaction in higher education. The findings from our review of the literature in this area suggest that faculty members' satisfaction and their decisions to stay or leave are influenced by individual, departmental, institutional, and community factors. We used this four-way framework as background for the analysis presented here.

Design of the Analysis

The University of Minnesota Senate and Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Personnel jointly initiated a task force on faculty productivity at the university and subsequently provided financial support for this research project. The faculty exit survey was designed to examine sources of faculty satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the university, and suggest domains for ameliorative action. No one could argue that departed faculty are the best source of information on the factors limiting faculty productivity at this institution, but their responses in the aggregate can provide a valuable additional source of information on the question.

Instrument: On March 27, 2001, each former faculty member meeting sample-selection criteria (see below) was mailed a cover letter and a survey (see Appendices 1 and 2). The survey was constructed based on 1) the published literature on exit interviews, exit surveys, and faculty satisfaction (see above), and 2) the exit survey given departing faculty at the Pennsylvania State University.^[4] Pennsylvania State has long been committed to exit surveys of its departing faculty, and has refined its questionnaire over many years, based on the evolving uses of the data by administrative leaders there. The survey provided an extraordinarily helpful model for the survey project here at the University of Minnesota. To help build response rates, the cover letter for the Minnesota survey was sent under the signatures of both the chair of the university's Faculty Development Task Force and the university's Vice President for Human Resources.

The survey contained 56 items. The first 54 items were dual-response items headed "influences on faculty careers." These items were based on 54 specific areas of influences identified earlier. These influences were broken down into four categories in keeping with the literature on faculty satisfaction (see above): individual considerations, departmental life, university and college policies and practices, and local community life. Respondents were asked to rate each influence separately for importance and satisfaction on a five-point scale, where 1 = low and 5 = high. Thus, for each of the 54 areas of influence, there were two ratings for importance and satisfaction respectively.

Two further items on the survey, termed "factors in your departure," asked respondents to indicate the items playing the biggest factor in their decision to leave the university and whether a retention offer was made. The next item had four parts, asking respondents to provide their faculty rank, race, gender, and former university department. The final item asked for an overall rating of satisfaction with all aspects of their faculty position at the university using a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all satisfied) through 4 (moderately satisfied) to 7 (very satisfied).

Sample: Sampling was limited to faculty from the University of Minnesota system's Research I Twin Cities campus. The Twin Cities campus is one of the most comprehensive in the country with 20 colleges and professional schools, 2,275 full time tenured/tenure track faculty, and 1403 faculty on other appointment types. There is substantial variation among the four campuses in the University of Minnesota system, and creating a survey adequately addressing the missions and faculty responsibilities at all of those institutions would be difficult. Because this was an initial, exploratory study of possible future approaches to exit analyses, it was decided to begin work on a single site, the Twin Cities campus. In the report, references to "the university" are to be read as referring only to the Twin Cities campus. It is critical that similar analyses be conducted to include the other three campuses of the system.

The research sample was constructed from the records of the university's Office of Human Resources. Tenure-track and tenured faculty who left the university's Twin Cities campus during the preceding three years were identified as an initial pool. Then, faculty who had left the university because of tenure denial or who had left for non-academic positions and retirement were removed from the pool. Thus, the study's core sample was tenure-track and tenured faculty who had left the university voluntarily in 1997-98, 1998-1999, or 1999-2000 for a similar position at another college or university.

College dean's offices were asked to supply forwarding addresses for departing faculty associated with their unit in the Human Resources database. When a college could not or would not provide forwarding information,^[5] the last known address available from central records for the survey subject was used for the mailing. In total, 106 former faculty members were sent an exit survey and cover letter (see Appendices 1 and 2). Each survey was numbered, allowing the research team to send out a second letter and questionnaire to individuals who had failed to respond by April 18. By May 7, current addresses for 12 additional former faculty members had been found. These individuals were mailed the initial solicitation letter, bringing the mailed survey total to 118. At that point, we set a survey cut-off return date of June 15. By that date, 48 of the initial group of 118 former faculty had returned their surveys, constituting a response

rate of 40.6 percent. Of the 48 surveys, 43 had sufficient information for sample inclusion.

Missing addresses, differential departure rates by college, and differential response rates by college all contributed to making this sample only imperfectly representative of all faculty and of all departing faculty at the university. Thus, aggregated results presented in this report should be interpreted cautiously. In Table 1, the college composition of the analysis sample is compared to that of faculty as a whole, all departed faculty, and faculty in the survey sample (i.e., departed tenure-track and tenured faculty who had available addresses and left voluntarily for other academic positions). Relative to the composition of the original survey pool, Veterinary Medicine is substantially over-represented in the analysis sample and the Medical School is substantially under-represented, because of distinctive survey response rates in the two units.

