



# How Academic Leaders Can Address Faculty and Staff Burnout

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# What Is Burnout?



# UNM Gauges Enduring COVID-19 Impacts on Faculty

The University of New Mexico Surveyed Full-Time Faculty in Spring 2022

**Advance**  
at UNM

## Key Survey Logistics



Goal: Determine **impacts of COVID-19 on full-time faculty** at UNM



Team: Faculty and staff working to create **sustainable climate changes** for increased success of women and minority faculty



Timeline: Online responses collected April 30-May 18



Respondents: 343 Full-time UNM faculty in Spring 2022

## Sample Questions:



Compared to semesters prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, how much time did you spend on [**Childcare, Adult Caregiving**] in Spring 2022?



After work, I **need more time than in the past to relax/feel better.**



Lately, I **think less at work and do my job almost mechanically.**



Overall, to what extent has the COVID-19 pandemic negatively effected your Spring 2022 semester with regard to **satisfaction with work?**



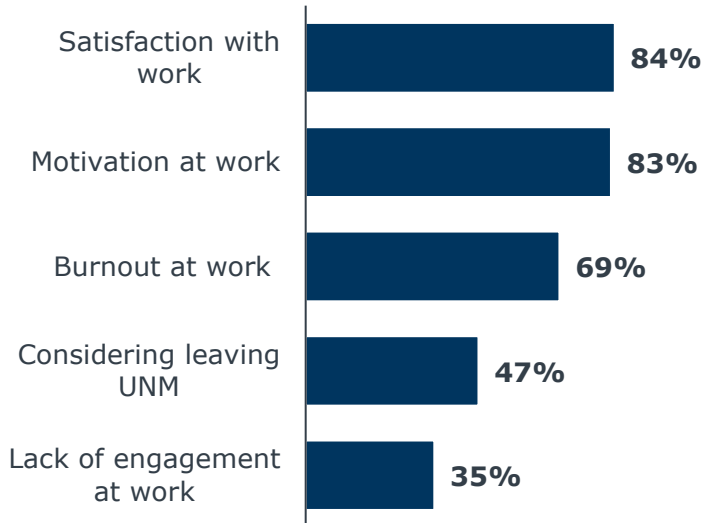
*Further Reading on Caregiving Supporting Faculty and Staff Caregivers Whitepaper*

# Pandemic Impact on Faculty Continues to Reverberate <sup>5</sup>

UNM Surveys Finds Significant Consequences in Spring 2022

## The pandemic negatively affected my work in Spring 2022 with respect to...

N = 343 University of New Mexico Faculty



### Struggling Beneath the Surface

“[T]o everyone around me, I look like I am successful and managing to balance work and life. I feel, on the other hand, like crying most days and I think about leaving this university more and more often lately.”

