Each year, the Faculty Association conducts a significant survey concerning academic matters and the state of the faculty. In the 2010 survey, 358 faculty members participated, including nearly 300 (approximately two-thirds) of the full-time faculty. And participants offered over 1,700 comments. The survey gathered faculty views on three main academic matters: 1) professional development and the Faculty Learning Fellowship application and review process, 2) the Foundations program, and 3) library services. Furthermore, the survey responses provide profile information about our full-time faculty, pre-CFS faculty, professional faculty, one-year hires, and part-time/adjunct faculty and their ideas regarding their specific assignments.

Faculty responses to the annual survey are published to the faculty, reviewed at the annual meeting and caucuses of the Faculty Association in the spring, and submitted to the Academic Office to encourage informed decision-making.

The following is an executive summary of the results, including answers to both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Full results, including all multiple choice statistics and faculty comments, are attached.

Faculty Profiles

Part-Time/Adjunct Faculty—Over half (53%) of the part-time/adjunct faculty who responded to the survey have taught at BYU-Idaho for five years or less, and a significant majority (82%) have taught here for ten years or less. Most (61%) teach two classes each semester, although a significant minority (21%) teach three or more. Part-time/adjunct instructors express appreciation for working at BYU-Idaho, particularly with the students and other faculty. As a result of the nature of their contract, however, they are concerned that their income is insecure. Some express interest in the ability to be considered employees to be able to apply for other internal positions when they become available. Online teaching seems to require more work hours for the same pay. Part-time/adjunct faculty members have a particularly difficult time parking. Some wonder if more benefits could be offered. Finally, part-time/adjunct faculty could benefit from more representation.

One-Year Faculty—One-year faculty members are grateful for the opportunity to teach. Some feel that the teaching burden they carry is overwhelming; they are so busy with teaching that they have no time to apply for other jobs or to plan their post-BYU-I contract career. One-year hires, some urge, should only be used for emergency class coverage; full-time faculty should be hired if classes need to be taught year after year.

Professional Faculty—About half (50%) of the professional faculty who responded to the survey have worked and taught at BYU-Idaho for more than eleven years. Most (69%) continue to teach at least one class for the university. Some professional faculty members are still not comfortable with their status; they do not understand why their status was changed to professional faculty. Instead, they believe they need to develop professionally. Some feel they do not have the time or the opportunity to become qualified specialists for the disciplines to which they are assigned.

Full-Time Faculty—A significant minority (40%) of full-time faculty who responded to the survey have worked at BYU-Idaho between 6-10 years. Many faculty members still have difficulty finding the time to stay current in their field. A large majority (74%) characterized the amount of time to stay current in their fields of instruction as “somewhat insufficient” or “insufficient.” They appreciate that they now teach 12 hours a semester instead of fifteen; however, this teaching load is still heavy. The results of the survey demonstrate that 3 teaching preparations is still the most common number for 40% of the respondents, with about 20% having 2 preparations and about 20% having 4. It appears that most faculty members have been unable to teach the 2 preparations a semester as proposed when the new three semester contract was established.

Faculty Learning Fellowships

Faculty members are very pleased that they now have a written Faculty Learning Fellowship application form and documented review process. Although the available document standardizes the application and review process across campus, several faculty members commented that it seems to have been written specifically for the Performing and Visual Arts College, and the language has not yet been revised to be generally applicable to all colleges.
In terms of the application process for the 3-hour fellowships, about 52% thought the process was “somewhat difficult” or “too difficult,” about 43% thought it was “just right,” and about 5% thought it was “somewhat easy” or “too easy.” Similar opinions prevailed with the review process for 3-hour fellowships (about 50%, 47%, and 3% respectively). But in regards to the 12-hour fellowships (i.e. “sabbatical” leaves), the process was viewed more favorably. A majority of respondents characterized both the application and review processes as “just right” (50% and 54% respectively) for these fellowships.

As demonstrated by their written comments, faculty members are pleased the review process has a peer-review component; however, many think that the peer-review component should only be applied in the 12 credit review process. Many faculty note the significant obstacles posed by having to apply 16 months in advance for a 3 hour Fellowship and then having to follow the same application and review process (except for approval by the Academic Office) as for the 12 hour Fellowship. They request a greater distinction between the demands of a 3 hour application and that of a 12 hour and a greater distinction in the review process between the two levels as well. Many faculty members suggest that the 3 hour application and review process can be handled at the Department level (with a possible appeal process to the college level). Faculty also request that clear policy-based justifications be given when Fellowships are denied. After Fellowships, some faculty members suggest even greater accountability for their use of the Fellowships.

