

Who Teaches at Proprietary Colleges? Investigating the Background Characteristics and Job Satisfaction of Full-Time Faculty in For-Profit Colleges in the U.S.

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ABSTRACT

This study used survey research methodology to investigate the background characteristics and job satisfaction of full-time faculty at for-profit colleges in the U.S. A web-based questionnaire using items from the UCLA-HERI faculty survey was administered to a random sample of 149 full time faculty at 28 four-year private for-profit colleges. Univariate descriptive estimated statistics on selected variables -- age, gender, ethnicity, number of years at institution, highest degree earned, prior activity, academic rank, tenure, primary interest, and preferred work setting-- were used to explore the background characteristics of full-time faculty at private for-profit universities and to compare them with the background characteristics of full-time faculty at public and private nonprofit universities. Grounded in Herzberg's and Hagedorn's conceptual frameworks, the study aimed at determining whether faculty job satisfaction differs between private for-profit colleges and public and private nonprofit colleges. Univariate statistics were used to describe faculty satisfaction with respect to: opportunity for scholarly pursuits; autonomy; visibility for other jobs; opportunity to develop new ideas; salary and fringe benefits; teaching load; quality of students; working conditions; professional and social relationships with other faculty; competency of colleagues; job security; and relationship with administration. Subsequent analyses compared levels of satisfaction measured by the different indicators among for-profit colleges and comparison groups of public and private nonprofit colleges. Generalized least-squares

(GLS) regression analysis was used to examine the effect of institutional type on job satisfaction variance, both with and without control for the background characteristics that were found to differ across institutions.

The study detected statistically significant differences among faculty with regard to age, race, years at current institution, highest degree earned, degree currently working on, academic rank, and primary interest, and reasons to pursue an academic career.

Regression analyses indicated that institutional type is a consistent predictor of faculty job satisfaction. Faculty at 4-year private for-profit colleges are less satisfied with their jobs than faculty at 4-year public and private nonprofit colleges regardless of rank, age, gender and race. Assistant professors and professors are more likely to be satisfied than either instructors or lecturers; female faculty are more likely to be satisfied than male faculty; and African American and Asian American faculty are less satisfied than White / Caucasian faculty.