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# Summary of Findings from HERI's 2011 Faculty Survey, including Comparisons to HERI's 1999 Faculty Survey

## CURRENT SURVEY (2011) SUMMARY

Recently, Western participated in the Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI) 2010-2011 Faculty Survey. This survey was web based and administered over several months, from August, 2010, through March, 2011. For this summary, only the responses from full-time faculty were used: 139 men and 127 women, 266 total. In the final report, Western's results were compared to two comparison groups: 1) a short list of ten public institutions that in as many ways as possible resembled Western; and 2) a list of all the public 4-year institutions that participated in the 2010-2011 survey. Western's peers in the first list were one of twenty peer groups created by HERI based on type (in Western's case a four-year college; i.e., a masters-granting institution), control (public), and selectivity (median SAT Verbal and Math scores of first-year students—which, in Western's case, was "high").

In the 2010-2011 survey, HERI broke survey responses into "constructs." According to HERI, these constructs "...are designed to capture the experiences and outcomes institutions are often interested in understanding, but that present a measurement challenge because of their complex and multifaceted nature." Similar to how the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) combines individual survey responses for benchmarking, so, too, does HERI combine individual responses into global measures very useful for benchmarking. The Office of Institutional Research has created a report of these benchmarks: "HERI 2010-11 Faculty Survey: Analysis of Data Constructs."

Very briefly, those findings will be summarized here, but for a full analysis, please refer to the above report, available through Institutional Research. HERI devised a dozen constructs. They are:

1. **Student-centered Pedagogy:** Western was more likely to embrace the concepts of student-centered pedagogy (small groups, student presentations, reflective writing, etc.) than our peers.
2. **Undergraduate Education Goal, Personal Development:** Western was about the same as our peers to believe that students' personal development ("help students develop personal values," "help students develop moral character," etc.) is a central goal for undergraduate education.
3. **Scholarly Productivity:** In this measure of scholarly activity, Western faculty were more likely to publish scholarly articles, chapters, etc., than our peers.
4. **Civic-minded Practice:** Western faculty were about as likely as their peers to be engaged in civic activities. (Questions included: "collaborated with the local community in research/teaching," "community service as part of coursework," etc.)
5. **Civic-minded Values:** Western faculty were about as likely as their peers to believe that civic engagement is a central part of the college mission. (Questions included

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“encourage students to become agents of social change,” “instill in students a commitment to community service,” etc.)

6. **Job Satisfaction, Workplace:** Western faculty were about as likely as their peers to be satisfied with their work environment.
7. **Job Satisfaction, Compensation:** As an overall construct, Western faculty were about as likely as their peers to be satisfied with their compensation packages. However, there were many differences on individual items. Here are two examples, one in the negative, and one in the positive: Western faculty were less satisfied with their salaries, but more satisfied with their teaching load.
8. **Career-related Stress:** As an overall construct, Western faculty and their peers reported about the same amount of career-related stress. However, there were many differences on individual items. Here are two examples, one in the negative, and one in the positive: Western faculty feel more stress than their peers due to lack of personal time, but less stress due to research or publishing demands.
9. **Institutional Priority, Commitment to Diversity:** Western faculty are about as likely as their peers to believe their institution is committed to diversity.
10. **Institutional Priority, Civic Engagement:** Western faculty are less likely than their peers to believe that their institution is committed to facilitating civic engagement among students and faculty. (Questions included that “your” institution “provides resources for faculty to engage in community-based teaching or research,” “facilitates student involvement in community service,” etc.)
11. **Institutional Priority, Increase Prestige:** Western faculty are about as likely as their peers to believe their institution is committed to increasing prestige.
12. **Social Agency:** Western faculty are about as likely as their peers to value political and social involvement as a personal goal.

In many of the above constructs, there are slight differences in response to individual questions. These differences are divulged in more detail in the report noted above, “HERI 2010-11 Faculty Survey: Analysis of Data Constructs.”

