



UNIVERSITY OF
DETROIT MERCY

HERI Faculty Survey

2022-2023

Executive Summary: Results & Findings

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The HERI Faculty Survey is a national study of postsecondary faculty conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA. The survey provides institutions with a comprehensive, research-based snapshot of faculty experiences. Since 1989, nearly 1,300 two- and four-year institutions have used this tool to examine how faculty practices, values, and priorities relate to institutional success. It supports decision-making around strategic planning, recruitment and retention, faculty development, and assessment.

In 2022–2023, all full-time and part-time faculty actively teaching across all campuses at the University of Detroit Mercy (UDM) were invited to participate. This report summarizes the major themes, institutional strengths, and opportunities revealed through the survey, supported by benchmark comparisons to peer institutions.

KEY FINDINGS

The 2022–2023 HERI Faculty Survey results highlight Detroit Mercy's strong institutional focus on teaching, student development, and civic engagement. Faculty reported exceptionally high engagement in student-centered pedagogy and alignment with undergraduate educational goals. Service to the institution and community also emerged as a distinct strength.

At the same time, the results point to critical areas for improvement. Faculty expressed lower satisfaction with wellness support, research time and resources, and shared governance. Stress related to workload and concerns about compensation equity were also prevalent. Despite these challenges, most faculty remain committed to the university's mission and report a sense of purpose in their roles.

SURVEY FORMAT

The HERI Faculty Survey instrument is web-based and designed to provide actionable data on a broad range of issues including pedagogy, faculty goals, research, service, stress, satisfaction, and faculty-student engagement. Results are provided in a format that allows for comparisons across key subgroups and peer institutions.

Additional Modules Added:

- Campus Climate
- Mentoring
- Spirituality
- STEM

INSTITUTIONALLY ADDED ITEMS

Detroit Mercy used HERI's option to include locally developed questions, adding items tailored to institutional priorities. These custom questions addressed topics such as shared governance, campus equity, and instructional practices. Institutions are allowed to add up to 30 closed-ended and 5 open-ended questions, ensuring the survey remains relevant to local needs.

Multiple Choice

1. I would recommend Detroit Mercy to a potential student:
2. I would recommend Detroit Mercy to a potential employee:
3. My current workload supports a positive work life balance:
4. I am able to balance my research, teaching and service responsibilities:
5. I receive adequate support to achieve my research and scholarship/scholarly activity goals:
6. I recommend the university implement an academic advisor training program:
7. In my experience, faculty teaching, research, and service are fairly evaluated within the annual review and tenure and promotion processes at Detroit Mercy:
8. Colleagues frequently demonstrate disrespectful behavior to their peers:
9. I am actively engaged in student retention activities:
10. Most entering Detroit Mercy students are prepared for the academic program in which they are enrolled:
11. I believe there is adequate language support and instruction for international and domestic students for whom English is not their first language to succeed in their coursework:
12. I am familiar with the range of student support services on my campus and know how to contact relevant offices or individuals when a student is in need of support:
13. I believe there is adequate support and resources available to students who are socially and/or economically disadvantaged?
14. I know what to do if a student tells me they are considering harming themselves or others:
15. I feel comfortable in my knowledge of the Jesuit/Mercy traditions (e.g. social justice, education, service to the poor etc.):
16. I integrate the Jesuit/Mercy traditions in my teaching:
17. I am satisfied with the resources available to me that further my understanding of the Jesuit/Mercy traditions:
18. If you were hired within the last three years, which statement best describes your experience?
19. If you are familiar with the libraries' resources, how adequate are they for your research needs:
20. I am able to articulate the value of the Core Curriculum to prospective and current students:
21. How would you rate the physical accessibility for disabled individuals of Detroit Mercy buildings and facilities?

Open-Ended

1. If you indicated that you would *not recommend* Detroit Mercy to a potential employee or student, please explain why.
2. If you indicated *disagree* or *strongly disagree* to the question "My current workload support a positive work life balance" please explain and provide examples.
3. If hired within the last three years, and you indicated new faculty orientation/on-boarding was *not sufficient* please explain why and provide feedback on what can be improved.
4. What do you need to enhance your performance in research, teaching, and/or service? Provide examples...
5. If you can make one suggestion to improve Detroit Mercy, it would be...

SURVEY ITEM RATINGS

Faculty responded to core national items using Likert-scale formats, multiple-choice dropdowns, and text-entry fields. These covered areas such as teaching practices, scholarly productivity, stress and well-being, job satisfaction, institutional priorities, and diversity.

