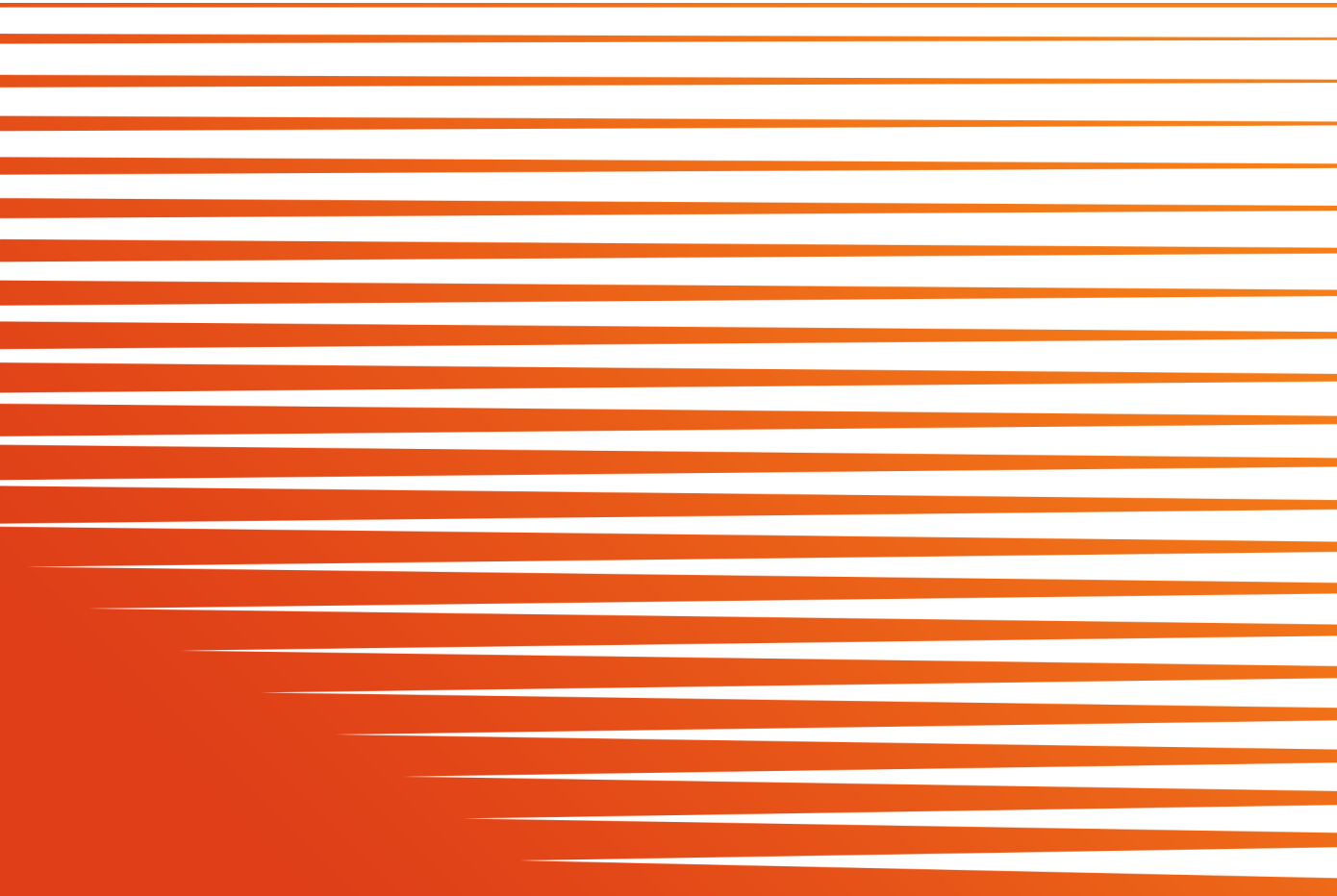


Who Cares About College Teachers?

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It may seem like stating the obvious to note that providing excellent instruction is a key priority at colleges and universities in the United States given the underlying educational mission of those institutions. However, over the past few decades, there has been a remarkable trend in these institutions towards baking greater intentionality into their teaching and learning functions. You can see this by reading university strategic plans and parsing the metrics used to measure their success. You can see this by peeling back administrative layers and mapping services oriented towards teaching and learning support. You can see this in the growing interest from third parties in developing systems to track, predict, and nudge universities towards successful outcomes.

Depending on where you sit, it may seem ironic, or perhaps by design, that this emphasis on teaching and learning outcomes comes at a time when it is arguably more challenging than ever to teach in a university.¹ Universities and their instructors are the target of culture wars and austerity measures.² The adjunctification of faculty means that those who teach students are more likely than ever to be precariously employed, and in at least one recent case, outsourced.³ And third party technology providers are beginning to promise that they can make teaching more efficient, which could potentially be used as a justification for reducing compensation and positions for human instructors over time.⁴

Amidst this complex and often conflicting landscape is the reality that instructional support is provided at universities on the ground through multiple service models concurrently. The units providing these services often use different professional languages to communicate their goals and evaluate the success of their approaches. This plurality of services can lead to inefficiencies, and as a result a number of institutions are now focusing on shoring up cultures of collaboration across the units that provide teaching and learning support, including through co-location and administrative reorganization.⁵ There are also many working within those institutions who are advancing critical approaches to evaluating and adopting third party tools designed to support teaching and learning activities.