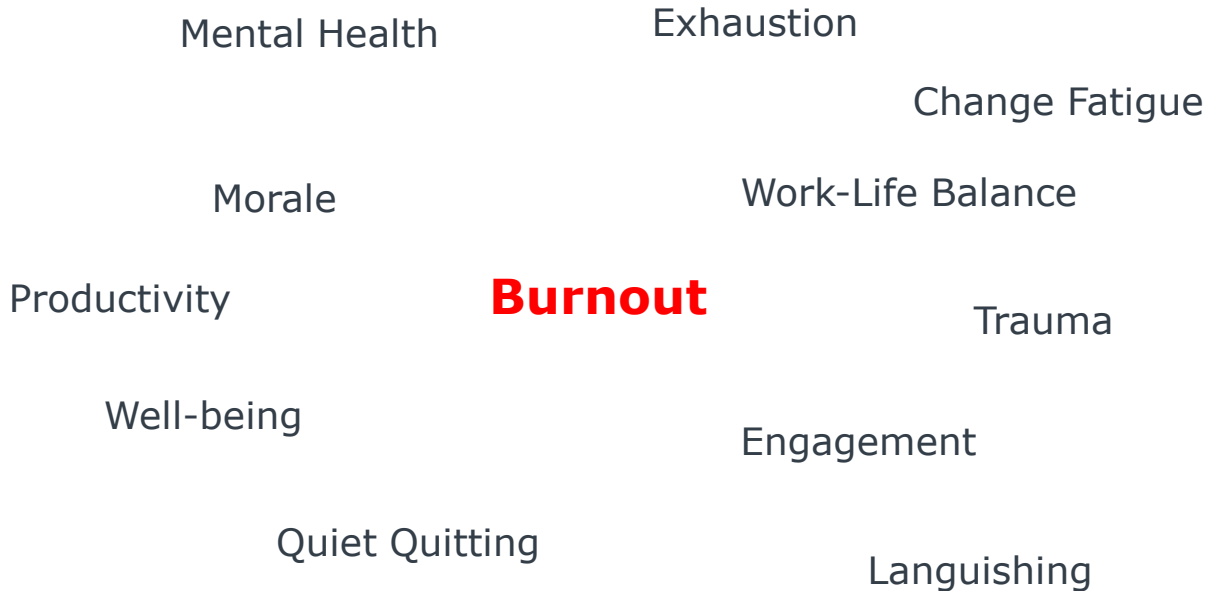
*UNM Faculty Member*

# Finding the Most Useful Frame for the Study



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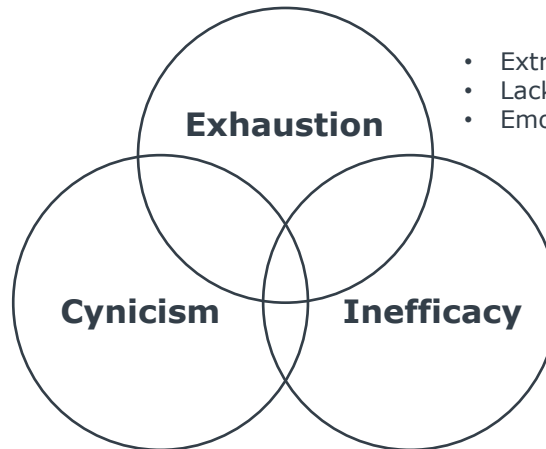
## Why We Chose to Focus on Burnout



# What Is Burnout?

“Burnout is a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job, and is defined by three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy.”

Maslach et al. “Job Burnout” (2001)



- Extreme fatigue
- Lack of energy
- Emotional exhaustion

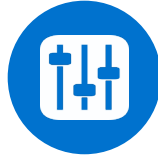
- Loss of idealism and passion
- Feelings of depersonalization
- Detachment from the job

- Sense of ineffectiveness
- Lack of accomplishment
- Loss of control over work conditions

# Maslach's Six Drivers of Burnout



**Workload**



**Control**



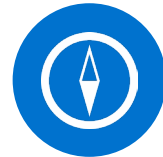
**Reward**



**Fairness**



**Community**



**Values**





## Characteristics

- Excessive overload
- Mismatch between work and skills
- Work that requires people to display emotions inconsistent with their feelings

## Examples of **Workload** Drivers in the Academic Affairs Workplace:

- Faculty feel pressure to care for student mental health amidst rising need & staff shortages or lack of capacity
- Increasing expectations to pivot pedagogy to fit evolving student needs and preferences
- Pandemic impacted scholarship, leaving faculty to feel they need to make up for lost time to stay on ideal career tracks
- Rising outside of work responsibilities such as adult caregiving and/or childcare



The **increased workload** and anxiety is something I don't think non-teachers can quite grasp...for me...to **teach effectively and thoughtfully requires about twice the time**, and there's a **constant sense you're never doing enough.**"

- Dr. Louis Mackenzie, Associate Professor, University of Washington



## Characteristics

- Insufficient control over the resources needed
- Lack of authority to pursue the work in what they believe is the most effective manner

## Examples of **Control** Drivers in the Academic Affairs Workplace:

- Increasing pressure on faculty to accommodate at the same rate as they did during the pandemic
- Increasing influence of outside entities, such as mandates imposed by federal, state, and local government
- Perceived 'erosion of shared governance'
- Obligations to adapt course format to fit evolving student preferences and needs



*Students Demand Endless Flexibility — but Is It What They Need?*



*Florida bill would end diversity programs, ban majors, shift power at universities*

# Burnout Driver #3: Reward



## Characteristics

- Insufficient financial rewards
- Lack of social recognition or reinforcement
- Reduced sense of purpose, fulfillment, and direction

