



FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT, INSTITUTION, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Insights from the 2023
HERI Faculty Survey

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The UCLA School of Education and Information Studies (UCLA Ed&IS) and the American Council on Education (ACE) are in partnership to strengthen and lead the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). HERI is the longest-running, most comprehensive data collection of institutes of higher education, including data on more than 1,900 institutions, over 15 million students, and more than 500,000 faculty. CRESST, a research and development center within UCLA Ed&IS and the administrative home for HERI, partners with ACE in carrying out HERI's portfolio. Through this partnership, ACE and UCLA Ed&IS will elevate and expand HERI's research and reach through ACE's extensive capacity and expertise in faculty and presidential-level data collection and research and CRESST's knowledge and expertise in assessment and methodology. ACE and CRESST are collaborating on data sharing, research design and development, and supporting higher education institutions' leadership and the students they serve. For more information on the partnership, see the [partnership announcement](#).



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Introduction

The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey is designed to provide institutions with actionable information on important and timely issues. It includes topics such as pedagogical practices, faculty goals and expectations for students, research and service activities, sources of stress and satisfaction, and the connection between learning in the classroom and practices in the local and global community.¹

The survey is normally administered every three years. The 2023 HERI Faculty Survey was conducted from September 2022 to April 2023. Data from the 2023 survey offer useful insights into faculty experiences, especially given their essential role in the primary teaching and learning mission of higher education institutions.



72
institutions²



28
states³



15,355
faculty⁴

This brief highlights differences in faculty perceptions of their student-facing roles—including teaching and course delivery, student engagement, and engagement external to the classroom—to contribute to faculty recruitment, retention, and development; support strategic planning; and connect pedagogy to student learning experiences. Where it makes sense to do so, data are analyzed by respondents' academic rank, tenure status, full-time or part-time status, and institutional control.

84%
were full-time
faculty

36%
were not on the
tenure track, but
their institution had
a tenure system

52%
received their
first academic
appointment
after 2010

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- 1 This information was provided by HERI as a brief descriptor of the HERI Faculty Survey. To learn more, visit <https://heri.ucla.edu/heri-faculty-survey/>.
 - 2 The 72 institutions included 17 universities and 55 four-year colleges. There were no community colleges represented in the sample. Of the institutions within the sample, 14 were public institutions and 58 were private.
 - 3 The 28 states were Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin, as well as the District of Columbia.
 - 4 Data analysis for this brief was based on the 13,638 faculty who completed 10 percent or more of the survey.

The role of faculty expands beyond teaching in the classroom. While most report teaching as a principal activity, most also report that they engaged with students in various formats outside of the classroom. These included mentoring individual students, advising student groups, serving on dissertation committees, and helping to develop future curriculum and course formats. Faculty involvement outside of the classroom setting can benefit student persistence, motivation, and overall success (Hoffman 2014). Administrators can navigate the evolving role of faculty by understanding engagement both inside and outside of the classroom, as well as through professional development.

