

RACE TO THE BOTTOM

Losing Ground and Losing Faith

Executive Summary

The job of college professor used to be a solidly middle-class profession. You didn't expect to get rich from teaching, at least not in the California State University, but you could count on a life not so different from other middle-class, college-educated people. You could pay your bills, care for and educate your children, buy a house, and you could someday retire.¹

That basic economic security—not getting rich—was what most faculty expected, and that's what most college professors experienced. As a result, they were able to do their best work as a professor because they were secure in their ability to support themselves and their families adequately.

But for faculty in the CSU, things have changed; that economic security has become shaky for many, and for others, impossible. As a result, more and more faculty in the CSU—tenured and lecturer alike—are losing ground economically and losing faith in their institutions and in the future of their profession.

As we detail in this paper, recent changes in the economic status of CSU faculty have had enormous consequences for the lives of CSU faculty and their families. For faculty trying to raise families, pay for housing, finance college for children, or deal with the many other rising costs of living in California, the loss of purchasing power they have experienced over the last decade has been devastating. That fact, as well as low starting salaries and salary stagnation we described in the first paper in this series, has meant genuine hardships, a decrease in the quality of life, and the abandonment of many middle class aspirations for large numbers of CSU faculty and their families.

The CSU Administration recently stated that it “deeply values its faculty and is committed to investing in faculty compensation. Our dedicated faculty deserve it and our mission of serving students requires it.”² Yet the CSU fails to make the kind of investment needed to raise faculty wages to keep up with even the pace of inflation. Some faculty must choose which bills to pay each month. Others qualify for food stamps or live in government housing. Some have declared bankruptcy. One faculty member couldn't afford to pay for her husband's funeral. For CSU faculty, this is not living. It is, in many ways, survival.

Introduction

This paper is based on the results of a survey on CSU faculty salaries distributed by the California Faculty Association and responded to by over 5,500 faculty members during the period of February 6 to March 16, 2015.³ Faculty were asked questions about their economic situations and were also given the opportunity to add written comments about their personal experiences. One indicator of the intensity of faculty feeling about salaries is that over 2,600 actually took the time to make extended comments; of those, more than 800 were willing to have their comments made public and to be contacted for further interviews. A number of respondents were contacted in order to follow up in more detail on their written comments.

Both the quantitative and the qualitative data reveal a significant economic precariousness in the lives of many CSU faculty. From these responses (and from the salary data provided in our first paper), it is undeniable that significant numbers of faculty teaching in the CSU today are among California's "working poor." Many others are financially hanging on by a thread through a variety of means, from living far from campus to save money on housing to postponing having children and borrowing from friends and relatives. Even many full professors, who often have been in the system long enough to have bought a house in easier times and to have received salary increases over the years, struggle with issues like paying for children's college or helping aging parents.

Faculty Spotlight: Frank Lilly

For Dr. Frank Lilly, being a full professor hasn't meant financial freedom. Lilly, who teaches in the College of Education at Sac State, also teaches at UC Davis and maintains a private educational and counseling practice.

Despite working countless hours and weekends, his salary continues to hold him back. It has impacted everything from his health to his ability to save for his wedding. Yet he's determined not to dwell on it.

"I've had colleagues who've left and gone to the private sector and understandably so. But I love to teach. I love doing what I'm doing ... But if you worked my salary out by the hour, you would laugh."

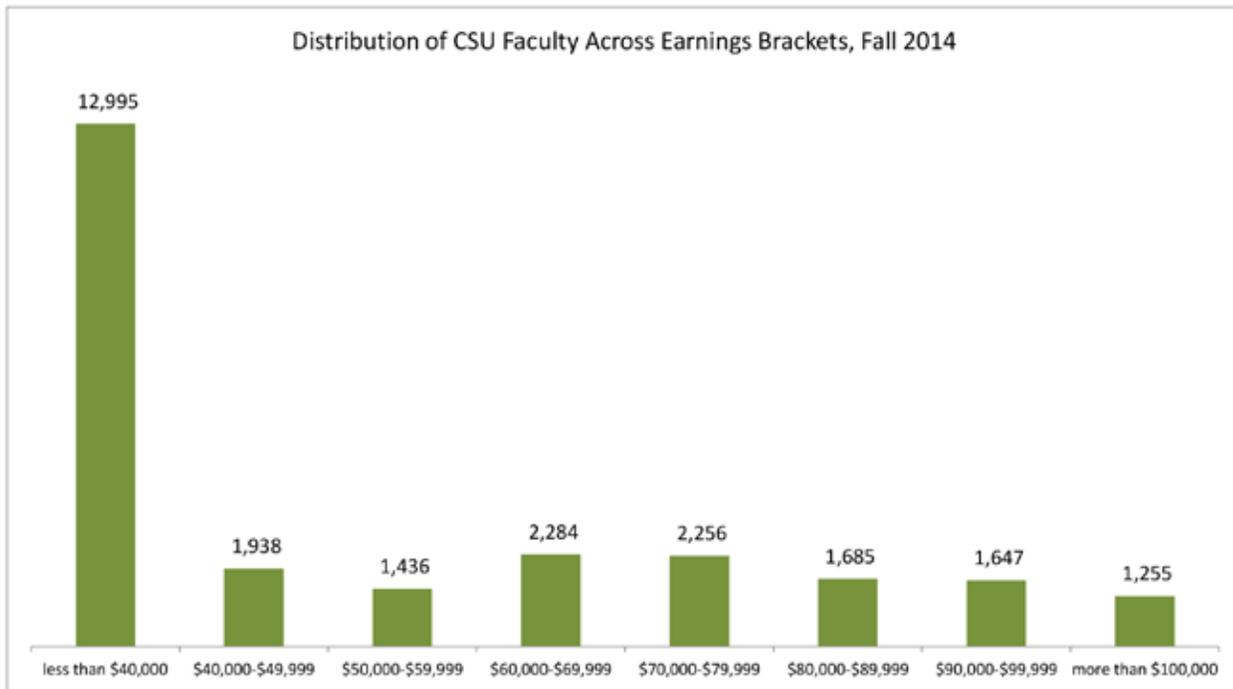
In short, it is clear that many, probably most, CSU faculty are currently locked out of the middle-class or live in fear of becoming so.⁴

Economic Context of Faculty Survey Responses

To understand the individual responses on this survey requires a short review of data from the first two papers in this series. Indeed, these survey results flesh out in some detail what the aggregate data on faculty salaries mean for the everyday lives of CSU faculty members and their families. The following findings from earlier papers should be kept in mind as background when reading this paper:

- **Aggregate data on salaries:** While it is commonplace to suggest that the road to the middle class is paved by getting an education, even with their advanced degrees (PhD's, MFA's, JDs, etc.) CSU faculty salaries are surprisingly low. **Even if all faculty were working on full-time contracts, the average salary for CSU faculty would only have been \$63,000 in Fall 2014. Half of all CSU faculty would still have had a salary of \$55,000 per year or less.**
- **Base salary versus actual gross earnings:** Since so many CSU faculty are only hired on a part-time basis (about half of all instructional faculty are on part-time contracts and the average appointment is for roughly half-time), the earnings of CSU faculty are far less than "base salary" numbers often quoted for CSU faculty or the "average" salaries cited above. **On average, CSU faculty actually earn \$45,000 per year in pay before taxes and other deductions; more than 50 percent of CSU faculty make less than \$38,000 in gross earnings per year.**

The chart from our first paper, reprinted on the next page, shows the distribution of faculty by earnings brackets according to CSU payroll data:



- Loss of purchasing power for CSU faculty salaries: **The average CSU faculty salary on every CSU campus actually has lost purchasing power over the last decade.** This loss in purchasing power ranges from \$7,114 at San Diego State to more than \$13,796 at Chico State.

Even the most senior faculty have slipped significantly over the last decade with the average full professor salary declining in real terms at every campus in the CSU. This loss in purchasing power for full professors ranged from \$9,672 at San Francisco State to \$19,276 at Sacramento.

In short, the “average” CSU faculty member is poorer today than she/he was 10 years ago.

- CSU faculty salaries compared to UC and California community college faculty: **Faculty salaries lag behind the UC and California community college faculty salaries** both in absolute terms and in relation to inflation over the last 10 years.

While the average faculty salary at the University of California rose from 2004 to 2013, adjusted for inflation, purchasing power for CSU faculty fell during the time period. This disparity is most dramatic in San Francisco, where UC San Francisco average faculty salaries rose \$16,138, while faculty at San Francisco State lost \$9,748.

- Widening gap between salaries of faculty and CSU administration: **Overall, managers, supervisors, and campus president salaries grew substantially over the last decade while faculty salaries did not.**

For example, between 2004 and 2014, full time equivalent faculty throughout the CSU **lost** \$9,056 in purchasing power (adjusted for inflation), while CSU campus presidents’ average salaries **gained** \$22,917 in purchasing power.

Losing Ground: How CSU Faculty experience low salaries, salary stagnation, and loss of purchasing power

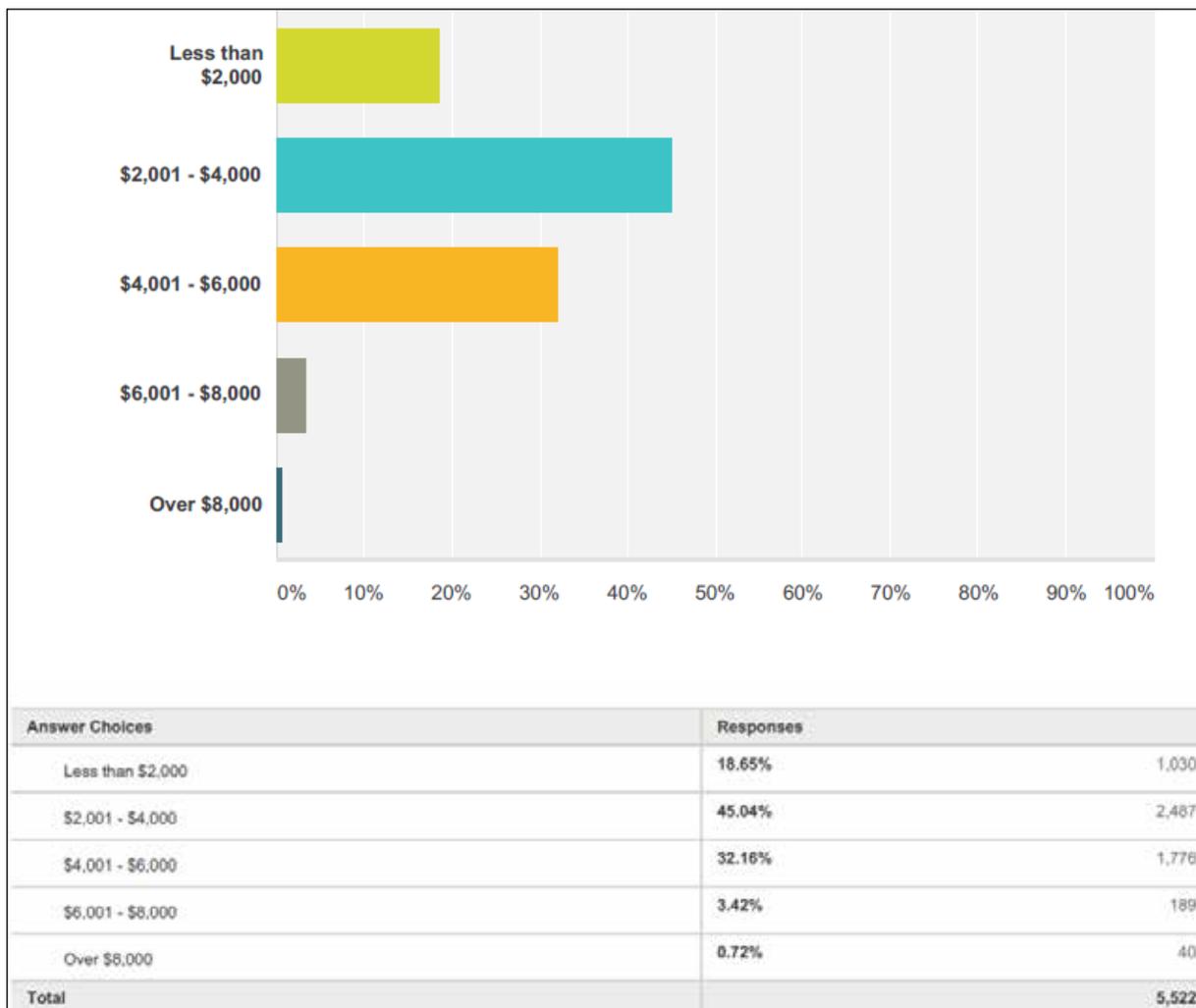
It is clear from the responses to our survey that most CSU faculty are, in at least general terms, aware of each of these trends. It is also clear that low salaries, salary stagnation, and loss of purchasing power have had a

damaging effect on people’s ability to provide for themselves and their families.

