

Being the Best

Young faculty members rate Cal State Fullerton 'exemplary' in national survey

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Cal State Fullerton has been named an “exemplary institution” by the Harvard-based Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE).

The distinction is based on surveys of young faculty members across the nation — two years’ worth of data that puts CSUF in the same company with Stanford, Duke and Brown University.

“The strength of our efforts in reaching out to newly hired faculty members to make them welcome and to help ensure their success are reflected in these results,” said President Milton A. Gordon, who credited senior faculty members and administrators for mentoring newcomers.

For the Tenure-Track Job Satisfaction Survey administered by COACHE, more than 7,000 respondents from 56 universities and 22 liberal arts colleges rated their institutions in 12 categories regarded as key to attracting and retaining faculty members.

The latest survey included respondents from master’s-level universities, which opened the door to the campuses of the California State University. Cal State Fullerton and two other CSUs make their debut on this year’s list — the second since the survey was first administered.

At Cal State Fullerton, 204 tenure track faculty members received the survey, and 114 responded — 67 women and 47 men.

Fullerton achieved exemplary status in three of the 12 categories — a measure matched by Cal State San Marcos. Cal Poly Pomona is listed in one category.

Positive marks from young faculty members thrust CSUF to the top in the categories of “Climate/Collegiality,” “Tenure Clarity” and “Tenure Practices Overall.” CSUF ranks alongside Brown, the University of Kansas and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in these thematic areas.

“We’ve worked hard to make tenure expectations clear,” said Margaret Atwell, associate vice president for academic affairs, “so we’re pleased that was borne out in the survey.”

Fullerton’s inclusion on the list comes in the third year of Gordon’s mandated five-year effort to conduct 100 faculty recruitments each year.

The Tenure-Track Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey determined that some colleges and universities are “exemplary” on certain key dimensions of faculty work/life: tenure practices, clarity and reasonableness; effectiveness of key policies (e.g., mentoring, childcare and leaves); nature of work: teaching, research and support services; work and family balance; satisfaction with compensation; climate, culture and collegiality; and global satisfaction.

The COACHE survey is geared to identify just two liberal arts colleges and four universities as “exemplary institutions” in each of the categories. Yet, those campuses with ratings that fall within .05 of the second college or fourth university are included, resulting in more than six institutions — listed alphabetically — for most categories.

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Top vote-getters are Brown and Stanford in eight categories and Duke in seven.

Cal State Fullerton has seven peers in the arena of “Tenure Practices Overall,” six in “Tenure Clarity” and just four in “Climate/Collegiality.”

“Tenure Clarity” is the category all three CSUs on the list have in common, while San Marcos joins Fullerton as exemplary for “Climate/Collegiality.”

According to *Inside Higher Education*, which reported the survey results in December, COACHE “has become an influential player in discussions of how to make colleges more ‘family friendly’ and how institutions should prepare for a generation of professors who may not accept the traditional hierarchical mode of many academic departments.”

The complete list is available online at <http://gseacademic.harvard.edu/~coache>.



Some of Cal State Fullerton’s newest faculty members pose for a photo with longtime professor Phil Gianos. From left are: Erualdo R. González, Alexandro J. Gradilla, Sarah A. Hill, Gianos and Patricia A. Perez. Gradilla was one of CSUF’s faculty members who participated in the COACHE survey. PHOTO BY KELLY LACEFIELD