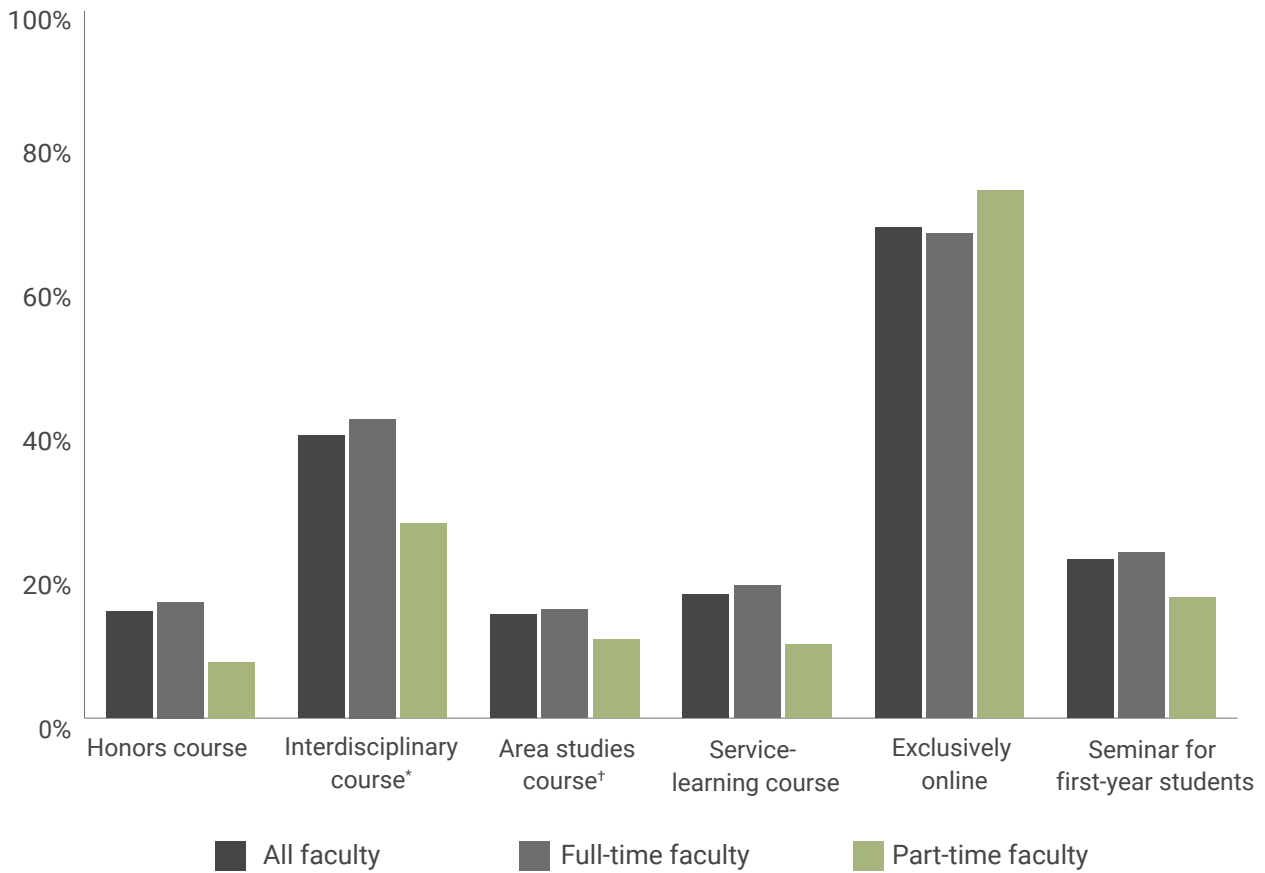
Teaching and Course Delivery

Faculty were asked about their classroom engagement with students, including teaching methods, course types, and course delivery. The role of teaching remained the principal activity for 84 percent of all respondents, including nine out of 10 lecturers (93 percent) and instructors (91 percent). Teaching was also a primary activity for assistant (86 percent) and associate (83 percent) professors. Among assistant professors, nearly six in 10 (59 percent) had taught three or more courses during the term the survey was fielded—the highest percentage of any faculty rank. Over two-thirds of all academic ranks (excluding graduate students who also taught) indicated that they had taught a course exclusively online during the past three years; this was most frequently reported by lecturers (75 percent).

The survey findings also highlighted differences in teaching load and types of courses between part-time and full-time faculty (see figure 1). Four out of every 10 full-time faculty (41 percent) responded that they had taught an interdisciplinary course in the past three years, compared with one-fourth (27 percent) of part-time faculty.⁵ The share of full-time faculty (16 percent) who had taught an honors course was twice that of part-time faculty (8 percent).

5 The term *interdisciplinary courses* may include not only courses that were officially designated as such but also courses that respondents considered to be interdisciplinary.

FIGURE 1. TYPES OF COURSES TAUGHT IN THE PAST THREE YEARS BY FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME FACULTY



*This may include not only courses that were officially designated as such but also courses that respondents considered to be interdisciplinary. | †For example, women’s studies, ethnic studies, or LGBTQ+ studies.

