

Executive Summary

2025-26 Annual Faculty Welfare Survey

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 Assisted by Pinky Rusli and Aaron Wichman (FWPR Committee Members)
 Date: 27 April 2026

Details

The Faculty Welfare Survey is an annual survey distributed by WKU Faculty Senate’s *Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities* (FWPR) Committee to gauge how faculty members feel about the current campus environment, our leadership, and their overall work-life wellbeing. The 2026 survey was distributed via Qualtrics to approximately 548 faculty members (an estimate based on the 2024-25 academic year). A faculty member is defined as anyone who holds a teaching and/or research position either at full-time, part-time or adjunct status. 343 raw responses were received, and 330 cleaned responses were analyzed – 13 responses were removed because they were completely blank across all questions – for an approximate response rate of 60.2%.

Quantitative responses will not add up to the 330 total because the analyses did not include responses who left answers blank.

Qualitative summaries were generated using AI Claude Sonnet 4.6 Extended (from Anthropic). Quantitative tables and data visualizations were generated using R, ChatGPT, and Qualtrics. Parts of this report’s analysis were generated with assistance from Microsoft Copilot. Samples were spot-checked to verify the accuracy of the analysis and write-ups were edited for clarity.

Note from the Committee Chair

I read through every, single comment for each question – it was a very somber experience... WKU faculty are overall unhappy and have been for a long time. When respondents disclose they are contemplating suicide or fear dying alone in their office, **that isn’t OK**, nor is it publicity that WKU needs. Respondents who wrote neutral or positive comments either are content with their situation or probably haven’t been here long enough to adequately assess their overall experience.

Few respondents commented whether any meaningful changes will come of these surveys – *I would like to see that change*. It seems that data-driven decision-making is a favored strategy of change and implementation. In various reports to key stakeholders, I offered data to display performance satisfaction trends and asked them to strongly consider making meaningful changes to improve the quality of campus life for what probably is one of WKU’s most valuable assets – its full- and part-time faculty and instructors.

Overall Consolidated Thematic Structure (Administrative Summary)

Factor	Definition (What this captures)	Core Issues / Indicators	Where It Appears Across Questions
1. Leadership Trust / Transparency	Degree to which faculty perceive leadership as honest, visible, accountable, and genuinely engaged with faculty concerns	Opaque or selective communication; lack of follow-through; performative consultation; inconsistent messaging across levels; limited leadership visibility; lack of accountability for decisions	RAMP transparency concerns; job difficulty (communication issues); President feedback; Provost feedback; Board feedback
2. Resource Stewardship / Priority Alignment	Perceived alignment between institutional spending decisions and the academic mission	Athletics subsidy; administrative expansion; capital projects vs. academic needs; loss of faculty lines; loss of staff support; disconnect between productivity and resources; housing / facilities concerns	RAMP resource allocation; job difficulty (resource loss); President performance; Board performance
3. Shared Governance / Procedural Fairness	Extent to which faculty voice meaningfully shapes decisions and processes are applied fairly and consistently	Faculty input ignored; decisions announced rather than deliberated; unchecked dean authority; favoritism; inequitable workload distribution by rank / status; lack of clear criteria for decisions; weak oversight structures	RAMP faculty exclusion; job difficulty (governance concerns); Provost oversight issues; belongingness (rank / favoritism)

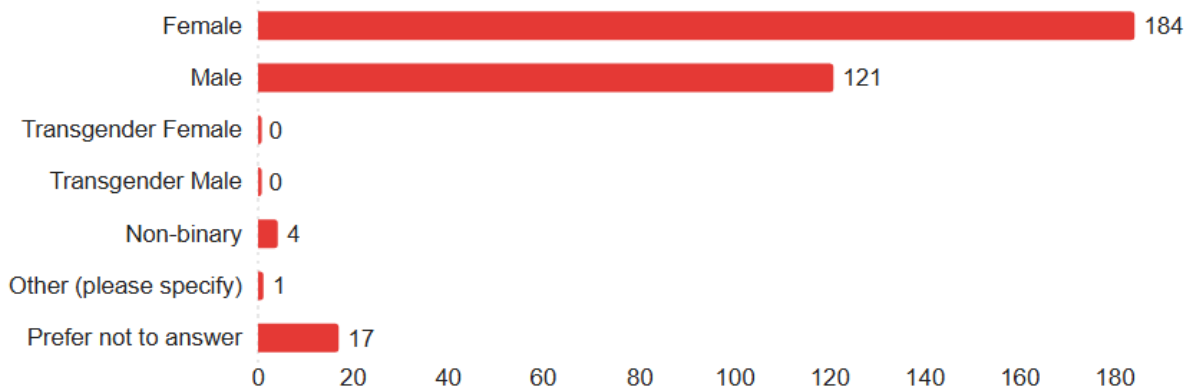
<p>4. Faculty Workload / Sustainability</p>	<p>Sustainability of faculty roles given workload, compensation, and support conditions</p>	<p>Faculty / staff shortages; increased service burden; larger class sizes; loss of research time; administrative / reporting burden; salary compression / inversion; benefits strain; reduced travel/research support; facilities challenges</p>	<p>Job difficulty (primary theme); RAMP (staff / resource constraints); AI (grading / enforcement burden)</p>
<p>5. Academic Mission / Educational Integrity</p>	<p>Degree to which institutional conditions support genuine student learning, rigor, and disciplinary standards</p>	<p>AI misuse and integrity concerns; inability to assess authentic student work; declining student preparedness; pressure to prioritize enrollment over quality; reduced rigor; concern about graduate competence</p>	<p>AI question; job difficulty (student preparedness); RAMP (incentive structure concerns)</p>
<p>6. Belonging / Identity Safety (Optional)</p>	<p>Extent to which faculty feel respected, included, and safe across identity and status dimensions</p>	<p>Rank-based exclusion; contingent faculty invisibility; gender inequity; religious tension; disability access barriers; DEI rollback effects; political climate and self-censorship</p>	<p>Belongingness question; job difficulty (climate); leadership responses related to HB4</p>

