July 10, 2020

Dr. Richard Muma
Wichita State University
1845 Fairmount St.
Wichita, Kansas 67260

Dear Dr. Muma,

At the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education, we strive to provide institutions with the data they need to make the academic workplace a better, more equitable place. We understand that faculty are the heart of your institution. Their work as teachers, scholars, and citizens is what keeps your institution afloat. This is true in ideal times and even more important in times of uncertainty.

We would be hard pressed to find times that are more uncertain than these. Your faculty, staff, and students have been asked to make a monumental shift in core operations with just a few weeks' notice. We are all being challenged to explore issues of power, privilege, and racism. We are realizing that those of us with the best intentions must do more to support faculty of color and to dismantle institutional racism. And all of this is happening during what might be the worst economic downturn in a century.

You have spent the last few months dealing with immediate issues. I hope the summer is giving you an opportunity to pause and recalibrate to prepare for the fall. More importantly, I hope it gives you the time to think about your COACHE results as a powerful tool for navigating this next year rather than as a standalone initiative.

The global outbreak of COVID-19 created an upheaval in the middle of the COACHE survey administration period. Fortunately, most faculty completed the survey by late February or early March. Still, faculty are trained to be skeptical, and may ask questions about the reliability or validity of these data. We have conducted an analysis of response rates and patterns to determine whether there were any practical differences between response patterns of faculty who completed the survey prior to the COVID-19 disruptions and those faculty who responded later in the survey administration period. In short, our analysis concluded that the impact on your CAO Report is likely negligible. Following this letter, I have highlighted some of the key takeaways from our COVID-19 review and compiled some suggestions for analyzing your results to inform your planning for the upcoming year. Later this summer, COACHE will host a virtual strategy workshop, where we will discuss our analysis in greater detail.

Given COACHE's mission of making the academy a more equitable place to work, and in light of the welcome transformation in the dialogue around race and equity globally, I have also attached advice for analyzing your results with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion and for sharing the results in a way that drives constructive dialogue.

How you engage with your faculty over the next several months will be as important to the health of your institution as the policy decisions you make. COACHE's work with our partners also hinges on thoughtful processes, which is why our team has planned a series of workshops in July and August to help

your team craft a strategy for working with your results. The sessions will include technical training on how to read, navigate, and interpret your findings; strategic advice for sharing your data in ways that spur dialogue; and some thoughts about potential risks and pitfalls. Each session will include time for you to work with your local team and to learn from other institutions. You can find the full details for these workshops in the attached Strategy Workshop Agenda.

      I hope that you will see that COACHE is here to support your institution as you navigate these challenging times. However, do not think of COACHE as just our staff. Consider the collaborative network of other institutions, administrators, and faculty who are addressing the same issues, working through many of the same problems, and living with the same constraints. Now, more than ever, I hope you will access this community of practice.

Sincerely,

R. Todd Benson, Ed.D.
Associate Director
The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education

Strategy Workshop Agenda

Overview
The Partner Strategy Workshop is designed to ensure that your institution moves into the fall semester with the capacity to read and interpret your results, develop a comprehensive communication strategy for disseminating your results, and to learn from other teams in your cohort. The sessions are spread over several dates and each session may include pre-work and post-work.

Planning for Report Delivery
July 24th, 2-4pm EDT

Pre-work:
- Read the case study (to be sent by July 20).

Session Overview:
This session will deal with two important issues. First, we will share the results of our analysis comparing faculty responses prior to and after the COVID-19 outbreak. Looking at the data across institutions, we will address the question of whether data patterns suggest that responses to the survey prior to the COVID-19 outbreak differed from survey responses after the mid-semester "pivot". The session will also provide you with some guidance for any additional analysis that your team may wish to explore with your unit-level data file, if you are receiving one.

The second half of this session will focus on the important issue of managing open-text responses in data dissemination. Our team will provide a case study highlighting a single institution and ask small groups of participants to discuss the options for sharing qualitative comments.

Homework (Due next session):
- Develop a statement/rationale for how you will manage open-text comments.
- Watch report tutorial videos.
- Make sure you can open your report using the instructions sent earlier this week.
- Share the report with any team members participating in the Strategy Workshops.