Student Engagement: Students’ Knowledge and Moral Development

Faculty were asked about the extent to which they agreed that it was their role to foster students’ learning, development, and engagement. Among all faculty, nearly all (96 percent) somewhat (24 percent) or strongly agreed (72 percent) that they had played a role in preparing students for employment after college. In comparison, 94 percent somewhat (37 percent) or strongly agreed (57 percent) that they had a role in preparing students for graduate or advanced education. Similarly, more than nine in 10 (95 percent) faculty somewhat (26 percent) or strongly agreed (69 percent) that they had played a role in encouraging respect for different beliefs. An additional 86 percent somewhat (38 percent) or strongly agreed (48 percent) that they had a role in enhancing students’ knowledge of and appreciation for other racial and ethnic groups.

While nearly all faculty surveyed (96 percent) either somewhat (22 percent) or strongly agreed (72 percent) that a racially and ethnically diverse student body enhances the educational experience of all students, only 78 percent either somewhat (44 percent) or strongly agreed (35 percent) that they felt they had the skills to facilitate conversations about diversity issues in the classroom.

Regarding developing students' values and character, 86 percent somewhat (46 percent) or strongly agreed (40 percent) that they had played a role in helping students develop personal values. In comparison, 87 percent somewhat (44 percent) or strongly agreed (43 percent) that they had a role in developing students' moral character. Four in five faculty either somewhat (49 percent) or strongly agreed (31 percent) that they had provided for students' emotional development. Tenured faculty (23 percent) and faculty at public institutions (22 percent) were the highest shares of those who reported that they disagreed to any extent that faculty play a role in providing for students' emotional development.

When considering their role in encouraging students to become agents of social change, 83 percent somewhat (40 percent) or strongly agreed (43 percent) that they had played a role. Tenured faculty (19 percent), part-time faculty (18 percent), and faculty at private institutions (17 percent) were the highest shares of those who reported that they disagreed to any extent that faculty play a role in encouraging students to become agents of social change.

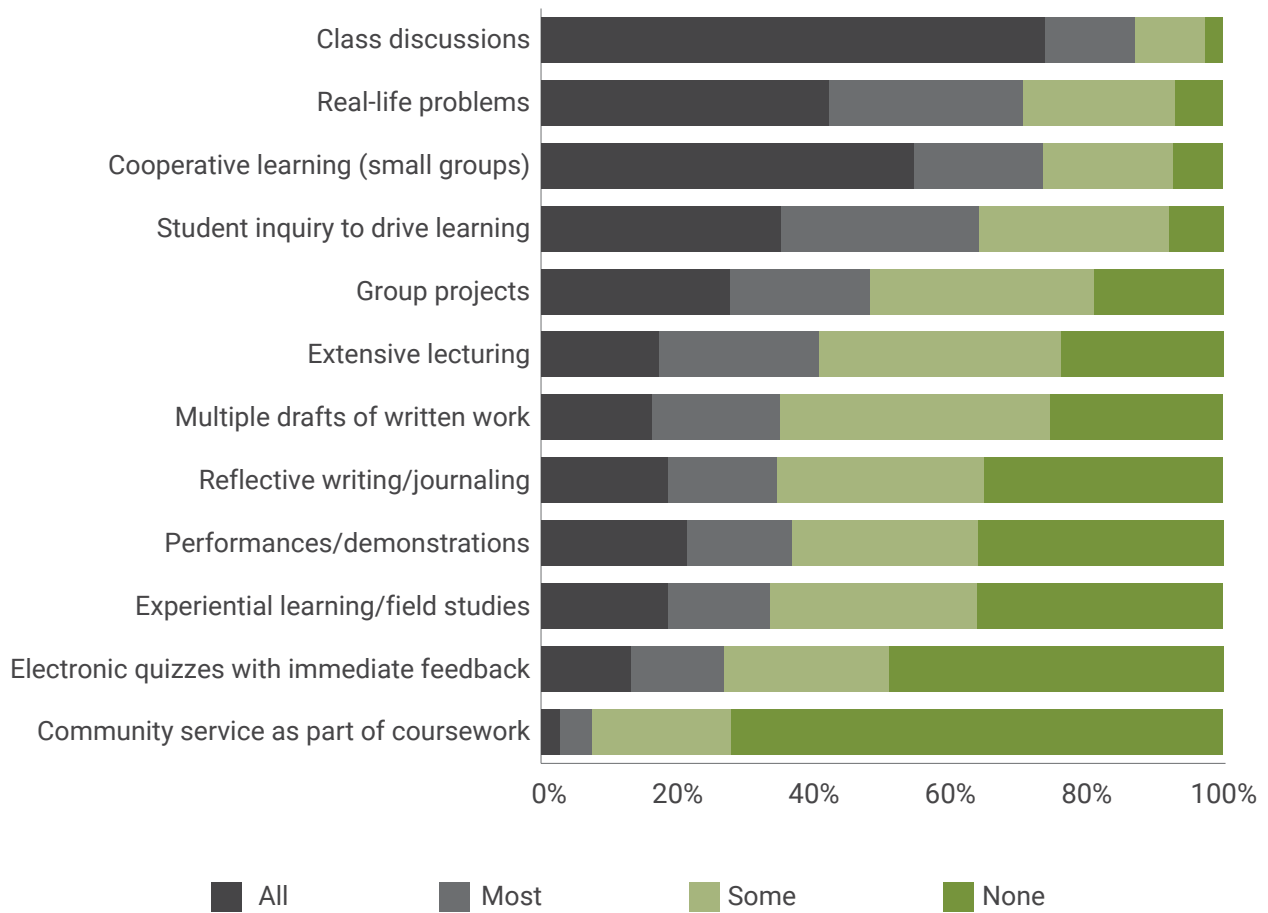
Student Engagement: Classroom Learning and Teaching Methods