Executive Interpretation

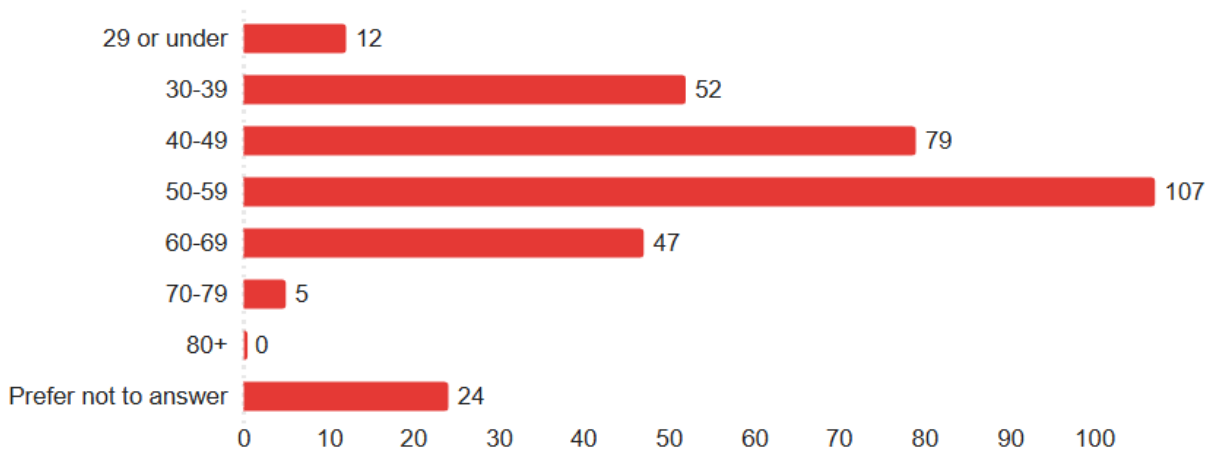
- Faculty responses cluster into **five core institutional dimensions**, with a sixth (belonging/identity safety) relevant for climate-focused reporting.
- The same concerns recur across multiple questions, indicating **system-level issues rather than isolated problems**.
- The strongest cross-cutting patterns are:
 - Low trust in leadership transparency and accountability
 - Perceived misalignment between spending and academic priorities
 - Erosion of shared governance
 - Unsustainable workload and compensation conditions
 - Growing concern about the integrity of student learning

Images 1-11. Demographics.

D1 - Your Gender - Selected Choice



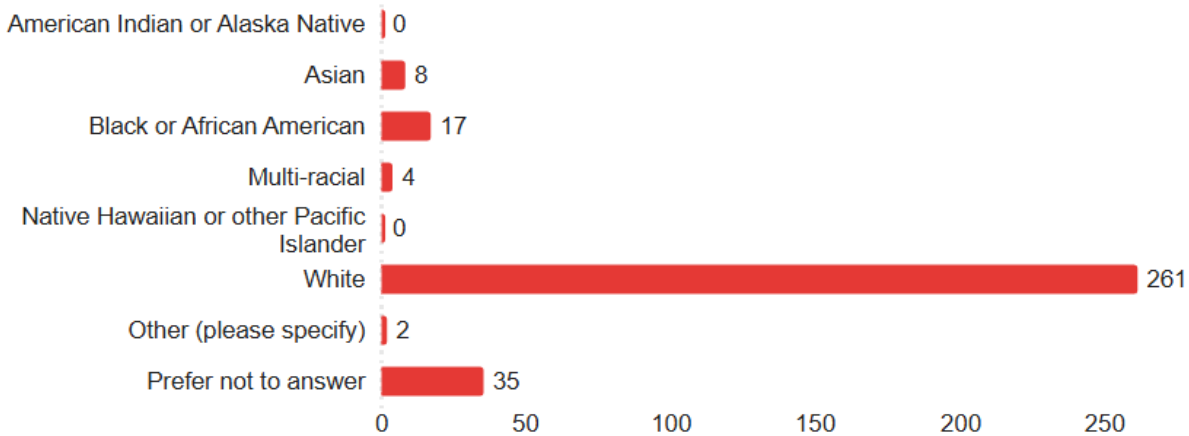
D2 - Your age



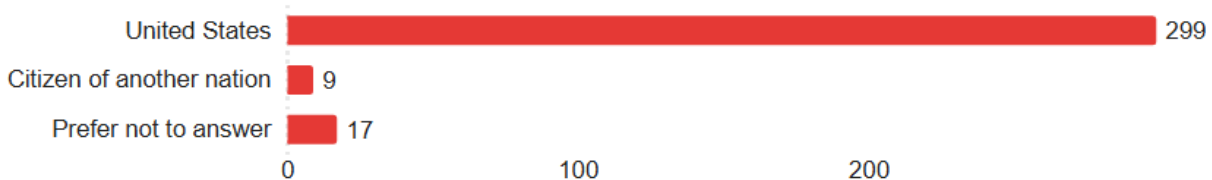
D3 - Are you Hispanic or Latinx?



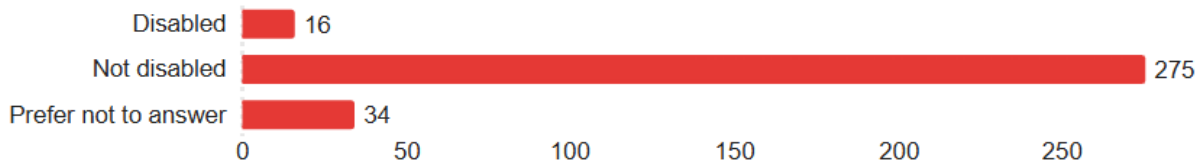
D4 - Your primary racial identity - Selected Choice



