

Cornell University

2016 Academic Work Life Survey: Survey Population and Response Rates

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The 2016 Academic Work Life (AWL) Survey opened on October 6th and closed on November 7th. This web-based survey asked about the work activities in which Cornell academics are engaged and the extent to which they feel Cornell supports that work; perceptions of leadership and departmental climate; experiences with hiring and review, and plans to stay at or leave Cornell; and how life outside of Cornell meshes with work responsibilities. The AWL survey replicated many questions from similar surveys of Cornell faculty conducted in 2005 and 2010 but also included new questions of interest.

Survey Population

While the populations for the 2005 and 2010 surveys were restricted to professorial rank faculty, all employees in academic positions hired as of fall 2015 and holding at least a 50% appointment (N=2,921) were invited to participate in the AWL survey¹. Academics in non-faculty positions were invited to participate in a slightly modified version of the survey. For analysis purposes, the AWL survey population and respondents have been grouped according to type of academic position held:

¹ Academics employed in the library (i.e., archivists and librarians) were excluded from this survey population; they were invited to complete the Cornell Employee Survey.

Faculty: Tenured and tenure track faculty holding a professorial rank of assistant professor, associate professor or professor.

Academic professionals – instruction: Non-faculty academics with primary emphasis on instructional or clinical responsibilities (e.g., clinical professors, lecturers, senior lecturers, instructors);

Academic professionals – research: Non-faculty academics with primary emphasis on research (e.g., senior research associates, research associates, research scientists);

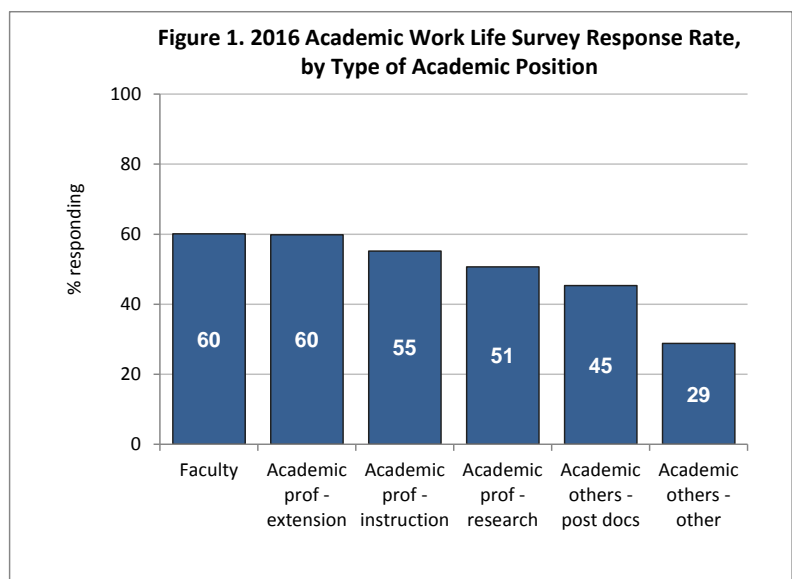
Academic professionals – extension: Non-faculty academics with primary emphasis on extension responsibilities (e.g., senior extension associates, extension associates);

Academic others – postdoctoral: Non-faculty academics with postdoctoral appointments (e.g., postdoctoral fellows and associates);

Academic others – other: Non-faculty academics with visiting or courtesy appointments (e.g., visiting scholar, critic or professor).

A total of 1,602 academics completed some portion of the survey, yielding an overall response rate of 55%. Response rates differed significantly across academic positions (Figure 1).

Response rates were highest among faculty (although their response rate of 60% is somewhat lower than response rates of 65% achieved in 2005 and 2010), and academic professionals with extension responsibilities. “Other” academics responded at the lowest rate (29%).



Response rates also differed significantly by academics' gender, race/ethnicity and disciplinary field (Table 1).

Table 1. 2016 Academic Work Life Survey Population and Respondents

Population	Population N	Respondents N	Response Rate
Overall	2921	1602	55%
By academic position**			
Tenure-track faculty	1536	923	60%
Academic prof - instruction/clinica	364	201	55%
Academic prof - research	335	170	51%
Academic prof - extension	199	119	60%
Academic other - postdocs	296	134	45%
Academic other - other	191	55	29%
By gender**			
Men	1835	962	52%
Women	1086	640	59%
By race/ethnicity**			
White	2200	1262	57%
Asian	475	202	43%
Black	101	43	43%
Hispanic	111	78	70%
Other	22	14	64%
By professorial rank (tenure-track only)			
Assistant	288	184	64%
Associate	401	252	63%
Full	847	487	58%
By disciplinary field*			
Administrative	30	13	43%
Agricultural sci & natural resource	248	154	62%
Biological & biomedical sci	705	405	57%
Business & economics	325	174	54%
Design	106	65	61%
Engineering	295	136	46%
Extension	48	25	52%
Humanities	352	199	57%
Law	64	27	42%
Physical & mathematical sci	445	225	51%
Social & behavior sci	284	173	61%
Other	19	6	32%

Significant differences in response rate: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.