Faculty were also asked about the frequency with which they had incorporated various student engagement activities in the classroom over the past year. These items measure how faculty structure their classes to have students be active in the learning process to develop habits related to lifelong learning. Nine in 10 faculty indicated that they frequently (88 percent) or occasionally (5 percent) encouraged undergraduates to ask questions in class. Over 90 percent of faculty reported that they had frequently (72 percent) or occasionally (20 percent) encouraged undergraduate students to accept mistakes as part of the learning process. Nine-tenths of faculty surveyed frequently (59 percent) or occasionally (31 percent) encouraged undergraduate students to seek alternative solutions to a problem. In comparison, nearly three in four frequently (73 percent) or occasionally (18 percent) encouraged students to support their opinions with logical arguments. A substantial share (89 percent) of faculty also reported that they had frequently (64 percent) or occasionally (25 percent) encouraged undergraduates to critically evaluate the quality or reliability of information they had received in the past year.

The survey findings also highlight frequent and occasional faculty encouragement for undergraduate students to analyze multiple sources before concluding (89 percent), explore topics independently even if not required for class (89 percent), and recognize biases that affect their thinking (87 percent). About four in five faculty reported that they had frequently (49 percent) or occasionally (31 percent) encouraged undergraduate students to look up scientific research articles and resources. More than three-fourths (77 percent) of faculty reported that they had encouraged undergraduates to take risks for potential gains, with a little more than one-third (37 percent) of the faculty who frequently did so and 40 percent who occasionally did so.

Faculty were surveyed on their use of various instructional methods across the courses they taught (see figure 2). Three-fourths of faculty (74 percent) reported that they had incorporated class discussions into all of their courses. Cooperative learning—learning in small groups—was used by 55 percent of faculty in all of their courses, while real-life problems were employed by 42 percent of faculty in all of their courses. Over one-third of faculty also reported that they had used student inquiry as a learning driver across all of the courses they taught. More than seven in 10 faculty reported that they had not used community service in their coursework (72 percent) across all of the courses they taught. Just under half (49 percent) of faculty reported that they had not used electronic quizzes with immediate feedback across their courses.

FIGURE 2. USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS



Outside the Classroom

Faculty were also surveyed on their roles and responsibilities outside of the classroom. Half of the faculty reported that they had advised student groups in service or volunteer work during the past three years. More full-time faculty (54 percent) than part-time faculty (29 percent) reported that they had advised students in this capacity. While nine in 10 faculty surveyed either somewhat (39 percent) or strongly agreed (53 percent) that colleges have a responsibility to work with their surrounding communities to address local issues, only 42 percent had collaborated with the local community on research or teaching to address their needs in the past three years.