## PREVIOUS FACULTY SURVEY (1999) COMPARISON

In 1999, Western participated for the first time in the Higher Education Research Institute’s (HERI) Faculty Survey. A summary of that report, “1999 Western Washington University Faculty Survey: A Sampling of Findings”<sup>1</sup> is available through the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. That report and this summary used the responses from full-time faculty only. The most revealing findings from that report were that Western’s female faculty had experienced subtle discrimination at a higher percentage than our peers; that Western’s female faculty were less likely than our peers to agree that “women faculty were treated fairly”; and that Western’s female faculty were more likely than our peers to report they had been sexually harassed. These findings triggered further studies, including a 2001 survey conducted by an outside agency (International Survey Systems) that examined these issues in greater depth and detail. The results of that 2001 survey indicated that an uncomfortable

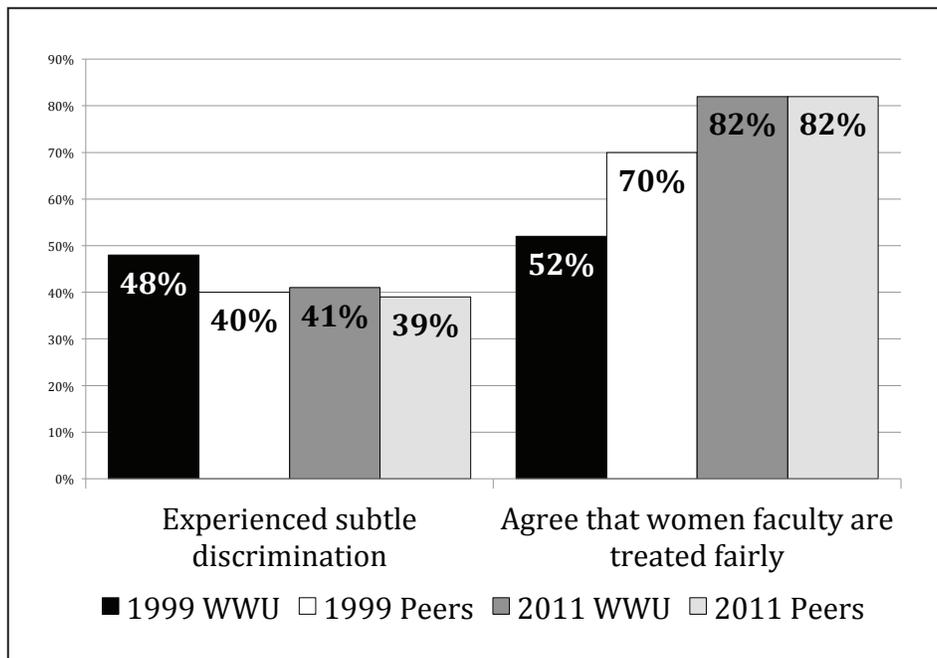
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<sup>1</sup>Focus: A Research Summary, Volume 7, Issue 1. August, 2002.

environment for female faculty did exist, but appeared to have improved—although this improvement was probably due to faculty turnover rather than changes implemented by the institution. This report, too, “Perceptions of Subtle Gender Discrimination, Hostility, and Sexual Harassment among Senior Women Faculty at Western Washington University,”<sup>2</sup> is available through the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education’s office.

Since these studies were published in 2002, programs meant to address and ameliorate these issues were implemented, not just for female faculty, but all Western employees. When Western again administered HERI’s Faculty Survey in 2011, some very different results were found. The percentage of Western’s female faculty who had experienced “subtle discrimination” fell from 48% to 41%, which was quite near our peers, at 39%. In addition, the percentage of Western female faculty who agreed that “women faculty were treated fairly” rose from 52% to 82%, which was the same as our peers. (See the table below.)

**Faculty Survey Findings Compared**  
Female Faculty only, 1999 vs. 2011.



Please note that all of the reports noted in this report are available through the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (VPUE). The original data set for the 1999 Faculty Survey is available through the VPUE, while the data set for the 2011 Faculty Survey is available through the Office of Institutional Research. This summary report was compiled by Gary McKinney, 360-650-3409, gary.mckinney@wwu.edu.

<sup>2</sup>Technical and Research Report 2002-02. August, 2002.