

Empowering potential: Faculty as your key competitive asset

Insights from academic leaders to
enable faculty success and excellence

While covering faculty salaries is a major financial outlay, engaged faculty repay that investment, bringing in revenue via their research grants and commercial activities.

They help raise your institution's reputation through their **research** impact, and their **teaching** produces knowledgeable and skilled graduates. Importantly, faculty **service** plays an increasingly important role in helping your institution meet real-world impact goals.

But to excel in these three areas, **faculty need the right support, tools and information.**

Through a survey of over **425 academic leaders**, split between **senior leadership** and **senior faculty members**, across **87 countries**, we discovered how current challenges such as **funding pressures**, **administrative duties** and **staff burnout**, are influencing how they **hire, retain and develop their faculty.**

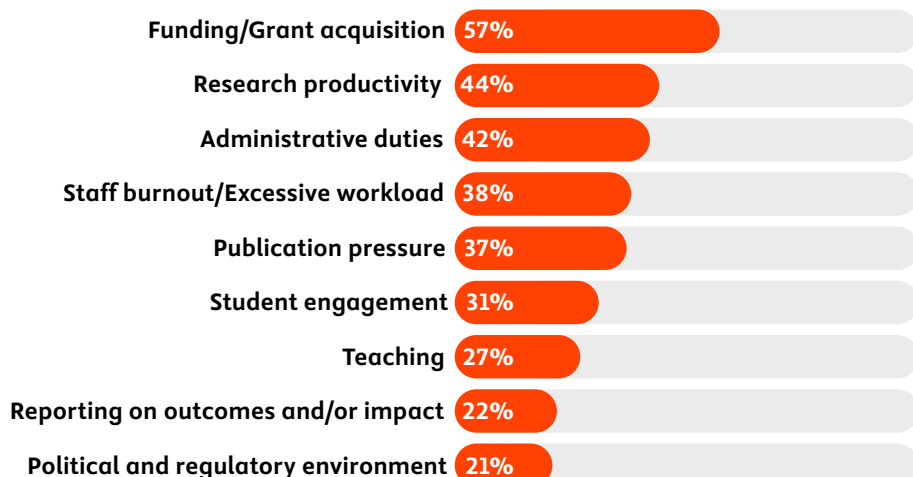
In addition, the report offers perspectives on:

- Priorities and performance around faculty management, including hiring, recruitment and retention
- Priorities and points for addressing funding challenges
- Employment of technology and data usage, including specific use cases
- Potential barriers to technology implementation, such as budgets and leadership buy-in
- Related areas, such as equity, diversity and inclusion

Current challenges identified by academic leaders

Academic leaders named **funding/grant acquisition** as a top challenge area (57%), followed by **research productivity** (44%) and **administrative duties** (42%).

Staff burnout (38%) and publication pressure (37%) were also identified as top challenge areas.



People and culture:

Nurturing an environment in which faculty can thrive

Academic leaders are dealing with unprecedented challenges around funding, including **funds for research and education, prioritization of resources and reporting on outcomes and impact**. This has consequences for every aspect of academic life, including priority areas of **attracting, retaining and showcasing faculty and their work**.

For **senior faculty members**, frustrations over a **lack of equitable career opportunities** are compounded by concerns over **rising workloads**, along with **dissatisfaction about their remuneration and recognition**.

At the same time, **senior leadership** fear that rising pressures are resulting in a **deteriorating research culture** and even **faculty burnout**. They are also concerned they may **lose top faculty**.

All academic leaders are calling for increased support for faculty. High on their wish lists are **more, and improved, professional development opportunities and systems, better workload distribution and competitive compensation**.

“The institution requests many reports and files with redundant information, and the administrative load requires a lot of time.”

Senior faculty member,
Mexico

“Access to real time data on faculty performance is very limited, which often causes delays in their evaluations. These, in turn, can slow down the promotion process, affecting faculty advancement and morale.”

Senior leader,
Australia

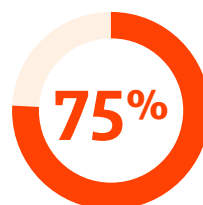
Data, Processes and Systems:

Building the right foundation to drive institutional success

Fragmented systems and data silos make it difficult for academic leaders to access the strategic insights they need. Respondents are concerned this **hinders their ability to make informed decisions for their institutions**.

They also report that **poor data and analytical tools**, combined with **inefficient and opaque processes**, impact **recruitment and review, promotion and tenure**.

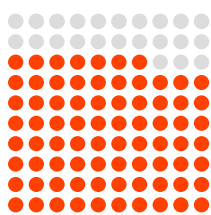
Along with **better insights into faculty and research performance**, academic leaders want **improved technology to showcase their institutional achievements**, so they can leverage successes to boost funding, reputation and recruitment opportunities.



of academic leaders believe that **inefficient faculty review processes create high administrative burden**.

“While we produce a significant amount of high-quality research, we lack a centralized, user-friendly platform to effectively highlight these achievements to external stakeholders, such as potential collaborators, funding agencies and the public.”

Senior leader,
Ecuador

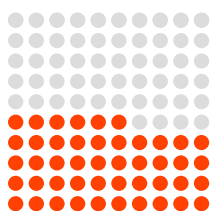


77%

of academic leaders would like better visibility into the **faculty review process**.

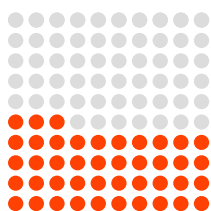


No significant difference between positions.



46%

of academic leaders think their institutions need **better tools for reporting** the full range of faculty impact.



43%

of academic leaders believe that **top faculty at their institution are considering leaving their positions**.



Academic leaders have clear ideas about how the challenges their institutions face can be tackled:

1 Modernize systems:

Academic leaders feel that upgraded evaluation and reporting tools will improve transparency and efficiency. Integrated technology systems could also support better decision-making in areas important to faculty careers and engagement.

2 Improve data integration:

Academic leaders want a unified system that will streamline decision-making, track faculty performance and ensure equitable practices in performance reviews. They also want data collection to be simplified, further reducing the administrative burden on faculty. And they want measures introduced to improve the quality—and usefulness—of the data captured.

3 Increase faculty support and resources:

Respondents believe their institutions will benefit from improved resources that streamline administrative tasks and reduce the time required for activities like activity reporting. Their hope is that this will free up faculty to focus more on teaching, service and research.

4 Revisit processes for hiring, retaining and recognizing faculty:

Faculty attraction and retention remains a struggle for most institutions. Academic leaders believe there should be a greater focus on competitive compensation, professional development and addressing mental health needs.

5 Promote equity and diversity:

Ideally, academic leaders want standardized criteria for promotions that are consistently applied, along with leadership pathways that will improve diversity and representation.

Survey methodology

When: October–November 2024

What: 10-minute online quantitative survey

Who: Global study with **428 responses** from 87 countries, comprising:

- **243 senior leadership:** those involved in institutional governance and the management of faculty, schools, departments and centers. It also covers heads of functional teams and chief technology officers.
- **185 senior faculty members:** established faculty who advise or participate in decision-making teams when their institutions consider new systems or services.

Results: To ensure the results were representative, we weighted them based on OECD researcher population figures by region, and to equally represent senior leadership and senior faculty members in the totals.



View the full report at:

elsevier.com/promotions/empowering-potential

Interfolio

Interfolio's innovative Faculty Information System enables academic leaders to achieve strategic success and drive institutional impact. Trusted by more than 500 universities across 20 countries, the Faculty Information System streamlines processes for faculty hiring and recruitment, academic appointments and timelines, activity data reporting, and reviews and promotions.

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