

Faculty Senate Survey Spring 2017

The San Antonio College Faculty Senate Survey was conducted in Spring 2017. The instrument was developed with the leadership of Dr. G. Mike Burton with contributions from the faculty senators. The survey was sent to 437 full- and part-time San Antonio College faculty via a link to the online survey provider Survey Point. In total, 275 faculty responded to all or some of the questions for a response rate of 62.9%.

Table 1 displays the Faculty Employment Status of the survey respondents. The majority of respondents (60%) were full-time permanent faculty. Adjunct faculty, that is faculty who are not permanent, are comprised of full-time and part-time adjuncts. Six and a half percent of the respondents were full-time adjuncts and 33.5% were part-time adjuncts.

Table 1: Faculty Status of Respondents Compared to Faculty Invited to Participate in Survey				
	Survey Respondents		Faculty	
	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency
Faculty Employment and Status				
Full-Time – Permanent	60.0%	165	57.7%	252
Full-Time Adjunct*	6.5%	18		
Part-Time Adjunct	33.5%	92	42.3%	185 (FT&PT)
Total		275		437

* Email lists are by Permanent and Adjunct Faculty Status

This report is divided into five thematic areas presented in the same order as they appeared in the survey:

- I. Faculty Morale
- II. PGR Win-Win Agreements
- III. Student Drops and Withdrawals
- IV. 4-Day Class Schedule
- V. Perceptions of Faculty Senate.

I. Faculty Morale

Faculty morale at San Antonio College has been of concern over the past few years, and was part of the impetus to undertake this survey of faculty. The Faculty Senate selected three items to measure aspects of faculty morale. The complete prompt and responses are provided in Table 2. Faculty were asked about faculty morale at SAC. The majority of faculty reported agreeing or strongly agreeing that they make a difference (67%), they are encouraged to provide a unique contribution (49%), and they feel appreciated (41%) at SAC.

While the most frequently occurring responses are all within the agree side of the scale, the high percentage of neutral responses, combined with the double-digit *number of* negative responses warrants further investigation. For example, one out of three faculty do not believe they make a difference at San Antonio College, and almost two out of three do not believe their contributions are appreciated.

The three questions were intended to be about the construct of faculty morale. A further analysis was made to see if there is an internal consistency in the respondents' responses across the three question that would indicated that these are different parts of the same construct. A Cronbach's alpha is a statistical way to look at the questions together to see if they, in fact, are part of a single construct. In this case, the Cronbach's alpha is 0.866. The high value of the Cronbach's alpha (which can range from 0.0 to 1.0) can be interpreted that the three questions together are part of a larger construct of a concept we identify as "faculty morale."

Table 2: Faculty Morale

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I make a difference at SAC	67.3%	20.2%	12.5%
I am encouraged to make a unique contribution at SAC	49.2%	26.4%	24.4%
My Contributions are appreciated at SAC	41.1%	23.9%	35.1%

To further examine the issue of faculty morale, the permanent and adjunct perceptions are compared. For all three questions, permanent faculty had a greater percentage of negative faculty responses (see Table 3).

Table 3: Faculty Morale Perceptions by Faculty Status

	Perceived Negative Effect	
	Permanent Faculty	Adjunct Faculty
I make a difference at SAC	13.4%	10.9%
I am encouraged to make a unique contribution at SAC	28.2%	17.0%
My Contributions are appreciated at SAC	41.3%	25.5%

Open-Ended Response Themes

- Initiative overload – too many new initiative from too many sources competing for time and attention that leave faculty feeling overwhelmed and undervalued
- Powerlessness to respond to all the old and new competing demands on faculty time and resources
- Low morale linked to addition of new mandates with insufficient support and respect from administration and a lack of feeling valued in the organization

Quote: I feel this college and our instruction as faculty members is becoming an afterthought at best and a joke at worst. No longer are we given resources or encouragement to teach.