Reading and Interpreting Your Report
July 28th, 1-2:30pm EDT & July 31st, 2:30-4pm EDT
(Only enroll for one session. Whenever possible, attend with at least one other team member.)

Pre-work:
- Review the "Understanding Your CAO Report" video series.
- Make sure that everyone on your team who should have access to the report does and can successfully open the report on their device. If you have difficulty accessing your report, please contact nduka_azubuike@gse.harvard.edu.
- Come to the meeting with your report open so you can follow along.

Session Overview:
The session will begin with a short review of the 7/24 homework. Next, Todd will provide a top-level understanding of how to navigate, read, and interpret your results. Please come to this session having opened

and reviewed your report. There will be ample time for teams to work with their reports and ask specific questions at the end of the workshop.

Homework (To be shared during the next session):
- As a team, identify 3-5 high-level issues in your results that you want to explore further.

Dissemination: Communications Plans
August 7th, 2-3:30pm EDT

Pre-work:
- Review your report and select 3-5 of the benchmarks that you want to explore further based on your results.

Session Overview:
This session will begin with a discussion of the topics that rose to the top during your first review of the reports. Next, two COACHE partners who have disseminated their results will share their experiences working with their dissemination strategies. After their presentations and time for questions and answers, our team will review the final assignment of developing a campus level communication plan.

Homework:
- Hand in communications plans by August 21st.

Viewing your data through a COVID-19 lens

The COACHE Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey is administered annually to our college and university partners during the months of February, March, and April. During that time, it is not unusual for an unanticipated event to occur on a single campus. We have seen changes in leadership (some planned and others not), political crises, and even natural disasters. In each instance, questions might be raised about the impact of such events on the reliability and validity of the data.

Like when the financial markets collapsed in late 2008, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a direct, significant impact on all institutions at approximately the same time. The effects of the coronavirus, however, have been more pervasive and immediate. By the end of March, all of our partners had moved from in-person to remote teaching, along with other monumental shifts in operations.

We all agree that an incident of this magnitude significantly impacted the work and lives of faculty. However, we cannot assume that it had a significant impact on the findings in your report and the decisions they will inform as you move into the fall semester. How should your COACHE data inform practice in the "new normal"?

To that end, this document will summarize:
- Our analysis of the potential impact of COVID-19 on your comparative reports
- Recommendations for using your COACHE data in the upcoming, unprecedented year

Understanding response rates and response patterns during a global pandemic

To assess the impact of the COVID-19 response on your faculty survey behaviors, we began by using timestamps to delineate respondents into three groups who completed the survey:
- prior to institutional shifts due to COVID-19 (Pre-transition)
- during the shift to remote learning (In-transition)
- after the shift to remote learning (Post-transition)

It is difficult, of course, to create a line of demarcation that accounts for every institution's "pivot" date in the COACHE cohort. Even if we ask each institution to pick its individual date, institutions do not exist in a bubble; even at those who made a relatively late formal announcement, faculty could see a change coming.

Because of those issues, our team used the survey's email reminder schedule to delineate between the three groups. The pre-transition group refers to respondents who started the survey based on the initial (launch) invitation or the first reminder. In-transition respondents began the survey after the second reminder was sent, but before the third reminder. Post-transition respondents completed the survey based on a prompt from the third or fourth reminders.

The response patterns to the Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey are not evenly distributed across its relatively long administration period. Each year, most faculty start the survey very early in the approximately 8-week period. This pattern held true again this year: based on the definitions above, 75 percent of this cohort's valid respondents started the survey in the pre-transition phase.

For the past several weeks, the COACHE team has been comparing responses to survey items in the pre-transition group and the post-transition group. Our full report will be shared at the July 24 Strategy Workshop session.

At this time, we can report that any potential impact of COVID-19 on the means, frequencies, and comparisons in your report was, for all practical purposes, negligible. Any statistically significant differences between the pre-transition group and the post-transition group were suppressed by the size of the former, which outnumbered the In-transition and Post-transition groups by 3 to 1. When we compared each institution's overall benchmark mean to the mean with only the pre-transition group included, we found that on average, the means shifted by less than 0.1 for all benchmarks (measured on five-point scales).