HERI uses CIRP constructs to measure complex faculty experiences by aggregating related survey questions. Each construct score ranges from **0 to 1.0**, with higher values indicating stronger agreement, greater engagement, or more positive perceptions. Scores closer to 1.0 reflect more favorable outcomes.

Example:

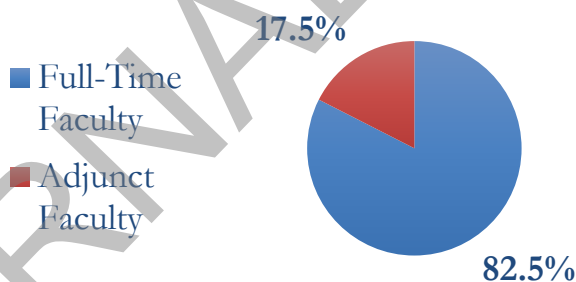
- A score of **0.854** in *Teaching* reflects very high institutional commitment to teaching.
- A score of **0.199** in *Health & Wellness* suggests opportunities for support.

SURVEY DISTRIBUTION

The HERI Faculty Survey was administered during the Winter 2022 term using anonymous, personalized links sent to each eligible employee's university email address. All full-time and part-time faculty actively teaching a course as of March 2023 were included. Administrators who also teach were excluded. The survey launched on March 22, 2023, and closed on April 30, 2023. Across all campuses, **815** faculty members received an invitation to participate.

In total **217** faculty members completed the full survey for an **overall response rate of 27%**.

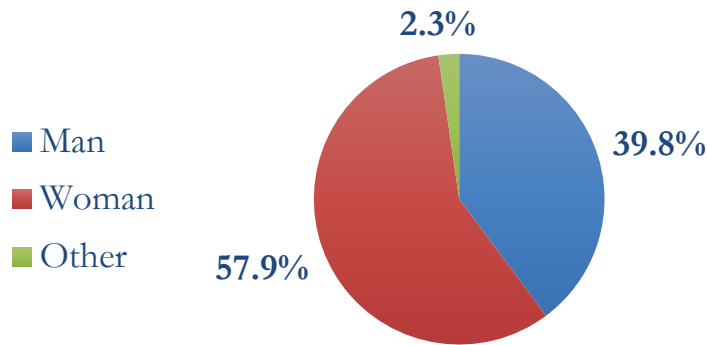
Respondents by Type



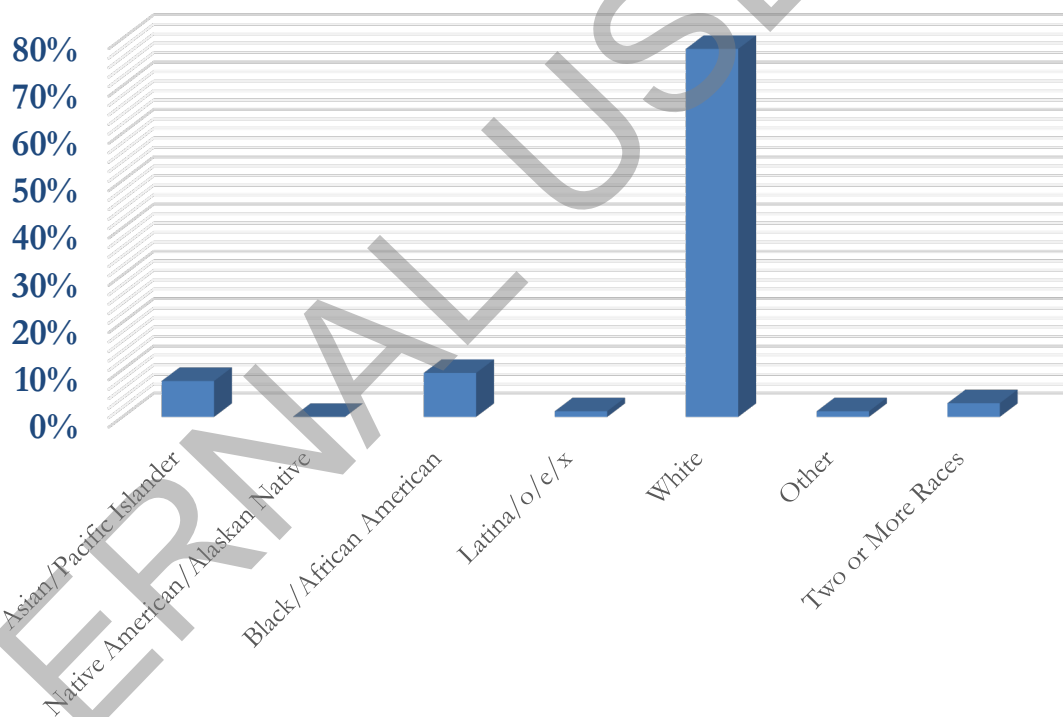
RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Overall, the gender and race/ethnicity demographics of survey respondents closely align with the broader Detroit Mercy faculty population, supporting the representativeness of the results. The respondent group was majority female, with small but present representation of gender-diverse faculty. The racial and ethnic breakdown of respondents was predominantly White, with representation from Black, Asian, Latina/o/e/x, multiracial, and other groups.