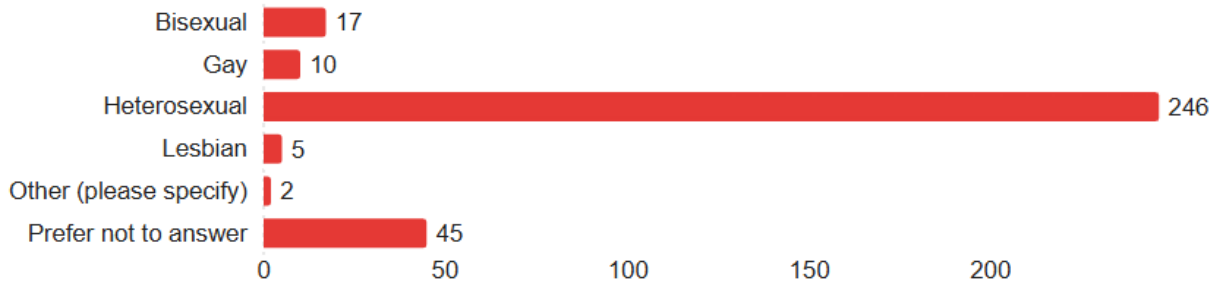
D5 - Your citizenship status



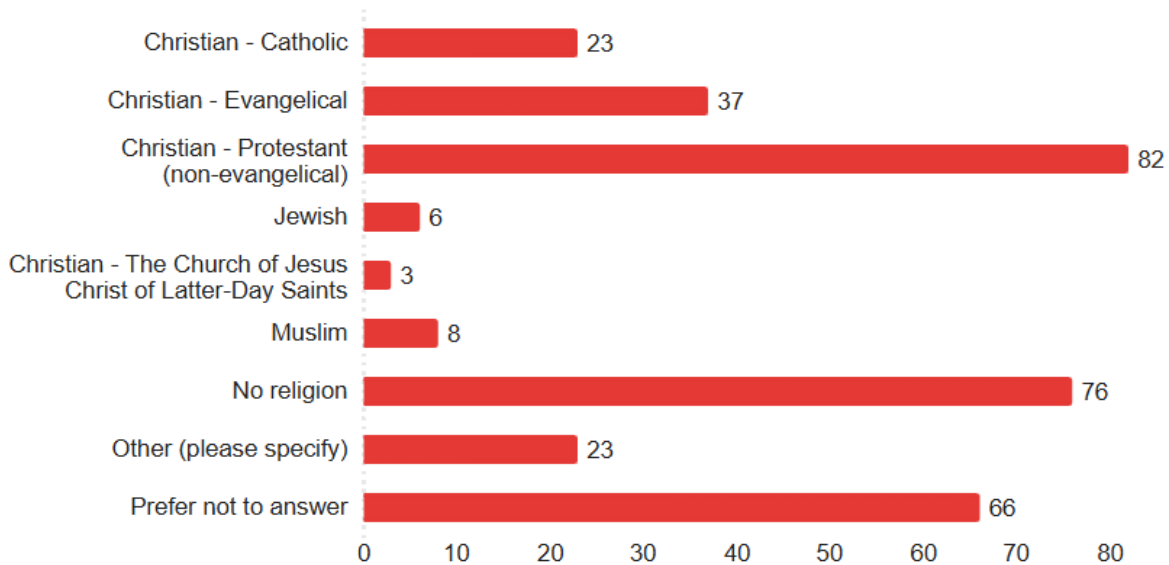
D6 - Your disability status



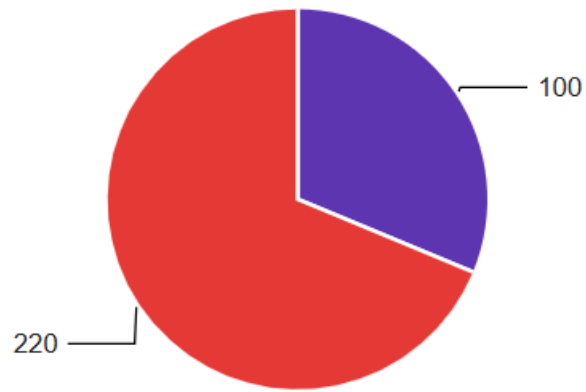
D7 - Your sexual orientation - Selected Choice



D8 - Your religion - Selected Choice



W1 - Do you hold a tenure-track position?



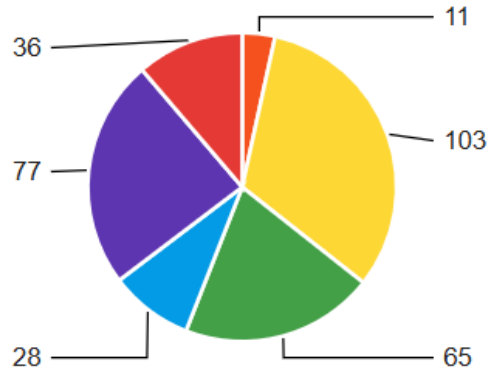
■ No ■ Yes

W2 - Your Rank



■ Professor ■ Associate Professor ■ Assistant Professor ■ Full-time Instructor ■ Part-time Instructor

W3 - Your Affiliation



- University Libraries
- Potter College of Arts and Letters
- Ogden College of Science and Engineering
- Gordon Ford College of Business
- College of Health and Human Services
- College of Education and Behavioral Sciences

Agree and Disagree Statements

The following tables are frequency counts (i.e., 38 people “strongly agreed” with the first item in Table 1).

Table 1. Perceived Support at WKU.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion are taken seriously at WKU.	38	109	63	38	24
I feel supported at WKU given my gender / gender identity.	66	128	50	16	7
Faculty of all genders / gender identities are supported at WKU.	49	113	55	26	13
I feel supported at WKU given my race / ethnicity.	71	134	44	10	7
Faculty of all races / ethnicities are supported at WKU.	53	99	60	30	12
I feel supported at WKU given my sexual orientation.	73	115	53	8	6
Faculty of all sexual orientations are supported at WKU.	47	96	63	22	10
I feel supported at WKU given my age.	68	138	43	18	10

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Faculty of all ages are supported at WKU.	55	111	61	21	11
I feel supported at WKU given my citizenship status.	87	117	36	1	5
Faculty of all citizenship statuses are supported at WKU.	47	76	63	8	11
I feel supported at WKU given my disability.	23	33	37	6	9
Faculty of all levels of ability/disability are supported at WKU.	33	64	50	23	16
I feel supported at WKU given my religion.	39	85	62	21	16
Faculty of all religions are supported at WKU.	36	76	66	25	22
All faculty are treated similarly and/or equitably in my department.	67	90	44	39	38

Table 2. Satisfaction with Support Services

Service	1: very satisfied	2	3	4	5: very dissatisfied
Library resources	4	11	45	122	82
Availability of support for childcare and parental obligations	13	18	32	33	13
Availability of university leave and benefits for familial obligations	8	21	30	83	34
Support for a healthy work-life balance	40	57	51	89	37
Paternity/maternity leave options	3	7	24	50	36
Information technology	11	30	44	130	68
Parking and transportation services	45	62	60	83	23
WKU Store services	12	23	64	99	27
Campus food services	10	22	60	122	30
Human Resources	7	15	67	127	40
Preston Center	12	23	33	66	20

Image 12. Faculty Morale.