The two health units were both over-represented in their departure rates relative to their proportions of all university faculty. The Medical School, the School of Public Health, and Veterinary Medicine had especially high internal turnover rates (i.e., percentages of their faculty departing in the focal three-year period). This turnover no doubt reflects the difficult conditions of health units in this period on this and many other campuses. Relative to university faculty as a whole, Veterinary Medicine is substantially over-represented in the analysis sample, and the Institute of Technology, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Medical School are substantially under-represented.^[6]

Table 1

Sample Composition by College

| College | All Faculty | | Departing Faculty | | | Initial Survey Sample | | Returned Surveys | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Total Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty | % of Total University Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty | # of Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty | % of Total University's Departing Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty | % of College's Total Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty | # of Surveys Sent | % of Total Surveys Sent | # of Surveys Returned | % of Total Surveys Returned |
| Veterinary Medicine | 66 | 3.1 | 15 | 7.6 | 22.7 | 15 | 12.7 | 9 | 20.9 |
| Agriculture, Food, & Environmental Science | 181 | 8.6 | 9 | 4.6 | 5.0 | 8 | 6.8 | 5 | 11.6 |
| Liberal Arts | 440 | 20.8 | 18 | 9.1 | 4.1 | 17 | 14.4 | 5 | 11.6 |
| Medical School | 420 | 19.9 | 98 | 49.7 | 23.3 | 37 | 31.4 | 5 | 11.6 |
| Public Health, School of | 63 | 3 | 16 | 8.1 | 25.4 | 10 | 8.5 | 5 | 11.6 |
| Law School | 33 | 1.6 | 3 | 1.2 | 9.1 | 3 | 2.5 | 3 | 7 |
| Biological Sciences | 66 | 3.1 | 4 | 2 | 6.1 | 4 | 3.4 | 2 | 4.7 |
| Education & Human Development | 102 | 4.8 | 6 | 3 | 5.9 | 4 | 3.4 | 2 | 4.7 |
| Management | 97 | 4.6 | 10 | 5.1 | 10.3 | 7 | 5.9 | 2 | 4.7 |
| Technology, Institute of | 347 | 16.4 | 7 | 3.6 | 2.0 | 6 | 5.1 | 2 | 4.7 |
| Dentistry | 57 | 2.7 | 3 | 1.5 | 5.3 | 1 | 0.8 | 1 | 2.3 |
| General College | 27 | 1.3 | 1 | 0.5 | 3.7 | 1 | 0.8 | 1 | 2.3 |
| Nursing | 36 | 1.7 | 2 | 1 | 5.6 | 2 | 1.7 | 1 | 2.3 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|
| Architecture & Landscape | | | | | | | | | |
| Architecture | 16 | 0.8 | 1 | 0.5 | 6.3 | 1 | 0.8 | 0 | 0 |
| Human Ecology | 54 | 2.6 | 1 | 0.5 | 1.9 | 1 | 0.8 | 0 | 0 |
| Libraries, University | 25 | 1.2 | 1 | 0.5 | 4.0 | 1 | 0.8 | 0 | 0 |
| Natural Resources | 35 | 1.6 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pharmacy | 34 | 1.6 | 1 | 0.5 | 2.9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Public Affairs | 16 | 0.7 | 1 | 0.5 | 6.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 2115 | 100 | 197 | 100 | 9.3 | 118 | 100 | 43 | 100 |

Responding former faculty members were primarily male: 30 of the 40 who provided their gender were male. Of the 41 who responded to the item on race/ethnicity, 32 reported “white” (the nine non-white respondents included four Asians/Pacific Islanders, three African Americans/Blacks, one Native American/American Indian, and one who responded “Other.” Roughly equal numbers of respondents reporting holding university ranks at the assistant (14), associate (14), and full (15) professor ranks at the time of their departure.

Methods: Most of the 43 respondents in the final sample completed the great majority of the items on the survey. Nevertheless, only four respondents completed every item, and for two especially demanding items, only 32-35 respondents provided complete responses. This level of missing data, combined with the small overall sample, made extensive multivariate analysis (e.g., multiple regressions or factor analyses with large numbers of variables) inadvisable. Instead, simple descriptive analyses and small-scale correlational and regression analyses were conducted.

Findings

Overall, departing faculty did not indicate a high level of dissatisfaction with the University of Minnesota. The closing question of the survey asked former faculty members to indicate their level of satisfaction with all aspects of their faculty position at the university. Their mean response was 4.19 on a 7-point scale, where 1 = not at all satisfied, 4 = moderately satisfied, and 7 = very satisfied. Although only 4.7 percent of respondents stated they were not at all satisfied, 35 percent indicated a level of satisfaction below “moderate” (see Table 2). Conversely, 44.2 percent suggested they were more than moderately satisfied. One might interpret these data as evidence that a sizable number of departures are either “close calls” between faculty positions here and elsewhere or decisions rooted in factors beyond the control of the university.

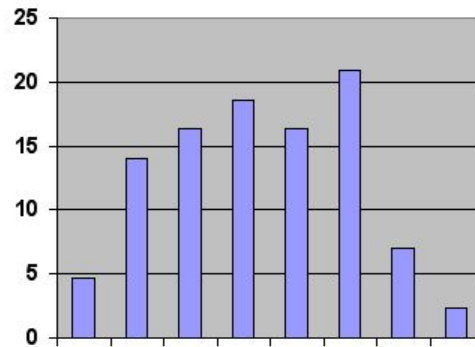
Table 2
Overall Level of Satisfaction with All Aspects of Faculty Position at the U of Mn

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| Response | % |
| Not at all satisfied | 4.8 |
| 2 | 14.3 |
| 3 | 16.7 |
| Moderately satisfied | 19.0 |
| 5 | 16.7 |
| 6 | 21.4 |
| Very satisfied | 7.1 |
| Total | 100.0 |