In fact, about 80% of faculty who responded to the survey said that their salary has had a meaningful negative effect on their lives.⁵

The survey results also underscore the seriousness of those “negative effects” by showing how many faculty are struggling to make ends meet. Contrary to the popular image of the college professor, the economic position of many CSU faculty is anything but securely middle class.

Since most people think about their finances in terms of their take-home pay per month and must pay their bills out of what they take home, our questions were framed in that context. The following chart shows what respondents reported making per month in take-home pay:



Not surprisingly, these averages vary by rank with assistants on average making less than associate or full professors, and lecturers on average making less than assistant, associate, and full professors.⁶ What this means in terms of take-home pay is that:

- 95% of lecturers are taking home less than \$4,000 per month. (43% of them are taking home less than \$2,000 per month).
- 72% of Assistant Professors are taking home less than \$4,000 per month.

- 52% of Associate professors are taking home less than \$4,000 per month.
- Even at the top, 88% of full professors are taking home less than \$6,000 per month.

As these numbers clearly indicate, many CSU faculty cannot afford the comforts and security traditionally associated with a middle class life.

Not surprisingly, relatively few faculty members responded that their salary allowed their families a reasonable level of economic security. Of those who did, many stated that they only enjoy that level of well-being because someone else in the family works full-time outside the CSU or because of a variety of events unrelated to work, such as inheritances. Many married faculty members expressed fear about what divorce would mean for them; many divorced faculty put words to those fears and described the economic hardship not having a second income had meant for them and their children.

While few described feeling securely in the middle-class or living a life traditionally associated with that status, a troubling number of faculty respondents reported serious difficulties meeting basic needs.⁷

Economic difficulties caused by low fulltime salaries are compounded because, as we saw from the system-wide salary data in our first paper, many CSU faculty are not working full time. The rationalization for the low take-home pay of lecturers has often been that most lecturers are “moonlighting” from their day jobs or teaching simply for pleasure, not to pay bills. “They want to work part-time,” the story goes. This survey explodes that myth.⁸

While a few faculty say they are working part-time because they want to and can afford to, most describe working part-time as a forced and unwelcome necessity. And they nearly always relay the hardships of living on a CSU salary.⁹

In short, faculty at all ranks, both full and part time, report struggling. A surprising number (over 60%) of all CSU faculty in our survey aren’t able to have the 3 months recommended savings in the bank. Considerable numbers have no savings at all. Others manage by taking on significant amounts of credit card debt and other kinds of debt or by relying on family members. A few even report being forced into bankruptcy.

Anguish and dismay at these situations are palpable in comment after comment received in our survey:

“My husband and I live in a one bedroom apartment with our young daughter. We are both working extremely hard as adjunct employees. We qualify for WIC [Women, Infants, and Children’s Supplemental Nutrition Program] and that is how we have been able to feed our child. Our situation feels hopeless.”

“Work three jobs just to make ends meet. Have no time for family or friends, or exercise. All money goes to bills and student loans. No savings or emergency funds.”

Faculty Spotlight: Althea Waites



She is an acclaimed concert pianist and holds a master’s in music from Yale, yet Althea Waites doesn’t earn enough to get by teaching as a lecturer at Cal State Long Beach.

Waites supplements her monthly pay with freelancing and working part-time as a church organist. While others her age typically retire, Waites doesn’t know if retirement will ever become a reality.

“If you’re teaching part time, as I have been for all these years, there’s no way that I could live off of the retirement the university would pay me,” she said. “I don’t know what it’s going to take for the administration to realize that if they want to retain or keep good faculty coming in, as well as providing for the younger teachers, they need to reward service and excellence in salaries.”

"I am a single mother and receive no child support or alimony. The only way I am able to survive in this career and take care of my children is through the reliance on SIGNIFICANT financial support from my retired parents!"

"It's impossible to save and not have to use money to repair the car or other emergencies. Been barely existing, not living, for 7-years now."

"On a daily basis I have to make choices based on my income. For example, in wintertime I often do not use heating in my home, with temperatures dropping down to less than 55 degrees indoors. My vehicle is 17 years old and does not have safety features I would like to have. I live in an unsafe neighborhood because I can't afford to buy in a safer part of the town."

"I cannot afford to buy groceries often, so I eat meals with my parents and grandparents in order to save money. I have a PhD. This is not okay."

Faculty Spotlight: CSUN Lecturer

One lecturer at CSU Northridge juggles teaching 15 units with raising two children and helping keep the household afloat. For her family, the recession coupled with a contingent faculty salary hasn't been kind.

They lost their home to foreclosure four years ago; since then, they've had to file bankruptcy. Together, the educators have \$100,000 in student loans. She grocery shops with the help of WIC and CalFresh government assistance programs, and extreme coupon shops to make ends meet. They qualify for assistance on their gas bill.

"My dad was a firefighter and my parents were working class people, but we never had to have assistance. I never really thought I would be here."

"I love working at the CSU, but on what I make, I can't afford more than to rent a one-bedroom apartment for myself and my husband. I could never buy a house. The period in which we were furloughed was particularly painful, as I was often down to less than \$20 in my checking account, and eating peanut butter sandwiches in the last week of the month. That sounds like an exaggeration, but unfortunately, it was the truth."

"My salary situation has meant that (1) I cannot own a car; (2) I have had to live with roommates found on Craigslist in order to afford my rent—at the age of 45! (3) I have no savings, and approximately \$25,000 in credit card debt; and (4) during my period as probationary faculty—when I was still in my 30s—I could not even consider the possibility of having a child, as my salary would barely cover the cost of housing and day care, omitting any other expenses."

"Even though I am 54 years old, my father contributes to my rent because he thinks that the students benefit from having me as an instructor. I teach 12 units at [CSU campus], 2 classes at a different school, and take on consulting contracts...as available. My car has 140k miles on it and is in constant need of repair. I have teenagers and no savings. The last 5-7 days of the month, I use my mother's credit card for gas and food and then pay it off after payday."

"My house has needed a roof for 10 years. Until I took on considerable 'additional' work to my CSU job, I could not afford the roof and food. At this point in my career, teaching should pay the bills, but, it doesn't, and emergencies like a roof, etc. make it more difficult to survive."

"Each month I alternate which utilities will be paid. I no longer purchase food in supermarkets and I buy clothing in consignment shops or the Goodwill."

"This is my dream job and I already feel like I am impacting students significantly. However, I am constantly under financial pressure. I sometimes cannot afford groceries...."

"My children and I rely on my family's support, which is a shame really considering the fact that [I am] a fully grown adult with a Ph.D. degree and a Full professor's rank...."

This hardly sounds like the traditional middle-class life. Other keystones of middle-class existence also elude many CSU faculty.