Although the number of reported full-semester (12-hour) leaves declined sharply after 2004, the number has grown steadily during the last few years. It should be noted, however, that over half of the full-time faculty respondents (51%) reported they had not even applied for a full-semester leave in the last ten years.

Foundations Program

A majority of full-time faculty who responded to the survey (53%) had not developed or taught a Foundations course. But among those who had, a significant majority (72%) characterized their faculty teaching teams as “effective” and “somewhat effective,” 14% were neutral as to the question of effectiveness, and 14% thought the teaching groups were “somewhat ineffective” or “ineffective.” A significant minority (39%) felt “somewhat unqualified,” “unqualified,” or “neutral” about their qualifications to teach foundations courses.

On the question of quality, a significant majority (70%) were “satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the quality of foundations courses. But on the question of whether the quality exceeded the old GE classes, respondents were divided: 39% felt the quality “exceeded” or “somewhat exceeded” the old courses, while another 39% felt the quality was “lower” or “somewhat lower” than the old course, and 22% thought the quality was the same.

Faculty members enjoy being able to learn new material—particularly from other disciplines—for the Foundations courses. However, many faculty feel that their lack of training and education in the cross-disciplinary courses results in curricular simplicity and decreased rigor. Some faculty experts have been left off of Foundations committees, so they have been unable to draw upon their background to contribute to the quality of the courses. The cross-disciplinary approach may not be appropriate in all classes. About 45% thought a cross-disciplinary approach “improved” or “somewhat improved” the quality of the class, while 37% thought the cross-disciplinary approach “lowered” or “somewhat lowered” the quality.

Library Services Comments

Most faculty members who responded to the survey reported that few of their assignments require library use, but that they rely on its resources to stay current in their fields. About 52% reported that 0-10% of their assignments require library use, and another 33% require it for only 10-30% of their assignments. But 77% said that library resources are “important” or “somewhat important” to staying current in their fields.

Faculty members are appreciative of the great services—databases, interlibrary loan, book resources—provided by the library. They find the librarians to be knowledgeable and helpful. Many faculty members request to have longer-checkout time for the faculty themselves to complete research and curriculum development. The available databases are great; however, faculty members desire more up-to-date journal articles and more scholarly journals, particularly in the sciences and the MLA. Faculty request more connection between the disciplines and librarians, so needed material can be purchased. Faculty wonder if the
search engines could be refined to produce more relevant sources. And, finally, the library environment could be remodeled to be more comfortable, more academic, and more conducive to serious study.

**CFS Process**

Pre-CFS faculty members are pleased with their CFS committees and feel that they receive helpful feedback from their faculty peers. About 64% of pre-CFS faculty reported being “satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the process. Many pre-CFS faculty members think that the new CFS process is better than the previous process; however, they are troubled by the continual change to the process. Many are not sure what the CFS requirements actually are, and they believe their supervisors are unaware as well. Pre-CFS faculty request a more defined, standardized, and more clearly articulated process. Deans and Chairs should all be trained on the process, so they follow it uniformly. Some faculty would also appreciate more feedback from mentors or from a teaching center on what they are doing well and on what they could improve.

**Communication with Administration**

The communication between the administration and faculty seems to have improved. Almost 50% described the level of communication between faculty and administration as “adequate,” while 5% characterized it as “excellent.” However, 45% characterized communication as “inadequate.” In their comments, faculty members noted that some academic policy or program changes are not announced directly to the faculty nor written down and distributed. Many faculty request that more opportunities for genuine two-way communication be offered; they tire of the frequent question-and-answer sessions between administrators and faculty; some observe that the structure of the communication assumes that only the faculty have questions—not possible recommendations or solutions—and that only administrators have answers.

**Faculty Association**

When asked if they were satisfied with the work of the Faculty Association, 60% said they were “satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied,” 32% said they were “neutral,” and 8% said they were “dissatisfied” or “somewhat dissatisfied.” Many faculty members are pleased with the direction of the Faculty Association; they think the Association provides an essential route of communication with the Academic Office. Some wonder whether or not the Faculty Association is influential, or if the administration is interested in faculty comments. Some others miss a few of programs sponsored under the previous constitution. A few were uncomfortable with the tone of last year’s accreditation report, though others praised the Association’s approach to accreditation issues.