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## Office of the Provost

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Dear Faculty Colleagues:

During yesterday's Spring Faculty Meeting, you were invited to engage in the next steps of our COACHE process through Faculty Satisfaction Working Groups. These groups will involve faculty across divisions in conversations that dig deep into the data, look at additional analyses, and ask important questions that lead us to actionable steps toward improving the faculty experience at Baylor.

After reviewing the initial COACHE survey data, four broad areas of faculty experience have emerged as those that could benefit from discussion and development. Working Groups will be formed around each of the four topics. Addressing these areas will improve our ability to move the University forward in our implementation of *Illuminate*. If you would like to learn more about survey findings in these four areas, I invite you to [watch this video](#) of my conversation with several members of the Task Force on Faculty Job Satisfaction.

### **Working Groups**

- 1. Decision Making Across all Levels**

**Matt Cordon, Working Group Leader**

Governance processes and procedures guide the decisions of academic leaders. Governance processes include formal structures and policies as well as informal norms that surround and shape decision-making practices, such as trust, adaptability, and understanding the issues at hand. While Baylor faculty indicate high trust in senior leaders and a strong belief in a shared sense of

purpose, 40 percent of faculty are less satisfied than faculty at peer institutions with input into departmental and divisional decisions.

2. **Mid-Career Uncertainty**

**Theresa Kennedy, Working Group Leader**

Mid-career uncertainty is typified by ambiguity about professional advancement after tenure and promotion. Mid-career uncertainty includes unfamiliarity with promotion policies, unclear expectations for promotion, confusion about pathways for advancement, uneven mentoring for advancement, low valuing of career development, and lack of clarity about administrative opportunities. Associate professors indicate that one of the most difficult aspects of mid-career uncertainty is the unrelenting pressure to perform.

3. **Experiences of Underrepresented Minority (URM) Faculty**

**Patricia Wilson, Working Group Leader**

COACHE defines URM faculty as individuals who do not identify as White, non-Hispanic, or Asian/Asian-American. The URM category does not include women as they approximate the number of men on the faculty. COACHE data show that in comparison to majority faculty, URM faculty report less control over teaching assignments, heavier service commitments, lower valuing of scholarly expertise and achievements, limited integration into the academic community, and greater feelings of isolation. URM faculty at Baylor indicate a lower satisfaction than majority Baylor faculty and faculty at peer institutions in their ability to balance teaching, research, and service.

4. **Barriers to Interdisciplinary Research and Teaching**

**Peter Klein, Working Group Leader**

Universities organize faculty research and teaching into discrete academic units. While organizational structures support fair resource allocation and facilitate distinctive scholarship and teaching, they also impede collaborative work that transcends the limits of disciplinary thinking. Barriers to interdisciplinary research and teaching include non-collaborative evaluation and reward structures, insufficient infrastructure for interdisciplinary funding, and inflexible

teaching assignments and loads. Baylor faculty express a lower interest in interdisciplinary work than faculty at peer institutions.

The Working Groups and Task Force members will work together to develop data-driven, faculty-led initiatives that will make Baylor an even more satisfying place for faculty to live out their professional lives. If you are interested in participating in next steps, please email [coachesurvey@baylor.edu](mailto:coachesurvey@baylor.edu).

Sincerely,

Nancy Brickhouse, Ph.D.  
Provost



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