Respondents by Gender



Respondents by Race/Ethnicity



COMPARISON GROUPS

Detroit Mercy's results were benchmarked against two comparison groups:

- **Private Institutions:** Peer institutions that are private and non-profit
- **Catholic Institutions:** HERI-identified Catholic universities

These comparisons provide insight into how faculty at Detroit Mercy perceive their work and institution relative to national trends and mission-aligned institutions.

RESULTS

KEY STRENGTHS

1. Teaching-Centered Mission
 - a. **Score:** 0.854 | **Peers:** 0.800 and 0.855
 - b. Faculty heavily engage in **student-centered pedagogy**, including discussion-based learning, reflective writing, and cooperative projects.
2. Commitment to Undergraduate Goals
 - a. **Score:** 0.514 | **Peers:** 0.422 and 0.403
 - b. Faculty emphasize outcomes like **critical thinking, civic responsibility, and lifelong learning** more strongly than peers.
3. Service Engagement
 - a. **Score:** 0.293 | **Peers:** 0.269 and 0.217
 - b. Faculty contribute meaningfully to institutional and **community service**, reflecting Detroit Mercy's **mission**.
4. Student Development Focus
 - a. High scores on **Habits of Mind**, indicating faculty strive to help students:
 - i. Accept mistakes as part of learning
 - ii. Explore topics independently
 - iii. Use inquiry to drive learning

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. Faculty Wellness and Balance
 - a. **Score:** 0.199 | **Peers:** 0.192 and 0.171
 - b. Faculty cite stress related to workload, personal time, and burnout. This calls for enhanced **well-being support**, flexibility, and workload planning.
2. Scholarly Productivity Support
 - a. **Score:** 0.303 | **Peers:** 0.370 and 0.378
 - b. While teaching is a clear priority, many faculty seek more **time, funding, and recognition** for research and scholarly work.
3. Faculty Governance and Equity
 - a. Mixed satisfaction reported with:
 - i. Compensation
 - ii. Pay equity and family flexibility
 - iii. Departmental leadership
4. Some faculty perceive limited involvement in campus decision-making.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS FROM HERI CONSTRUCTS

Faculty Satisfaction

- Most faculty are satisfied with autonomy (82.6%), teaching work (70.4%), and 77.3% were satisfied with their department's leadership.
- Satisfaction is lower for retirement benefits (42.1%), leave policies (50.5%), and compensation (47.3%).

Sources of Stress

- Top stressors included:
 - Teaching load (73.8%) and committee work (65.9%)
 - Self-imposed expectations (75%)
 - Lack of personal time (67.6%)
 - Discrimination (notably higher among women and faculty of color)

Campus Climate

- Faculty believe Detroit Mercy prioritizes diversity and civic engagement (81.2%)
- Concerns noted in areas such as:
 - Effectiveness of hiring for diversity
 - Preparedness to address conflict over diversity in the classroom (only 65.1% feel prepared)

Institutional Commitment

- 31.9% of Detroit Mercy faculty reported seriously considering leaving the institution in the past year.
- 27.2% reported seriously considering leaving the academic profession altogether.
- Still, many affirm their alignment with institutional mission, particularly around student engagement and social justice.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- **Faculty Wellness:** Expand resources to address workload-related stress, improve work-life balance, and support mental health.
- **Scholarly Activity:** Increase protected time and resources for research, creative work, and professional development.
- **Compensation & Equity:** Audit pay and benefits for fairness and transparency; address gaps in equity and leave policy.
- **DEI & Campus Climate:** Provide robust, ongoing training in inclusive practices; strengthen recruitment and retention of diverse faculty.
- **Governance:** Ensure faculty voices are central in institutional planning and decision-making processes.

NEXT STEPS

- Department-level review of results encouraged
- Strategic planning committees should integrate these findings
- Institutional questions and modules (custom) can be added for more localized insight

The next HERI Faculty Survey will be conducted in 2025-2026