As shown in Figure 1, results on this item were rather normally distributed (skewedness = -0.123). Thus, the faculty who depart the university are not, on balance, “dissatisfied,” but rather distributed rather evenly around a mean centered between extreme satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Figure 1

Overall Level of Satisfaction with All Aspects of Faculty Position at the U of Mn



It is instructive to compare these results to those for all faculty at the university: is this group of departed faculty similar in overall satisfaction to those who remain here? In the university's 1997 survey of faculty (Hendel, 1999), 62.1 percent indicated that they were satisfied with their employment at the institution. For our sample, including as "satisfied" those giving a response of 5, 6, or 7 yields 45.2 percent, while adding those "moderately satisfied" to the total yields 64.2 percent. It seems on the surface that the departed faculty are not substantially different in satisfaction levels from those remaining, but the special circumstances of the 1997 survey (i.e., the tenure controversy) make such inferences at least debatable.

There were no statistically significant subgroup differences in overall satisfaction for the departed faculty. Still, some descriptive data may be of interest. The mean level of overall satisfaction was 4.50 for former assistant professors, 3.82 for former associate professors, and 4.25 for former full professors. Recalling that these are satisfaction levels for departed professors, not in-place professors, it is striking that there are no strong differences between the most senior and most junior former faculty, and that the most dissatisfied were those in the middle rank. The mean level of overall satisfaction was 4.33 for males and 3.75 for females. Finally, the mean level of overall satisfaction for faculty of color was 4.61, compared to 4.18 for whites.^[7]

Table 2 and Figure 2 reveal that many of the departed faculty were satisfied while at the university. Table 3 suggests that, in many of these cases, the feelings were mutual. Fully 58 percent of the survey respondents indicated that before their departure, the university made them a retention offer. Of this group, 14 percent were the object of a retention offer in a previous year but not for the year of departure, 35 percent were the object of a retention offer in the departure year and declined the offer, and 9 percent were objects of retention offers in both a previous year and the year of departure. Although the proffer of a retention offer is not a perfect indicator of valuation,^[8] these results suggest that a high proportion of the respondents were valued members of the faculty.

Table 3

Responses to the question: "Prior to your departure from the U of Mn, were you the object of a retention offer?"

| Response | % |
|---|------|
| No | 41.9 |
| Yes, in a prior year but not in the year I left (i.e., I accepted the earlier | 14.0 |

| | |
|--|-------|
| retention offer) | |
| Yes, in the same year as my departure, but I declined it and left the university | 34.9 |
| Yes, in both a prior year and the year of my departure | 9.3 |
| Total | 100.0 |

Individual Importance and Satisfaction Items: The heart of the survey was an examination of satisfaction and importance for specific aspects of respondents' university experiences. The survey contained 20 items relating to "individual considerations," 13 items relating to "departmental life," 15 items relating to "university and college policies and practices," and six items relating to "local community life." Each survey participant rated these 54 items' importance and satisfaction as influences on their faculty careers. The survey contained five boxes for respondents to check for each item for importance and satisfaction, respectively. In these items, the leftmost box was labeled "low" and the rightmost labeled "high." For scoring purposes, we coded these boxes 1 to 5, with the low extreme equal to 1 and the high equal to 5. Here, we present in turn the most important influences, least important influences, most satisfying influences, and least satisfying influences.

Table 4 presents the ten factors respondents identified as the most important influences on their faculty careers at the university: (1) quality of library facilities; (2) professional autonomy (i.e., courses, research projects, and service); (3) the university's commitment to their discipline; (4) support of department head for their continuing professional growth; (5) fairness of review processes for annual merit increases; (6) availability of time for research/scholarship, relative to other demands; (7) cultural and social opportunities in the Twin Cities community; (8) an academically strong department (re: disciplinary peers); (9) the university's commitment to their area of research; and (10) respect and cooperation among colleagues. There was virtually no separation of the mean scores for these items, a pattern that continued deeper into the item ratings. In all, 34 of the 54 items had a mean rated importance of four or higher on the five-point scale for these items. Beyond the overall importance of so many of the items, it is intriguing to note that, of the ten highest ranked items, four came from the "university and college practices" portion of the survey, three came from the "individual considerations" portion of the survey, and three came from the "departmental life" portion of the survey.

Table 4
Most Important Influences on Faculty Careers
(on a five-point scale where 1 = low and 5 = high)

| Survey Item | Mean |
|---|------|
| 1. Quality of library facilities | 4.66 |
| 2. Professional autonomy (courses, research projects, service...) | 4.65 |
| 3 (tie). University's commitment to your department or discipline | 4.63 |
| 3 (tie). Support of department head for your continuing professional growth | 4.63 |
| 3 (tie). Fairness of review processes for annual merit increases | 4.63 |

| | |
|---|------|
| 6 (tie). Availability of time for research/scholarship, relative to other demands | 4.62 |
| 6 (tie). Cultural and social opportunities in the Twin Cities community | 4.62 |
| 8. An academically strong department (re: disciplinary peers) | 4.60 |
| 9. University's commitment to your area of research | 4.58 |
| 10. Respect and cooperation among colleagues | 4.56 |