## Examples of Reward Drivers in the Academic Affairs Workplace:

- Growing student disengagement erodes sense of meaning and accomplishment in the faculty role
- Opportunities to achieve career growth seem less and less accessible or achievable
- Failure of compensation to keep pace with inflation
- Perception that trustees, voters, many politicians do not value faculty work



*'Higher Ed Is a Scam of a Career': Readers Speak Out on Dead-End Jobs*



*Student Disengagement Has Soared Since the Pandemic*



*Public Opinion on Value of Higher Ed Remains Mixed*



## Characteristics

- Lack of perceived fairness in the workplace (*such as inequity in workload or pay, inappropriate handling of promotions or evaluations*)

## Examples of Fairness Drivers in the Academic Affairs Workplace:

- Increasing evidence of workload and compensation inequity
- Bias in faculty evaluation, promotion and tenure processes
- Greater budget pressure and transparency highlight funding differences between disciplines
- Disparate impacts of the pandemic on faculty groups – e.g., disproportionately set back the research of faculty who needed access to a lab



**Faculty of color are more likely to take on full slates of service**, including large advising loads and sitting on numerous committees. **These high service workloads often go unrecognized and undercompensated and can get in the way of promotion and tenure for BIPOC faculty.**

- Joshua Ddamulira, Senior Analyst, EAB

# Burnout Driver #5: Community



## Characteristics

- Loss of sense of positive connection with others in the workplace
- Chronic and unresolved conflict with others on the job

## Examples of **Community Drivers** in the Academic Affairs Workplace:

- Faculty lost connection in a virtual world and that sense of connection has not fully renewed since the pandemic
- Time spent on campus is packed with student meetings, teaching courses, committee work – leaving less time for connecting with colleagues
- Struggling to find time for formal and informal mentorship opportunities

Faculty Who Agreed the Pandemic **Negatively Affected** Them in Spring 2022 with Respect To:

96%

Networking opportunities

90%

Fostering new collaborations



## Characteristics

- People feel constrained by the job to do things that are not in accord with their own values
- Discrepancy between the lofty mission statement and actual practice

## Examples of **Values** Drivers in the Academic Affairs Workplace:

- Pressure to be more accommodating to students even if that does not lead to greater student success outcomes
- Perception that the university acts more like a corporation than a mission-driven institution
- Over-reliance on educational mission as a benefit or justification for longer hours
- Legislation in conflict with personal values



**There is some sense that there is the espoused values of our institutions and then the enacted values, and that there isn't perfect alignment between those two...institutions are falling short when it comes to really being able to provide evidence...what it has suggested to some folks is that there is a real values conflict."**

- Kevin McClure, Associate Professor, UNC Wilmington

# Staff and Faculty Experiences Differ

## Staff Feel Like Second-Class Citizens

Perspectives, input often ignored or deprioritized in decision making

Lack of recognition, respect for their expertise and mission contributions

Meager recruitment packages, fewer benefits (e.g., limited university housing)

Main targets for budget, workforce reductions

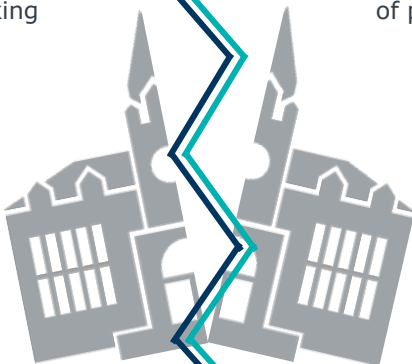
## Faculty Feel Excluded and Devalued

Loss of trust, confidence in shared governance as a result of pandemic decision-making

Heightened workloads, chronic change fatigue after COVID experience

Absorbed additional student support responsibilities (e.g., well-being)

Received lower service quality, less staff support amid shortages



# Can We Win on Mission Amid “Crisis of Meaning?”

## Higher Ed Should Appeal to Employees Seeking Purposeful Work...

66%

Of employees said COVID-19 has caused them to reflect on their purpose in life

56%

Of employees said the pandemic has made them want to contribute more to society

50%

Of employees are reconsidering the kind of work they do because of the pandemic

## ...But “Mission-Based Gaslighting” Raises Skepticism, Reduces Appeal

### Profile of a Higher Ed Expatriate



Marci Walton

- ▶ 13 years working in residential life
- ▶ Left higher ed in spring 2021 for private sector

“ Stop saying things like, ‘What did you expect to get paid? You work in education!’...By **using the mission to make your staff members feel ridiculous** for asking for a raise or better benefits, you are shutting down legitimate concerns.