M1_1 - In my opinion, faculty morale is

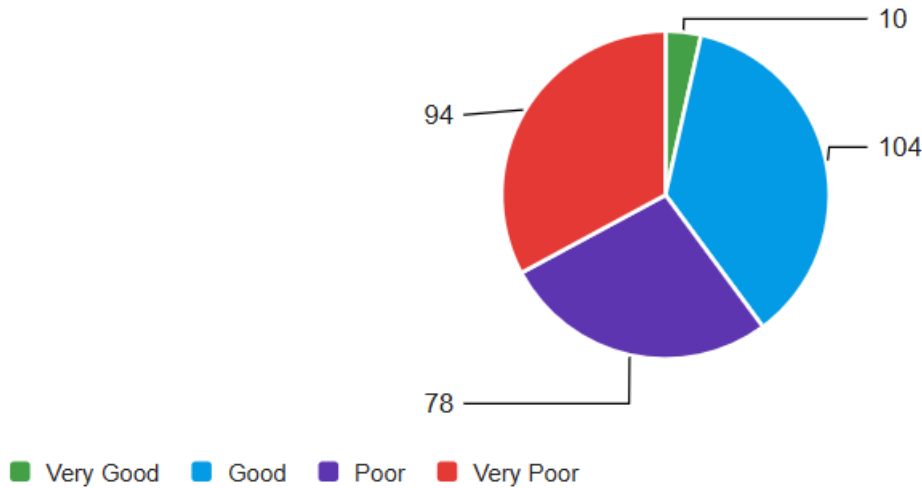


Table 3. Perceived Support of Workload.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My teaching load is reasonable.	37	162	35	37	10
My service load is reasonable.	28	130	39	42	24
My research load is reasonable.	19	110	47	18	8
Considering all of my responsibilities, my workload is manageable.	17	63	33	44	25
My workload is satisfactory.	30	124	42	56	30
I understand the procedure by which workload is determined in my unit.	26	111	62	55	26
University procedures for establishing workload are appropriate.	37	126	46	36	27
Work is distributed equally and/or fairly in my department.	25	91	40	67	51
I feel supported in doing my job.	57	111	45	45	25

Table 4. Perceived Use of Artificial Intelligence in Workload.

Area	Using AI is core to what I do	I frequently use AI	I occasionally use AI	I rarely use AI	I don't use AI at all
Research	6	32	72	58	106
Teaching	4	44	103	59	73
Service	3	25	65	58	129

Table 5. Perceived Satisfaction with Salary.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Relative to years of service and rank my salary is satisfactory.	5	36	33	89	117
Relative to colleagues at other universities and/or colleges, my salary is satisfactory.	5	17	18	93	127
Relative to persons with similar credentials working in the private sector, my salary is satisfactory.	4	13	20	70	165

Table 6. Satisfaction with Benefit Options.

Item	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Retirement savings plan options	32	143	53	21	12
Health insurance options	23	89	50	60	38
The Top Life Wellness Program	21	72	68	47	37
Tuition benefits for yourself / spouse / dependent	36	74	33	21	9

Table 7. Reported Understanding of the Promotion and Tenure Process.