An essential step to refining an institution's underlying strategy for advancing teaching and learning excellence is to understand the models for instructor support at universities and how evidence about teacher practices and needs is used to inform those services. This paper outlines

¹ Beth McMurtie provides an excellent overview of the conditions of contradiction in US higher ed instruction. See: Beth McMurtie, "Americans Value Good Teaching. Do Colleges?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 20 September 2023, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/americans-value-good-teaching-do-colleges?>

² The examples are numerous, but for two prominent recent cases see: Chris Schulz, "West Virginia University Announces More Planned Cuts to Support Staff," *WV News*, 22 September 2023, https://www.wvnews.com/west-virginia-university-announces-more-planned-cuts-to-support-staff/article_9a09cc76-5826-11ee-97e1-8f4cf267aa08.html; Johanna Alonso, "UC Berkeley to Close 3 Libraries," *Inside Higher Ed*, 6 March 2023, <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2023/03/07/uc-berkeley-close-3-libraries>.

³ Jeremy Bauer-Wolf, "Why One Community College Outsourced Its Faculty," *Higher Ed Dive*, 19 September 2023, <https://www.highereddive.com/news/why-one-community-college-outsourced-its-adjunct-faculty/694011/>.

⁴ For an example of the kinds of teaching efficiencies being explored, see the pilot between JISC and TeacherMatic: Paddy Shepperd, "TeacherMatic Pilot – Using Generative AI to Reduce Workload," *National Centre for AI*, 8 August 2023, <https://nationalcentreforai.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2023/08/08/teachermatic-pilot-using-generative-ai-to-reduce-workload/>.

⁵ Danielle Miriam Cooper and Rebecca Springer, "Student Focused: Fostering Cross-Unit Collaboration to Meet the Changing Needs of Community College Students," *Ithaka S+R*, 3 March 2021, <https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.314874>.

which units on campus have instructional support mandates and how those units typically engage with teachers both at their own institution and nationally.⁶ With a map pointing to where the care for college instruction is located, it becomes easier to identify areas of mutual interest between them. As many universities endeavor to improve their support service models, including through cross-unit coordination and collaboration, this paper is intended as a resource for those working on that mission.

Mapping Out Who Cares

Before diving into what it is about college teachers' needs that is typically surfaced, it is important to map out which entities and organizations see surfacing and meeting those needs as their purview. When looking across this landscape, three distinct areas of activity emerge, each with its own array of players who care enough about college teachers to learn about their activities and needs from the vantage of the instructors themselves.⁷

First, there is the research that is conducted on college teachers to **advocate for the needs of instructors**. This work is typically made publicly available and is used to characterize trends in teaching beyond individual institutions. Some of these projects seek to track these trends over time and/or on a variety of topics, such as the periodic survey by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), Tyton Partners' "Time for Class Series," Ithaka S+R's US Faculty Survey, and EDUCAUSE's faculty survey.⁸ Other projects are framed around more singular issues, such as the 2022 survey of contingent faculty by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), or the Faculty in the South Survey fielded in 2023 by the Georgia, North Carolina, and Texas conferences of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the United Faculty of Florida, and Texas Faculty Association.⁹ In all cases, the research also serves as an opportunity to engage with the communities that it seeks to represent.

Second, there is the data collected about or from college teachers **to inform practices on the ground**. This category can include scholarly research on college teaching, as well as

⁶ Thank you to Flower Darby, Emily Guhde, and Jana Remy for their thoughtful feedback as external reviewers. Thank you also to my Ithaka S+R colleagues Melissa Blankstein, Sage Love, Kimberly Lutz, Mark McBride, and Roger Schonfeld for their careful review.

⁷ While not the focus of this issue brief, it is important to acknowledge that a large source of data consistently collected about instructor activities comes in the form of student evaluations.

⁸ Catherine Shaw, Ria Bharadwaj, Louis NeJame, Sterling Martin, Natasha Janson, Kristen Fox, "Time for Class 2023: Bridging Student and Faculty Perspectives on Digital Learning," *Tyton Partners*, 20 June 2023, <https://tytonpartners.com/time-for-class-2023/>; Melissa Blankstein, "Ithaka S+R US Faculty Survey 2021," *Ithaka S+R*, 14 July 2022, <https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.316896>; Nicole Muscanell, "2023 Faculty and Technology Report: A First Look at Teaching Preferences since the Pandemic," *Educause*, 21 August 2023, <https://www.educause.edu/ecar/research-publications/2023/faculty-and-technology-report-a-first-look-at-teaching-preferences-since-the-pandemic/introduction-and-key-findings>