In short, our analysis of the aggregate data does not suggest a need for any additional cleaning of responses due to the COVID-19 outbreak. While the differences we discovered through our analyses were negligible in practical application, they can help reveal who among your faculty is better equipped to manage during the pandemic and which pockets of faculty are in need of additional support for the upcoming year. We will discuss these patterns during the Strategy Workshop.

Leveraging your data to respond to COVID-19

While data collected during and after the transition to remote teaching do not appear to produce large variation in COACHE outcomes, several of the benchmarks and their underlying items might help inform your work. For example, in the *Nature or Work: Teaching* benchmark, the survey asks faculty to rate the support they receive for developing online or hybrid courses, teaching online or hybrid courses, assessing students' learning, and for improving teaching generally. Our data suggest that faculty in community colleges are much more comfortable with these tasks than are faculty in all other higher ed sectors. The dean of a small college (where these dimensions tend to be rated poorly) might reach out to collaborate with her counterpart at a two-year college, or perhaps, search her own COACHE data for the disciplines that can guide others on her campus into this new territory.

The COVID-19 outbreak forced institutions to make decisions quickly, perhaps foregoing the more deliberative decision making that colleges and universities typically adopt. This raises questions about the quality of decisions made in haste as well as the risks to shared governance. Although we suspect you are still making decisions very quickly (and with incomplete data), we do have more time to be thoughtful about the process. The five benchmarks related to academic governance and the four leadership benchmarks should provide insights into the pockets of faculty who feel engaged in decision making and those who feel they are being left out. A few questions your COACHE data can help you explore are:

- Are my faculty governing bodies inclusive in their decision making? Which faculty are feeling left out right now?
- In which disciplines are faculty and administrators able to discuss difficult issues in good faith, and in which are they not?
- How effective are senior administrators and faculty leaders at cultivating consensus, at ensuring that there is sufficient time for faculty to provide input on important decisions, and at communicating the rationale for important decisions?
- Will our shared governance model hold up under unusual situations, and can faculty expect a systematic review of institutional decision-making?

The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education

Looking at the Disciplinary Analysis within your report will help you understand whether your social scientists need more teaching support than your physical scientists, for example. Look at the results by tenure status to ensure that your non-tenure-track faculty feel included in decision making. If you

opted to receive unit-level data, consider some of the additional variables in your population file and survey responses that might inform practice. For example, we collect data about faculty marital and family status. Are faculty with children more likely to report concerns about balancing work and their personal lives? Are mothers more concerned about tenure and promotion?

Ultimately, partners with a COACHE report may use it to identify their institutions' "pre-existing conditions": faculty inequities likely to be inflamed and their preparedness for this extraordinary undertaking. The most respected higher education associations and scholars are calling on colleges to plan for a fall semester that is partly or even entirely online. The COACHE Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey reveals which corners of your institutions can lead and which can learn in a more thoughtful shift to remote teaching, research, and other academic work.

As always, if you need additional support in considering how to utilize your data, you are welcome to reach out to our team at coache@gse.harvard.edu.

Considerations for utilizing COACHE data as a tool for exploring issues of equity and diversity

As a trending item on Twitter, #BlackInTheIvory highlighted the experiences of faculty of color as they navigate the academic workplace. The Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey has been collecting and curating stories like these for nearly two decades and, in that time, we have seen a variety of institutional responses—including no response at all. Each response needs to take into consideration the campus climate, leadership styles, resources, and most importantly, the wellbeing of the faculty who trusted you by completing the COACHE survey. All of these factors mean that there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

Analytic considerations

Let the disaggregation tell the story

Your CAO Report provides two important layers of analysis for nearly all the Likert scale items in the survey. The dashboards compare your faculty of color to faculty of color at other institutions and then, in the same display, compare your faculty of color to white faculty at your institution.

In the first comparison, you can learn whether the experiences of your faculty of color are better or worse than the experiences of faculty of color elsewhere. This is particularly important when you see differences between the overall results and the results for faculty of color. What does it say about your results when you are generally performing well on a benchmark, but your faculty of color have a very different experience? Posing this type of question to your faculty may help reveal the details about where inequities lie.