Student Advising

Faculty provide additional learning and advising opportunities to students outside of the classroom. These efforts include advising or counseling students on enriching their educational journey, such as connecting them to academic resources and helping students to select courses. When asked how many hours per week on average they had spent advising or counseling students, more than 58 percent of faculty reported that they had spent an average of one to four hours per week doing so. An additional 20 percent of faculty had spent an average of five to eight hours per week advising or counseling students. A little more than one in 10 faculty (12 percent) reported that they had not spent any hours per week advising or counseling students, while 9 percent reported that they

had spent nine or more hours per week advising or counseling students. A higher share of full-time faculty (92 percent) than part-time faculty (67 percent) reported that they had spent time each week advising or counseling students.

Among the 55 percent of faculty who indicated that they were advising two or more undergraduates when the survey was fielded, nine in 10 reported that they had frequently (69 percent) or occasionally (25 percent) helped undergraduate students plan their courses of study. The majority (98 percent) of these faculty also indicated that they had frequently (70 percent) or occasionally (28 percent) discussed career and postgraduation goals with the undergraduates they advised. Nine-tenths of these faculty had also frequently (57 percent) or occasionally (38 percent) informed their undergraduate advisees of academic support options, such as study skills advising, financial aid advising, writing center opportunities, or disability resource center assistance. Academic performance was frequently (58 percent) or occasionally (37 percent) discussed with advisees; similarly, faculty frequently (58 percent) or occasionally (37 percent) provided information on other academic opportunities such as study abroad, internships, and undergraduate research.

Mentoring

Faculty were asked to indicate the extent (e.g., very large, large, some, small, or not at all) to which they had mentored undergraduate and graduate students. Among faculty who reported that they had worked with or taught undergraduate students in the past year, more than two-thirds (68 percent) said that they mentored undergraduate students to a large (29 percent) or very large (39 percent) extent. Six in 10 (62 percent) faculty who had worked with or taught graduate students indicated that they had mentored them to a large (28 percent) or very large (35 percent) extent during the past year. Regarding the quality of mentoring relationships, 92 percent of faculty rated their relationships with undergraduate students as good (45 percent) or excellent (47 percent). Mentoring relationships between faculty and graduate students were rated similarly by faculty (91 percent) as good (43 percent) or excellent (48 percent). More full-time faculty rated their mentoring relationships as either good or excellent (93 percent for undergraduate students, 91 percent for graduate students, respectively), compared with ratings made by part-time faculty (84 percent for undergraduate students, 87 percent for graduate students, respectively) (see figures 3 and 4).

FIGURE 3. QUALITY OF MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS—UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