Table 5 presents the ten factors respondents identified as the least important influences on their faculty careers at the university: (1) opportunities to participate in university governance; (2) availability of time for internal university, college, and departmental service, relative to other demands; (3) flexibility to engage in consulting; (4) opportunities to participate in college governance; (5) tuition support for their family and themselves; (6) availability of time for external service and outreach, relative to other demands; (7) formal recognition (such as university and college awards); (8) support for diversity (i.e., ethnic, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation); (9) their advising assignments; and (10) their internal service assignments. It is noteworthy that even the lowest ranked item received an importance score near the middle of the five-point scale. Also noteworthy is the fact that, of the ten items listed, seven came from the “individual considerations” portion of the survey and three from the “university and college practices” portion of the survey. None came from the “departmental life” or “local community life” portions of the survey.

Table 5
Least Important Influences on Faculty Careers
(on a five-point scale where 1 = low and 5 = high)

| Survey Item | Mean |
|---|------|
| 1. Opportunities to participate in university governance | 2.78 |
| 2. Availability of time for internal university, college, and departmental service, relative to other demands | 2.98 |
| 3. Flexibility to engage in consulting | 3.08 |
| 4. Opportunities to participate in college governance | 3.13 |
| 5. Tuition support for your family and you | 3.21 |
| 6. Availability of time for external service and outreach, relative to other demands | 3.24 |
| 7. Formal recognition (such as university and college awards) | 3.34 |
| 8. Support for diversity (ethnic, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, ...) | 3.44 |
| 9. Your advising assignments | 3.50 |
| 10. Your internal service assignments | 3.50 |

Table 6 presents the ten factors respondents identified as the most satisfying influences on their faculty careers at the university: (1) cultural and social opportunities in the Twin Cities community; (2) availability of health services in the Twin Cities; (3) employee benefits for healthcare, disability/life insurance, and retirement; (4) professional autonomy (courses, research projects, service); (5) availability of K-12 schools in the Twin Cities; (6) cost of living in the Twin Cities; (7) spousal/partner employment opportunities in the Twin Cities; (8) quality of library facilities; (9) tolerance and encouragement of ethnic and cultural diversity in the Twin Cities; and (10) course teaching assignments. Of the ten items listed, six came from the “local community life” portion of the survey, three came from the “individual

considerations” portion of the survey, and one came from the “university and college practices” portion of the survey. None came from the “departmental life” portion of the survey.

Table 6

Most Satisfying Influences on Faculty Careers
(on a five-point scale where 1 = low and 5 = high)

| Survey Item | Mean |
|--|------|
| 1. Cultural and social opportunities in the Twin Cities community | 4.44 |
| 2. Availability of health services in the Twin Cities | 4.42 |
| 3. Employee benefits for healthcare, disability/life insurance, and retirement | 4.23 |
| 4. Professional autonomy (courses, research projects, service...) | 4.21 |
| 5. Availability of K-12 schools in the Twin Cities | 4.06 |
| 6. Cost of living in the Twin Cities | 4.00 |
| 7. Spousal/partner employment opportunities in the Twin Cities | 3.95 |
| 8. Quality of library facilities | 3.88 |
| 9. Tolerance and encouragement of ethnic and cultural diversity in the Twin Cities | 3.85 |
| 10. Course teaching assignments | 3.69 |

Table 7 presents the ten factors respondents identified as the least satisfying influences on their faculty careers at the university: (1) tuition support for their family and themselves; (2) balanced workload assignments for faculty in their department; (3) sense of collegiality, inclusiveness, and shared decision making; (4) the university’s commitment to their department or discipline; (6) effective departmental leadership; (5) the social climate within the department; (7) their sense of being recognized and rewarded for their teaching and advising; (8) the university’s commitment to their area of research; (9) their sense of being recognized and rewarded for their internal university, college and departmental service; and (10) their annual salary.

Table 7

Least Satisfying Influences on Faculty Careers
(on a five-point scale where 1 = low and 5 = high)

| Survey Item | Mean |
|---|------|
| 1. Tuition support for your family and you | 2.31 |
| 2. Balanced workload assignments for faculty in the department | 2.44 |
| 3. Sense of collegiality, inclusiveness, and shared decision making | 2.47 |
| 4. University’s commitment to your department or discipline | 2.63 |
| 5. Healthy social climate within the department | 2.67 |

| | |
|--|------|
| 6. Effective departmental leadership | 2.70 |
| 7. Sense of being recognized and rewarded for your teaching and advising | 2.72 |
| 8. University's commitment to your area of research | 2.73 |
| 9. Sense of being recognized and rewarded for your internal university, college and departmental service | 2.73 |
| 10. Annual salary | 2.74 |

In Table 7, the break between the three lowest rated items and the others is notable. Beyond the tuition-support item, the second and third rated items came from the “departmental life” portion of the survey. In fact, of the six lowest rated items, four come from that portion of the survey, and one other item, for the university’s commitment to your department or discipline, relates directly to departmental life. Of the ten lowest satisfaction items, four came from the “departmental life” portion of the survey, four from the “individual considerations” portion of the survey, and two from the “university and college policies and practices” portion of the survey. In direct contrast to the most satisfying influences presented in Table 6, none of the least satisfying influences came from the “local community life” portion of the survey.

