Faculty Time-Use Study

Question and Answers

1. ***Why is the survey offered only one day? Won't this skew results? Why
not a snap shot of asking them about workload over the past month
verses just one day?***

So it is time prohibitive and unlikely to be able to get faculty to
reliably fill out a time diary for a month. We tried this before
actually--but were only able to get 111 faculty to work with us on the
project. One day time diaries are more accessible and doable for
people and although they provide only a snapshot of how we spend work
time--they can provide insight into new demands on faculty time that
cross sectional surveys do not. We also ask some questions that
provide a context for the one day--ongoing commitments such as
advisees, course loads and campus leadership roles that provides a
bigger picture at the front end of the survey.

This method is more accurate than reflecting back on your time
generally over a year or month, because we ask participants the very
next day what they did yesterday and this has been found by time use
scholars to be the most accurate way to understand time use because
recall is so much better.
2. ***How long has this study been in existence?***

Time diary studies have been around for a long time, especially those
exploring how people spend leisure time and balance work and family.
In terms of studying faculty work and time there have tended to be
only a few methods: cross sectional surveys that ask folks to estimate
time spent on work activities over the last year, analysis of annual
faculty report data, and some ethnography shadowing individuals and
interviews with small samples. Time diary methods are somewhat newer
as applied to faculty. However, I conducted a prior study with Big 10
faculty using this method just last year (paper under review).
Clemson's ADVANCE program is using this method, there has been some
work internationally, and it is likely to become more popular.
3. ***How many institutions (and which ones) have or are participating in the study?***

We will not be reporting results with names of institutions--but this
spring we have about a dozen institutions participating.
4. ***What have the response rates been like in previous studies? What are
some suggestions you might have to ensure better response rates?***

We have found overall it is hard to get faculty to complete any survey;
and those institutions that are most successful have administrators
and faculty leaders on campus encouraging participation and providing
local reasons the data could be useful. Also, it is crucial faculty
understand data is not being collected to evaluate faculty or to be
used in any critical way but to support them. The degree to which
faculty leaders and administrators can communicate these things during
data collection--the better the response rate.

When faculty have not received that message clearly--there have been
low response rates, in places where the message has been
stronger--better ones. Most faculty survey response rates are between
30-50% so that would be our goal with local campus support.

1. ***How will the data be presented back to us? Will there be ways to
stratify data based on things like gender, college, departments,
faculty status...etc.?***

We will provide a report of findings, reported
by gender, discipline/college and faculty status to the degree
confidentiality allows (e.g. we will not report by race if there are
not a significant number of responses such that confidentiality is at
risk--the greater the response the more we can stratify.

1. ***Have there been issues related to non-response bias?***

Yes, there is always a risk of this with surveys and we ask for the sample
statistics so we understand whether the sample is representative as
well.

1. ***How have universities/colleges that have been part of previous studies
used their findings to address workload at their respective
institutions?***

We have not been involved in reform at campuses based on
results to date; though I have been involved in such efforts as
Director of ADVANCE at UMCP--using different kinds of data to inform
workload reform. Such information can inform efforts to train mentors,
think about work climate, and think about whether some groups (e.g.
associate professors or women) are facing differential demands on
their time.