

Xavier University Strategic Planning Committee

Teaching, Scholarship and Research Capacity Team

REPORT

Group Members:

- Anil Kukreja, Facilitator (*Business*)
- Bob Blake (*Basic Pharmacy Sciences*)
- Gene D'Amour (*Resource Development*)
- Gary Donaldson (*Center for Undergraduate Research*)
- Allen Gale (*Planning & Institutional Research*)
- Nicole Pepinster Greene (*English*)
- Elizabeth Yost Hammer (*Center for the Advancement of Teaching*)
- Joe Ross (*Biology*)

CHARGE FOR TEACHING, SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH CAPACITY TEAM

Academic excellence at Xavier is intrinsically related to the work of the faculty in teaching, scholarship and research. The issue for this team to consider is: ***What is the proper balance between teaching and research?*** And, ***What are the implications of this question as it affects the teaching load of most faculty members?***

- A. To what extent would it be desirable for Xavier to attempt to stimulate and assist its faculty in their ability to carry out scholarly and/or research activities? How might this enhance the quality of teaching? How might it help attract and retain good faculty and/or students? How might this impact the reputation of the University? How might this positively impact the financial condition of the University?
- B. To the extent desirable, what strategies might be implemented to enhance Xavier's scholarship and research capacity? How might the desirability of this goal differ in the college of Arts and Science and the College of Pharmacy? (e.g. reduced teaching loads, improved library, better start-up packages, enhanced equipment/facilities, more funds to attend professional meetings?)
- C. What challenges/constraints/barriers exist to implementing these strategies? What is the cost?

PROCEDURES

The team designed and implemented an online survey focusing on Teaching and Research/Scholarship Capacity at Xavier, and identification of barriers to same, with the goal of making recommendations on strategies for the University to overcome such barriers, and identifying new resources that might be required to achieve this goal.

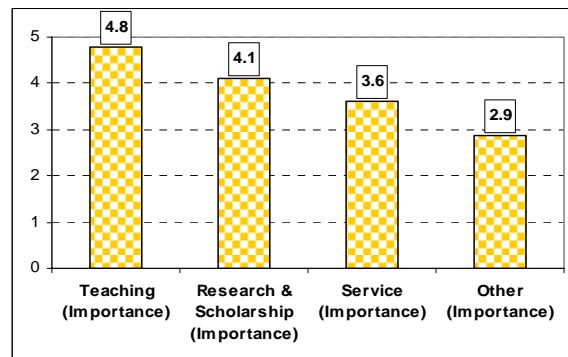
Of 186 surveys sent to faculty, there were 127 respondents (68% response rate), with all colleges, divisions, and departments represented. This report summarizes the findings of this survey. Unless otherwise indicated, data reflect all responses combined. Data, including field-specific analyses, are found in the Appendices.

SURVEY ANALYSIS

Charge A1. To what extent would it be desirable for Xavier to attempt to stimulate and assist its faculty in their ability to carry out scholarly and/or research activities?

Ratings of importance of faculty responsibilities

Teaching is seen as the most important aspect of faculty responsibilities (mean = 4.8, with 5 being “Extremely Important”), but *research/scholarship* follows closely behind (mean = 4.1). See graph at right. [See Appendix 1, Pages 6–7]



Faculty time: Actual versus ideal

Faculty members report that they *actually* spend the majority of their time on teaching responsibilities. 77% of faculty responded that they spend less than 25% of their time on research.

In contrast, faculty would *ideally* like to increase the time they spend on research/scholarly activities. 70% of faculty responded that ideally they want to spend between 25–50% of their time on research. See tables below.

TIME ALLOTMENT (ACTUAL)		
Teaching	Count	Percentage
0 to less than 25%	4	3.3%
25 to less than 50%	17	13.9%
50 to less than 75%	49	40.2%
75 to 100%	52	42.6%
Research/Scholarship	Count	Percentage
0 to less than 25%	88	77.2%
25 to less than 50%	26	22.8%
50 to less than 75%	0	0.0%
75 to 100%	0	0.0%

TIME ALLOTMENT (IDEAL)		
Teaching	Count	Percentage
0 to less than 25%	4	3.3%
25 to less than 50%	32	26.7%
50 to less than 75%	70	58.3%
75 to 100%	14	11.7%
Research/Scholarship	Count	Percentage
0 to less than 25%	25	21.4%
25 to less than 50%	82	70.1%
50 to less than 75%	9	7.7%
75 to 100%	1	0.9%

