

LRCFT FACULTY SURVEY RESULTS

By Robert Perrone

Whew, am I glad that's over. After four false starts, we finally got it right on the fifth try, with a little divine intervention (thanks, Phil). Now that the results are in, I will share some preliminary findings with you.

The first order of business is to thank all those who participated in the survey. The response rate was an astounding (in social science terms) 34%. That translates to 785 responses out of 2,314 faculty.

DEFINITIONS

For the statistics-challenged reader (including this writer) a few definitions are in order.

The survey allowed feedback in two formats—a Likert Scale and ranking. A Likert Scale is an ordered, one-dimensional scale from which respondents choose one option that best aligns with their view. There are typically between four and seven options. Five is most common. I use the Likert Scale results as the basis of explanation. For raw or ungrouped data, the mean is the sum of all the sampled values divided by the total number of sampled values. For example, in the graph accompanying this article, of all the respondents to the question of eliminating Type A leaves, the mean response was 4.14, which, on the scale of 1-5 used in the survey, the mean or typical response was somewhere between “support” and “strongly support.”

WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT SURVEYS?

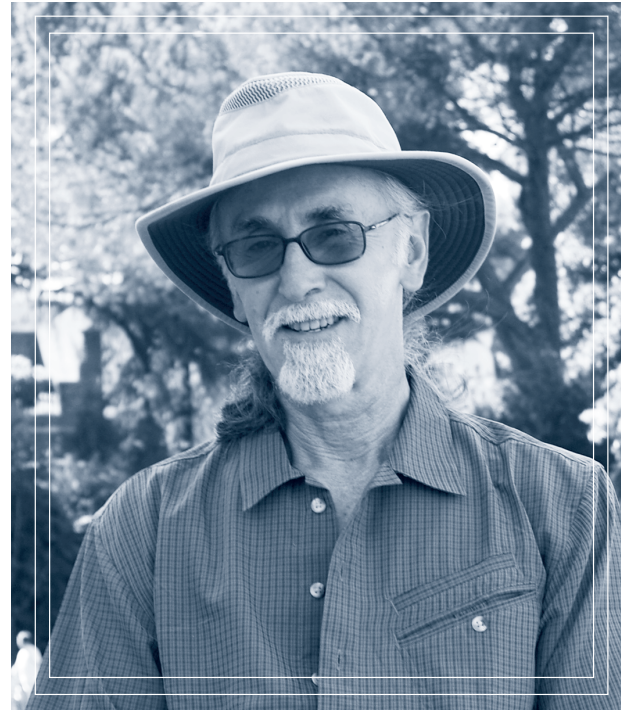
Let me share some lessons we learned. The first lesson is that the easiest method of providing surveys is the one that finally worked—use an already existing Web site or create one for the specific purpose of posting the link to the survey. That would have eliminated all those false starts.

Second, we didn't need two different methods of registering preferences. The first set of options offered in a Likert scale were sufficient to reach valid conclusions based on the confidence level we determined was acceptable.

Third, more of an explanation of the impact of the options would have made for more informed choices.

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Fourth, some people don't seem to understand the concept of shared sacrifice. I received irate emails from a handful of people asking how we could possibly offer



X as an option, given how much pain that might bring. Nevertheless, we believe that the results will provide some useful guidance to the LRCFT's negotiating team in the weeks ahead.

THE RESULTS

While the results yielded a minimum of surprises, those results also yielded few clear directions. In the not surprising category, those options that had the smallest personal economic impact received the strongest support. For example, 75.6% of those who responded to the “leaves” option supported eliminating Type A and B leaves completely. And, 77.4% of those who responded to the “voluntary workload reductions” option supported allowing faculty to do so. However, when it came to the individual taking the survey, only 18% responded that they would definitely or probably reduce their workload.

Reducing the salary schedule by 1% was opposed by 64.6% of respondents. The response to freezing the schedule was less helpful—44.8% opposed and 48.7% supported that option.

Eliminating two flex days received the support of 62% of respondents. Eliminating all four days was opposed by a fraction over 50% of respondents.

The message on reducing office hours was clear—62% opposed that option. Similarly, 52.5% opposed reducing or eliminating department chair reassigned time/stipends, while 33% supported it and just over 14% were indifferent.

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The message on the other stipend elimination options, performance/coaching stipends, was less clear, as 36.2% opposed that option and 43.2% supported it.

