



2021 Faculty Survey of Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities

(A joint project of the PSU Faculty Senate Research Committee and Research and Graduate Studies)

KEY FINDINGS

530 FACULTY MEMBERS RESPONDED FROM ACROSS PSU

- Schools represented: CLAS, Engineering and Computer Science, CUPA, and the Schools of Arts, Business, Education, Social Work, and Public Health. The Library, Honors College and other units were also represented.
- Fields: Social sciences (~50% of respondents), natural/physical sciences and engineering (25%+), followed by the humanities, arts and other fields.
- Ranks: Assistant, associate, or full professor (~60%). Adjuncts or instructors (~25%), & research faculty (~10%).
- Time at PSU: More than half had been at PSU for more than 10 years. Almost 75% were full time.
- Tenure status: About 50% of respondents had tenure. Almost one-third were not tenure track.

RESEARCH IS IMPORTANT TO PSU'S EDUCATIONAL MISSION

- **More than 75%** of respondents conducted research, scholarship, or creative activities (RSC).
- Respondents report **incorporating their RSCs into their undergraduate teaching** at least once each term and half reported doing so at least weekly.
- Faculty RSCs provide **(1) educational opportunities** for all levels of students (incl capstones & master's projects/theses), **(2) student employment and financial aid** (GRA's, stipends, tuition remission), and **(3) faculty and staff compensation** (course buy-outs, soft money for RSC).

MOST FUNDING SOURCES ARE EXTERNAL

- Over half of the almost 400 respondents doing RSC reported receiving external funds to do so.
- Respondents who spent **>75% of their time** on RSC reported being **funded primarily through external grants, fellowships of contracts.**
- Respondents who spent **<25% of their time** on RSC covered those costs through a combination of **internal and external** funding sources.
- In the past 3 years, **~75% of those who had applied** for external funds **as a PI, Co-I or Collaborator reported receiving at least some funding.**
- During that same period, a similar portion of respondents who reported applying for external funds for **travel, sabbaticals, artists residences and other activities** reported receiving at least some funds for those purposes.

MORE INTERNAL SUPPORTS ARE NEEDED

- Respondents expressed the need for additional supports for developing and funding RSC.
- Some seemed **unaware of the internal supports** that are available.
- A review of the departmental- and college-level support for RSC is needed.



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Preliminary Results

Prepared for June 7, 2021 Faculty Senate Meeting (updated 5/26/2021)

In order to avoid duplicate surveys going out to faculty, the University Research Committee collaborated with Research and Graduate Studies (RGS) to form a single survey. The survey link was distributed via the Faculty Senate's google group of all faculty on April 1, 2021. **Between April 2nd and 13th, 530 responses were received.** Survey development and analysis were conducted by the Faculty Survey Work Group of the University Research Committee.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Demographics: The majority of respondents identified as male or female with **slightly more women than men**. Approximately **three-quarters respondents identified as white**. The next highest portion of respondents identified as Asian, followed by Hispanic or Latino, Black, African or African American, and American Indian or Alaska Native. No one identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, though some preferred not to say. Respondents ranged in age from their 20s to their 70s, falling mainly between the **ages of 35 to 64** with more clustered in the center of that range (age 45-54). Approximately **half reported having children at home or other caregiving** responsibilities.

PSU: Respondents were **predominantly from CLAS**, followed by the Maseeh College of Engineering and Computer Science, CUPA, and the Schools/Colleges of the Arts, Business, Education, Social Work, and Public Health. The Library, Honors College and other units were also represented. Almost half came from the **social sciences**, one-quarter from **the natural/physical sciences and engineering**, followed by **the humanities, arts and other fields**. Respondents **predominantly held the ranks of assistant professor, associate professor, or professor**, followed by adjunct professors, instructors/senior instructors, and research faculty. More than half had been at PSU for more than 10 years and almost three-quarters had an FTE of 1.0. **Approximately half were tenured. Almost one-third were not tenure track.**

MORE THAN 75% OF RESPONDENTS CONDUCTED RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, OR CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Of the respondents who conducted research, scholarship, or creative activities, about **two-thirds worked on research and one-third on creative arts or humanities**. Of the time spent on those projects, about one quarter of it was taken up by administrative activities.

RESEARCH IS IMPORTANT TO PSU'S EDUCATIONAL MISSION

Almost all respondents indicated that **research experience is moderately to extremely important in the general education of PSU students**. Of those who taught undergraduates, almost all reported incorporating their research, scholarship, or creative activities into their teaching at least once each term (half reported doing so at least weekly). Respondents indicated that their **research, scholarship, or creative activities provide (1) educational opportunities** for graduate, undergraduate, and even high school students, including for completing capstones, and master's projects or theses; **(2) student employment and financial aid**, including GRAs, stipends and tuition remissions; and **(3) faculty and staff compensation** (course buy-outs, soft money). Despite these contributions to PSU, more than half of respondents felt that research, scholarship and creative activities were **undervalued** by the university (compared to less than a fifth who felt undervalued by their department).