Housing

For CSU faculty, housing is nearly always described as a struggle. According to a recent report, the median house in California lists at a price of \$425,000. The median rent is close to \$1,900.¹⁰ Some areas of the state are even worse: California has 6 of the 7 least affordable housing markets for middle class homebuyers and 10 of the 20 least affordable rental markets in the U.S.¹¹

Given these facts, it should come as no surprise that finding affordable housing was often discussed as a major problem in our survey:

- 43% of the responding CSU faculty said their income level has been an impediment to purchasing a home.
- 60% reported that they can't afford housing in the community where their campus is located. In their comments, faculty describe the ways the resulting long commutes affect both their personal lives and their time available to spend with students.

While two-thirds (68%) of respondents report having managed to buy a home, many of those who do not own a home say they never expect to be able to do so. Many faculty describe struggles to purchase a home with emotions ranging from resignation to disbelief:

"With a salary like mine I will never own a home, even though I'm single...I lead the life of a student, only being able to rent a one bedroom apartment and not owning anything but the cheapest car in the market."

"When I was hired at [CSU campus], the university was building new faculty housing. I did not qualify for a loan to purchase the homes that were built for me!"

"Shouldn't an adult professional with tenure be able to afford a one-bedroom condo after over a decade of service?"

Even those who have managed to buy a home often speak of the struggles and sacrifices they encountered doing so or of the disappointing options that were available to them:

"I live on meth alley. Break-ins are a constant threat. I was only able to afford my home because it was a run-down foreclosure. I wanted to have children, but I could never afford it in my 10 years at CSU. Now I am too old to bear children."

"The only place I could afford to purchase a home is 70 miles away from my campus. I spend an average of 4 hours a day in my commute. This certainly has a negative impact in my life."

"My insurance company told me that they do not insure homes that look like mine. My eldest son as a teenager was so embarrassed by our home that he insisted that we invite his friends to the local park to celebrate his birthday. Our department has an exchange program with a German institution in which faculty exchange homes and cars. My exchange faculty member was shocked by our home and it took many emails to convince him that my family car with 240,000 miles was safe for him and his wife to drive."

"I had to back out of being a foster parent because I couldn't meet the minimum housing requirements of the state. This was a devastating blow to me that I cannot really describe."

"I was able to buy a house 25 years ago in a somewhat dodgy neighborhood thinking it was an investment and that I could eventually sell and move to a better place. My salary has not kept up and during the

recession this dodgy neighborhood has gotten even dodgier. I am both underwater...and unable to qualify for a higher mortgage.”¹²

Even a middle-class rental situation is out of bounds for many CSU faculty:

“Since I accepted my job in 2007, I have lived in a dorm for three years and house-sat for 1.5 years.”

“My salary is terrible. I am a 43-year-old tenured associate professor. I work constantly with few breaks and am dedicated to my job and my students. To compensate me, the CSU pays me a salary that does not allow me to afford even a very modest home in my community. I have to rent a house with two adult roommates. This is demoralizing, and its effect is cumulative with each passing year.”

“I currently sub-let a room (1 room in someone’s 3-bedroom apartment rental) in the city. This forces me to move around regularly because I cannot afford to rent a place on my own. This takes considerable time out of my year and adds significant stress....The fact that I am forced to rent single rooms in a large apartment is shocking...I am competing with my students for the cheapest rooms in the city.”

“I still live in my van in my husband’s mother’s driveway because our combined salaries do not afford us our own apartment. I made more over twenty years ago when working as a receptionist!”

Paying for college

The ability to provide one’s children with a good education, including college attendance, has been a staple of American middle-class life for decades. The increasingly ephemeral nature of that dream and the realities of student loan debt for many Americans are finally getting the attention they deserve. A fact often overlooked, however, is that faculty also often emerge from graduate school with significant levels of student debt.

In our survey, one third (34%) of the responding faculty reported having student loans.¹³ And the amounts are significant. As the chart below shows, of those who have student loans, one-quarter owe more than \$75,000.

<u>Amount owed</u>	
Less than 5,000	6.12%
\$5-20K	22.19%
\$20-50K	30.61%
\$50-75K	15.90%
\$75-100K	11.29%
Over \$100K	13.88%

Needless to say, for many CSU faculty it is impossible to make payments on these loans without significant compromises and often serious sacrifice.

Paying for their children’s education is yet another worry confronting CSU faculty. Of our survey respondents, 45% of respondents have children; 86% of those parents report that they have not been able to save or otherwise prepare for their children’s college expenses. Many express concern and even dismay that they may not be able to provide for their own children the education they provide for others:

"I have a PhD and educate other people's children for a living, yet worry about how I will help my own children go to college."

"My salary is ridiculously low for a full prof. with 25 years of experience. It's impossible to save for retirement, and I took a second mortgage on my home to send my daughter to college. We couldn't afford to assist her with law school, so she was forced to take out a \$200,000 loan—this is what our children inherit."

"I cannot afford to send my children to a CSU on my current salary."

"Both our children owe 100K in student loans because we had to liquidate our college fund to meet living expenses. We had to sell our home, downsize, and still struggle. Too embarrassed to share my name."

"I am married to a CSU full professor, and it's ironic that, in order to do our jobs well— be on campus to meet with students, effectively evaluate their work, etc. and to encourage them to persist in college, we have, in essence, sacrificed saving for our own children's education. We've prioritized doing our jobs well, but we haven't pursued as many outside 'moonlighting' jobs as we could have to save for our own kids' education."

Coping strategies

The resourcefulness of faculty in their persistent efforts to meet these and other financial challenges is an overwhelming theme that emerges from the written comments in our survey. Reports of cutting out "extras" and trimming necessities are common.

72% of all respondents have taken on additional work to make ends meet. Of those who have, 77% have worked off campus in employment ranging from extra teaching and consulting to jobs totally unrelated to academic credentials.¹⁴

Living further from campus than they would like is another strategy. 60% of our respondents report not being able to afford to live in their own campus community. The move further from campus may cut housing costs; but, as they report, this "solution" adds to stress, eats away at their personal time, and reduces the time they are available for students.¹⁵

More than a fourth (27%) of the responding faculty have roommates or live with extended family to make ends meet.

The list of other strategies is extensive—couples (even parents) living apart so both can work, postponing (or not having) children, going to campus less to avoid childcare costs, "couch-surfing" during the week to save on commuting costs and time, to mention just a few.

Sometimes, however, even the most inventive strategies are not enough; and the numbers just don't add up.