”

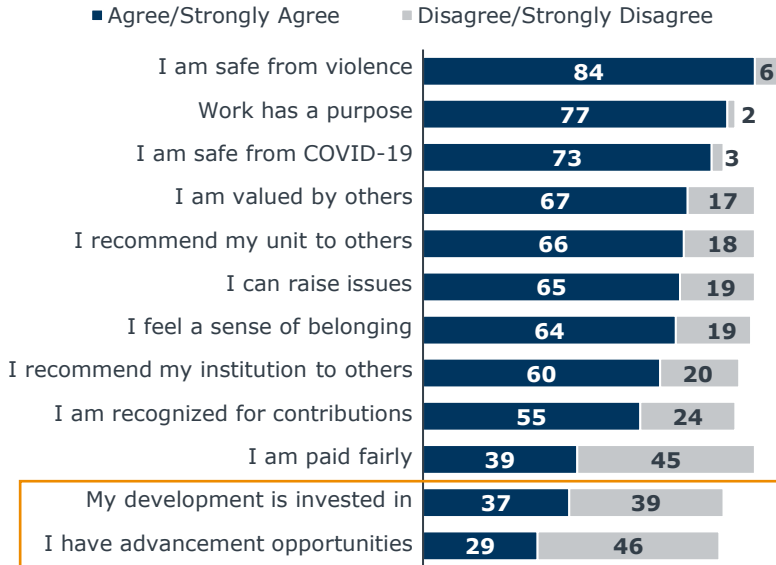




# The #1 Source of Staff Dissatisfaction

## Staff Are Less Satisfied With Career Opportunities Than Compensation...

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your place of work?<sup>1</sup>



## ...Yet Few Institutions Are Investing Here

EAB's Talent Questionnaire<sup>2</sup>

20%

Of institutions have tried to create structured staff **career paths** since July 2021

38%

Of institutions have launched **zero** staff career development initiatives since July 2021

1) n=3,815.

2) n=77.

# Discussion

## How Is Burnout Manifesting In Your Unit?

- What are the biggest pressures on your faculty or staff?
- How are they expressing their frustrations?
- How does this get in the way of achieving your unit goals?




# What Can Academic Leaders Do About Burnout?



# Tip of the Iceberg?

## UNM Recommendations Hinge on Systemic Change

- 
1. Resources to **support productivity in scholarship and creative works**
  2. **Training and rewards for mentoring** students and colleagues
  3. Communicate and adapt faculty **performance expectations and evaluation processes**
  4. Track changes that might impact **childcare** and explore additional options
  5. Design opportunities for informal **faculty interactions**
  6. **Make visible and evaluate programs that promote faculty well-being** and work-life balance
  7. **Raise awareness of resources** to assist with student academic needs and well-being
  8. Help faculty and staff navigate the application process for **ADA accommodations**

# What Can You Do About It?



<b>Driver</b>	<b>What the Provost and Deans Cannot Do</b>	<b>What the Provost and Deans Can Do</b>
<b>Workload</b>	Reduce total workload	Clarify workload expectations and support balanced loads
<b>Control</b>	Give the faculty control over all major decisions	Engage faculty in decision-making
<b>Reward</b>	Increase compensation across the board	Work towards equity in compensation and workloads
<b>Community</b>	Eliminate departmental conflict	Provide training and support for chairs to address conflict
<b>Fairness</b>	Fund all departments at their desired level	Introduce transparency into resource allocation decisions
<b>Values</b>	Fight off all political attacks on higher education	Clarify where the university stands on critical social issues, defend faculty who are publicly attacked