⁹ AAC&U most recently surveyed faculty in 2020, see: Ashley Finley and Kate Drezek McConnell, "On the Same Page? Administrator and Faculty Views on What Shapes College Learning and Student Success," *American Association of Colleges and Universities*, 2022, <https://www.aacu.org/research/on-the-same-page>; more information on AFT's 2022 survey of contingent faculty here: "An Army of Temps: AFT Contingent Faculty Quality of Work/Life Report 2022," *A Union American Federation of Teachers*, February 2022, <https://www.aft.org/highered/2022-contingent-faculty-survey>; More on the Faculty in the South survey here: "2023 Faculty in the South Survey," *American Association of University Professors at UT Austin*, 23 August 2023, <https://aaup-utaustin.org/2023/08/23/2023-faculty-in-the-south-survey/>.

assessments conducted by various support service units to improve their offerings. The assessments may involve soliciting perspectives from instructors (e.g. surveys, interviews, focus groups), or their activities can be measured through usage data related to various tools, services, or materials used when teaching (such as tracking smart board use in classrooms, evaluating the volume or type of interlibrary loan requests, or analyzing help desk queries).

When soliciting perspectives from instructors, the instruments that are used in these efforts may be designed and administered on an institution's behalf by a third party or developed in-house. Some portion of the collected data may be shared beyond the institution, such as for peer benchmarking or community accountability. In all cases, the research is scoped around the goals of specific campus audiences, and their application varies widely by the assessment culture of the unit(s) and their staff who will be working with the findings. For example, the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI) offers the McCabe Faculty Survey to help institutions improve their "academic integrity cultures," whereas the Healthy Minds Study has a survey available to help institutions "understand their faculty and staff's mental health and perceived ability to help students with mental health concerns."¹⁰ Or consider the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), one instrument in a series of tools designed by Indiana University to help institutions create a culture of collective responsibility for student engagement, in contrast to the LibQUAL+ survey, which is made available through the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) to assess use of and satisfaction with library services.¹¹ Ithaka S+R has also conducted a series of in-depth qualitative studies in collaboration with colleges and universities to explore how teaching support needs vary by discipline and/or pedagogical approach.¹²

Third, some information about college teachers is collected **to measure performance by US regulatory bodies and inform policy**. The scope of this data collection is fairly narrow because it is intended for benchmarking at a high level. For example, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) serves as the core postsecondary data collection program of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).¹³ College teachers are represented most explicitly in the data as it relates to "human resources," which collects information about an institution's employees by "primary occupational activity" (faculty status, and full- and part-time status), as well as information about staff and faculty who serve in a "full time instructional capacity" (rank, gender, contract length/teaching period, and in the case of

¹⁰ Information on the McCabe Faculty survey here: "McCabe Faculty Survey," International Center for Academic Integrity, <https://academicintegrity.org/mccabe-faculty-survey>; for more on the survey for faculty and staff through the Healthy Minds Study, see: "The Healthy Minds Study – Faculty / Staff Survey," Healthy Minds Network, <https://healthymindsnetwork.org/hms-faculty-survey/>.

¹¹ More information about the FSSE survey here: "Faculty Survey of Student Engagement," NSSE Indiana University School of Education, <https://nsse.indiana.edu/fsse/>; Further details on LibQUAL+ here: "LibQUAL+" Association of Research Libraries, <https://www.arl.org/libqual/>.

¹² Ruby MacDougall and Dylan Ruediger, "Teaching with Streaming Video: Understanding Instructional Practices, Challenges, and Support Needs," *Ithaka S+R*, 26 January 2023, <https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.318216>; Dylan Ruediger, Danielle Miriam Cooper, et al, "Fostering Data Literacy: Teaching with Quantitative Data in the Social Sciences," *Ithaka S+R*, 27 September 2022, <https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.317506>; Kurtis Tanaka et al, "Teaching with Primary Sources: Looking at the Support Needs of Instructors," *Ithaka S+R*, 23 March 2021, <https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.314912>; Kurtis Tanaka, Danielle Miriam Cooper, et al, "Teaching Business: Looking at the Support Needs of Instructors," *Ithaka S+R*, <https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.312297>.

¹³For more information in the IPEDS program, see: <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>.

faculty, salary outlay). This data about college teachers can also be used to draw connections between staffing trends and the student behavior that IPEDs also tracks, including enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. Similar data is also reviewed during accreditation processes for US postsecondary institutions, which is administered by a network of nonprofits.¹⁴

Due to structural issues in higher education, relatively little attention has been paid to the experiences and needs of non-tenure track faculty.

When comparing between the main areas of activity to track college teachers, **a key variable is in the breadth and depth of the data collection.** For example, while regulatory bodies cover the full breadth of US institutions with maximum uniformity, there are only a few data points collected about teachers, and none of it is from their vantage. Research designed for advocacy work is often drawn from a national sample, but there are variations in how that population is defined and the degree to which the results are representative, which limits how the insight can be applied in specific contexts. On-the-ground research involves tradeoffs between customizing the assessment for in-house use and the opportunity to make comparisons between institutions. And finally, when looking across these different approaches, it is also important to recognize that due to structural issues in higher education, relatively little attention has been paid to the experiences and needs of non-tenure track faculty, even though many instruments collect demographic information that would potentially enable those comparisons. Given these structural challenges, it is also likely that contingent faculty are generally underrepresented in the research that seeks to include them among other teacher populations.