In addition to relying on extended family, a shockingly high number of faculty respondents (13% overall and 1 in 5 lecturers) report having received income-based government assistance while working in the CSU.¹⁶

The price paid by faculty for low salaries and the economic scrambling they require is enormous in terms of family life, personal physical and

Faculty Spotlight: Stephen Campbell



Despite holding degrees from three universities, Dr. Stephen Campbell, a lecturer at Cal Poly Pomona, depends on food stamps and Medicaid at times to get by. He teaches at a community college to supplement his income. He's years away from even being able to think about starting a family.

He said he "can't ethically recommend graduate school for anyone in history anymore."

mental health. The price paid by students, the topic of our next paper, is also huge. Students cannot help but be affected by the choices their faculty are forced to make. A professor who must spend hours each day commuting obviously has less time to be on campus for his or her students. A faculty member who works multiple jobs cannot afford to devote all of his or her professional energies to CSU students. It's hard even to imagine that faculty worried about feeding or educating their children can be doing their best possible work with students.

In very real ways, with salaries as with other aspects of faculty employment there are consequences for students. Faculty working conditions are, indeed, student learning conditions.

A "final" strategy available to CSU faculty also affects students. Given how often faculty describe their situations as "untenable," it is not surprising that many report actively looking for other work:

"I have been EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL at this job but I am EMBARRASSED to work here. I will continue looking for employment elsewhere."

"My salary is insultingly low for a tenured Ph.D. My wife, a 7th grade teacher with a MA, makes more than me. I am seriously considering leaving the CSU system for more lucrative work."

"When I started I took this work because I love teaching and am very passionate about it. At that time my husband was working and able to support us. He was laid off 18 months ago and I now have to consider whether or not I can stay on at [CSU campus] in their nursing program. This is extremely disheartening as I love what I do and I know how difficult it is to get nursing faculty. But unfortunately this may end up being the only option."

"I started in 2007, right after the previous contract was negotiated and accepted. I was promised a 24% raise over 5 years. Adjusted for inflation, I make less today than I did when I started. I will never be able to save for retirement and achieve my life dreams working at a institution where faculty are so grossly underpaid. I have been spending the better part of a year looking for a new job, as are at least half of the members of my home department."

"I feel absolutely hopeless. There is no clear path for advancement. There is no future financially. I feel I am a very good teacher but that [CSU campus] finds me disposable. It is depressing. I'd like to stay at [CSU campus] forever but instead, I am always looking for other work."

"For the first time in 27+ years since I started teaching, I am now seriously considering leaving the job I love. I am not depressed but it is close. I work hard. I am a great instructor. But I am overworked and underpaid and undervalued by my campus. My students value me and that is what keeps me going. That, plus my passion. But I am getting maxed out. I'm 48 years old. I deserve not only a decent living wage but I deserved to be paid well. Why do I have to question whether or not I can afford to buy a lunch out or a new pair of shoes because my old ones are worn out. It is haunting me daily now that I am making \$28,000 a year. I made more when I taught high school. I could make more waiting tables. It is despicable."

Losing Faith: Faculty Attitudes towards their Salaries and Their Careers

As responses to the survey make crystal clear, harsh economic realities have meant that the financial security which once made it possible for CSU faculty to focus on their students and their teaching has, for many, been replaced by a stressful scramble for economic survival accompanied by feelings of sadness, frustration, demoralization, and anger.

General dissatisfaction with salaries is at a level that would surely concern any responsible employer:

- 78% of respondents reported being dissatisfied with their salary.¹⁷
- 82% of respondents reported feeling unfairly compensated.¹⁸

These findings point to a very serious problem with faculty morale in the CSU that is painted in starker detail in faculty's written comments:

"It is disheartening to live and work here—but not afford to really 'live.'"

"I lost about 14% income over the past 15 years. I do not have savings, am paying off student loans, cannot move out of our terrible neighborhood, have had to take work outside of my job to make ends meet, have a husband with chronic health issues, cannot afford to engage in my research/exhibitions/career as an artist, and barely afford to make ends meet each month. I am overworked, stressed out, and I am completely demoralized."

"The hours I log for [CSU campus] compared to my salary places me below the federal poverty line. My family could not survive if I didn't supplement my income. This all equates to a poor quality of life and psychological burnout. What an unfortunate way to live."

"My salary has flat-lined for the past ten years. My morale has flat-lined as well."

"I have had to look for a part-time job as a full professor because of my low salary. It is disgraceful. Morale is terrible."

"It is a repellent and toxic work environment, filled with the most contaminating form of demoralization, pessimism, and cynicism."

"Our university has become a sweat shop for the most educated persons in our society and those who are entrusted with the responsibility of educating society's citizenry at the highest level."

"I have low pay and no job security and yet I am supposed to put a smile on my face every day when we walk into class. I do just that, but I don't know how much longer I can do this both emotionally and physically."

"2008 put me into a major depressive episode that lasted 2 years. Salary was a big part—full prof, but worthless in eyes of state...I have 15 years left in my career— feel my job is dead end."

"This 'part-time' lecturer system is a living hell, it is slavery. I feel less and less human every day."

"I have never, ever worked so many hours in a week and been paid so little. It's demoralizing. Of course, I love teaching and feel honored and privileged to be in a position to do so. This is why I continue to work for less than minimum wage."

Feelings of embarrassment about their salaries are frequently expressed by faculty in their written comments for our survey. Even more troubling are the feelings of shame and humiliation about their choice of career:

"Having a faculty job was my dream job but I honestly am feeling humiliated about the fact that I found my dream job at [CSU campus]."

"My family and I now believe that my Ph.D. degree is nothing but a useless title. It's not worth spending so much time, energy, and efforts to pursue a higher degree and work for CSU unless you serve as campus administrators whose income are much higher. It makes me feel like it's a big shame to work here. It's really embarrassing if someone finds out your actual income through a public website and looks at you with sympathy."

“My current salary (as Associate Professor) is about 60% of what I was offered by other schools 9 years ago as a junior Assistant Professor. Colleagues from other schools keep asking why I don’t move, everybody feels sorry for me. This is pretty embarrassing, to say the least.”

“At this pay, I no longer feel like a professional.”

“I feel I have failed to achieve my aspirations of moving from poverty to a solid, stable middle class life as an academic. Such a shame and such a disincentive to those considering a career in academia.”

Part of the morale problem for faculty clearly stems from their strong feelings of being treated unfairly by “higher ups” in the CSU. The 82% “no” response rate to the question about feeling fairly compensated shows the breadth of that feeling, but its intensity is palpable in the written comments. For many faculty, their low salary is not just about economics; it is also about respect, fairness, and equity:

“I ADORE what I do but often feel as though the ‘higher-ups’ could care less. To me, it’s an issue of respect.”