# Tackling Burnout Requires Cultural Change

Well-Being Initiatives That Encourage “Self-Help” Ignore Systemic Factors

**Efforts to Support Well-Being Target the Individual**



Yoga Classes



Time Management Trainings

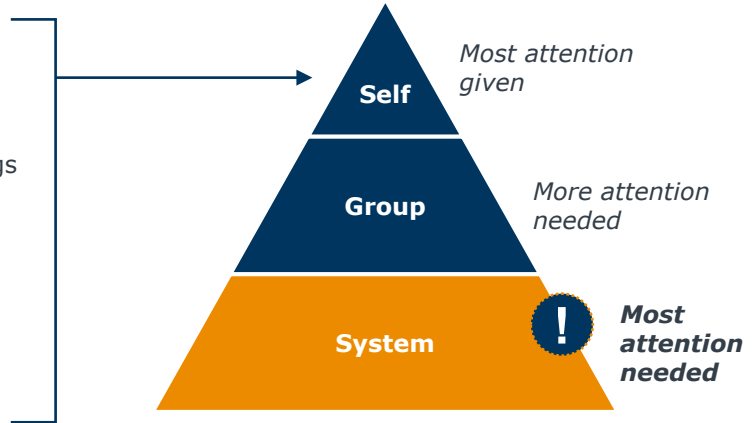


Meditation Apps



Fitness Challenges

**But Systemic Cultural Changes Are Necessary for Real Improvement**



**A major step toward eliminating burnout from the culture of higher ed is acknowledging that only systemic cultural changes will make a significant difference.** Most of the reporting on burnout offers suggestions targeting individuals rather than the culture that led to the problem. Because burnout is endemic to higher education....**individual interventions will not make a dent in the academic culture.**

- Rebecca Pope-Ruark, *Unraveling Faculty Burnout*

# Culture of Well-Being Is a Framework for Change

## U.S. Surgeon General Releases New Framework for Workplace Well-Being



**October 2022**

*U.S. Surgeon General  
Releases New Framework  
for Mental Health and Well-  
Being in the Workplace*

— “ —

“As we recover from the worst of the pandemic, **we have an opportunity and the power to make workplaces engines for mental health and well-being**, and this Surgeon General’s Framework shows us how we can start.”

*- Surgeon General  
Dr. Vivek Murthy*

— ” —





# Communicate the Importance of Faculty Well-Being







# Your Role in Supporting Faculty Well-Being



**Priority Areas  
Where  
Academic  
Leaders Have  
High-Impact**

***HR Is the Primary  
Owner, Academic  
Leaders Have Low-  
Impact***

## Faculty Well-Being Priority Areas

- **Lead by example** and use communication best-practices to facilitate a culture of well-being
  - **Identify opportunities to make systemic adjustments** in academic affairs to benefit faculty well-being
  - **Upskill managers** to encourage faculty well-being support on a local level
  - **Equip department heads with resources** to foster supportive department workplace environments
  - **Surface faculty well-being support needs** and possible solutions to senior leaders and HR leaders
- 
- *Develop interventions aimed at reducing health risks and costs by promoting healthy lifestyles*
  - *Implement screening activities to identify health risks*
  - *Determine employee benefits*



# Clarify Well-Being Expectations of Leaders

NYU's Reference Sheet Communicates Well-Being's Value in the Workplace



**NYU**

Work  
Life

## **Best Practices for Managers, Department Chairs, and Leaders**

Empathy and consideration for those we manage has never been more important. There is an increased need for managerial emotional intelligence—to lead with compassion, empathy and trust. Incorporating a work-life perspective into your role can lead to better personal and professional integration for those you manage. Learning how to listen and point to helpful and supportive resources for professional, family, and personal needs will result in less stress for all and a more positive work culture.

Start with yourself! The more you seek to create healthy work-life habits in your life, the easier it will be for you to understand and incorporate good practices with those you manage. Identify your work life challenges and take small steps to address them.