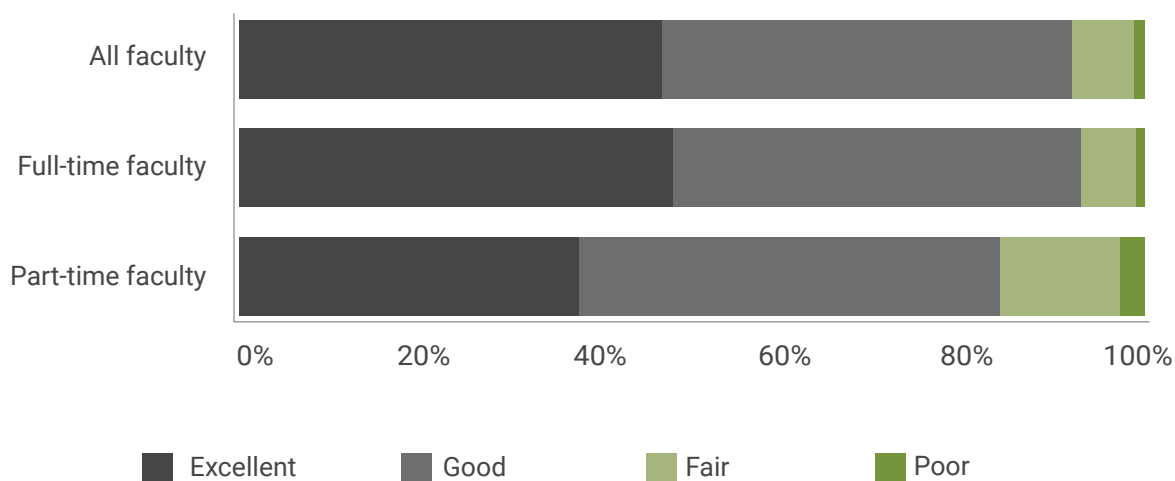
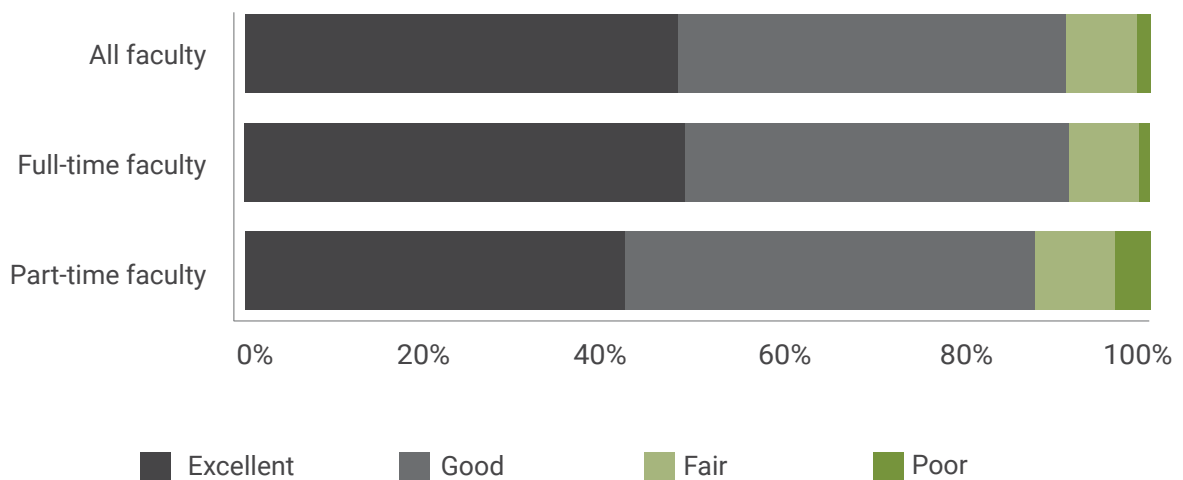


FIGURE 4. QUALITY OF MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS—GRADUATE STUDENTS