“I’m fed up with president’s speeches about the quality of faculty and their commitment to CSU which are not reflected in their salaries. Pretty soon it will be hard to take another speech and faculty will simply stop attending convocations, commencements and so on. What is the use? We do it for students, the only source of fulfillment this job provides, but it is hard to take hypocrisy and humiliation.”

“Having cancer has allowed me to get a mortgage modification that I would not have been eligible for otherwise. Sadly, I will get a bigger monthly break from strangers after having cancer than the monthly raise I have received from my employer over the past 8 years.”

“I have a Ph.D. and have worked on campus for over 10 years. My wife has a Master’s degree and works in a middle school. She makes \$20,000 more than I do. Over the same period of time, her salary has increased about \$18,000 more than mine. Why does CA have money for her and not us?”

“My current salary disgusts me, is an embarrassment to the campus, and creates a formidable amount of loathing and distrust towards our administration.”

“I really come unhinged over the fact that at this public—not private—institution, bloated admin levels and layers and their hefty salaries were climbing and still are while telling us faculty there ‘isn’t enough money’ to compensate appropriately, and telling the students they have to pay more for less. I consider the whole arrangement obscenely unethical...”

“I do not feel that the CSU values the work faculty do at all.”

“The administration should be embarrassed by the way it underpays not only lecturers but many full-time faculty at this institution. This neglect/oversight/error—whatever it is—is quite honestly close to shameful.”

“It is difficult to feel like a valued member of the CSU educational team when my primary work—teaching—is compensated so poorly in comparison to the work done by administrative personnel.”

“Every day that I go to work at the CSU, I know that I and my fellow workers are being cheated.”

Responses to one question provide perhaps the most telling indicator of the demoralization and despair many faculty feel. When asked whether they would recommend their job to students or to colleagues at other institutions, a shocking 79% of faculty replied “no.” As many written comments make clear, faculty feel great sadness about this fact and what it means for the future of their university and their profession:

“I am very sad that I got a Ph.D. It was a choice that I would never recommend to someone that comes from a working class family.”

"I am personally ashamed about my lack of ability to provide a better life for my family. We have no retirement, no savings for their education. I would never recommend a career in higher education, at least at a public university."

"For years I have recused myself on ethical grounds from serving on my department's hiring committee, because I don't want to be implicated in bringing new faculty into the CSU, where they will be overworked, exploited, and not paid a living wage...I regret that I ever thought that going into academia would enable me to live a middle class life."

"I tell my best students to do something else with their lives, instead of pursuing academia. The only way to get a meaningful raise in the CSU is to abandon my students and enter administration, where the pay is much better."

"I would never recommend my job to friends. I tell my children not to enter the teaching profession."

The reasons for low morale are, to be sure, complex and related to more than just salary, but survey responses make it clear that salary is a major source of the problem. In their written comments, faculty repeatedly express frustration with lack of raises in recent years and the small size of the very few they have received. They know their salaries are lagging behind those of other professors in California because, as they point out, they have friends or spouses who teach in the UC, community colleges, or the K-12 sector. Furthermore, the "tilt toward administration" described in our second paper is not lost on the respondents who time and time again cite it as a source of substantial bitterness and demoralization.

In short, CSU faculty are frustrated, disheartened, and angry. They are losing faith that "the system" values them or their work or that teaching in the CSU is a viable career.

This situation is a serious one with profound and far-reaching effects. But as Patricia Gándara and Gary Orfield, Co-Directors of the UCLA Civil Rights Project, point out in an earlier study that also found severe demoralization among CSU faculty, "Losing the faith of the faculty in the institutions can have very grave long-term consequences."¹⁹

As any employer knows, low employee morale can negatively affect retention and recruitment as well as "worker productivity." But as Gándara and Orfield point out, faculty morale affects much more in a university. In fact, they argue, because faculty play such a critical role with students and in shaping the kind of education they receive, they also play a huge role in "defin[ing] what a university is."

As this survey highlights, there is an urgent need for the CSU administration to re-examine what kind of university the CSU is becoming when its faculty are living and feeling so on the edge of survival and despair.

Faculty Spotlight: **Loredana Lo Bianco**

Loredana Lo Bianco grew up in Italy with a love of her country and a passion for teaching. She loves teaching Italian at Fresno State, but her \$2,500 a month take-home salary as a part-time lecturer isn't enough to pay rent, utilities, car payment, insurance, gas and groceries.

She teaches 15 units for the CSU, and to supplement her income, also teaches at a local high school. When her husband of 25 years passed away in May 2014, Lo Bianco couldn't afford to have a funeral for him.

Her 18-year-old son recently indicated he might like to follow in her footsteps and become a teacher.

"I told him 'You're not going to be a teacher because it does not pay.' That's been my experience. That's a very sad thing to say."

Conclusion

An obvious question to ask—and one, in fact, many faculty address in their written comments—is why they continue to work in the CSU for what they see as inadequate, embarrassing, and insulting salaries. Each person’s situation is unique, of course, but one reason voiced repeatedly in survey responses is the satisfaction faculty receive from working with students.²⁰

They often report this as their reason for being in the profession, their deepest satisfaction, and the reason they stay. But it is surely a bitter irony for many that working in the CSU means choosing between their commitment to students and the economic well-being of themselves and their families. And it is surely another irony that teaching in the CSU—a major engine of upward mobility for our state—puts so many dedicated professionals in an economic downward spiral.

But the effects of what we have described in this paper go beyond the increasingly harsh toll on faculty.

Quite simply, we cannot preserve a CSU that truly fulfills its mission as an “engine of social mobility” when those at the center of that mission are losing ground, struggling economically, and wasting energy that could be better harnessed to ensure student success and the best possible educational experience for them. And we cannot expect to have a CSU that builds a strong future for California when the faculty themselves are losing faith.²¹

A strong future for the CSU will require that leaders chart a course for the university different from that of the last decade. Only a shift in priorities back toward the CSU’s core mission will ensure a state university system that lives up to its promise for our students and for California.

ENDNOTES

¹ This broader, more sociological notion of the middle class follows a long tradition in social analysis. The most relevant recent use of this definition of “middle class” has been by the Obama Administration’s “Middle Class Task Force,” chaired by Vice President Joe Biden. See David Rohde, “What Does It Mean to be ‘Middle Class?’” *The Atlantic* (online, December 30, 2011).

² CSU Statement on Faculty Compensation, Hiring and Funding Priorities, March 24, 2015. Viewed at <http://blogs.calstate.edu/pa/news/?p=6169>.