"I often feel as though PSU wants to have its cake and eat it too, in the sense that it really wants the prestige and funding that come from being a research institution, but it also really leverages discourses that I associate with teaching-focused institutions."

DESIRE TO COLLABORATE ACROSS DEPARTMENTS IS HIGH, BUT BARRIERS EXIST

Respondents predominantly reported collaborating with (1) colleagues at higher ed institutions other than PSU, (2) students, and (3) colleagues in their own departments. Collaborations across PSU departments appear to occur at about half the rate of collaborations within departments. Respondents expressed strong interest in interdepartmental or interdisciplinary work with other faculty across PSU, but cited institutional barriers for doing so, including **fragmentation of departments** and the **lack of interdisciplinary frameworks**, such as like the former School of the Environment and the de-funded Portland Center for the Public Humanities. Some identified University Studies as a gateway for

interdisciplinary programs that might integrate research, civic engagement, and undergraduate education even more comprehensively than the present arrangement.

OVER 50% OF RESPONDENTS WORK WITH DATA FOR RESEARCH OR ANALYSIS

About half of those who reported working with data had written protocols for managing data, including a **data management plan, data security plan, or data use agreement**. For some, the distinction between these documents and IRB protocols was unclear. Respondents stored their data primarily on a **PSU** office or lab computer, Google Drive or a Network drive. Respondents also saved data on their **personal computer or hard drive** and/or used **personal funds** to pay for at least part of their data storage. Few identified compliance standards and regulations that applied to their data, most commonly protections for human subjects' research (**IRB**), student records (**FERPA**), and health records (**HIPAA**). The majority of those who shared data did so mainly via email or data depositories such as **PDXScholar** or **Genebank**. At least one respondent used **Dropbox** to share data, which is discouraged by PSU due to its history of being hacked.

MOST FUNDING SOURCES ARE EXTERNAL

Over half of the almost 400 respondents doing RSC reported **receiving external funds** to do so. Respondents who spent 75-100% of their time on RSC reported being funded primarily through external grants, fellowships or contracts. Respondents who spent less than 25% of their time on RSC covered those costs through a combination of internal and external funding sources. In the past 3 years, about three-quarters of respondents who had applied for external funds for RSC as a Principal Investigator (PI), Co-I or Collaborator reported receiving at least some funding. During that same period, a similar proportion of respondents who reported applying for external funds for travel, sabbaticals, artists residences and other activities reported receiving at least some funds for those purposes.

Of those who submitted **external funding proposals**, approximately one-half submitted all or most of them through the Sponsored Projects Administration unit within Research and Graduate Studies (**SPA**), one-quarter sometimes submitted proposals though SPA, and one-quarter had never submitted their external proposals though SPA.

COMMUNICATION COULD BE ENHANCED

The majority of respondents felt that they **knew little about highlights and successes** of research, scholarship, and creative activities happening at PSU. Suggestions for spreading the word included putting research, scholarship and creative activities on the PSU homepage more often, press releases, up-to-date searchable webpages, a research vlog or video newsletter, and social media posts (including Linked-In). Over half of respondents were **unfamiliar with the University's Open Access Publication Policy**, and less than one-quarter had deposited their work in **PDXScholar**.

MORE INTERNAL SUPPORTS ARE NEEDED

Respondents expressed the need for additional supports for developing and funding RSC. **The majority of support appears to come from SPA**. Development support was also provided to a lesser extent by: (1) partners at other universities or organizations; (2) faculty, chairs or classified staff in the respondent's department; (3) faculty in other departments; (4) the PSU Foundation; (5) PSU Innovation and Intellectual Property (IIP); and (6) consultants hired by individual departments.

When provided with a list of **potential university supports** for helping to grow or develop their work, potentially building it into a larger project, the ones most often identified as helpful or very helpful were: **(1) departmental funds** to cover a percent of a respondent's FTE, **(2) an increase in IPDA** (Individual Professional Development Account) funds, **(3) funded course buy-outs**, and **(4) an overall reduction in course load / teaching responsibilities**. Other identified supports appeared to be less important for the respondent pool as a whole, but could have more importance for specific subgroups of respondents, such as non-tenure track faculty or teaching faculty. These supports included **funded GRAs and GTAs, sabbaticals for pre-tenure or non-tenure track faculty, and an increase in the number of advisors** to relieve faculty from that responsibility, among others. Some respondents seemed **unaware of the internal supports that are already available**. A review of the departmental- and college-level support for RSC and how it is communicated, especially to newer faculty, is needed.

"...spending typically two plus days on the 40-hour work week on admin and university service means doing scholarship in overtime. We need more administrative staff in departments to support work of curriculum committees, grad admissions, etc."

NEXT STEPS: A more in-depth analysis of the survey responses is currently being conducted by RGS.