Discerning Possible Influences on Departure – Three Approaches: Alone, neither the individual importance items nor the individual satisfaction items are fully satisfactory for providing insights into the rationales behind faculty departures. An item may be rated by a respondent as very important, but importance data without satisfaction data do not necessarily indicate a problem. Similarly, an item may be rated a source of strong dissatisfaction, but without importance data, it is impossible to discern if the factor might be a significant factor in departures. With this in mind, we developed three ways to explore the factors possibly behind faculty departures.

The importance/satisfaction gap. The first approach used the importance and satisfaction data jointly. Together, the importance and satisfaction data may help reveal the underlying dynamics in faculty departures. Because most of our respondents were patient enough to give us both kinds information for most of the items, we have a window into their reasoning in leaving the university. Accordingly, for each survey item, we constructed a new indicator subtracting the sample’s mean satisfaction rating from the sample’s mean importance rating. This new indicator, which we term the importance/satisfaction gap, is high when satisfaction levels on our five-point scale fall well short of importance levels on the same scale. Thus, items with large gaps are those for which the university experience was especially lacking for our respondents.^[9]

The data presented in Table 8 are for respondents who filled in *both* the importance and satisfaction items associated with a particular domain.^[10] The items with the ten largest gaps between respondents’ importance and satisfaction ratings were: (1) sense of collegiality, inclusiveness, and shared decision making; (2) the university’s commitment to their department or discipline; (3) balanced workload assignments for faculty in the department; (4) the university’s commitment to their area of research; (5) effective departmental leadership; (6) healthy social climate within the department; (7) availability of time for research/scholarship, relative to other demands; (8) effective departmental management; (9) their annual salary; and (10) fairness of review processes for annual merit increases.

Table 8
Largest Gaps between Importance and Satisfaction for Influences on Faculty Careers

| Survey Item | Importance/ Satisfaction Gap |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Sense of collegiality, | |

| | |
|---|------|
| inclusiveness, and shared decision making | 2.07 |
| 2. University's commitment to your department or discipline | 2.00 |
| 3. Balanced workload assignments for faculty in the department | 1.91 |
| 4. University's commitment to your area of research | 1.80 |
| 5. Effective departmental leadership | 1.79 |
| 6. Healthy social climate within the department | 1.72 |
| 7. Availability of time for research/scholarship, relative to other demands | 1.71 |
| 8. Effective departmental management | 1.67 |
| 9. Your annual salary | 1.66 |
| 10. Fairness of review processes for annual merit increases | 1.58 |

Note: Scores = Mean Importance Rating minus Mean Satisfaction Rating

Once again, the distribution of items across the portions of the survey is interesting. Of the ten items with the highest gap, six came from the “departmental life” portion of the survey, two from the “individual considerations” portion of the survey, and two from the “university and college policies and practices” portion of the survey. None came from the “local community life” portion of the survey. Two of the top three items are from the departmental section of the survey, and the third, for the university’s commitment to the department or discipline is closely related. . Further, four of the ten items directly relate to leadership/management at the department level. These results strengthen the interpretation from earlier analyses that the department is the focus of the discontent of the university’s departed faculty

Next, we analyzed overall importance and satisfaction scores, and the gaps between them, by areas of concern. That is, we collapsed the items into mean scales for each of the four areas of faculty life examined in the survey: individual considerations, departmental life, university and college policies and practices, and local community life. For consistency and conservatism, only those respondents who had no missing data on any satisfaction or importance item were included in this analysis (n=24). Table 9 presents the results. Regarding importance, the department items were ranked most important on the five-point scale, followed by community life and individual and university/college factors. Regarding satisfaction, community life was easily the most satisfying area for respondents, with the other domains a full scale point behind and clustered just above the mid-point (i.e., three) of the satisfaction scale. Translating these data into gaps brings us once again to the conclusion that it is the departmental factors that seem critical to our departed faculty. By far, the gap between importance and satisfaction was greatest for departmental factors. Well behind and closely bunched were individual factors and university and college policies and practices. Community life, in contrast, was a source of no apparent disjunction between importance and satisfaction.

Table 9
Mean Importance, Satisfaction, and Gap Scores for Items by Area of Concern:
Individual, Departmental, University/College, and Community

| Survey Item Area | Importance Mean | Satisfaction Mean | Gap Mean |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|----------|
| 1. Individual Considerations | 3.97 | 3.20 | .77 |
| 2. Departmental Life | 4.38 | 3.06 | 1.32 |
| 3. University and College Policies and Practices | 3.92 | 3.08 | .84 |
| 4. Local Community Life | 4.14 | 4.22 | -.08 |

Correlations with stated overall satisfaction. A second way to examine the relative weights of factors potentially influencing departure is to examine the associations between satisfaction factors and stated overall satisfaction. Not surprisingly, all individual satisfaction items had positive correlations with stated overall satisfaction, and some were quite strong. Table 10 reports the highest Pearson bivariate correlations between the individual satisfaction items and Question 58, for overall satisfaction. Each of the correlations presented is significant at the $p \leq .01$ level.