The means and frequency tables provide more detailed analysis by race/ethnicity. For example, the survey asks faculty whether they agree that their departmental colleagues are committed to supporting and promoting diversity and inclusion. Looking at the data collected this year, we see that that 78 percent of faculty agree with that statement and 12 percent disagree. Yet, when we examine just Black and African American faculty responses, we see that 63 percent agree and 26 percent disagree. Even if you consider the overall data—just 12 percent disagreeing!—to be an indicator of success, the disaggregation tells us that Black and African American faculty feel quite differently about their departmental colleagues' support for diversity.

Look at the best and worst aspects

Near the end of the survey, we ask faculty to pick the two best and two worst aspects about working at your institution. Both data tables break out the results by race/ethnicity. What makes your institution stand out for faculty of color? Do their preferences differ from the best aspects that white faculty chose? In either instance, these could be opportunities to celebrate. More importantly, the data highlight the things that make your institution attractive to prospective faculty.

The worst aspects shed light on something that may be more important. The list of available responses cover a broad range of issues, from the quality and support of colleagues to unrelenting pressure to perform. The results are important because they give you some sense of what is most pressing for your faculty of color. Given all of the many options available, these responses rose to the top and can help you to prioritize other results in your report.

Read the open text comments, but be thoughtful about dissemination

Some of the most powerful insights in the CAO Report come from the open-text responses to the question, *"What is the one thing your institution can do to improve the workplace for faculty?"* The report allows you to filter the comments by thematic codes so that you can drill down into issues of diversity and culture. As part of your first pass through the report, take the time to read the comments. The quantitative section of the report tells you where subsets of faculty are more and less satisfied. The open-text responses tell you how that satisfaction or dissatisfaction manifests itself every day.

Before sharing these comments, however, discuss the risks and implications for faculty of color. Might the sharing of an open-text response put undue attention on some faculty of color? Depending on the nature of the comments, you may decide to make an additional round of redactions or not to share some comments beyond your team. Seek counsel by engaging your chief diversity officer, your institutional research director, social scientists familiar with qualitative methods, and other groups who can provide you with their perspectives on the risks and benefits. A single, thoughtful, open-text response can catalyze a collective understanding on an important issue.

Strategic considerations

Lead with the data but don't stop there

Use the data as a primer for discussions. Sharing the results, especially results that highlight issues of racial inequity, is more effective when we give faculty the opportunity to discuss the findings candidly. Simply putting the results in a PowerPoint slide is not enough to drive change. Asking faculty substantive questions and providing safe platforms for the exchange of ideas is crucial to this work.

Consider who gets invited to the discussions (yourself included)

There are times when an entire community should come together to have difficult discussions. However, there are also times when faculty of color should be able to speak exclusively with colleagues who have a shared experience. There may also be times when white faculty need to facilitate these discussions on their own—to bear the burden of change. Your COACHE team should consider all the possibilities for facilitating these discussions. Being reflective about the power and privilege in the room is crucial to creating the conditions for candid discussion. Being transparent about those choices conveys empathy that in turn builds trust.

Some options to consider are:
- Creating sessions where only faculty of color speak to a trusted moderator who can share the (de-identified) synthesis with your team. Emeriti and cross-consortium faculty can possibly serve in these roles.
- Using anonymous (but moderated) discussion boards to allow the free exchange of perspectives while protecting confidentiality.

Be mindful of the tax that this work places on faculty of color

Even the most thoughtful approach to raising issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion places a burden on faculty of color. Even when the work is well-intentioned, we should reflect on the hidden labor of diversity work on faculty of color. When we ask faculty of color to speak up at workshops and convenings, we may inadvertently place them in uncomfortable positions while asking less or nothing of their white colleagues. Making diversity work the sole responsibility of faculty of color marginalizes

the work and may convey the message that diversity work is only for and about faculty of color. It is, of course, the majority's responsibility to do the work of change.

For additional thoughts on this topic, please review Giving Voice to Underrepresented Faculty.