Translating Evidence into Service Improvements

At any given time a university may look to a variety of sources of evidence to understand the practices of its teaching communities and identify opportunities to better support them. With such a vast array of approaches available for collecting that evidence, and the variations in mandates and cultures across support units, it can be challenging to identify opportunities for information sharing and reduce duplication of assessment efforts. The potential for improved coordination is especially strong when looking at national studies. This is because in many cases the university is already engaging with evidence from these studies and is in a position to grow cross-campus dialogue about that. This section describes the support service units typically using evidence about teachers to inform their service models and outlines patterns among the national studies available to help inform their strategies.

¹⁴ Judith S. Eaton, "Overview of U.S. Accreditation," *Council for Higher Education Accreditation*, 1 November 2015, <https://www.chea.org/overview-us-accreditation>.

Institutional Research

Institutional Research is the centralized administrative unit charged with collecting and sharing data about the university. A major impetus of Institutional Research offices is satisfying government mandated reporting requirements such as IPEDs. The data may also be used for accreditation or to support internal decision making. Within four-year institutions IRs typically report up through the provost or the president. While IRs are often involved in quantitative data analysis more broadly, they are not as often involved in translating evidence into action for college and university leadership. These offices are often not involved in qualitative data collection or analysis.

Institutional Research offices may help to gather the perspectives of instructors, typically by facilitating the administration of a survey on behalf of another campus unit or facilitating the administration of a third-party national survey program the university regularly participates in. There are two national instruments in particular that predominate in the US: the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) as a complement to its surveys of students (NSEE and BCSSE), and the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) offers a faculty survey in addition to its suite of student surveys and survey of staff.¹⁵

A point of intersection between FSSE and the HERI faculty survey is that both are designed as complements to surveys that are designed for students. This reflects the broader trend in this community towards focusing on student activities and outcomes. For example, the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) makes available five surveys exclusively for students.¹⁶ Its two surveys where faculty perspectives can be gathered alongside students and staff both focus on campus climate as opposed to teaching practices, needs, or support services. As a result, in both surveys, there are more questions framed around instructor perceptions of their students and their approaches to teaching them or pointing them to resources, as opposed to focusing questions about instructor support needs, including those related to the services or tools on offer to them. The FSSE survey also has an optional “topical module” on “scholarship of teaching and learning” that gathers perspectives on “institution driven assessment,” which can allow Institutional Research to evaluate instructor awareness of and engagement with its data collection activities. Table 1 below provides a comparison between FSSE and HERI’s overall.

¹⁵ For more information on HERI, see <https://heri.ucla.edu/>.

¹⁶ For more information on HEDS, see <https://www.hedsconsortium.org/heds-surveys/>.

Table 1: Comparing FSSE and HERI

	Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)	Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey
Parent Institution	Indiana University	University of California Los Angeles
Respondent population	Staff who teach at least one undergraduate course in the current academic year	Any faculty with teaching responsibilities
Survey structure	Main survey plus demographics (49 questions); optional topical modules (ranging from 2-10 questions); consortium opt-in modules ¹⁷	Core instrument plus demographics (60 questions); optional modules (ranging from 4-13 questions) ¹⁸
Core thematic areas covered	Teaching strategies and approaches to learning development; Interactions with students; Institutional supports for students; Time management	Pedagogical approaches, goals and expectations for students, time spent on research and service, job satisfaction
Additional topics covered	Academic advising; Civic Engagement; Experiences with writing; Inclusiveness and engagement with cultural diversity; Teaching professional development; Transferable skills; Career and workforce development; Scholarship of teaching and learning	Campus climate; STEM; Mentoring; Spirituality
Ability to customize	Can customize survey invitations and the population that receives the survey; Choose up to two optional topical models in addition to running the core instrument and/or parallel questions added through consortia participation	Can customize the survey invitations and the population that receives the survey; Add up to 5 open ended and up to 30 close-ended questions; determine when survey is delivered within a larger set timeframe
Survey administration	FSSE staff manage invitations and follow-up messages, delivery of the online survey, compilation of data, and reporting of results	HERI staff manage delivery of the online survey, compilation of data and reporting of results; option for HERI staff or institution to manage invitations and follow-up messages

¹⁷ Information drawn from the description of the 2022-2023 edition of the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement, see <https://nsse.indiana.edu/fsse/survey-instruments/index.html>.

¹⁸ Information drawn from the description of the 2022-2023 edition of the HERI Faculty Survey, see <https://heri.ucla.edu/heri-faculty-survey/>.