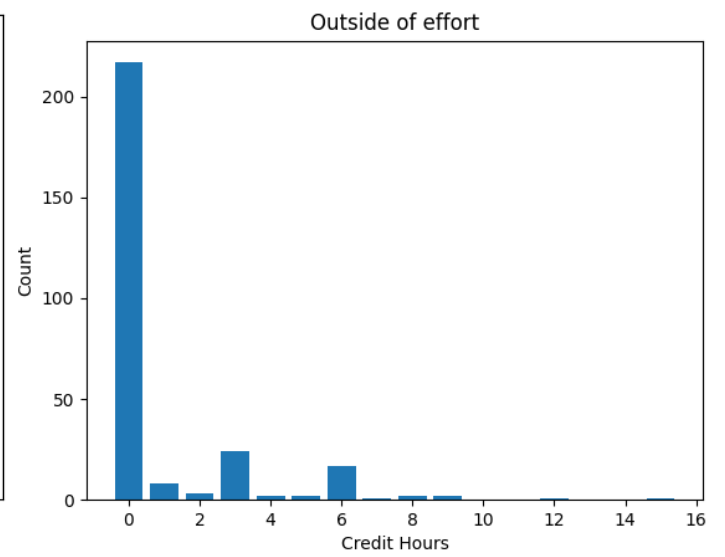
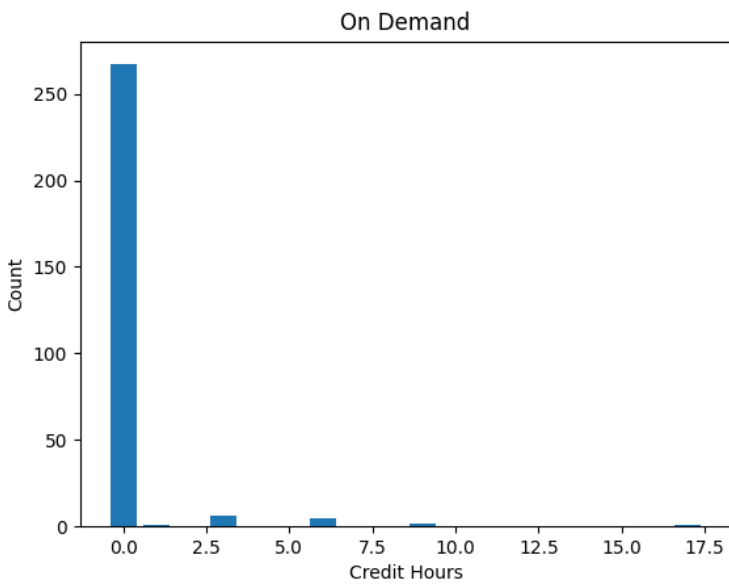
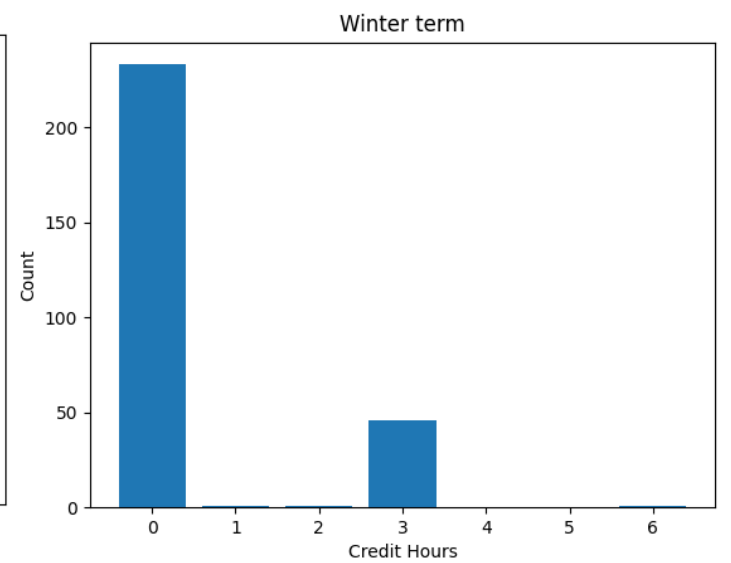
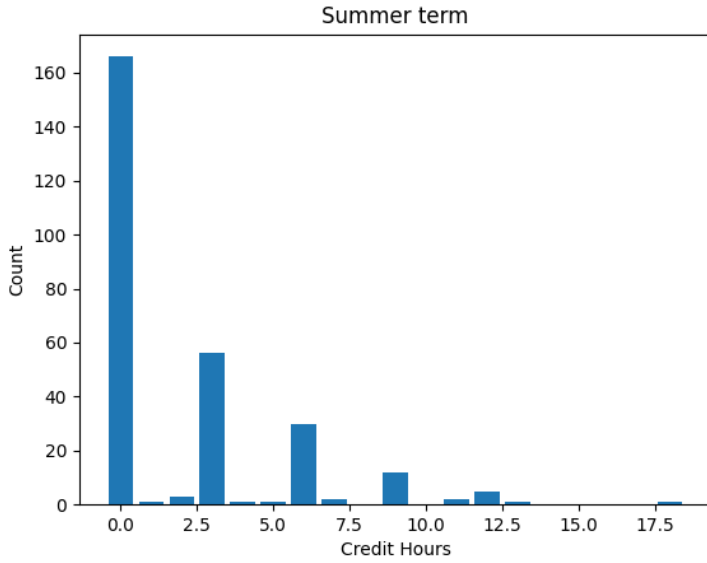
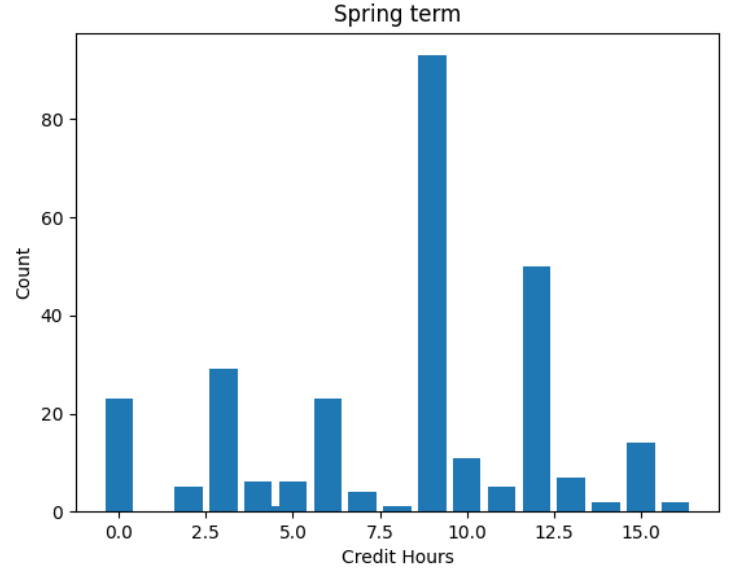
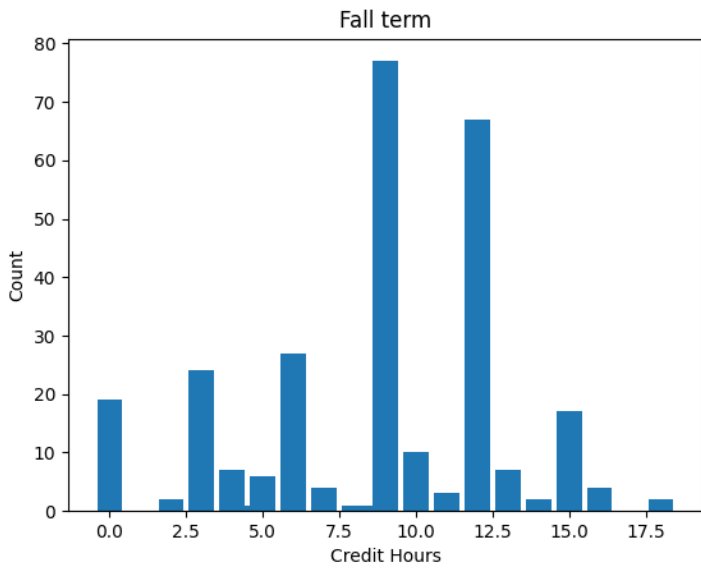
Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have a clear understanding of what is required for tenure decisions.	69	112	20	17	5

