

HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE (HERI) FACULTY SURVEYS COMPARED: 1999 AND 2011

INTRODUCTION

These findings are survey data from the Higher Education Research Institute’s (HERI) survey of university faculty. The two surveys compared are those from 1999 and 2011. As a survey, the data are only the answers given by those individuals who participated in the survey. There is no inclusive or objective data set. Therefore, the findings in this report are neither inclusive nor objective. Also, because in 1999 the only group Western could compare its findings to were all other respondents, regardless of type and size of university, the same comparison group is used for the 2011 survey.

FINDINGS

According to the HERI survey findings, at both Western and universities nationwide, gender and ethnicity ratios changed between 1998 and 2011. Demographically, university faculties have a higher percentage of women and minorities in 2011 than they did in 1998. In each survey year there was very little difference in demographic make-up between Western’s faculty and those of its peers. (See Table 1.)

Table 1: HERI Faculty Survey Data Comparison, 1999 & 2011

	1999		2011	
	Western	USA	Western	USA
Male	62%	65%	52%	52%
Female	38%	35%	48%	48%
White	91%	91%	87%	88%
Minority	9%	9%	13%	12%

In both the 1999 and 2011 surveys, Western faculty reported spending more time on research than did faculty at other universities. Moreover, Western faculty were also more likely to report publishing in professional journals and edited volumes. In 2011, Western faculty and faculty at other universities were about as likely to report they had published between 3-10 articles, but Western faculty were more likely to report they had published between 11-20 articles. (See Table 2.)

Table 2: HERI Faculty Survey Data Comparison, 1999 & 2011

	1999		2011	
	Western	USA	Western	USA
5-8 Hrs/wk on Research	30%	21%	25%	21%
9-16 Hrs/wk on Research	24%	19%	21%	16%
3-10 Articles in Professional Journals	45%	37%	37%	36%
11-20 Articles in Professional Journals	15%	13%	24%	11%
3-10 Chapters in Edited Volumes	21%	15%	27%	13%

In the 1999 survey, Western faculty were more like to report that their research and writing focused on women and /or minorities than did faculty at other universities. By 2011, the percentage of faculty focusing their research on women and /or minorities fell, both at Western and other universities, although Western faculty were still more likely to report their research and writing focused on these issues. (See Table 3.)

Table 3: HERI Faculty Survey Data Comparison, 1999 & 2011

	1999		2011	
	Western	USA	Western	USA
Research/Writing Focused on Women	31%	25%	25%	19%
Research/Writing Focused on Minorities	33%	23%	25%	19%

In the 1999 survey, Western faculty were more likely than faculty at other universities to use competency-based grading, and less likely to grade on the curve or use multiple choice testing. In the 2011 survey, Western faculty were still more likely than faculty at other universities to use competency-based grading, but by a lesser margin. More Western faculty reported grading on the curve in 2011. More Western faculty also reported using multiple choice exams—although Western faculty were still less likely than faculty at othe universities to do so. (See Table 4.)

Table 4: HERI Faculty Survey Data Comparison, 1999 & 2011

Percent responding “All” or “Most”	1999		2011	
	Western	USA	Western	USA
Used Competency-based Grading	55%	47%	53%	51%
Graded on the Curve	12%	17%	15%	13%
Used Multiple-choice Exams	11%	33%	23%	40%

In the 1999 survey, Western faculty were more likely to have reported using cooperative learning (small groups) than faculty at other universities. They were also less likely to have reported using extensive lecturing than faculty at other universities. This was still true in the 2011 survey, although the gaps were less pronounced. (See Table 5.)

Table 5: HERI Faculty Survey Data Comparison, 1999 & 2011

Percent responding “All” or “Most”	1999		2011	
	Western	USA	Western	USA
Used Cooperative Learning (small groups)	46%	37%	65%	61%
Used Extensive Lecturing	39%	48%	38%	44%

The HERI faculty survey asked instructors about the importance of a list of educational goals for undergraduate students. Some interesting trends were noted. In 1999, Western faculty were less likely than faculty at other universities to consider preparing students for employment to be “essential” or “very important.” By 2011, the importance of this goal increased both at Western and at other universities, although fewer Western faculty considered this important.

In 1999, more Western faculty than faculty at other universities considered enhancing an undergraduate’s self-understanding to be important. In 2011, faculty at other universities were more likely to consider this important. Moreover, in 1999, more Western faculty than faculty at other universities considered enhancing knowledge of and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups. In 2011, about three-quarters of all faculty surveyed—Western and nationwide—considered this important.

In the most dramatic change, in 1999 only about half of Western faculty considered developing an undergraduate’s moral character to be essential. By 2011, these percentages increased greatly, both among Western faculty and faculty at other universities. (See Table 6.)