Obstacle: Time

When faculty were asked about obstacles to **research/scholarship**, *time* emerged as a serious issue. 81% of faculty disagree or strongly disagree with the statement “*I have enough time to carry out scholarly activities to maintain up-to-date knowledge in my academic field.*” This pattern was consistent when faculty were asked about time to publish (83% disagreement) and to write grants (95% disagreement). [See Appendix 1, Page 3]

Time was as pressing an issue for **teaching**. Only 31% of faculty disagree or strongly disagree with the statement “*I have enough time to carry out my teaching responsibilities*” while 57% agreed or strongly agreed. [See Appendix 1, Page 5]

Open-ended comments consistently noted TIME as a *barrier* to effective research/scholarship (please note that the Basic Science Division of Pharmacy did not rate time as problematic as did A & S faculty. The team speculated that perhaps this is because BSD faculty typically have only one preparation per semester, even though class size might be quite large). Other comment patterns indicated that too much time was taken up with meetings, and some department chairs' time was often taken up with clerical duties (*e.g.*, EPAFs).

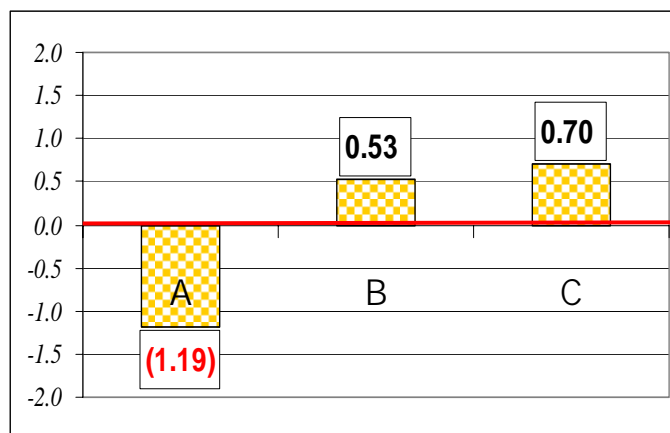
Obstacle: Teaching Load

The majority of faculty (81%) disagreed that the current 4:4 teaching load should be left in place. Only 8% of the faculty agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “*The current 4:4 teaching load for all faculty should be left in place as is.*” [See Appendix 1, Page 7]

Faculty members were given the following options from which to choose:

- Option A:** The current 4:4 teaching load for all faculty at Xavier University should be left in place as is.
- Option B:** The current 4:4 teaching load for all faculty at Xavier University should be reduced to 3:3, with an increased expectation for research and scholarly activity for all faculty.
- Option C:** The current 4:4 teaching load for all faculty at Xavier University should be changed to a mixture: 4:4 for some faculty and 3:3 (with an increased expectation for research and scholarly activity) for others.

The chart at right shows the degree of agreement vs. disagreement with each of the options (mean responses shown; ranged from –2=Strongly Disagree; 2=Strongly Agree). [See Appendix 1, Page 7]



When faculty were asked to rank preference (from First Choice to Third Choice) for the options, the majority (93%) chose either Option B or Option C as First Choice, as opposed to only 7% for Option A. Conversely, 80% rated Option A as their Third Choice (See table below).

	Option A	Option B	Option C
First Choice	7.1%	42.9%	50.0%
Second Choice	12.6%	43.2%	44.2%
Third Choice	79.8%	16.0%	4.3%

Recommendations:

- 1) Administration should continue to seriously explore the issue of teaching load through the Faculty Load Advisory Committee.
- 2) Specifically, Xavier should examine how many additional faculty may be needed, and what the cost would be to shift to either Option B or C.

3) In addition, Xavier should look at strategies used by other universities (e.g. Spelman) that have reduced their teaching loads to 3-3.

Charge A2. How might this enhance the quality of teaching? (See 4F re: time to maintain up-to-date knowledge on teaching)

While faculty were split on this item, 38% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “*I have sufficient time to maintain up-to-date knowledge regarding the courses that I teach.*” Time might be a problem in this area especially for those with large class sizes, heavy advising loads, and active scholarship. [See Appendix 1, Page 5]

Obstacle: Teaching Facilities

Open-ended comments revealed that insufficient *classroom facilities* were repeatedly mentioned as a barrier to effective teaching, especially for faculty who teach primarily in Xavier South, and for faculty surveyed in the humanities and Social Sciences.

Most faculty report being satisfied with computing resources; 73% of the faculty agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “*I have sufficient computing resources to teach my courses effectively.*” [See Appendix 1, Page 5]

Charge A3. How might it help retain good faculty?