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have a clear understanding of what is required for promotion decisions.	61	114	32	31	11
Tenure procedures at WKU are transparent.	45	98	48	26	8
Promotion procedures at WKU are transparent.	39	98	59	35	18
I am aware of the criteria for merit increases in my department.	17	27	28	63	93
I am satisfied with the merit increase process.	10	15	33	38	109
I feel supported in the tenure and/or promotion process.	40	88	61	25	21

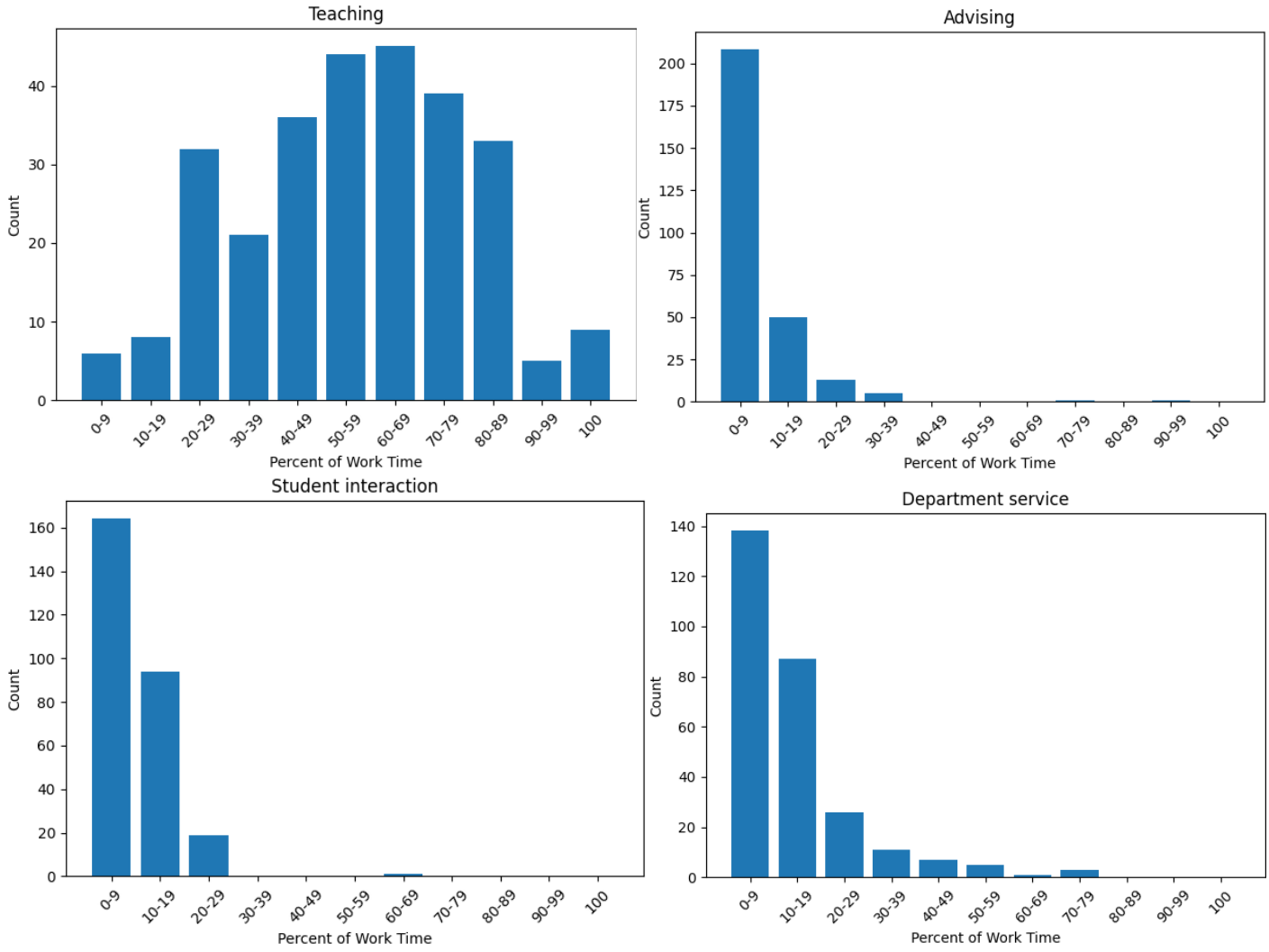
Table 8. Perceived Job Satisfaction and Feedback.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The current form of instructor and course evaluation (SITEs) provides effective information about teaching effectiveness.	13	53	51	69	75
I receive constructive feedback about teaching from students.	23	92	60	57	37
I receive constructive feedback about teaching from my department chair.	27	114	58	38	27
I receive constructive feedback about teaching from colleagues.	25	116	63	30	19
I am afforded an appropriate degree of autonomy with regard to my areas of responsibility.	102	138	19	9	9
Overall, I have high job satisfaction.	39	106	65	32	35

Images 13-17. Teaching hours per term.



Images 18-25. Weekly Percentages of Time Spent on Various Work-Related Activities.