Table 6: HERI Faculty Survey Data Comparison, 1999 & 2011 • Importance of Educational Goals for Undergraduate Students

Percent responding “Essential” or “Very important”	1999		2011	
	Western	USA	Western	USA
Prepare for employment	68%	74%	78%	86%
Enhance self- understanding	68%	61%	68%	75%
Enhance knowledge of and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups	67%	58%	74%	74%
Develop moral character	49%	54%	68%	72%

One of the more interesting changes from 1999 to 2011 was the drop in the percent of faculty who felt that increasing institutional prestige was the high or highest priority of their institution. This was evident both at Western and other universities, although at Western the percentage drop was even greater. In addition, at all universities, the percentage of faculty who believed their institution’s priority was to facilitate student involvement in community service rose. This was particularly true at universities other than Western. (See Table 7.)

Table 7: HERI Faculty Survey Data Comparison, 1999 & 2011 • Importance of Institutional Priorities

Percent responding “High” or “Highest” Priority	1999		2011	
	Western	USA	Western	USA
To increase or maintain institutional prestige	70%	64%	57%	57%
To facilitate student involvement in community service	38%	31%	41%	46%

Relationships between faculty appear to have improved between the 1999 and 2011. In 1999, the percentage of Western faculty indicating they were very satisfied or satisfied with their professional relationships with other faculty was 65%. This rose to 76% in 2011. The percentage rose for faculty at other universities, too, but not as dramatically. Moreover, in 1999, the percentage of Western faculty indicating that the phrase “faculty here respect each other” was very descriptive of Western was 28%. This rose to 52% in 2011. Again, while the percentage also rose for faculty at other universities, it was not as dramatic. (See Table 8.)

Table 8: HERI Faculty Survey Data Comparison, 1999 & 2011 • Faculty Inter-relationships

	1999		2011	
	Western	USA	Western	USA
Professional relationships with other faculty (“Very satisfied” or “Satisfied”)	65%	72%	76%	76%
Faculty here respect each other (“Very descriptive”)	28%	29%	52%	45%

In 1999, at all universities, about one-fifth of faculty indicated that the phrase “faculty are typically at odds with campus administrators” was very descriptive of their institution. In 2011, that percentage was the same for other universities, but had dropped among Western faculty. The phrase “faculty are rewarded for being good teachers” saw a rise in percentage at all schools between 1999 and 2011, but rose more dramatically at Western. (See Table 9.)

Table 9: HERI Faculty Survey Data Comparison, 1999 & 2011 • Perceptions and Relationships

Percent responding “Very descriptive”	1999		2011	
	Western	USA	Western	USA
Faculty are typically at odds with campus administrators	20%	21%	13%	21%
Faculty are rewarded for being good teachers	8%	12%	21%	18%

The HERI faculty survey asked about sources of stress. For Western faculty the top three sources of stress were lack of personal time, institutional procedures and “red tape,” and teaching load. In 2011, the percentage of Western faculty responding that these three issues were a somewhat or extensive source of stress fell, while for faculty at other universities the percentages remained relatively the same. The decreases for Western faculty were minor for lack of personal time and teaching load, but were dramatic for institutional procedures and “red tape.” (See Table 10.)

Table 10: HERI Faculty Survey Data Comparison, 1999 & 2011 • Sources of Stress

Percent responding “Somewhat” or “Extensive”	1999		2011	
	Western	USA	Western	USA
Lack of personal time	89%	79%	86%	82%
Institutional procedures and “red tape”	80%	76%	66%	74%
Teaching load	77%	67%	71%	71%

According to HERI faculty survey data, Western faculty were considerably more satisfied with the quality of Western students than were faculty at other universities. From 1999 to 2011, the percentages rose both at Western and at other universities, but Western’s numbers were quite high in comparison. (See Table 11.)

Table 11: HERI Faculty Survey Data Comparison, 1999 & 2011

Percent responding “Satisfactory” or “Very satisfactory”	1999		2011	
	Western	USA	Western	USA
Quality of students	63%	35%	71%	43%

Both the 1999 and 2011 faculty surveys asked questions about salary, including how much faculty made. However, these were self-reported numbers, and listed in categories. Much more precise salary figures are available through Western Office of Institutional Research, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, and even from the Chronicle of Higher Education. On the other hand, it can be noted that in 1999 only 24% of Western faculty reported they were not satisfied with their salary, as opposed to 34% being not satisfied in 2011. (See Table 12.)

Table 12: HERI Faculty Survey Data Comparison, 1999 & 2011

	1999		2011	
	Western	USA	Western	USA
Not Satisfied with Salary	24%	43%	34%	22%

Finally, faculty were asked if, given the chance to begin their career again, would still choose to be a college professor? In 2011, a higher percentage of Western faculty answered yes to this question than in 1999. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1: If you were to begin your career again, would you still want to be a college professor?