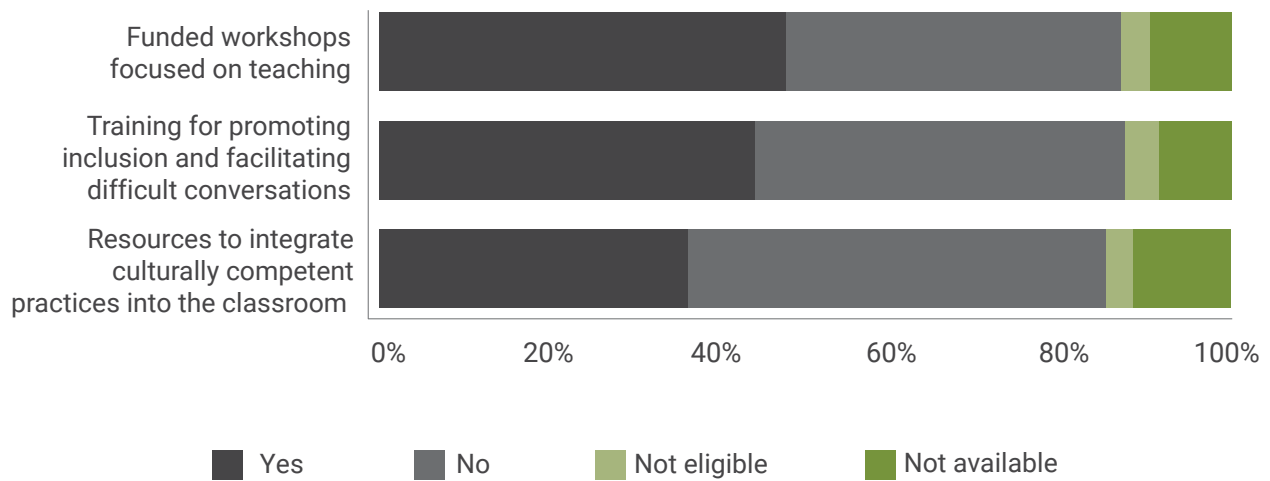
Professional Development

Faculty were surveyed regarding their access to professional development opportunities (see figure 5). Findings on professional development opportunities related to activities that serve students reveal differences in access and availability by academic rank, tenure status, and full- or part-time faculty status. When asked about funded workshops on teaching, 48 percent of faculty reported that they had participated during the survey collection year. More than half of associate and assistant professors (50 percent and 57 percent, respectively) had participated in funded teaching workshops. Only 38 percent of instructors had participated in these professional development opportunities, and instructors (17 percent) were the highest share of those who reported that funded teaching workshops were unavailable to them. Three in five (61 percent) faculty on the tenure track but not yet tenured attended funded workshops on teaching, compared with 45 percent of tenured faculty. Additionally, more full-time faculty (51 percent) than part-time faculty (28 percent) joined these funded workshops.

In training aimed at promoting inclusion and facilitating difficult conversations, 44 percent of faculty had taken advantage of training opportunities provided by their institutions. Fewer than half of associate professors (48 percent), assistant professors (48 percent), and professors (46 percent) participated in these provided trainings during the past year. Nearly three in 10 instructors participated in trainings on promoting inclusion and facilitating difficult conversations, but instructors again had the highest share of those who reported that these opportunities were not available to them (14 percent) or that they were ineligible to participate (13 percent). More full-time faculty participated in these trainings (48 percent) when compared with part-time faculty (22 percent); however, nearly one in five part-time faculty reported that these opportunities were not available to them or they were ineligible to participate (both 19 percent, respectively).

When faculty were asked if they took advantage of resources to integrate culturally competent practices into the classroom during the past year, nearly half (49 percent) of all faculty indicated that they had not yet used available resources. By academic rank, assistant professors (41 percent) were the highest share of those who had used these resources. In comparison, instructors (29 percent) were the lowest share of those who had participated, and instructors also reported being ineligible (10 percent) or that resources weren't available (15 percent). Faculty on the tenure track but not yet tenured (42 percent) were the largest share of those who reported that they had used these resources during the past year, and part-time faculty were more likely to report a lack of availability (20 percent) or eligibility (15 percent) for these resources.

FIGURE 5. USE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES DURING THE PAST YEAR



Considerations for Senior Leaders

Insights from the HERI Faculty Survey underscore the complexity of the roles faculty hold and illuminate the variance across academic rank, faculty type, and institutional control. The following questions can be raised among institution leaders to understand current contexts and assess the impact:

- Faculty and student mentoring relationships are critical to student success, yet they are often undervalued. How does your institution invest in faculty-student mentorship? What strategies do you use to ensure that every faculty member contributes to high-quality mentoring, and how is your institution holding them accountable?
- As teaching and learning modalities evolve, how is your institution seizing opportunities to integrate predictive and generative artificial intelligence into academic, administrative, and research functions? How is your institution investing in enabling faculty to thrive in this new landscape, or how is your institution setting them up for failure?
- With insights that relatively few faculty are participating in professional development opportunities offered by institutions, what is your institution doing to incentivize faculty to engage? Who is excluded from these opportunities on your campus? How will your institution democratize access to professional development so that all those in teaching roles may benefit?

These considerations center student success, faculty development, and responsiveness to learner needs in an ever-changing postsecondary ecosystem. With these insights, the engagement of department chairs, faculty senate, and other campus stakeholders in these discussions can improve institutional agility and the student experience.

As college presidents and senior executives navigate these conversations, it may also be useful to consult these resources:

- *Equity-Minded Faculty Workloads: What We Can and Should Do Now*: This report summarizes findings from the **Faculty Workload and Rewards Project** and makes recommendations for promoting workload equity among faculty.
- *Beyond Classroom Borders: Linking Learning and Work Through Career-Relevant Instruction*: This report explores how college and university faculty, with the support of academic leaders, can use career-relevant instruction to help students increase their employability and readiness for future work and learning.

- *Success & Equity Through Quality Instruction: Bringing Faculty into the Student Success Movement*: This report from the Association of College and University Educators and Sova is a toolkit that covers five key domains—strategy, equity, approach, evaluation, and culture—and offers resources and rubrics to engage faculty and drive change to improve student success.

Reference

Hoffman, Elin Meyers. 2014. "Faculty and Student Relationships: Context Matters." *College Teaching* 62 (1): 13–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/87567555.2013.817379>.