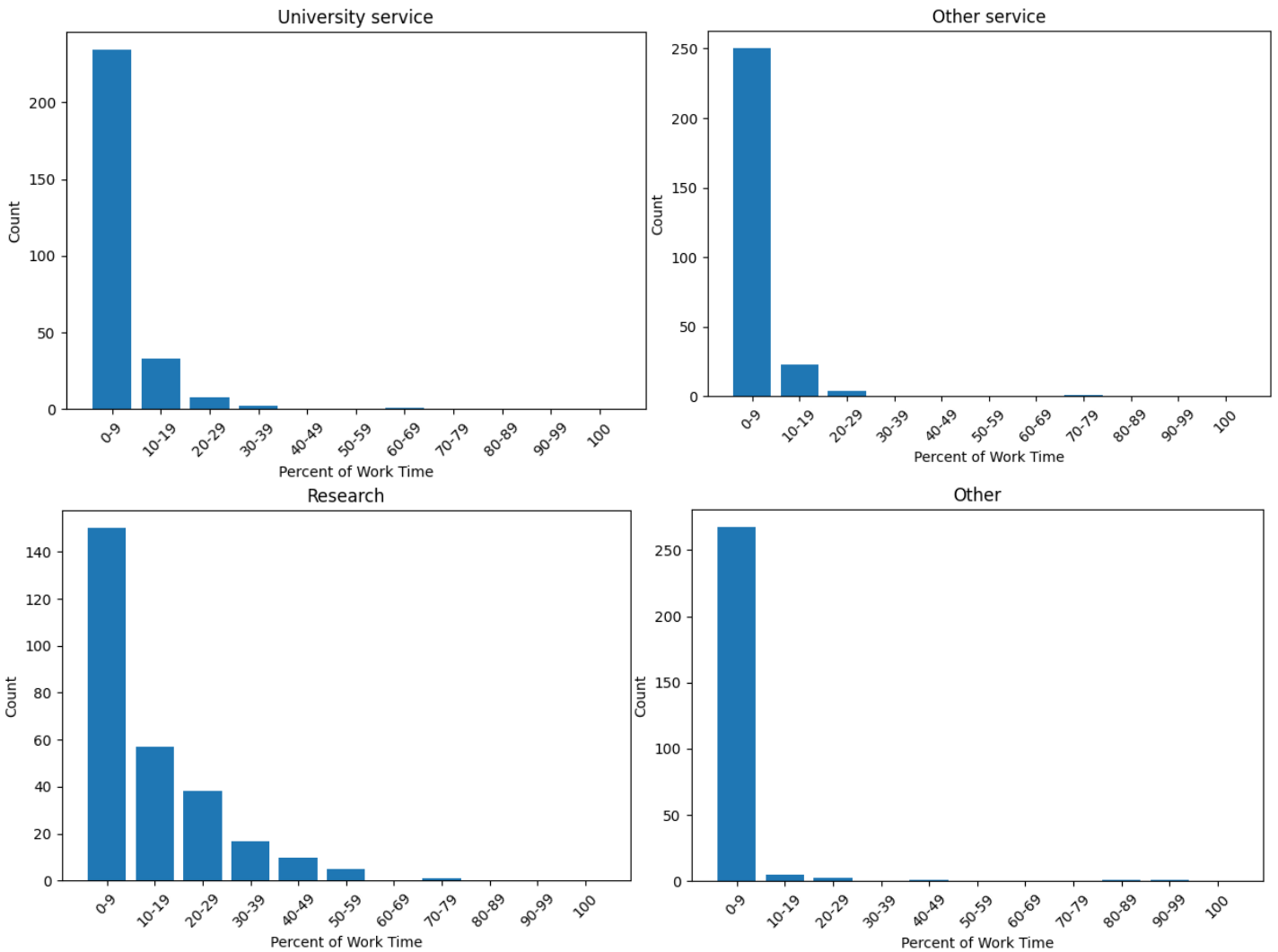


Table 9. Satisfaction with Campus Governance.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am informed about campus issues.	27	113	79	40	16
The University fosters shared governance.	10	67	69	63	43
Faculty members can express dissenting views on university governance without fear of intimidation or reprisal.	10	47	60	71	51
University decision making is transparent.	5	25	68	94	66
Academic administrators respond expeditiously to faculty concerns.	14	46	73	68	49
Academic administrators respond expeditiously to the need for action in institutional matters.	11	52	83	52	46

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The faculty has a strong influence on the selection of academic administrators.	6	29	67	73	59
The faculty has a strong influence in the evaluation of academic administrators.	52	85	51	37	45
I have a role in the governance of my college.	7	38	67	71	60
I trust the leadership team in my college (Dean, Associate/Assistant Deans).	10	44	68	70	43
I trust the leadership in my department.	92	82	45	24	29
Overall, the governance system of my department is effective.	55	82	67	25	34

Table 10. Satisfaction with the RAMP Budget Model.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am confident in the RAMP budget model as a fiscally responsible way to allocate university resources.	3	23	52	50	83
I am confident in my understanding of the RAMP budget model and how it allocates university resources.	12	68	44	50	41
I am confident in the RAMP budget model allocating university resources fairly.	1	22	46	66	78
I am confident in the RAMP budget model allocating university resources transparently.	2	35	46	56	72
My dean gives me opportunities to participate in the RAMP budgeting process.	9	29	40	48	76
There has been a better allocation of resources since the implementation of RAMP.	6	13	50	49	62

Table 11. Satisfaction with President Caboni's Performance and Leadership.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Articulates a clear vision for the future of the university based on its mission and values.	19	99	68	36	41

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Honors commitments and agreements.	19	67	69	23	38
Conveys accurate information about current issues that are important to the faculty in a timely manner.	17	78	64	51	46
Is willing to reevaluate and, if necessary, retract decisions.	15	35	58	46	54
Seeks input from faculty most directly affected by decisions.	10	24	53	54	69
Provides units with the resources necessary to successfully execute plans and initiatives.	11	29	58	63	58
Engages in open dialogue with the faculty on important current issues.	13	38	61	58	69
Is accessible to faculty.	11	30	60	46	76
Selects competent leaders for administrative positions.	12	64	84	30	49
Removes incompetent leaders from administrative positions.	3	22	65	36	60
Works to provide adequate pay raises and equitable compensation packages for faculty.	8	29	60	45	111
I have confidence in the President's leadership and endorse his continuance as President.	19	62	81	38	58

Table 12. Satisfaction with Provost Fischer's Performance and Leadership.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Develops and implements plans and policies that reflect the mission of the university.	26	93	64	18	21
Conveys accurate information about current issues that are important to the faculty in a timely manner.	27	90	58	30	24
Is willing to reevaluate and, if necessary, retract decisions.	18	71	54	24	29
Prioritizes budget needs effectively.	18	52	60	29	33
Seeks input from faculty most directly affected by decisions.	18	60	50	43	37

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Provides units with the resources necessary to successfully execute plans and initiatives.	14	48	67	35	42
Engages in open dialogue with the faculty on important current issues.	25	71	60	29	27
Is accessible to faculty.	34	82	47	24	27
Selects competent leaders for administrative positions.	19	60	60	22	31
Removes incompetent leaders from administrative positions.	9	30	50	31	36
Routinely consults the faculty on institutional matters and decisions.	18	57	57	38	33

Table 13. Satisfaction with the Board of Regents Performance.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The Board of Regents makes academics the top priority.	11	36	56	50	47
The Board supports the faculty's role in institutional governance.	13	31	64	38	44
The Board has a genuine interest in seeking input from the faculty, staff, and student regents.	15	26	60	42	46
The Board upholds its responsibility to ensure that the institution's resources are dedicated to the institution's mission.	15	33	66	36	41

Themes about how your job is easier or harder than previously.

