In early 2007, the Faculty Senate asked the Office of Institutional Assessment and Studies (IAS) to administer a survey to the full faculty to address a topic of high priority: faculty welfare, recruitment, and retention. The survey solicited feedback and opinion on a range of factors thought to affect faculty satisfaction and well-being. This report provides highlights of the survey results.

Since its founding in 1988, the University Assessment Program, later merged with the Office of Institutional Planning and Studies to form IAS, has designed dozens of questionnaires and surveyed hundreds of thousands of University faculty, students, and alumni. Currently, IAS administers a number of institutional surveys such as the National Survey of Student Engagement, undergraduate and graduate student surveys, alumni and faculty surveys. Also, a limited number of more focused surveys are administered for various academic and administrative offices, such as a survey about the honor system. The ultimate purpose of these surveys has been constant—to improve the educational environment at the University. For more information, or to view results from a past survey, go to http://www.web.virginia.edu/ias/surveys/surveys.htm.

Faculty Senate Survey Illuminates Commonality, Diversity of Opinion

How we recruit, retain, and nurture promising, distinguished and diverse faculty represents a serious challenge that interests many on the Senate and throughout the university as a whole. This is clearly a priority for the Board and the University administration, and we are pleased to be active partners in this enterprise.

“UVa is collegial,” agreed over three-quarters (78%) of the faculty. Digging a little deeper, the survey asked about the academic environment within departments. While 78 percent agreed that their department is collegial, declining percentages agreed that their service (74%), teaching (72%), research (69%), and participation in department governance (61%) are valued. In fact, 20 percent of faculty disagreed that their participation in department governance is valued and encouraged.

The survey asked about various aspects of the departmental academic community, such as department reputation, graduate and undergraduate students, opportunities for intellectual exchange, mentoring and promoting faculty, and support for public service fundamental parts of the student experience.

University Reaffirmed by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

On December 10, 2007, the University was informed of its ten-year reaffirmation by the SACS Commission on Colleges. Thank you to all who worked to make this possible and who continue to use assessment to improve student learning.

In five years, the University will report to SACS on the Quality Enhancement Plan, which seeks to enhance student-faculty engagement by making research and thoughtful public service fundamental parts of the student experience.
the department. Faculty members expressed the most satisfaction with undergraduate students (81% satisfied), departmental faculty (77% satisfied), and faculty in their school (77% satisfied). They reported the least satisfaction with diversity of faculty (43% satisfied, 28% dissatisfied), efforts to retain valued faculty (41% satisfied, 35% dissatisfied), and support for one’s discipline within the University (41% satisfied, 36% dissatisfied). More men (61%) were satisfied with the fairness of the review and promotion process than were women (49%).

**Perceptions of the Charlottesville Community**

Which aspects of the Charlottesville community were most important to the faculty’s overall job satisfaction and long-term retention?

Most important were: cost of living (85%), cost of housing (84%), range of socio-cultural amenities (84%), quality of public schools (82%), and range of recreational opportunities (80%). Least important were eldercare facilities (44%), city transportation (37%), and quality of private schools (33%).

Minority faculty members were more likely than non-minorities to cite as “very important” the cost of living (56% vs. 43%), range of socio-cultural amenities (50% vs. 40%), cost of living (49% vs. 42%), and proximity to major metropolitan centers (34% vs. 17%).

Women were more likely than men to cite as “very important” the availability of childcare facilities (37% vs. 21%), cost of living (49% vs. 39%), and cost of housing (50% vs. 42%).

**Perceptions of Personnel Benefits**

How satisfied is the faculty with current personnel benefits, and what additional benefits would contribute to their wellbeing and long-term retention?

**Current Benefits:** Faculty members expressed the most satisfaction with 403(b) savings programs (85%), retirement programs (78%), and 403(b) retirement plans (73%).

They were least satisfied with the vision plan (31% dissatisfied / 39% satisfied), their salary (30% dissatisfied / 52% satisfied), and pre-tax parking (28% dissatisfied / 47% satisfied).

**Potential Benefits:** Faculty members gave the highest rankings to tuition benefits for children (56%), subsidized parking (40%), and subsidized fitness/wellness programs (36%). Tuition benefits for children were a more important priority for men (64% ranked it 1st) than for women (44%).

**Faculty Priorities for Change**

Faculty members were asked to rank the top three items in each of three areas—administrative support/infrastructure, research support/infrastructure, and teaching support/infrastructure—according to which items would most enhance their own effectiveness. The percentages reflect those who ranked the item 1st, 2nd, or 3rd (see table).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Priorities for Change</th>
<th>Ranked 1st, 2nd or 3rd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative support</td>
<td><strong>Transparent administrative policies</strong> 49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Streamlined administrative procedures</strong> 47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Facility improvements</strong> 45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research support</td>
<td><strong>Additional support for:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel to meetings and conferences in the US and abroad 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate students 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interdisciplinary research collaboration on Grounds 28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching support</td>
<td><strong>Additional financial resources for teaching and course development</strong> 56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Additional support for teaching assistants</strong> 39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Renovation of existing classrooms</strong> 34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women were more likely than men to include “transparent administrative policies” among the top three administrative priorities than were men (55% vs. 45%), and also were more likely to rank “enhanced diversity, including minorities and women” as a high priority than men were (35% vs. 21%).

**Perceptions of Diversity**

“UVa is a diverse community.” Half of all respondents (52%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, but only 40 percent of minority faculty did so. Fully 28 percent of all faculty, 41 percent of minority faculty, and 37 percent of women faculty disagreed or strongly disagreed that UVa is a diverse community.

While the survey did not have a section devoted exclusively to diversity, the issue was explored throughout the survey. In general, women and minority faculty were more interested in diversity and less satisfied with progress in enhancing diversity:

- **Diversity of faculty:** minority faculty members were more likely to be dissatisfied (41%) than non-minorities (26%), and women more (35%) than men (23%).
- **Non-discrimination efforts of their department or school:** minority faculty members (52%) were less likely to be satisfied than non-minority faculty members (65%).
- **Diversity of Charlottesville community:** more women (81%) than men (66%), and more minority (86%) than non-minority (71%) faculty members rated community diversity as important.
- **Enhancing diversity, including minorities and women, as a first priority:** while approximately one-quarter of all respondents ranked “enhancing diversity” as a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd priority, one-third of women and over half of minorities felt that enhancing diversity would enhance their effectiveness in both teaching and research.

**Conclusion**

This summary barely scratches the surface of the information available from this survey. Even so, it is clear that on some matters, the faculty finds much common ground (UVa may be collegial and some benefits are greatly appreciated, but the cost of living and cost of housing in Charlottesville are important issues.). On many other matters, there is some variability in response, and that variability is likely be affected by gender, minority status, faculty rank, and school/department. In soliciting the faculty’s point of view, the Committee has taken an important step forward in identifying the vital issues that affect faculty welfare, recruitment, and retention.