II. PGR Win-Win Agreements

In 2015-2016, San Antonio College administrators focused on productive grade rates (PGR). The idea was that PGRs could be used as a tool to initiate discussions of areas to focus on for improvement in teaching and faculty support that may result in improved student outcomes. As part of the focus on PGR, win-win agreements were used to document individual faculty strategies and practices that would be used to improve PGR rates. This was the first time that PGR and win-win agreements were used in this manner at San Antonio College. The transition to this practice appeared to raise a lot of concerns among faculty. Now, about a year into the practice, the Faculty Senate sought to capture faculty perception and consequent practices related to Win-Win PGR Agreements. Survey results revealed that more than half of faculty respondents had the opportunity to communicate with an administrator regarding the policy. Of the faculty respondents, 25 (10.7%) had been asked to sign a Win-Win PGR agreement.

Faculty were asked to respond to four questions relating specifically to the effect of PGR win-win agreements. The questions are listed in Table 4. The response categories were strong negative effect, negative effect, no effect, positive effect, and strong positive effect. The initial five response categories in the following tables were collapsed into three categories: negative effect (comprised of strong negative and negative response categories), no effect, and positive effect (comprised of strong positive and positive effects).

Table 4: Explanation of Response Scale				
Strong negative effect	Negative effect	No effect	Positive Effect	Strong Positive Effect
Negative Effect		No effect	Positive Effect	

For example, if the survey results showed 10% of respondents chose “strong positive effect” and another 10% of respondents selected “positive effect,” the two are combined for form 20% “positive effect.”

The majority of respondents (64.3%) perceived the PGR win-win agreements to have a negative effect on overall faculty morale, but fewer respondents (53.8%) perceived the PGR win-win agreements to have a negative effect on their own morale. Also, the majority of respondents (59.9%) perceived the PGR win-win agreements as punitive. The majority of respondents (61.1%) perceived the PGR win-win approach to have a negative effect on academic standards.

Table 5: PGR Win-Win Agreement Perceptions for All Faculty

	Positive Effect	No Effect	Negative Effect
Do you consider the PGR win-win approach at SAC to have a positive or negative effect on overall faculty morale?	9.9%	25.8%	64.3%
Do you consider the PGR win-win approach at SAC to have a positive or negative effect for you personally?	10.0%	36.3%	53.8%
I consider the PGR win-win approach at SAC to be punitive.	12.7%	27.4%	59.9%
Do you consider the PGR win-win approach at SAC to have a positive or negative effect on academic standards?	14.3%	24.6%	61.1%

Given the negative perceptions of the majority of respondents and the seriousness of issues such as academic standards and faculty morale, additional analysis was conducted to further explore the other factors associated with these issues. Faculty Status is divided into two categories, permanent faculty and adjunct faculty. The results in Table 4 show that while both permanent and adjunct faculty respondents perceived the Win-Win Agreements in a negative light, a much higher percentages of permanent faculty perceive PGR Win-Win Agreements to be negative compared to the percentage of adjunct faculty.

Table 6: PGR Win-Win Agreement Perceptions by Faculty Status

	<u>Perceived Negative Effect</u>	
	Permanent Faculty	Adjunct faculty
Do you consider the PGR win-win approach at SAC to have a positive or negative effect on overall faculty morale?	76.5%	42.4%
Do you consider the PGR win-win approach at SAC to have a positive or negative effect for you personally?	65.1%	33.7%
I consider the PGR win-win approach at SAC to be punitive.	73.2%	35.9%
Do you consider the PGR win-win approach at SAC to have a positive or negative effect on academic standards?	72.5%	40.2%

The relationship between faculty perceptions of the PGR Win-Win Agreements and Faculty Morale was examined and the results (Table 7) show the relationships. In this case, Pearson's *r* is a statistical test that is used to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between two variables. (Pearson's *r* values range from 0 (meaning no linear relationship is present between the two variables) to + 1.0 or – 1.0 (meaning a complete linear relationship is present between the two variables, either positive or negative respectively)). Each variable pair analyzed was statistically significant and showed a moderate relationship between perception of PGR Win-Win agreement and Faculty Morale. For example, faculty who were low on the Faculty Morale Scale were more likely to respond on the disagreeing response-side regarding their perception of the PGR Win-Win agreement.