Response rates	Reported annually; in 2023 17% of invited faculty responded with the rate from institution to institution ranging from 2-53%	No information provided
Institutional participants	83 Bachelor Degree Institutions fielded the survey in 2023; 918 institutions have participated since its inception in 2003	1300 institutions have participated since its inception in 1989; 2022-2023 list not publicly available at point of publication
Pricing model	Static registration fee + administration fee based on sample size; available annually	Static registration fee + administration fee based on number of FTE as reported in IPEDS; available triennially
Platform	Qualtrics	No information provided
Deliverables for standard participation	Tableau dashboard; institutional data file available for download from the FSSE Qualtrics account	Static reporting in the form of an overall "institutional profile;" stratifications by faculty type, and PowerPoint summary deck; data file, and monograph of the national results
Ability to benchmark and compare results	Available for all institutions that have run the survey since 2014 via the "NSSE interface"	Option to select peer comparison groups for your institutional reporting; Data archive of "HERI Faculty Survey Trends"

Student Support Services

Universities provide a variety of support services directly to students, ranging from those that are related to learning (writing center, accessibility services), to well-being (counseling), and to basic needs (financial planning, food pantry). Because teaching faculty serve as a critical point of connection between students and the university, it is important to understand their level of awareness of support services designed for students.¹⁹ The HERI and FSSE instruments are good examples of how “out-of-the-box” surveys by third parties can help track faculty perceptions of student support services (see table 2 below). Note that in both cases the value of these services is covered through one question with the various services included in the response options, as opposed to separate sections devoted to each service type.

¹⁹ Effectively locating and using relevant college services, programs, and resources for students to successfully navigate is a form of fluency that is essential to both students and staff, and there is considerable work to be done to build up that capacity. For an example of project seeking to build “college fluency,” see the IMLS-funded initiative by the Borough of Manhattan Community College in partnership with Ithaka S+R: Melissa Blankstein and Jean Amaral, “College Fluency Capacity Building: BMCC Library and Ithaka S+R Launch New Research Project,” *Ithaka S+R*, 8 December 2022, <https://sr.ithaka.org/blog/college-fluency-capacity-building/>.

Table 2: Survey questions for faculty about student support services

	FSSE	HERI
Value of learning/academic support services	Question 2 (main instrument); various services included under one response option	Question 19 (main instrument); various services included under one response option
Value of well-being related support services	Question 2 (main instrument); various services included under one response option	Question 19 (main instrument); various services included under one response option
Value of supporting basic needs	Question 2 (main instrument); various services included under one response option	Question 19 (main instrument); various services included under one response option
Quality of student interaction with support service professionals	Question 3 (main instrument); broken out by various options	N/A
Role in advising in curricular and/or non-curricular contexts	Question 10 (main instrument); Academic advising (topical module)	Question 24 (main instrument)
Awareness of institution-supported assessments of student educational experiences and outcomes	Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (topical module)	N/A

Information Technology

Within universities there is typically administrative distinction between the information technology units providing enterprise support versus those supporting research or teaching functions (aka research computing, educational technology, instructional design).²⁰ Centralized support units, such as the library, as well as schools or departments may also maintain their own information technology departments. These units often will review usage data to inform decision making.

An organization that focuses on teaching with technology is EDUCAUSE. From 2013-2020, the FSSE survey included an optional module on educational technology created in collaboration with EDUCAUSE. Since 2014, EDUCAUSE has also periodically partnered with its institutional members to conduct national faculty surveys. EDUCAUSE ran its national faculty survey most

²⁰ Angela Chauncey, et al, "The Higher Education IT Service Catalog: A Working Model for Comparison and Collaboration (Second Edition)," *EDUCAUSE*, 19 November 2019, <https://library.educause.edu/resources/2019/11/higher-education-it-service-catalog-second-edition>.

recently in 2023 by partnering with eight institutions to field the survey locally to their faculty.²¹ The research EDUCAUSE conducts from the instructors' vantage is part of its larger evidence gathering activities to gather higher education stakeholder perspectives, which also includes studies of students, IT staff, and university leadership.

Some for-profit businesses in the educational technology space also track teaching practices nationally in ways that are relevant to campus information technology professionals. For example Tyton Partners has fielded its longitudinal "Time for Class" survey of introductory course faculty since 2014, focusing on the digital courseware landscape. Bay View periodically surveys faculty, in partnership with the Online Learning Consortium and Pearson through its "Digital Faculty" series. Cengage launched a "Faces of Faculty" survey in 2022. What these surveys hold in common is that they are intended to serve as marketing for those businesses as opposed to diagnostic or benchmarking tools for support service providers within universities.

Table 3 below compares EDUCAUSE's model for surveying faculty on their technology practices and support needs to Tyton Partners. In contrast to the examples in the previous section, these surveys were designed more to take the pulse on wider trends, as opposed to serving as diagnostic tools that can be fielded locally by universities, which is reflected in the more topical nature of the themes. A major difference between the EDUCAUSE and Tyton survey is their approach to sampling: Tyton sends its survey out nationwide to individual faculty members whereas EDUCAUSE works with a subset of institutions to target its invitations. Another difference is how these surveys balance out providing longitudinal information with emerging trends. For example, Tyton's 2023 findings focused especially on instructor attitudes to one of the newest, high-profile iterations of AI (generative AI), whereas EDUCAUSE's most recent survey is framed around AI more broadly.

²¹ Nicole Muscanell, "2023 Faculty and Technology Report: A First Look at Teaching Preferences since the Pandemic," *EDUCAUSE*, 21 August 2023, <https://www.EDUCAUSE.edu/ecar/research-publications/2023/faculty-and-technology-report-a-first-look-at-teaching-preferences-since-the-pandemic/methodology-and-acknowledgments>.