- ✔ Sets the tone regarding well-being and its importance in work culture
- ✔ Articulates high-level expectations for empathy and support among leaders
- ✔ Outlines simple best practices to help leaders provide effective support



# Just-in-Time Prompts to Reinforce Well-Being

Plan Ahead to Ensure Well-Being Messaging Is Consistent and Timely

## Build an Annual Communication Plan to Keep Well-Being Top of Mind



**August** Email well-being resources

**October** Attend a well-being event

**January** Resource email reminder

**March** Coffee chat series

### Guidance for Next Steps

Use **EAB's Annual Well-Being Communication Planning Activity** to map well-being promotion next steps to key moments throughout the year

## Common Actions to Promote Well-Being



### Events

Attend campus well-being events to show support for initiatives



### Email Reminders

Emails from the Provost's office about well-being resources for faculty



### Forums

Listen to well-being concerns at a faculty forum



# Provide Resources to Faculty to Help Each Other

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# Take the Guesswork Out of In-the-Moment Support

## Orange Folder Helps Colleagues Recognize Distress and Start a Conversation



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

### Orange Folder

▶ Recognize signs of distress

▶ Respond with concern and empathy

▶ Refer your colleague to available resources

! If a colleague does not want help



### Prioritizes Supportive Conversations

*"Listen actively, ask open ended questions and help them feel heard and understood."*



### Elevates Resources for Faculty and Staff in Distress

*"Early intervention plays a key role in creating healthy and respectful work environments."*



### Provides Explicit Advice on What to Do If a Colleague Does Not Want to Help

*"Respect their decision. Accepting assistance must be left up to the individual, except in emergencies."*



# Support Chairs in Addressing Faculty Well-Being



# Managers Make or Break the Employee Experience

## Deans and Chairs Relied on to Shape Workplace Culture

### Manager Influence by the Numbers

**75%** Of employees who voluntarily **left their jobs** said it was **because of their manager**, not the job itself

**70%** Of the variance in **employee engagement scores** are accounted for by managers

### When Management Goes Well...

*Those who feel supported by their employer are...*

- More likely to have positive views of their workplace and its leaders
- Less likely to underperform and miss work
- More satisfied with their job and more likely to stay
- Less likely to experience mental health symptoms



**Leaders Expect This Support to Come from Deans and Chairs**

**79%**

Of academic leaders feel **deans and chairs are responsible for ensuring faculty are supported**, engaged, and connected



# A Preparedness Gap Among Leaders

## Results in Varying Experiences with Well-Being Support across Departments

### *Difficulty **recruiting** faculty to leadership*

"There just isn't a long list of people waiting to serve as head; it is a challenging role. Most faculty just want to focus on their teaching and research and will need support for this new role."

*Simon Bates, Provost, UBC*

### *Some leaders **dislike "touchy-feely"** work*

"Some chairs just think the touchy-feely stuff is a bunch of bologna."

*Michael McPherson, Provost, UNT*

### **Training for New Chairs Often Sparse**

**67%**

Of chairs receive **no formal training** from their institution

**2 in 3**

Chairs with training said it did **not prepare them adequately**

### **Top Topic-Areas Covered for Chairs**

- 1 Resource Allocation and Budgeting
- 2 Legal Issues
- 3 Promotion and Tenure

### **Top Topic-Areas Needed for Chairs**

- 1 Evaluation of Faculty Performance
- 2 **Maintaining a Healthy Work Climate**
- 3 Obtaining and Managing External Funds





# Small Shifts in Listening Habits Go a Long Way

Leverage Productive Listening Techniques to Demonstrate Compassion

## Habits that Lead to Unproductive Listening:

- ✘ Avoiding questions that open a can of worms
- ✘ Only hearing the "squeaky wheel"
- ✘ Focusing response on surface-level concerns

## Results of Unproductive Listening

- ⚠ Compassion fatigue
- ⚠ Concern about support needs is perceived as disingenuous

## Tips to Bolster Productive Listening

- Take time to **reflect during and after listening sessions**
- Hear the "squeak" and **look for the broken axle**
- Communicate what you *can* do** and clarify what might be outside of your scope of control
- Validate emotion** and empathize

## Counterintuitive Signs You're Listening Well

- 🔊 Asking more questions
- 🔊 Getting more complaints

# UBC Helps Leaders Prepare for Complex Challenges

## Leadership Challenge Simulator Encourages Leaders to Fine-Tune Approach



### The University of British Columbia's Campus Resource Treasure Hunt



Convenes resource experts from across campus and 30+ new academic leaders participating in the Academic Leadership Development Program (ALDP)