³ This salary survey was widely circulated among faculty on all 23 campuses of the CSU. In addition to posting it on the website of the California Faculty Association and sending it out to all the email addresses for faculty that were in CFA’s possession, the survey was widely circulated through campus and department list serves, personal outreach, and other means.

We received a broad set of responses from all campuses. Tenure-line faculty were over-represented in comparison to temporary faculty (60%/40%). Given the lower salaries, on average, of temporary faculty, our results are perhaps conservative in regard to the economic insecurity of CSU faculty.

⁴ The plight of the middle-class throughout America has received considerable attention since the most recent recession. Report after report speaks of the middle class as being “crushed,” “squeezed,” or “pummeled.” Other commentators refer to it as “shrinking,” “limping,” or “vanishing.”

For a sampling of these discussions, see the following:

Paul Harris, “The Decline and Fall of the American Middle Class,” *The Guardian*, September 13, 2011. Viewed at <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/sep/13/american-middle-class-poverty>.

Lawrence H. Summers and Ed Ball, “Report of the Commission on Inclusive Prosperity,” Center for American Progress, January 15, 2015. Viewed at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/report/2015/01/15/104266/report-of-the-commission-on-inclusive-prosperity/>.

Robert B. Reich, “The Limping Middle Class,” *The New York Times*, September 3, 2011. Viewed at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/04/opinion/sunday/jobs-will-follow-a-strengthening-of-the-middle-class.html?_r=0.

“The Lost Decade of the Middle Class,” Pew Research Center, August 22, 2012, Viewed at <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/08/22/the-lost-decade-of-the-middle-class/>.

For details on the “shrinking” middle-class in California, see <http://capitalandmain.com/inequality-section/california-by-the-numbers/>, <http://capitalandmain.com/inequality/reich>, http://ssrc-static.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/A-Portrait-of-California_vF.pdf, and <http://www.epi.org/multimedia/unequal-states-interactive/#/California>.

⁵ Our survey is not the first study to find that CSU faculty are experiencing considerable financial hardship. For instance, two studies in a series of papers produced by the UCLA Civil Rights Project in 2011 found problems similar in scope to those found in this study. In “Squeezed from All Sides,” Patricia Gándara and Gary Orfield found that 88% of their faculty survey respondents were seriously worried about their personal financial situation (p. 29).

Helen H. Hyun, Rafael M. Diaz, and Sahar Khoury also found stress and anxiety levels among CSU faculty to be high in their study, “The Worst of Times: Faculty Productivity and Job Satisfaction during the CSU Budget

Crisis,” also produced as part of the UCLA series of papers. Both can be viewed at <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/college-access/diversity/the-csu-crisis-and-californias-future-authors-and-abstracts/crp-csu-crisis-ca-future-2011.pdf>.

⁶ While the average salaries vary by rank, rank and years of service are not guarantees of salary progression for individual faculty. Because there have been so few raises over the last decade, a considerable number of faculty find themselves making less than those hired later at lower ranks.

⁷ Even the average CSU fulltime faculty salary of \$63,000 is, according to a recent report, barely adequate in California to meet a family’s basic needs. (See <http://californiawatch.org/dailyreport/federal-poverty-level-doesnt-meet-basic-needs-data-shows-12903>). It takes this much, of course, because of the high cost of living in California, which is the 6th most expensive state in which to live according to a report in USA today (<http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/personalfinance/2014/09/13/cheat-sheet-most-expensive-states/15455129/>).

⁸ Another myth that doesn’t hold up is that a lecturer appointment in the CSU is a “temporary” appointment. While 32% of lecturers who responded to the survey indicated that they have worked in the CSU less than 5 years, 28% reported working here 5-10 years; 29% reported working here 11-20 years; and 11% of these so-called “temporary” faculty reported working in the CSU for more than 20 years.

⁹ For two recent reports about the economic hardship of CSU part-time faculty see Ana Beatriz Cholo, “Are Adjunct Professors the New Fast-Food Workers?” February 11, 2015 at <http://capitalandmain.com/inequality/capitalandmain.com/inequality/adjunct-professors-new-fast-food-workers/> and David Bacon, “Teaching Today: Leleula Loupes’ Journey as a Freeway Flyer,” February 11, 2015 at <http://capitalandmain.com/inequality/teaching-today-leleua-loupes-journey-freeway-flyer/>.

The financial struggles of part-time, “adjunct” faculty at colleges and universities around the country has received considerable attention recently. For instance, see “The Just-in-Time Professor: A Staff Report Summarizing eForum Responses on the Working Conditions of Contingent Faculty in Higher Education,” House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, January 2014 (Viewed at <http://democrats.edworkforce.house.gov/sites/democrats.edworkforce.house.gov/files/documents/1.24.14-AdjunctEforumReport.pdf>). For a first-person account of these struggles, see Tanya Paperny, “I was a Professor at Four Universities. I Still Couldn’t Make Ends Meet,” The Washington Post, March 6, 2015 (viewed at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/03/06/i-was-a-professor-at-four-universities-i-still-couldnt-make-ends-meet/>).

¹⁰ Erika Rawes, “7 Most Expensive States to Live in the U.S.,” USA Today, September 13, 2014. Viewed at <http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/personalfinance/2014/09/13/cheat-sheet-most-expensive-states/15455129/>.

¹¹ Manuel Pastor and Dan Braun, “The California Chasm,” Capital and Main, February 4, 2015. Viewed at <http://capitalandmain.com/inequality-section/the-california-chasm/>.

Capital and Main, “California by the Numbers: An Illustrated Guide to Inequality.” Viewed at <http://capitalandmain.com/inequality-section/california-by-the-numbers/>.

¹² 3% of respondents on this survey report having have experienced foreclosure. The state of California has a foreclosure rate of .08%. according to RealtyTrac (<http://www.realtytrac.com/mapsearch/california-foreclosures.html>).

¹³ Not surprisingly, student loan debt varies by rank. For instance, faculty report student loan debt as follows:

Assistant Professors	54%
Associate Professors	38%
Full Professors	15%
Lecturers	37%

¹⁴ Helen H. Hyun, Rafael M. Diaz, and Sahar Khoury also found that many CSU faculty were having to take on additional employment from extra teaching to working as a locksmith and a food server (“The Worst of Times: Faculty Productivity and Job Satisfaction During the CSU Budget Crisis,” p. 46. Viewed at <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/college-access/diversity/the-csu-crisis-and-californias-future-authors-and-abstracts/crp-csu-crisis-ca-future-2011.pdf>.)

¹⁵ According to a recent study, an income of \$68,640 is required to afford an average apartment in Los Angeles County. “California the Numbers: An Illustrated Guide to Inequality.” Viewed at <http://capitalandmain.com/inequality-section/california-by-the-numbers/>.