You can decide for yourself whether this next result is a surprise or not. Of those who responded to this option, 76% opposed eliminating adjunct medical coverage. On the topic of adjunct office hours, though, the message was not as clear—an almost even split, 46.6% to 43.1% between oppose and support respectively, to eliminate adjunct office hours.

THE NEXT STEP(S)

As Dean Murakami's article explains, the failure to reach agreement on placing the tax extension options on a June ballot means that the District is in plan B mode. The Union has already used the survey results by approving elimination of all Type B leaves as a step toward responding to the imbalance in the faculty bucket. And, in the coming weeks the Union's leadership will be weighing the other survey results to determine further steps toward addressing the problem. As all of you know by now, the District is doing what is in its authority to do by drastically reducing sections in the summer sessions and just slightly fewer in the fall 2011, spring 2012 semesters.

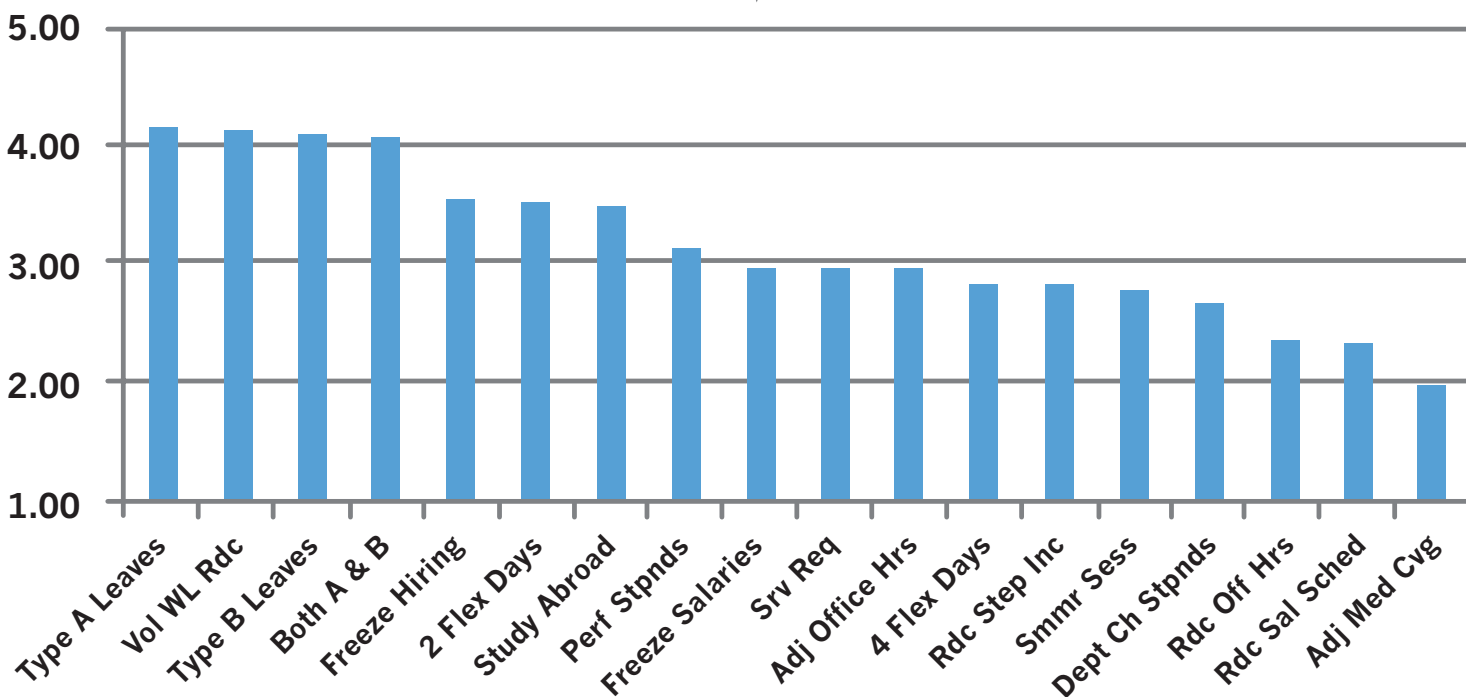
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks go to Professor Patricia Harris-Jenkinson (PJ), who provided support for the development of the survey and was a direct conduit to the firm that actually designed technical aspects of the survey. She has continued to provide support through the writing of this article.

Finally, thanks go to Professor Phil Smith, without whom the survey would not have been accessible in a timely fashion. ■

Results

LIKERT SCALE



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