

Faculty Life-Work Balance Executive Summary

Overview:

Findings from the March 5, 2026 (~23% of faculty; 46% PS, 15% TT, 40% Tenured) Life-Work Balance Committee survey indicate widespread strain among faculty driven by increasing workload expectations, stagnant compensation, and limited structural supports. While respondents express strong commitment to students and the university's mission, many view current conditions as unsustainable and misaligned with available resources.

Key Findings:

Compensation and Workload

- Stagnant salaries amid inflation and R1-level expectations have created significant financial stress.
- Many respondents feel undervalued, with some relying on secondary employment.
- Compensation is perceived as non-competitive with peer R1 institutions and local employers.

Systemic Overload

- Rapid implementation of new initiatives, policies, and structural changes, often without adequate consultation or staffing, has led to burnout and "initiative fatigue."
- Faculty report increasing pressure to "do more with less."

Caregiving and Life-Stage Challenges

- The absence of a standardized paid parental leave policy is a major concern.
- Childcare remains financially inaccessible and caregiving for aging parents is largely unsupported.
- Family-friendly facilities (e.g., lactation spaces) are inconsistent across campus.

Access Barriers to Resources

- Many employees are unaware of existing work-life resources.
- Others fear using them due to concerns about retaliation, negative evaluations, or professional stigma, particularly in tenure and or other annual review processes.

Leadership and Trust Gaps

- Respondents perceive a disconnect between senior leadership and frontline faculty, citing misalignment between messaging about balance and daily realities.

Location-Specific Inequities

- Discovery Park and satellite campus employees face added burdens including long commutes, aging facilities, limited amenities, and parking constraints.

Access of UNT Resources

- Compared with peer and aspirational institutions, UNT's work-life resources are unusually fragmented, requiring prior knowledge of offices and systems rather than offering a centralized, user-friendly point of access for faculty needs.
- This fragmentation, combined with fear of retaliation and inconsistent implementation across units, significantly limits the practical accessibility of otherwise available resources.

Priority Recommendations

- Implement competitive salary adjustments aligned with inflation and peer institutions.
- Increase staffing support to reduce overload and invisible labor.
- Standardize parental leave, caregiving accommodations, and scheduling stability.
- Reduce administrative "busy work" and inefficient systems.
- Expect leaders to model healthy boundaries, improve transparency around workloads and resources.
- Offer a central hub for resource information.

Conclusion

The prevailing sentiment is sustained burnout paired with deep institutional loyalty. Respondents urge leadership to move beyond "work-life balance" rhetoric and focus on work balance through aligning expectations, compensation, and resources to sustain faculty and the university's core mission.