

Faculty Planning Priorities Survey Report, August 2002

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This report summarizes the main results from Executive Council's Spring 2002 survey of the faculty. The goal of the survey was to identify issues that should be seen as priorities for the 2002-03 institutional planning process. The results presented in this report will help to inform that process.

The questions asked on this survey, including the categories provided as items to be ranked, were based on the results of an earlier survey administered during Fall 2001. That survey asked open-ended questions about the college's strengths and weaknesses, about what Grinnell should do more or less of than it does now, and what items should become planning priorities. Responses to that earlier survey were combined into the categories on the second survey.

91 responses were received. To make sure the process was inclusive, the survey was sent electronically to 220 faculty members, including those on leave or on Senior Faculty Status, visiting faculty members, and non-classroom faculty such as librarians and Writing Lab staff. Since respondents identified themselves only by division and as tenured or not tenured, it is not possible to calculate a response rate for "regular faculty."

Pattern of Respondents:

	Humanities	Social Studies	Sciences	(row totals)
Tenured	13% (12)	21% (19)	22% (20)	57% (51)
Not Tenured	15% (13)	8% (7)	21% (19)	43% (39)
(column totals)	28% (25)	29% (26)	43% (39)	*

*One respondent did not identify either division or tenure status.

1. Which facets of the organization should be considered first in the planning process?

38% of respondents said that faculty workload issues should be the highest priority for the planning process. Members of the Humanities Division were the most concerned with workload (60% ranked it first), while members of the Science Division were the least likely to make workload their top priority (22% ranked it first). These patterns were the same for both tenured and untenured respondents. Although "resources" was ranked first by only 19%, it was the least likely to be ranked last (only 6% did so).

Item	% ranking relevant item as the most important			
	Overall	Humanities	Social Studies	Sciences
College governance	24%	28%	19%	24%
Curriculum	19%	4%	15%	30%
Distribution of resources	19%	8%	23%	24%
Faculty workload and the quality of working life	38%	60%	42%	22%

2. The following items all relate to college governance; please indicate your view of the relative importance of having the planning process address each issue.

Three issues emerged as major concerns: the budgetary decision-making process, organizational climate, and communication. Each of these issues was ranked in the top three by approximately two thirds of both tenured and untenured faculty members. Tenured respondents were twice as likely (40%) as untenured ones (19%) to rank facilities planning in their top three priorities.

Issue	Average ranking of each issue; 1 = most important			
	All	Humanities	Social Studies	Sciences
Budgetary decision making processes.	3.0	2.5	2.8	3.5
Organizational climate (perceptions and attitudes).	3.0	3.9	2.8	2.6
Communication.	3.3	3.7	3.5	2.8
The role of the Executive Council and other committees.	3.9	3.5	4.3	3.9
Facilities planning processes.	4.4	4.7	3.6	4.8
The structure of faculty meetings.	4.6	4.2	4.9	4.7
The structure of academic divisions and departments.	5.4	4.4	5.8	5.8

3A. Do you think the faculty should conduct a review of the curriculum?

The respondents are about evenly divided as to whether a curricular review should occur. This is also true of each division and of tenured and untenured faculty separately.

	All	Humanities	Social Studies	Sciences
Yes	52%	42%	54%	55%
No	48%	58%	46%	45%

3B. Assuming that a curricular review is conducted, please suggest an order of importance for consideration of the items listed below.

Four issues were placed among the three most important by more than half of the respondents: the role of independent study, what students must complete in order to graduate, what subjects and courses are taught at the college, and the role of interdisciplinary programs/concentrations. Untenured respondents were twice as likely (41%) as tenured ones (20%) to rank the tutorial in the top three items for consideration.

Issue	Average ranking of each issue; 1 = most important			
	All	Humanities	Social Studies	Sciences
The role of independent study, student research, MAPs, etc.	3.1	2.6	3.1	3.3
What students must complete in order to graduate	3.3	3.5	3.9	2.8
Interdisciplinary programs/concentrations	3.6	3.8	2.9	3.8
What subjects/courses are/should be taught at the college	3.6	3.9	4.0	3.2
The role of the first-year tutorial	4.7	4.0	5.5	4.6
The role of off-campus study	4.8	5.2	4.6	4.8
Institutes and centers	4.8	4.5	3.8	5.5

4. This question divides the distribution of resources into two areas. For each list, please indicate what you see as the order of importance for funding these items.