Academic leaders receive realistic **leadership challenge case studies**



Scenarios must be addressed by consulting with resource experts



**Offered annually** since 2014



**Facilitators:** The Director of the Academic Leadership Development Program and the Director of Faculty Relations

### Case Study Examples

#### Faculty and Staff Morale in Your Unit

- Overburdened workload complaints
- Recent wave of staff resignations

#### PR and Freedom of Speech

- Professor wrote controversial op-ed
- Now receiving threats and hate mail

#### Conflict and Power Dynamics

- Untenured faculty member concerns over tenure prospects due to committee involvement
- Classroom environment amid student protests

#### Indigenous Scholar Feels Marginalized

- Has received inappropriate comments
- Tenure-eligible, but considering leaving
- Inequitable service workload

# UBC's Campus Resource Treasure Hunt In Action

Academic Leaders Consult with Experts in Real Time and Propose Solutions

## Step 1

*Leaders Receive Scenarios*

Leaders are split into teams



Groups have 20 minutes to discuss cases and create a plan using **provided directions**:

- List issues in scenario
- Identify information needed
- Determine which resources may be helpful
- Keep notes to summarize for full group at the end

## Step 2

*Consult Campus Experts*

Teams have **1 hour to consult with campus experts**



Faculty Relations



University Council



Human Resources



Equity & Inclusion



Office of the VP, Students



Media Relations

## Step 3

*Debrief Scenarios*

Teams present their plans to address the case:

- New academic leaders **receive feedback** from campus experts

Activity **concludes with reflection exercise**

- Leaders discuss their experience and what they learned through the activity
- Concluding remarks reiterate top learning objectives