Table 10
Largest Bivariate Correlations with Stated Overall Satisfaction at the U of Mn

| Survey Item | r |
|---|-----|
| 1. Effective departmental management | .74 |
| 2. Respect and cooperation among colleagues | .68 |
| 3. Your sense of being recognized and rewarded for your research | .67 |
| 4. Effective departmental leadership | .66 |
| 5. Healthy social climate within the department | .65 |
| 6. Sense of collegiality, inclusiveness, and shared decision making | .60 |
| 7 (tie). Your sense of being recognized and rewarded for your teaching and advising | .58 |
| 7 (tie). Mentoring of junior faculty | .58 |
| 7 (tie). An academically strong department (re disciplinary peers) | .58 |
| 10 (tie). Availability of time for research/scholarship, relative to other demands | .56 |
| 10 (tie). Your internal service assignments | .56 |

The list of strongest correlations contains eleven items in all, because of ties. Of those eleven, four come from the “individual considerations” area of the survey and seven come from the “departmental life” portion of the survey. None come from the university/college or community portions of the survey. This pattern continues further down the ranks of correlations: six more items have correlations over .50, and of that group, four come from the departmental portion of the survey and two the individual portion of the survey.

To explore this pattern further, we next used multiple regression to examine further these correlational data for the

satisfaction items. Specifically, we undertook stepwise regression with entry criteria set at $p \leq .05$ and exit criteria set at $p \leq .10$. This approach suffered from a high degree of multicollinearity among the independent variables as well as from the small sample and notable level of missing data.^[11] Nonetheless, the results confirmed inferences from the bivariate data. Not surprisingly, individual and departmental factors comprised six of the seven significant predictors in the final equation, with the only other factor entering being “availability of K-12 schools in the Twin Cities,” from the community portion of the survey. Overall, the final regression model explained 85 percent of the variance in overall satisfaction.^[12]

Open-ended statements of influences on departure. A third way to examine the relative weights of factors potentially influencing departure is simply to pose the question in more open-ended fashion. Question 55 on the survey asked each former faculty member to list the three most important influences on their individual decisions to leave the University of Minnesota. Faculty could use items from the survey or insert their own answers in a blank line. Four of the survey respondents chose not to answer this question, 11 respondents listed only one influence, three respondents listed two influences, 18 respondents listed three influences, and seven respondents listed four influences. Clearly, the open-ended opportunity given for this item, and the varied response possibilities, make these data imperfect, but they are instructive. Table 11 presents a list of the influences that were listed more than once. The top three influences on decisions to leave the university, as stated by individual departing faculty members, were (1) administrative problems, (2) annual salary, and (3) moving closer to family/extended family. The first and third of these were a set of open-ended responses we judged similar enough to be grouped. Other listed items follow patterns present in the earlier tables. The first and third of these items were mentioned in open-ended responses, suggesting these domains should have been more fully addressed in the formal questionnaire items. In general, responses to this item parallel the probably more reliable responses from importance and satisfaction items examined earlier, but the Question 55 data do suggest directions for future iterations of exit surveys and analyses.

Table 11
Influences Most Important to Decisions to Leave the University of Minnesota

| Stated Primary Influences on Decision to Leave the U of Mn | # of Responses |
|---|-------------------|
| Administrative problems | 9 |
| Your annual salary | 7 |
| Move closer to family/extended family | 6 |
| Respect and cooperation among colleagues | 5 |
| The university's commitment to your area of research | 5 |
| The university's commitment to your department or discipline | 5 |
| Support for research and scholarship that crosses departmental boundaries | 5 |
| Institutional support for graduate students | 4 |
| Your sense of being recognized and rewarded for your research | 4 |
| Effective departmental management | 4 |
| Your sense of being recognized and rewarded for your teaching and advising | 3 |
| Support of department head for your continuing professional growth | 3 |
| Balanced workload assignments for faculty in the department | 3 |
| Fairness of review processes for annual merit increases | 3 |
| An academically strong department (re: disciplinary peers) | 3 |
| Healthy social climate within the department | 3 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Support staff for teaching and research administration | 3 |
| Simple need for change | 3 |
| Great job offer somewhere else | 3 |
| Sense of collegiality, inclusiveness, and shared decision making | 2 |
| Spouse's job | 2 |

Summary Analysis

The consistent differences in the frequencies of high or low responses from particular areas of the survey led us to summarize the extreme importance and satisfaction scores by areas of concern: individual, departmental, university/college, and community. The data for Table 12 are from the earlier tables of this report. What emerges here is the centrality of academic departments in departures: these are the areas of least satisfaction, greatest gaps between importance and satisfaction, and greatest correlations with overall satisfaction scores in this sample of faculty who have left the university. In contrast, community life is an area of great satisfaction but does not seem critical in reasons for departure. Individual and university/college areas are between these two extremes in their centrality to the results. Of course, these data are not perfect guides to policy, because they rely so heavily on the selection, placement into areas, and phrasings of the particular items in the survey. Still, the consistency of the message regarding departments merits attention.