From the 168 written responses, these are five main themes identified.

1. Increased Workload With Fewer Resources
 - Faculty report being asked to “do more with less,” driven by unfilled vacancies, retirements, and hiring freezes.
 - Teaching, service, advising, recruitment, and administrative tasks all expanded without workload reductions or compensation.
 - Loss of support staff (TAs, GAs, administrative assistants) pushes routine and clerical work onto faculty.
2. Compensation, Pay Inequity, and Cost-of-Living Pressure
 - Salaries and COLAs are widely described as not keeping pace with inflation, leading to financial stress and second jobs.

- Pay compression and inversion (senior faculty earning less than newer hires) are demoralizing and affect retention.
 - Benefits costs (healthcare, childcare) further erode take-home pay and harm work–life balance.
3. Administrative Burden, Bureaucracy, and Governance Concerns
 - Faculty describe a sharp rise in reporting, assessment, forms, and documentation that detracts from teaching and research.
 - Decision-making is viewed as top-down, with limited transparency, weak communication, and reduced shared governance.
 - Frequent administrative restructurings and new initiatives are added without removing old requirements.
 4. Student Preparedness, Support Needs, and Changing Classroom Dynamics
 - Incoming students are perceived as less academically prepared, requiring more scaffolding, mentoring, and emotional support.
 - Faculty report spending significant uncounted time addressing mental health concerns, advising, and “student care.”
 - Larger class sizes, higher advising loads, and expectations of constant availability intensify faculty burnout.
 5. Impact of Artificial Intelligence and External Policy Environment
 - AI has increased grading time, complicated assessment design, and raised concerns about academic integrity.
 - Faculty feel under-supported in adapting pedagogy to AI, with few tools, guidelines, or institutional resources provided.
 - State-level policies (e.g., HB4) and political pressures have created fear, uncertainty, and constraints on teaching and research.

Themes about the RAMP Budget Model.

From 69 responses, these are five main themes identified.

1. Lack of Transparency and Understanding of the RAMP Model
 - Many faculty report they do not understand how RAMP works or how budget decisions are actually made.
 - Communication is viewed as inconsistent, incomplete, or filtered, with faculty excluded from meaningful discussion.
 - The model is often perceived as appearing transparent without providing actionable clarity.
2. Perceived Inequity in Resource Allocation
 - Departments with high teaching loads, credit-hour production, or enrollment growth often report declining support.
 - Faculty describe inequities across colleges and departments, including pay disparities and uneven reinvestment of revenues.
 - RAMP is seen as failing to reward productivity or to account for differing instructional costs (e.g., labs, hands-on programs).
3. Concentration of Power at the Dean/Administrative Level
 - Deans are perceived to have broad discretion over resources with limited accountability or oversight.
 - Faculty report that incentives and revenues stop at the dean’s office rather than benefiting departments or faculty.
 - This concentration of power is described as fostering “fiefdoms,” mistrust, and morale problems.
4. Negative Impact on Faculty, Staffing, and Academic Quality
 - Respondents frequently link RAMP to loss of faculty lines, increased reliance on adjuncts, and higher workloads.
 - Budget pressures are seen as contributing to burnout, recruitment failures, and reduced program stability.
 - Some faculty believe the model incentivizes larger, lower-quality courses at the expense of student learning.
5. Misalignment of Incentives with Academic Mission

- RAMP is widely criticized for prioritizing enrollment numbers, revenue, or “butts in seats” over educational quality.
- Interdisciplinary collaboration and long-term academic planning are discouraged by competitive, siloed funding incentives.
- Athletics, infrastructure, and administration are perceived as being protected or prioritized over core academic needs.

Themes about artificial intelligence use on campus.

From 145 responses, these are five themes identified.

1. AI as a Productivity and Efficiency Tool for Faculty
 - Faculty widely report using AI as a thought partner for brainstorming, drafting, organizing, editing, and routine administrative tasks (e.g., emails, rubrics, letters).
 - AI helps reduce time spent on low-stakes or repetitive work, allowing more focus on research, mentoring, and course design.
 - Most positive users emphasize that human oversight of AI supports, but does not replace, disciplinary expertise or judgment.
2. Student Overreliance on AI and Academic Integrity Concerns
 - Student use of AI for completing assignments is perceived as widespread, difficult to detect, and often indistinguishable from original work.
 - Faculty report significant concern that AI enables cheating, undermines originality, and weakens critical thinking and writing skills.
 - Many respondents feel forced to assume AI use in all out-of-class writing unless students are actively restricted.
3. Increased Teaching and Grading Burden
 - Policing AI use, redesigning assessments, and “AI-proofing” courses have substantially increased faculty workload.
 - Writing- and research-intensive courses (especially in the humanities and first-year courses) are described as becoming much harder to teach effectively.
 - Faculty note spending more time investigating potential AI misuse than providing substantive instructional feedback.
4. Lack of Institutional Guidance, Tools, and Support
 - Faculty consistently cite insufficient university policies, training, detection tools, and clear messaging about acceptable AI use.
 - Mixed signals from administration—encouraging AI adoption while holding faculty responsible for learning outcomes—create confusion and frustration.
 - Many respondents want structured support for ethical AI use, clear standards, and shared responsibility rather than faculty-only enforcement.
5. Tension Between AI Adoption and the Educational Mission
 - Faculty express deep concern that AI threatens core goals of higher education: critical thinking, skill development, originality, and intellectual growth.
 - Some describe AI as accelerating “deskilling,” turning instruction into surveillance rather than teaching.
 - A recurring sentiment is that AI should be deliberately limited, carefully scaffolded, or explicitly taught as a skill—rather than treated as a default solution