# Bring Greater Transparency and Equity to Faculty Workload

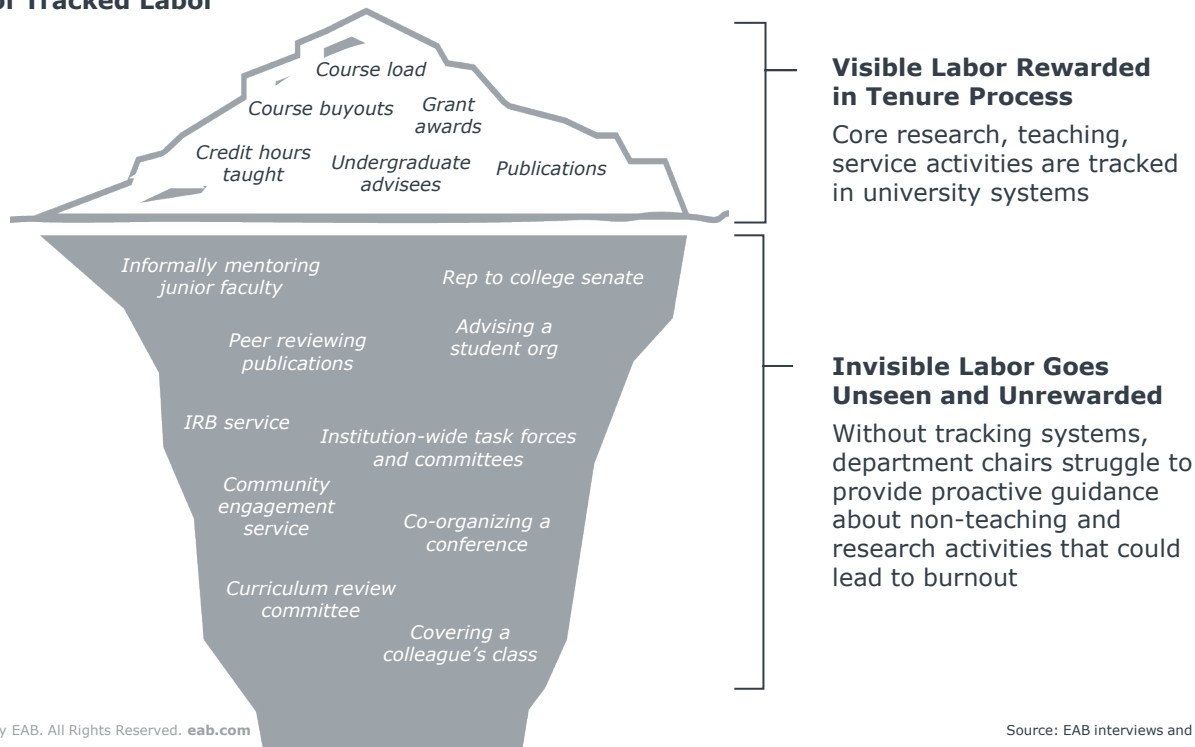




# The Invisible Labor Problem

## Upskill Chairs to Enhance Performance Evaluation

### Tip of the Iceberg: Department Chairs Only Aware of Tracked Labor





# UMD's Rubric Puts Parameters on Workload

## Expectations Rubric Clarifies Inputs at Different Performance Levels



### Excerpted Associate/Full Professor Rubric

	Teaching/ Mentoring	Research	Service
Below Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach <i>less</i> than 5.5 courses per year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0-1 peer reviewed publications per year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair 0 department and/or other committees</li> </ul>
Meets Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach 5.5 courses per year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 peer reviewed publications per year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair 1 department committee</li> </ul>
Above Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach <i>more</i> than 5.5 courses per year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 or more peer reviewed publications per year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair 2 department and/or other committees</li> </ul>
Far Exceeds Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach <i>more</i> than 6.5 courses per year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 or more peer reviewed publications per year in top tier journals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair 3 department and/or other committees</li> </ul>

Role-specific rubric provides necessary context

Grouping creates clear understanding across responsibilities

Concrete numbers and specific activities make expectations concrete

Full view of levels provides snapshot of what faculty workload can, and should, look like



# Self-Audit Prompts Workload Conversations

## Proactively Identify Areas of Overwork to Prevent Faculty Burnout

### Faculty Service Audit



#### Faculty Service Expectations

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Assistant Professors              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Serve on 2 college/university or department committees</li></ul>  |
| Tenured Associate/Full Professors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chair 1 department committee</li><li>• Serve on 2 other college/university or department committees</li></ul>         |
| Instructional Faculty             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chair 1 department committee</li><li>• Serve on 3 or more other college/university or department committees</li></ul> |

*Please identify which service roles you are playing this year that continue into the following academic year.*

*Please check boxes of any service roles you would prefer to play in the future. We encourage all faculty to check at least some boxes.*

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Merit Review Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum Review  | <input type="checkbox"/> Budget & Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Admissions & Fellowships          | <input type="checkbox"/> Workload Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Rep to University Senate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rep to College Senate             | <input type="checkbox"/> Research & Grants  | <input type="checkbox"/> IRB Representative       |

*Are you interested in chairing any committees? If so, which ones?*



Faculty reflect on where their workload burden comes from



Faculty and chair discuss current and future workload



Faculty reminded of work needed to meet expectations at top of worksheet

# Strengthening Your Talent Pipeline From Within



## Six Career Mobility Strategies With Corporate and Higher Ed Case Studies



1) Learning & Development.



# 105 Tactics to Improve Employee Engagement



Download the EAB Infographic

- ✓ **Compensation-Centered Recognition**
- ✓ **Flexible Work Arrangements**
- ✓ **PTO Policies**
- ✓ **Professional Development**
- ✓ **Manager Training and Upskilling**
- ✓ **Performance Reviews**
- ✓ **Welcoming Working Culture**
- ✓ **Employee Perks and Fringe Benefits**
- ✓ **Family-Centric Benefits**
- ✓ **Health Benefits**

Welcoming Working Culture	
52	Conduct exit interviews when staff leave to diagnose opportunities for future improvement and engagement strategies
53	Block or limit work communications during a determined time frame (e.g., after contract hours)
54	Conduct regular "stay" interviews to individualize career counseling and develop an engagement plan
55	Provide online/anonymous forms for staff at all levels to comment on proposed institutional policies
56	Empower staff and adjunct/part-time faculty to participate in research opportunities on and off campus

# Discussion

What Have You Already Tried to Address Burnout?

- What Has Worked?
- What Has Not Worked?



# Individual Exercise

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# Individual Exercise



1. Which aspects of burnout do you feel are the most urgent for you to address within your unit this academic year?
2. Which of the potential approaches that are within your control do you believe are most likely to positively impact your faculty and/ or staff?
3. What is the top approach that you plan to focus on this academic year?
4. What support would you need in order to implement your proposed approach?
5. What is the next concrete step you would need to take in order to get this started?
6. How will you know if your approach is having an impact?