Table 12

Number of Extreme Responses for Various Items, by Area of Concern:
Individual, Departmental, University/College, and Community

| Survey Item Area | Ten Items of Most Impt. | Ten Items of Least Impt. | Ten Items w/ Most Sat. | Ten Items w/ Least Sat. | Ten Items w/ Greatest Impt./Sat. Gaps | Ten Items w/ Greatest r's with Overall Sat.* |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Individual Considerations | 3 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| 2. Departmental Life | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 7 |
| 3. University and College Policies and Practices | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| 4. Local Community Life | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

*Note: Eleven ranks are presented because of a tie for tenth-strongest correlation.

These results strengthen the interpretation from earlier analyses that the department is the focus of the discontent of the university's departed faculty

Conclusions

The findings of this analysis must, of course, be viewed very cautiously. Only tenured or tenure-track faculty leaving for tenured or tenure-track positions elsewhere were in the sample. There is no simple way to discern in these data which faculty among those leaving the institution were most valued and productive and which faculty were encouraged to leave the university and perhaps were better suited for positions at other institutions. Analysis of the most productive faculty leaving the university would be more useful than aggregate analysis across all departing faculty. One major college chose not to provide forwarding information for its departed faculty. The survey was sent as much as six months to three years after departure, rather than simultaneously with departure. Only faculty from the Twin Cities campus were included, so no generalizations to other campuses of the University of Minnesota are warranted. The small size of the sample precluded separate analyses for significant subgroups (e.g., faculty of color, faculty from individual colleges). The sample was too small for intensive multivariate analysis, so descriptive data and simple correlations drive the conclusions, without adequate controls for confounding factors. Thus, causation cannot be inferred from the data presented here. Finally, although every effort was made to increase the validity and reliability of the responses, there is no assurance that individuals' responses reflected accurately the full reasons for their departures. For all of these reasons, the findings do not lead definitively to recommendations for administrative actions at either the unit or the central levels.

Nevertheless, there is much here of interest:

- Although there is very little published research on faculty departures in higher education, many institutions (including Penn State, Michigan State, and Iowa) conduct regular exit interviews or surveys of their departing faculty, and well-established models exist for these efforts.
- Given the opportunity, former University of Minnesota, Twin Cities faculty will respond to requests that they provide information on the circumstances of their departures.
- Departing University of Minnesota, Twin Cities faculty for the period 1997 to 2000 reported mean overall satisfaction scores just above "moderately satisfied."
- Individual considerations, such as salary and course assignments, were of moderate importance and satisfaction to departing faculty.
- Departmental factors, such as the perceived social climate, management effectiveness, and sense of collegiality in the unit, were very important to departing faculty and were the greatest source of dissatisfaction among respondents.
- University and college policies and practices, such as the perceived commitment to disciplinary and interdisciplinary areas, were very important to departing faculty, but had only moderate associations with faculty satisfaction levels, and the university/college items that did have such associations were those most connected to individual departments and disciplines.
- Departing faculty were very satisfied with community life in the Twin Cities and these factors did not seem to be critical in decisions to depart.
- A majority of departed faculty reported having received a retention offer from the university before leaving the institution.

The findings here concerning the centrality of the department echo the literature on the characteristics of highly research-productive departments. That literature uses such factors as grants, books, articles, and patents as outcome measures and explores associations of such outcomes with various contextual characteristics. In general, three types of contextual characteristics appear associated with research productivity: individual (e.g., research skills and time), organizational (e.g., positive climate and adequate rewards), and leadership (e.g., supportive department head and participative decision making). While the individual characteristics are essential, they are insufficient. Especially with established faculty, organizational and leadership characteristics are the most powerful predictors of research productivity and satisfaction (e.g., see Clark and Lewis, 1985; Burke, 1991; Fairweather, 1996; Bland and Bergquist, 1997).

The analysis here was exploratory, and many quite significant limitations apply. Nevertheless, the early evidence presented here can ideally help guide further investigations of ways the university can do a better job in retaining its most valued faculty.

References

Bland, C. J. and Bergquist, W. H. (1997). The vitality of senior faculty members: Snow on the roof, fire in the furnace. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, Volume 25, Number 7. Washington, DC: George Washington University.

Burke, D. L. (1991). Faculty mobility in an organizational context. In J. C. Smart (Ed.), Higher education: Handbook of theory and research, Vol. VII. New York: Agathon Press.

Clark, S. M. and Lewis, D. R. (1985). Faculty vitality and institutional productivity: critical perspectives for higher education. New York: Teachers College Press.

Doty, J. (1999, Spring/Summer). Exit interviews: State of the practice. Journal of the College and University Personnel Association, 50, (1/2): 9-12.

Dworak, L. L. (1983, Winter). The exit interview - A lasting impression. Journal of the College and University Personnel Association, 34, (4): 26-28.

Fairweather, J. S. (1996). Faculty work and public trust: Restoring the value of teaching and public service in American academic life. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Finnegan, D. E., Webster, D., and Gamson, Z. (Eds.). (1996). Faculty and faculty issues in colleges and universities. Second Edition. Needham Heights, MA: Simon and Schuster.

Garretson, P. and Teel, K. S. (1982). The exit interview: Effective tool or meaningless gesture? Personnel, 59, (40): 70-77.

Giacalone, R. A., Knouse, S. B., and Montagliani, A. (1997). Motivation for and prevention of honest responding in exit interviews and surveys. Journal of Psychology, 131, (4): 438-448.

Harris, C. L. (1979, January). The exit interview. National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, 63, (423): 112-115.