Table 3: Comparing EDUCAUSE and Tyton Partners

	2023 EDUCAUSE Faculty Survey	Time for Class 2023 by Tyton Partners
Survey structure	44 questions	No public information provided
Respondent population	Those who taught a postsecondary course in the past 12 months	1,748 instructors
Core thematic areas covered	Teaching modality practices and preferences, course materials, support services and tools, professional development	Courseware, E-Texts, OERs, Generative AI Writing Tools, Resources the institution provides prior to teaching a course ²²
Survey administration	Partnered with 8 institutions to field the survey locally to roll up to a national "sample" analyzed by EDUCAUSE	No public information provided
Response rate	30%	No public information provided
Ability to benchmark and compare results	Member institutions administer the survey locally in exchange for member data and benchmarking tools through the Analytics Services Portal.	N/A

As technology is a predominant framing device for narratives around progress, including within education, it is also not surprising that surveys designed to support special interests are often reflective of topical interests in this area. For example, in 2023 Wiley surveyed instructors and students on a variety of topics that would be of interest to their university clientele. The resulting report, designed to advertise their expertise in what will constitute “higher ed’s next chapter” identifies “the rise of technology and artificial intelligence” as its first of four key trends.²³

²² Tyton Partners does not make its survey instrument publicly available and so this description is based on the questions included in the public report. See: Catherine Shaw, Ria Bharadwaj, Louis NeJame, Sterling Martin, Natasha Janson, Kristen Fox, “Time for Class - 2023,” *Tyton Partners*, 20 June 2023, <https://tytonpartners.com/time-for-class-2023/>.

²³ Report available for download here: “Generative AI Already Being Used in Majority of College Classrooms, According to Instructors in New Wiley Survey,” *Wiley*, 21 September 2023, <https://johnwiley2020news.q4web.com/press-releases/press-release-details/2023/Generative-AI-Already-Being-Used-in-Majority-of-College-Classrooms-According-to-Instructors-in-New-Wiley-Survey/default.aspx>.

Libraries, Archives, and Special collections

Providing instructional support services is foundational to academic library, archives, and special collections operations and organizational culture, which reflects how information use is core to the teaching and learning mission of the university. It is especially noteworthy to see how libraries have shaped their staffing structures to reinforce their mandate: you can see this through the employment of subject liaisons or embedded librarians who work directly with instructors and researchers in specific departments. It is also visible in the roles designed to support instructors in functional areas, such as when they are identifying course materials to assign, or when providing curricula that build students' information-related research skills. Those working in the library, archives, or special collections often serve as instructors themselves and can look to their fields' robust scholarly discourse and culture of assessment to inform their approaches. Libraries, archives, and special collections are leading experts in some specific approaches to teaching, such as teaching with primary sources.²⁴

Among the evidence that libraries, archives, and special collections typically gather to identify and improve instructional practices through their services, there is considerable attention paid to collecting information related to relevant instructor practices and needs. Some of this evidence is collected under the auspices of a faculty research program, as a portion of a library's staff are on the tenure track. And, while there is considerable variation based on the size of the university, it is also now common for a library to have at least one member on staff whose role is focused on assessment and/or user experience. There are several venues for those who engage in this work to exchange knowledge with their peers, such as through conferences, publications, and professional associations. Some of their assessment work supports reporting requirements beyond the university, such as work in collaboration with Institutional Research on the library-related IPEDs metric or to accreditation bodies, as well as the reporting requirements of library, archives, and special collections-specific consortia and membership organizations. Assessment work is also done to understand how instructors are using various resources in the purview of the library, archives, and/or special collections, and how their needs for support by these units are evolving.

In addition to the research tools that libraries, archives, and special collections staff will design in-house to understand instructional practices and support needs, there are also a number of instruments developed by third parties to help support these goals. Ithaka S+R has fielded a US faculty survey nationally since the year 2000, which includes a series of questions about the role of the library among the questions on their teaching, research, and publishing practices more broadly. There are also tools that have been developed to focus on assessing library service quality and satisfaction (LibQual+, LibSat, MISO) including among teaching faculty.²⁵

²⁴ For an example of the expertise that librarians bring to the issue of teaching with primary sources see: Kurtis Tanaka, Danielle Miriam Cooper, et al, "Teaching with Primary Sources: Looking at the Support Needs of Instructors," *Ithaka S+R*, 23 March 2021, <https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.314912>

²⁵ This is an updated version of the table originally published by Ithaka S+R in 2019 see: Christine Wolff-Eisenberg, "Landscape of Library Service Quality Tools," *Ithaka S+R*, 28 February 2019, <https://sr.ithaka.org/blog/landscape-of-library-service-quality-tools/>. Ithaka S+R also used to offer faculty survey tool that schools could administer locally, including for assessing library service quality. That program is not currently active and as a result has not been included as part of the comparator table.