Expanding the size of the faculty (whether for leave-proofing or to increase diversity) was generally seen as a high priority, along with faculty salaries and, to a lesser degree, support for faculty scholarship. 58% of respondents said that compensation for course development was their lowest priority among the six.

Issue	Average ranking of each issue; 1 = most important			
	All	Humanities	Social Studies	Sciences
Expanded faculty hiring for “leave proofing” and continuity.	2.4	3.0	2.5	1.9
Faculty salaries.	2.8	2.2	2.8	3.2
Support for faculty scholarship.	3.0	3.1	3.3	2.8
Expanded faculty hiring to increase diversity.	3.2	3.6	2.6	3.3
Support for travel to professional conferences.	4.1	3.8	4.4	4.2
Compensation for development of new courses.	5.4	5.1	5.4	5.5

83% of respondents ranked student financial aid as one of their top three funding priorities for the college. Support for student research, technology support, and new academic facilities were also ranked in the top three by 50-60% of respondents. Tenure status had no effect on funding priorities, for either faculty support or general items.

Issue	Average ranking of each issue; 1 = most important			
	All	Humanities	Social Studies	Sciences
Student financial aid.	2.1	1.9	2.4	2.1
Funding for MAPs and/or other student research projects.	3.2	4.1	3.7	2.4
Technology support on campus.	3.3	3.5	3.0	3.4
Building new academic facilities.	3.4	3.7	3.4	3.2
Creation of/support for new academic programs/centers.	5.1	3.9	5.2	5.8
Bringing speakers to campus.	5.2	4.9	5.2	5.4
Building new non-academic facilities.	5.4	5.1	5.1	5.8

5A. The following is a list of some things that could be done to reduce faculty workload. Rank them in order of their desirability.

Overall, a 2-2 teaching load was considered the most desirable option, with 73% of respondents rating it in the top three. 64% supported leaving more decisions to faculty committees as one of their top three choices. At the other end of the scale, there is clearly opposition to giving more decision power to administrators, and little support for having faculty spend less one-on-one time with students or supervising student research.

Issue	Average ranking of each issue; 1 = most desirable			
	All	Humanities	Social Studies	Sciences
Move to a 2-2 teaching load.	2.4	1.7	1.9	3.4
Leave more decisions to faculty committees without the participation of the faculty as a whole.	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.1
Reduce pressure to develop new courses.	3.6	4.0	3.8	3.3
Give more authority, responsibility, and incentives to department chairs.	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.6
Reduce research expectations for promotion/tenure.	4.6	5.4	4.7	4.1
Have faculty supervise less independent study work/student research.	4.8	3.8	4.7	5.5
Have faculty spend less one-on-one time with students.	5.7	5.2	5.5	6.1
Give more decision-making power to administrators with less faculty consultation.	6.7	7.3	6.8	6.3

	All	Humanities	Social Studies	Sciences
Yes	62%	76%	76%	46%
No	38%	24%	24%	54%

	All	Humanities	Social Studies	Sciences
Yes	75%	96%	75%	62%
No	25%	4%	25%	38%

5D. Now suppose that Grinnell does go to a 2-2 teaching load, and/or provides frequent research leaves. For the sake of discovering your priorities, assume that there is no increase in the size of the faculty, in which case trade-offs would have to be made. The following is a list of possible trade-offs. Please indicate, in priority order, which particular trade-offs you would be more or less willing to make.

63% of respondents ranked a minimum class size as one of their top two choices. Having larger classes, and offering fewer courses within a given subject, were ranked in the top two by 42-43%.

Table 5 D
Rank the Following Trade-offs, Made to Accommodate a 2-2 Teaching Load,
In Order of Desirability

Trade-off	Average ranking of each option; 1 = most desirable			
	All	Humanities	Social Studies	Sciences
Have a minimum class size below which a course cannot be offered.	2.3	2.6	1.4	2.7
Offer fewer courses within given subjects.	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.6
Larger average class size.	3.0	2.6	3.2	3.2
Offer fewer subjects at the college.	3.3	4.1	3.1	3.0
Implement multiple "tracks" for faculty, with different teaching loads and research expectations.	3.4	2.5	4.2	3.3