Hellweg, S. A. (1981, Spring). The exit interview: A potential management tool for university administrators. Journal of the College and University Personnel Association, 32, (1): 37-38.

Hellweg, S. A. & Phillips, S. L. (1981, May). An examination of current exit interviewing practices in major American corporations (Report No. CS-503-407). San Diego, California: Department of Speech Communication, San Diego State University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 203 406).

Hendel, D. (1999). The 1997 Faculty and Staff Climate Survey: Faculty and Staff Reflect on Their Employment at the University of Minnesota. Report of the Office of Institutional Research and Reporting, University of Minnesota, June. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

Hinrichs, J. R. (1975). Measurement of reasons for resignation of professionals: Questionnaire versus company and consultant exit interviews. Journal of Applied Psychology, 60, (4): 530-532.

Nelson, E. S. and Johnson, K. A. (1997). A senior exit survey and its implications for advising and related services. Teaching of Psychology, 24, (2): 101-105.

Sax, L., Astin, A., Arredondo, M., & Korn, W. (1996). The American college teacher: National norms for the 1995-96 HERI Faculty Survey. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA, September.

Appendix 1

Cover Letter Sent to Faculty Who Departed for Other Institutions, 1997-2000

May 7, 2001

Name
Address
College
City & State

Dear _____:

Greetings from Minnesota! We write to ask you to complete the attached Faculty Exit Survey. We are collecting information from former University of Minnesota faculty members who left voluntarily within the past three years for reasons other than retirement. This survey is one activity of a larger task force initiative, co-sponsored by the University Senate and the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Personnel, intending to examine the characteristics of successful and productive departments at Minnesota. The anticipated outcome of the task force's work is to better understand and implement practices within our departments that support productive faculty work. Your responses will provide one source of information about how well this institution has met the needs of faculty who have spent time here and then moved on. A final copy of the task force report, including a summary of information from this Exit Survey, will be available during Fall 2001.

Your information will be reported only as part of an aggregated data analysis and none of your responses or comments will be attributed to you as an individual. We have designed this survey to be completed within 30 minutes and hope that you will return it to us within the next two weeks. Please return it in the enclosed, stamped envelope. If you should have any questions about this survey, please call Carol Carrier at (612) 624-4515.

Thanks for your willingness to provide this information.

Regards,

Carole Bland, Chair
Faculty Development Task Force

Carol Carrier
Vice President for Human Resources

CB/CAC/lrb

attachment

Appendix 2

Survey Sent to Faculty Who Departed for Other Institutions, 1997-2000

Insert survey page 1 here

Appendix 2

Survey Sent to Faculty Who Departed for Other Institutions, 1997-2000 (cont.)

Insert survey page 2 here

Bland/senate/facdevgrp/productivity manual/chapters ready for 5-24 mtg/appendicies/Exit Survey Final Report 011213 Hearn

- [1] Information provided by Carol Carrier, the University's Vice President for Human Resources.
- [2] Copies of the Michigan State and Penn State exit surveys are available to those interested. Please contact Carol Carrier if interested.
- [3] Especially when compared to the literature on other higher-education practice areas (e.g., student testing and measurement). In this light, it is revealing that the only recent articles we found on exit surveys in higher education focused on obtaining the perceptions of an institution's graduating seniors (Nelson and Johnson, 1997).
- [4] This last resource was graciously provided us by officials at that institution, and we gratefully acknowledge that assistance.
- [5] One college (the College of Liberal Arts) chose not to participate in this aspect of the project. We included departed faculty from that unit, but had less information on their next career destinations and thus were less successful in obtaining responses from that group.
- [6] Although case data in the sample could be statistically weighted to produce more accurate estimates of response tendencies across the entire university, the number of cases in the sample is small and the resulting weighted means would be based on heavy weightings of small numbers of cases for significant units (e.g., the Institute of Technology).
- [7] The size of this study's sample precludes an in-depth examination of the responses of sample subgroups. There were no statistically significant subgroup differences for any of the analyses conducted for this report.
- [8] E.g., some faculty may accept external offers and make it clear at that time that a retention offer from the university would not make a difference. The indicator here is also not ideal, as it would be best to construct a formal definition of a retention offer and obtain more than self-reported evidence that such an offer was made.
- [9] Another way to approach this would be norm means for satisfaction items to zero, calculate a difference score for the difference of an item's means from the overall sample satisfaction mean across items (producing negative scores for items under that mean), then multiply the new difference score by the item's importance weighting. The resulting scores would constitute a new weighted satisfaction indicator ranging from the negative to the positive range. Items with the lowest scores would be, at least in concept, those with the highest potential for influence on overall faculty dissatisfaction. That is, they would represent areas of both substantial importance and substantial dissatisfaction.
- [10] As such, these mean differences will be slightly different from those that could be extrapolated from the differences for importance and satisfaction means for the same items provided in the preceding tables, because the earlier tables deleted only those with missing data on that particular item. For example, someone who gave an importance score for the "university's commitment to your department or discipline" but did not give a satisfaction score for that domain would be included in the earlier tables but not in this one.
- [11] Because of the small sample, we employed mean substitution for missing values rather than listwise deletion.
- [12] This is the adjusted R-square for the equation.