Table 4: Comparing LibQual+, LibSat, and MISO

	LibQual+	LibSat	MISO
Parent Organization	ARL	Counting Opinions	Bryn Mawr
Core thematic areas covered	Minimum service levels, desired service levels, and perceived service performance of three library dimensions (service, information control, and library as place)	Satisfaction with and importance of aspects of in-library and online library services, policies, facilities, equipment, and resources	Importance of, satisfaction with, and frequency of use of library (place-based, online, and in-person) and computing services
Additional topics covered	Information literacy outcomes, library use, and general satisfaction	Likelihood to recommend, services used, and information-seeking preferences	Campus communications, tools used, and levels of skill
Ability to customize	Participants can add up to five additional local questions; Participants can field “lite” version with reduced number of questions	Participants can localize questions and prompts to convey local terminology and remove or add questions; Respondents may be able to select survey length upon beginning the survey (regular, or in-depth versions)	Participants can include or exclude any items in the survey; Participants can include additional locally developed questions
Survey administration	Administration handled by the participating institution	Continuous feedback gathered via library website, email distribution, staff intercepts and/or paper-based response; respondents may also volunteer to receive invitations for annual survey follow-ups	Administered once annually and all participants on the same timeline
Response rates	Not reported (ARL does not collect this information; libraries are not required to provide these data to ARL)	If sample is defined, response rates can be generated based on identified time periods, as responses are continuously gathered over an extended period	Most institutions see rates of 50%+

Institutional participants	3,000+ surveys fielded to date by 1,390 institutions; 109 fielded in 2018; Includes participation within and outside of North America; Nearly all participants are higher education institutions	All participants within North America; Many participants are in public library settings	149 institutions to date; 40 participated in 2018-19; All participants within North America; All higher education institutions
Pricing	\$3,200 to participate with discounts for repeat participation within one or two years	Annual subscription relative to size of institution; quotes available on request	\$2,200 for three core populations (faculty, undergraduates, and staff)
Platform	Independently hosted platform	Independently hosted platform	Qualtrics for survey administration; Independently hosted platform for reporting
Deliverables for standard participation	PDF report with aggregate and stratified results by user group; Raw data in csv and SPSS formats; Real-time access to comments; Radar charts within platform	Reports available within platform; can view, segment, and export in real-time as responses are collected; Ability to route open-ended comments to persons of responsibility; Raw data in XML, tab-delimited, or csv formats	Aggregate results provided in Excel and PDF formats for each campus population; Raw data in csv and SPSS formats
Ability to benchmark and compare results	Can compare results with other institutions that participated in the same year, analyze results by user group and discipline, and download data tables and radar charts; annual subscription available for expanded access to data for all participating institutions from 2003-present	Can compare results within platform with aggregate pooled results from all other institutions and across respondents from multiple libraries	Can compare results within platform with any individual or combination of other participating institutions and across populations (e.g. faculty versus students)

Faculty Development and Teaching and Learning Centers

Within the US, formal training or credentialing for instructors is not required sector-wide, and the majority of institutions provide programming in house to fill that gap.²⁶ Teaching and learning centers or faculty development units often serve to support those on campus who provide instruction. At some institutions this programming falls under the mantle of a faculty development program. It is also common to find senior administrative roles scoped around faculty development functions, such as a vice provost of faculty development in the academic affairs unit through the office of the provost. Depending on the school, it may be possible to find a teaching and learning center, a faculty development program, both, or one nested inside the other.

Within this professional community, tracking instructor perspectives is one facet in its robust culture of assessment. While the capacity to conduct assessment varies widely based on the size of the unit (and many units can be quite small, including just having just one member with very limited budget), it is established best practice for those units to gather instructor perspectives at their institutions regularly, especially in ways that can help refine the unit's programming and/or overall service model.²⁷ These units also engage with data collected by institutional research offices that provides a window into the relationship between teaching practices and student outcomes, which often includes the FSSE and HERI faculty surveys. However, this field is sometimes also characterized as having a propensity to focus on rapid assessment of programming over more exploratory or sustained investigations.²⁸

The professional association serving this community, The POD Network, serves as an important national forum to discuss trends in instructor practices and perceptions, but it does not track those trends itself through a national instructor survey.²⁹ There is also meaningful scholarly communication overlap between this professional community and the academic field of higher education research, where instructor perspectives and needs are a topic of study.

The FSSE and HERI surveys are also arguably the best proxy for a national survey of instructors that teaching and learning center professionals and faculty development professionals are most likely to consult. EDUCAUSE also creates many resources relevant to this community, including

²⁶ While formal teaching training or credentialing is not universally required, it is important to note that a number of institutions have also developed certifications in teaching in Higher Education as part of their offerings in higher education through education departments and colleges, see for example: Temple University (<https://www.temple.edu/academics/degree-programs/teaching-in-higher-education-certificate-graduate-ed-tche-grad>), Kent State (<https://www.kent.edu/ehhs/fla/hied/college-teaching>), Rutgers University (<https://gse.rutgers.edu/content/non-degree-graduate-certificate-higher-education-teaching>), and Harvard University/Get Smarter (<https://www.getsmarter.com/courses/us/harvard-bok-higher-education-teaching-certificate>).