Table 7: Bivariate Analysis of PGR Win-Win Agreement Perception by Faculty Status and Faculty Morale

	<u>Faculty Morale</u>
Do you consider the PGR win-win approach at SAC to have a positive or negative effect on overall faculty morale?	$r = 0.376^*$
Do you consider the PGR win-win approach at SAC to have a positive or negative effect for you personally?	$r = 0.390^*$
I consider the PGR win-win approach at SAC to be punitive.	$r = 0.381^*$
Do you consider the PGR win-win approach at SAC to have a positive or negative effect on academic standards?	$r = 0.377^*$

* $p < 0.001$

Open-Ended Response Themes

- The PGR Win-Win agreements are viewed as punitive

Representative Quote: *The win-win is a sugar coated write up. It makes it sound like it's not a big deal, when actually it is. If it's going to be used as a punitive tool, then call it that.*

III. Student Drops and Withdrawals

San Antonio College uses a number of attendance-related initiatives with the intention to support student success. One of the most important is Smart Start, which seeks to ensure that students are ready the first day of the semester. Students are encouraged to attend the first day of class or to contact their instructor. Faculty can drop students for non-attendance and this drop would be conducted prior to census day. As part of this focus on student attendance, faculty are also able to withdraw students for non-attendance and negative performance. These policies and practices are documented in the student handbook. Table 7 shows faculty perceived likelihood of dropping students since 2016.

Table 8: Percentage Faculty Dropping and Withdrawing Students

	More Likely	No Change	Less Likely
Since Fall 2016, are you more or less likely to drop a student before census?"	38.0%	47.1%	15.0%
Since Fall 2016, are you more or less likely to withdraw a student without the student's request after census	16.5%	57.4%	26.1%

The majority of respondents (47.1% to 57.4%) reported no change dropping students before census and no change in withdrawing student without a request after census. Additional bi-variate analysis showed that faculty were consistent in practice before and after census. That is, faculty who reported being less likely to drop a student prior to census were also less likely to withdraw the student after census.

Open-Ended Response Themes

- No comments

IV. Four-Day Class Schedule

Faculty were asked eight questions on their experience and perceptions about the four-day class schedule. These questions considered issues ranging from student enrollment and scheduling, instruction and rigor, and effects beyond the classroom for students and faculty. Table 8 shows the results of this question series. The majority of faculty reported that the four-day class schedule had no effect on student enrollment (58%) and faculty scheduling (50%). With regard to instruction, the majority of faculty reported that the four-day class schedule had no effect on faculty ability to cover course content (61%), ensure course rigor (70%), and complete teaching and professional duties (47%). Likewise, student learning (60%), faculty-student engagement outside the classroom (57%), and student utilization of out-of-class resources (47%) were perceived as not being effected by the four-day class schedule according to the majority of respondents.

Table 9: Four-Day Class Schedule

Has the 4-day class schedule had a positive or negative effect on...	Positive Effect	No Effect	Negative Effect
...enrollment in your classes?	30.1%	58.1%	11.8%
...your ability to cover the course content in your classes?	25.5%	60.7%	13.8%
...on the rigor in your classes?	20.3%	69.1%	10.6%
...student learning in your classes?	23.5%	59.5%	17.0%
...your capacity to support student engagement outside of class?	23.9%	56.7%	19.4%
...course scheduling for you?	29.4%	49.8%	20.8%
...your capacity to manage and complete all of your teaching and other professional duties as a faculty member?	31.7%	47.2%	21.1%
...student's utilization of out-of-class resources (tutoring, labs, faculty office hours, advising, etc.)?	24.4%	47.2%	28.5%

It should be noted that while the majority of respondents perceived a no effect or a positive effect, one in five faculty found the new class schedule to created challenges associated with time management. More than 1 in 4 perceived the change to have a negative effect on student

utilization of out-of-class resources.

Given that workload of permanent and adjunct faculty is very different, and that permanent faculty have many responsibilities outside of the classroom, such as service and mentoring not required of adjunct faculty, the responses to issues related to the Four-day class schedule were further examined by faculty status. Table 9 shows that permanent and adjunct faculty differ in their negative perceptions of the four-day class schedule. Most notably, 1 in 5 permanent faculty perceived the four-day class schedule as having a negative effect on student learning. Both permanent and adjunct faculty perceived the four-day class schedule to have a negative effect on student use of out-of-class resources. Additionally, 1 in 4 permanent faculty perceived the four-day class schedule as creating challenges at meeting faculty obligations.