81% of respondents agree or strongly agreed with the statement “*Eliminating barriers identified (in the survey) would significantly increase Xavier’s ability to **retain** outstanding faculty,*” and 81% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “*Eliminating barriers identified (in the survey) would significantly increase Xavier’s ability to **attract** outstanding faculty.*” [See Appendix 1, Pages 5–6]

However, the pattern was a bit different for the Division of Clinical Pharmacy. The team speculated that this could be due to different work issues (e.g., off-campus clinical sites).

The following were listed as factors that *negatively* impact faculty retention.

- *teaching load*
- *lack of scholarly environment* (especially for humanities)
- *salary*
- *working in isolation* (especially for humanities)
- *lack of start-up funding* (especially for natural sciences)

Recommendation:

Addressing all recommendations included in this report should help in his area.

Charge A4-5. How might this impact the reputation of the University? How might this positively impact the financial condition of the University?

Scientific research is expensive due to the need for laboratories, technicians, supplies, etc. To the extent that Xavier can help its faculty become more competitive for external grants, some of these costs can be paid through such grants, rather than by the University. In addition, many of

these grants will pay for indirect costs incurred by our researchers, relieving the University of some of these costs.

While not necessarily appropriate, the national press and national rankings tend to emphasize research and scholarship activities. As Xavier increases its quality and visibility as a research institution, our national and regional rankings will tend to improve, as will our ability to attract more outside funds and greater numbers of outstanding students.

Charge B1. What strategies might be implemented to enhance Xavier's scholarship and research capacity, and how might the desirability of this goal differ in the college of Arts and Science and the College of Pharmacy?

Obstacle: Research Facilities

For A & S lab-specific science disciplines, only 52% report having adequate space to carry out research activities. In line with this, only 50% report having adequate lab and core facilities to carry out their scholarship. The faculty in the Basic Science Division of Pharmacy report similar results. One open-ended comment from an Arts and Sciences faculty member stated that the department was actually saved from their research space crunch by fallout from Katrina, and in three to five years, if current trends continue, the department will be right back in a crunch again. [See Appendix 2, pages 5–6]

Obstacle: Library Research Facilities

65% of humanities faculty, 71% of social science faculty, and 75% of business faculty respondents reported insufficient library resources to carry out research. The main comment that emerged was lack of library databases. [See Appendix 2, Page 4]

Recommendations:

- 1) Plans and cost estimates be pursued to renovate Xavier South classrooms and convert additional rooms to multimedia format.
- 2) Data already gathered be used forthwith to develop plans and cost estimates to expand laboratory space in A & S science departments.
- 3) Consideration be given to shared lab space in the old pharmacy building once the new Pharmacy building is constructed.
- 4) Additional information should be gathered to determine resources and databases needed in the library, and these resources should then be prioritized and assessed in terms of cost.

Charge C. What challenges/constraints/barriers exist to implementing these strategies? Cost? Impact on the quality of teaching?

There is **no clear consensus** about Xavier's commitment to increasing research and scholarship.

The survey responses indicate that although faculty believe that Xavier has a strong commitment to research and scholarship, this commitment is not reflected in its institutional policies and practices regarding tangible rewards and investment of university resources.

Only 54% of the faculty agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “*Xavier has a strong institutional commitment to increase research/scholarship*” while 33% disagreed or strongly disagreed. [See Appendix 1, Page 1]

Only 49% of the faculty agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “*This commitment is clearly reflected in institutional and academic unit policies and practices regarding rewards*” while 31% disagreed or strongly disagreed. [See Appendix 1, Page 1]

Only 31% of the faculty agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “*This commitment is clearly reflected in institutional and academic unit policies and practices regarding investment of university resources*” while 37% (22% Natural Sciences & Math; 50% Pharmacy Basic Sciences Division) disagreed or strongly disagreed. [See Appendix 1, Page 1]

Recommendations:

- 1) Costs for overcoming major barriers should be identified.
- 2) For those barriers which appear not to have consensus, more discussion is needed with faculty in individual departments.
- 3) University Administration needs to send a clear message to faculty about commitment to research and seek to find out why faculty responses to this topic vary.

CONCLUSIONS

Time emerged as the major barrier to faculty’s ability to remain active in research and scholarship. The team strongly recommends that the institution explore the feasibility of **reducing teaching loads**.

Condition of classrooms/facilities should also be addressed, especially at Xavier South.

Course loads and other barriers (e.g. facilities, library resources) need to be addressed in order to recruit and retain talented faculty.

Recommended Measurement Tools:

- 1) Administer this survey annually to assess progress made in addressing identified barriers.
- 2) Determine whether changes implemented affect faculty turnover.