²⁷ Susan R. Hines, "Evaluating Centers for Teaching and Learning: A Field-Tested Model," *To Improve the Academy: A Journal of Educational Development* 36, no. 2 (2017): 89-100, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/t/tia/17063888.0036.202/--evaluating-centers-for-teaching-and-learning-a-fieldtested?rgn=main;view=fulltext>.

²⁸ Ken-Zen Chen, Patrick R. Lowenthal, Christine Bauer, Allan Heaps, and Chrystal Nielsen, "Moving Beyond Smile Sheets: A Case Study on the Evaluation and Iterative Improvement of an Online Faculty Development Program," *Online Learning* 21, no. 1 (2017), <https://olj.onlinelearningconsortium.org/index.php/olj/article/view/810>.

²⁹ For more information on the POD Network, see <https://podnetwork.org/>.

through the kinds of questions it asks through its periodic national survey of faculty. Table 5 below compares the relevant questions.

Table 5: Survey questions for faculty about their instructional practices

	FSSE	HERI	EDUCAUSE
Perception that they have supports they need	Question 5 (main instrument)	N/A	N/A
Hours per week spent on working to improve teaching overall	Question 7 (main instrument)	N/A	N/A
Perceived value of programming or resources provided by the institution	Question 1 (topical module, teaching professional development)	N/A	Questions 2.1-2.4, 2.7, 2.8
Frequency of engagement with programming or resources	Question 2 & 3 (topical module, teaching professional development)	Question 20 (main instrument)	Question 2.5
Status of programming or resources as mandatory or optional	N/A	N/A	Question 2.6

Ways Forward

As universities seek to continuously improve their student outcomes, understanding the experiences and needs of teachers is an essential component to that goal. For many institutions the temptation is often just to maintain the status quo by continuing to participate in one or several third-party data collection programs while allowing various units to also conduct their own research ad hoc and in parallel. For example, it is generally best practice for institutions to employ a coordinating function to ensure that not too many surveys are sent out to faculty over the course of the year. However, it is far less common for institutions to mandate cross-unit collaboration that would decrease duplication across assessment activities, including surveys, as well as maximize use of the resulting data across them. And yet, as this issue brief outlines, there are opportunities to streamline use of third-party instruments and/or rely on more national studies that do not require local implementation.

When looking across the various approaches for gathering data on instructor activities and perceptions there also are opportunities to expand the scope of inquiry. At present considerably more effort is put into gathering student perspectives, and therefore one way forward is to adapt some of those approaches so that instructors benefit from the same level of representation. For

example, the survey strategies for exploring holistic students' needs can be applied to investigations of instructors' holistic needs.³⁰

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For institutions that are looking for opportunities to increase their understanding of their teachers in efficient and compelling ways, the first step is to review what data is currently being collected and/or used, to what ends, and by whom. Ideally this should be done by all units with remit to work with and/or support teachers to identify areas of synergy across their evidence gathering activities. This issue brief provides examples of the kinds of frameworks that can be used to compare across the instruments that universities regularly rely on. This kind of coordinating work is not simple, and it is compounded by the reality that supporting teachers is often positioned as secondary to supporting their students or maximizing research output. However, these efforts are worth prioritizing because supporting teachers results in better supported students.

There are also institutions that may be looking to grow or evolve their approaches to understanding their faculty. Here the greatest opportunity likely comes from leveraging usage statistics from the myriad tools and platforms that instructors are now using through their institutions. Here, too, cross-unit coordination is key, because the insights from use of any given technology will often be valuable to multiple support units in parallel. What is less clear is whether, and, if so, how coordination on usage assessment could happen between universities. While a company providing a technology has the analytics data to assess its usage across its full clientele, its university customers rarely do. As the university unit with the longest history of providing materials for instructional support, libraries have pioneered processes for pooling and comparing usage data that could be useful to other units.³¹ In the instructional technology world, there is also an interesting model presented by the relatively new Unizin membership organization, which provides a platform for institutions to pool usage data related to student information, learning management systems, and various educational tools.³²

Regardless of how an institution approaches collecting data about instructor practices or needs, it is important that the institution also determines the retention, storage, and sharing parameters for that data. In addition to providing static reports and interactive dashboards on

³⁰ For an example of a study probing students about their holistic needs, see: "2023 EDUCAUSE Horizon Report: Holistic Student Experience Edition," *EDUCAUSE*, 2 October 2023, <https://library.educause.edu/resources/2023/10/2023-educause-horizon-report-holistic-student-experience-edition>.

³¹ COUNTER is a nonprofit membership organization that stewards the Code of Practice "that enables publishers and vendors to report usage of their electronic resources in a consistent way. This enables libraries to compare data received from different publishers and vendors." See: <https://www.projectcounter.org/counter-release-5/>.

³² Unizin currently focuses on student use and therefore also serves as an example of how data collection practices could be expanded to also include instructor use: <https://unizin.org/>.

findings from specific assessment activities, it is also possible for institutions to leverage their centralized, internal repositories for storing this data for future use, such as through a data lake or data warehouse.

When approached thoughtfully, evidence about teachers' practices and their needs can be used to make productive interventions into the products, services, and policies that make up their day-to-day activities. Gathering evidence about teachers can be a form of care, but only when used wisely.