Table 10: Four-Day Class Schedule Perceptions by Faculty Status

Has the 4-day class schedule had a positive or negative effect on...	<u>Perceived Negative Effect</u>	
	Permanent Faculty	Adjunct Faculty
...enrollment in your classes?	16.1%	5.6%
...your ability to cover the course content in your classes?	18.8%	6.6%
...on the rigor in your classes?	12.8%	7.7%
...student learning in your classes?	20.1%	12.1%
...your capacity to support student engagement outside of class?	22.8%	13.2%
...course scheduling for you?	24.8%	12.4%
...your capacity to manage and complete all of your teaching and other professional duties as a faculty member?	25.7%	13.2%
...student's utilization of out-of-class resources (tutoring, labs, faculty office hours, advising, etc.)?	33.1%	20.9%

Open-Ended Response Themes

- Reduced time during the four class days pushes workload to home
- Fridays are meeting days and are not available for course planning and students
- Four-day teaching schedule had little effect

Quote: Chairs and faculty are receiving an increasing number of demands from various college and district administrators each of whom seems to believe that his/her requirement supersedes everything else. I feel all demands need to go through the college chain of command; i.e., to the chair from the dean. District's view that everything is a number one priority effectively means that nothing has a higher priority than anything else. Fridays have become scheduling opportunities for anyone in administration to capture faculty for whatever is deemed important to that administrator. This approach leaves departments/disciplines little time to work on curriculum development, program learning outcomes assessment, discipline-specific faculty development.

V. Faculty Perceptions of Faculty Senate

The final theme to be examined in the survey is that of faculty perceptions of Faculty Senate. In the three questions shown (see Table 10), “neither agree nor disagree” were the most frequently selected responses, with a relatively even distribution across the response options. Given the representative nature of Faculty Senate, and the role of Faculty Senate in shared governance, the neutral category should be viewed with concern.

Table 11: Perceptions of Faculty Senate Representation

The faculty senate represents...	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
...my policy concerns	33.5%	43.0%	23.5%
...my curriculum concerns	32.2%	40.4%	27.4%
...compensation concerns	28.3%	39.0%	32.7%

A further breakdown by faculty status is provided in Table 11. The pattern is consistent with the information provided when faculty are aggregated.

Table 12: Perceptions of Faculty Senate Representation by Faculty Status

The faculty senate represents...	Perceived Negative Effect	
	Permanent Faculty	Adjunct faculty
...my policy concerns	27.3%	18.1%
...my curriculum concerns	30.6%	22.0%
...my compensation concerns	30.7%	37.2%

Open-Ended Response Themes

- Lack of communication from and with faculty senators, including an unmaintained website, lack of information about faculty senate actions, and lack of information about who a faculty’s senator is
- Faculty Senate needs to better represent faculty’s concerns to administration, including the concern of adjunct faculty

- Faculty Senate is powerless

Quote: I'm not sure how to find out what is going on in Faculty Senate since a faculty member from my discipline is not on the Senate. The web page isn't maintained and we no longer have liaisons who report to the disciplines that aren't represented.

Themes from Open-Ended Comments

The following are themes that were noted in the open-ended responses that were not covered in the sections above.

- Compensation issues
 - Adjunct pay parity to full-time
 - Compensation for increasing workload
 - Compensation for training and development
- SAC autonomy concerns
 - Related to SAC's relationship with the District
 - Accreditation

Conclusions

The survey conducted by the San Antonio College Faculty Senate provides important information regarding issues facing Faculty at San Antonio College in 2017. Most importantly, Faculty Senate has a role in listening to and representing faculty concerns to administration. This survey provided an opportunity to hear the faculties' concerns. Further clarification and input from faculty on these survey results will be gathered at a Faculty Roundtable in September 2017. The Faculty Senate will then formulate its recommendations for addressing faculty concerns.