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### The Characteristics of Faculty in Comprehensive Institutions

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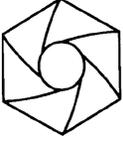
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**New England Resource Center *for* Higher Education**

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**Working Paper # 10**

The Characteristics of Faculty in  
Comprehensive Institutions

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March 1992

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***New England Comprehensive Universities Academic Labor  
Market Study***

This study was funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Members of the project team are: Dorothy E. Finnegan, Oklahoma State University; Zelda F. Gamson, University of Massachusetts at Boston; Robert Ross, Harvard University; and Ted I.K. Youn, Boston College.

## The Characteristics of Faculty in Comprehensive Institutions

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### *Abstract*

This paper compares the characteristics of faculty in comprehensive institutions with those of faculty in other college and university categories as identified by the Carnegie Foundation. Its 1987 Carnegie Classification<sup>1</sup> groups institutions on the basis of level of degree offered—prebaccalaureate to doctorate—and the comprehensiveness of their mission. Public and private institutions are included in each category.

This paper will summarize demographic features, working conditions, satisfaction and participation in academic work organizations, mobility and careers, and attitudes and orientations toward the profession and its organization.

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<sup>1</sup> **Research Universities** offer a full range of baccalaureate programs, are committed to graduate education through the doctoral degree, and give high priority to research. They receive between \$12.5 million and \$33.5 million in federal support and award at least 50 Ph.D. degrees annually.

**Doctorate Granting Universities** In addition to their baccalaureate programs, these institutions provide graduate education through the doctoral degree. They annually award between twenty and forty doctoral degrees in at least one discipline.

**Comprehensive Universities and Colleges** offer baccalaureate programs including graduate education through the master's degree. More than half their degrees are awarded in two or more occupational or professional disciplines such as engineering and business administration.

**Liberal Arts Colleges** are primarily undergraduate institutions that award more than half their baccalaureate degrees in the arts and sciences.

**Two-year Colleges** offer certificate or degree programs through the Associate in Arts level.

## ***I. Demographic Characteristics***

A 1978 U.S. Department of Education faculty survey reveals a total of 658,793 regular faculty in American universities and colleges (See Table 1), double the 1960 number. Seventy-four percent of the overall figure were full-time and 26 percent were part-time. In 1960, only 21 percent of regular faculty had part-time appointments (Table 1).

Comprehensive institutions, which employ 26 percent of all full-time academics in American higher education, are second only to research universities, which employ the largest number. Full-time faculty in public comprehensive institutions represent twice the number of those in private comprehensive institutions (Table 2).

Among four-year institutions of higher education, the largest number of part-timers—18 percent of the total—are employed by comprehensive colleges and universities (Table 3).

Male faculty made up 73 percent of full-time faculty at all institutions. In comprehensive institutions the ratio of men to women was 73:27. However, the ratio of male to female part-timers in comprehensive institutions was a more nearly equitable 56:44 (Table 4).

Across all institutions, whites accounted for 89 percent of full-time and 90 percent of part-time faculty. Representation of ethnic groups among either full and part-time faculty generally did not differ for the various categories of institutions (Tables 5,6).

Sixty percent of full-time faculty at all institutions were tenured, 22 percent were on tenure track but untenured, and 10 percent were not on tenure track.

More tenured faculty were found in public than in private comprehensive institutions, while the numbers of untenured and those not on tenure track were slightly larger in the private comprehensives (Table 7).

The mean age of full-time faculty in all institutions was forty-seven, with no significant difference among the various categories. Public comprehensive institutions employed a slightly larger number than private comprehensives of full-time faculty in the age group of forty-five and older (Table 8). For part-time faculty, the numbers were almost reversed. More than 60 percent of part-timers in public institutions were under forty-four, while 52 percent in private comprehensives were over fortyfive (Table 9).

## ***II. Working Conditions and Rewards***

## **The Characteristics of Faculty in Comprehensive Institutions**

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The average basic salary for full-time faculty at all institutions was \$39,439 in 1987. Their basic salary plus other institutional and consulting income averaged \$48,701.

Faculty in private comprehensive institutions earned more from consulting and other residual sources than those in public comprehensives (Table 10). As Table 11 shows part-time faculty employed at private institutions earned higher incomes on average. But faculty in private comprehensives received lower than average amounts of other income from their institutions.

Full-time faculty in comprehensives, public and private, averaged a substantially higher percentage of time per week in teaching (Table 12) and fewer hours per week at their institutions (Table 14), compared to those in research and doctoral institutions. Among part-timers in comprehensive institutions, the percentage of time spent in teaching is the largest of all professional activities (Table 15).

A majority of faculty in comprehensive institutions indicated their commitment to teaching (Table 13) and reported that they spent more than half their weekly working hours in teaching (Table 14). Nevertheless, there was substantial agreement among American faculty (except for those in two-year colleges) that research and publication are critical to achieving tenure (Table 16).

In comprehensive institutions, faculty displayed an impressive degree of interest in teaching; 77 percent spent between five and twenty hours a week in teaching undergraduate courses.

At the same time, they were convinced that production of publications was vital to their advancement (Tables 16, 17). There was a tug of war between their commitment to teaching and increased pressure to recognize the importance of scholarship. While faculty at comprehensive institutions spent only one-sixth of their time each week in research, many believed that they were engaged in work that they expected would lead to publication (Table 18). Even among those who were leaning toward teaching, a substantial proportion reported that they were engaged in activities that led to publications. Sixty percent in comprehensive institutions reported such activities (Table 19). The incongruity between perceived reward and personal interest is puzzling. It appears that an appropriate balance between teaching and research had yet to be achieved in comprehensive institutions.

### ***III. Satisfaction and Participation***

With regard to such job-related issues as the quality of life at the institution, autonomy, and work load, a majority of full-time faculty were at least somewhat satisfied with their jobs. Compared to the percentages for all full-time faculty, faculty at public comprehensive institutions show they were least likely to be satisfied with various aspects of their jobs. Only a small population of faculty in these institutions were satisfied with the support they received for teaching and research and their authority to make decisions about the content of their courses. A smaller number of faculty in public comprehensives than those in all other groups were satisfied with their work load (Table 20).

### ***IV. Orientation/Attitudes Toward the Profession and the Institution***

While the majority of faculty in comprehensive institutions were interested in teaching, they were not necessarily satisfied with the quality of their undergraduates (Table 21). Many expressed concern over the lack of basic skills of their students.

Although many faculty at comprehensives were far more concerned than other groups with the deteriorating quality of life at their institutions (Table 22) and the declining quality of institutional leadership (Table 23), 75 percent felt that if they had it to do again they would still choose the teaching profession (Table 24).

Even though the majority of faculty in comprehensive institutions were committed to teaching and service, more than 75 percent were aware of exciting changes taking place and seemed optimistic about the state of their academic disciplines (Table 25).

### ***Summary***

Faculty in comprehensive institutions represent the second largest number in higher education. One out of five faculty members hold part-time status. They are predominantly white and more than half are male. Faculty in comprehensives spend a substantial amount of time in teaching each week. While they are committed to teaching, they are increasingly pressured to publish, especially if they are to achieve tenure. There appears to be a substantial diversity of views regarding their own institutions among comprehensive faculty, although the vast majority share a deep commitment to their disciplines and to the teaching profession.