RECRUITING AND RETAINING SUCCESSFUL AND REPRESENTATIVE FACULTY: PROVOST FACULTY FELLOWSHIP #2

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THE PROJECT

- The challenges posed in PFF #2 were: to examine how to recruit and retain successful and representative faculty at USM.

- To achieve this, 3 main questions needed to be asked:

- 1. Why did current USM faculty come to USM?

- 2. What do USM faculty most enjoy about being faculty? (And what keeps them here?)

- 3. What challenges or problems are USM faculty facing?

Qualitative semi-structured interviews with permanent, full-time USM faculty.

Random sample selection; 36 total faculty emailed (44% response rate), 3 sampling frames.

IRB approval

N=16

Topics: USM Story/History, Faculty Benefits, Faculty Challenges

DEMOGRAPHICS

Race/Ethnicity	
White (non-Hispanic)	8 (50%)
Asian/PI	4 (25%)
Black	2 (12.5%)
White (Hispanic)	2 (12.5%)
N	16

Age	
20-29	1 (6.25%)
30-39	4 (25%)
40-49	4 (25%)
50-59	5 (31.25%)
60-69	2 (12.5%)
N	16

Gender	
Female	11 (68.75%)
Male	5 (31.25%)
N	16

DEMOGRAPHICS

Campus	
Hattiesburg	13 (81.25%)
Gulf Park	3 (18.75%)
N	16

Rank/Track	
Assistant Teaching Professor	4 (25%)
Associate Professor	3 (18.75%)
Full Professor	3 (18.75%)
Instructor	2 (12.5%)
Lecturer	2 (12.5%)
N	16

College	
Arts and Sciences	8 (50%)
Education & Human Sciences	3 (18.75%)
Nursing & Health Professions	3 (18.75%)
Business & Economic Development	2 (12.5%)
N	16

Zoom recorded interviews (in person and virtually); transcribed into Microsoft Word.

De-identified and then transferred into NVivo software.

3 coding rounds (Saldaña 2021)

1) Open/initial (free coding)

2) In vivo (using words/phrases of interviewees)

3) Focused (selective coding)

FINDINGS: *USM STORY/HISTORY*

Main themes of motivations for coming to USM:

- Tied to USM/was a student before 68.75% (11)

- Someone encouraged apply/come to USM 43.75% (7)

- From MS or already lived here 37.5% (6)

- Attracted by specific program or position 25% (4)

- USM was the first to make an offer and interview experience was pleasant 18.75% (3)

- A specific grant/research opportunity was a motivating factor 12.5% (2)

FINDINGS: *FACULTY BENEFITS*

<u>Main themes:</u>

- **Love of students and teaching 93.75% (15)**

- **Support 81.25% (13)**

- **Autonomy and flexibility 62.5% (10)**

FINDINGS: *FACULTY CHALLENGES*

Main themes:

- **Lack of institutional & financial supports 68.75% (11)**

- **Lack of social supports 50% (8)**

- **Being underpaid 50% (8)**

- **Teaching challenges 31.25% (5)**

- **Turnover/People are not staying 18.75% (3)**

FINDINGS: *MENTORSHIP*

13 out of 16 (81.25%) faculty had an official mentor assigned.

Most (9 of the 13; 69%) talked of mentors taking them under their wing, meeting for coffee regularly in a semester, being guided through scholarship/research, feeling cared for as a person and knowing how to move through P&T.

Most indicated they wouldn't be where they are without their mentors.

FINDINGS: *MENTORSHIP*

The remaining 3 faculty (18.75%) never had an official mentor or someone to mentor them.

1 thought this was because of when they came into the university (the process didn't exist)

2 thought this was because they were more senior and/or there weren't many in their areas/sub-fields.

Mentorship appears important but especially *active* v. *passive* mentorship.

FINDINGS: *COMMUNITY V. CULTURE*

Community definition:

Having support/feeling supported 43.75% (7)

-knowing you have people around you can count/rely on

Being or feeling connected to others 37.5% (6)

-included collaboration(s), feeling of belonging, having similar beliefs/values, able to work together with minimal conflicts, feel like part of "family."

11 of 16 (68.75%) faculty said they felt they had some form of community (from various sources/places).

6 out of 16 (37.5%) faculty noted there were difficulties, disconnections or feelings of separation/division.

FINDINGS: *COMMUNITY V. CULTURE*

Culture definition:

Positive and/or Supportive 50% (8)

Things are getting better compared to the past, we do more with less, culture is one of helping, being inclusive, or feels like home.

Challenging and Lacking 37.65% (6)

Trapped inside our program 'bubble', school is too big to find collaboration/community, covid-19 has disrupted interactions, feeling of not being valued/elitism (based on jobs, ranks, lack of support in program), and feeling pressure, in survival mode, or intensity (due to lack of funds/money, personnel, and enrollment drops).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Follow up survey of all faculty.

2. Increasing supports, positive community and culture, improving communication, etc. with a particular emphasis on "active" vs. "passive" mentorship.

3. Increasing pay to bring it in line with peer institutions.

4. Decreasing workload where/when possible.

5. Charging a study for staff to assess their needs.

THANK YOU!

Questions? Please don't hesitate to email me:

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