¹⁶ Given the details of income and family size faculty often describe, more are probably eligible for income-based assistance than are currently receiving it.

¹⁷ In this survey, faculty rank did not seem to make a huge difference in attitude. For instance, the percentages of faculty saying they were dissatisfied at various ranks were as follows: 79% for Assistant professors; 88% for Associate Professors; 82% for full Professors; and 74% for Lecturers.

¹⁸ This perception of unfairness is spread fairly evenly across ranks,:

Assistant Professors	78%
Associate Professors	88%
Full Professors	85%
Lecturers	81%

¹⁹ Patricia Gándara and Gary Orfield, “Faculty Under Siege,” UCLA Civil Rights Project, 2011, p. 30. They also found the following:

- 63% of faculty said they have considered leaving their institution;
- A third of faculty said they have considered early retirement; and
- 48% of faculty have considered leaving the academic profession altogether (p. 29).

In “The Worst of Times,” Helen H. Hyun, Rafael M. Diaz, and Sahar Khoury also found high levels of demoralization among CSU faculty. Both studies can be viewed at <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/college-access/diversity/the-csu-crisis-and-californias-future-authors-and-abstracts/crp-csu-crisis-ca-future-2011.pdf>.

²⁰ These core values among professors are borne out in our survey as well as other studies of faculty attitudes about their work. For instance, a recent study commissioned by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, “U.S. Postsecondary Faculty in 2015: Diversity In People, Goals And Methods, But Focused On Students,” found that teaching is often faculty’s “core passion and career goal” (p. 4). Viewed at <http://postsecondary.gatesfoundation.org/2015/02/10/u-s-postsecondary-faculty-2015/>.

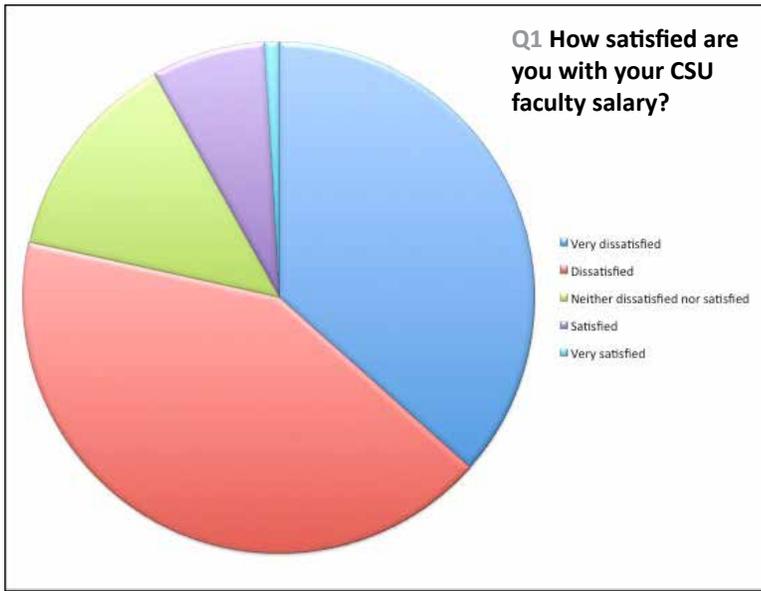
See also see “The Just-in-Time Professor: A Staff Report Summarizing eForum Responses on the Working Conditions of Contingent Faculty in Higher Education,” House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, January 2014 (viewed at <http://democrats.edworkforce.house.gov/sites/democrats.edworkforce.house.gov/files/documents/1.24.14-AdjunctEforumReport.pdf>) and the UCLA Civil Rights Project series on the CSU (viewed at <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/college-access/diversity/the-csu-crisis-and-californias-future-authors-and-abstracts/crp-csu-crisis-ca-future-2011.pdf>).

About the authors

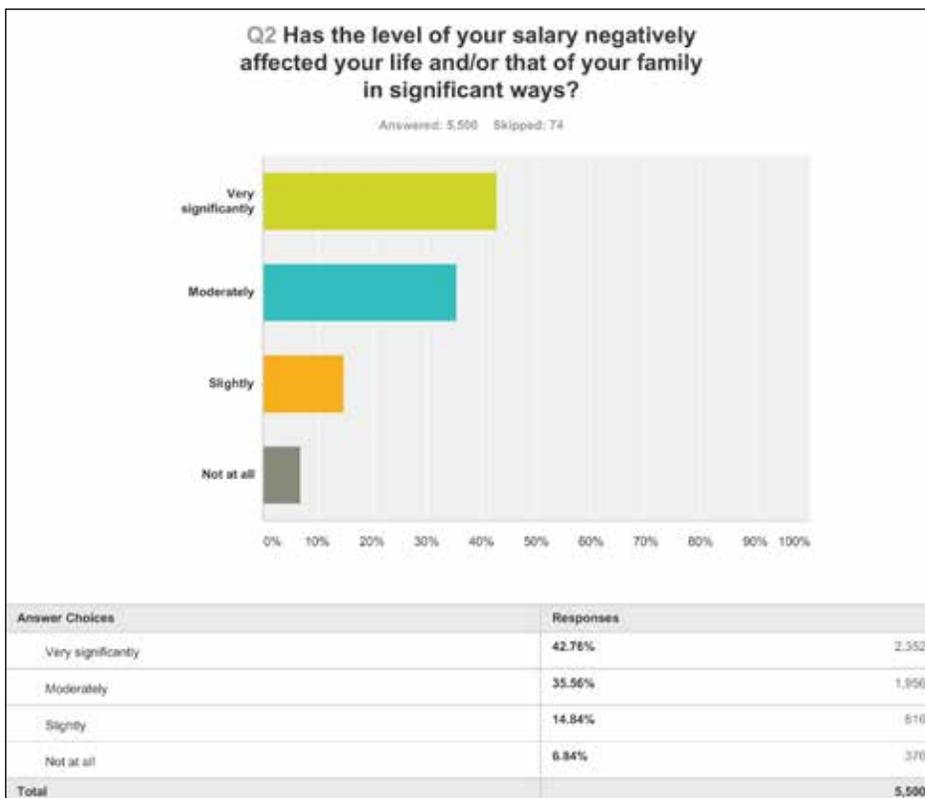
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CFA FACULTY SURVEY RESULTS

CFA conducted a survey of California State University faculty from Feb. 6 to March 16, 2015. More than 5, 500 respondents answered questions on a range of salary issues, ranging from take-home pay levels to how salary has impacted home-buying and other personal finance decisions. The results are included in this Appendix.

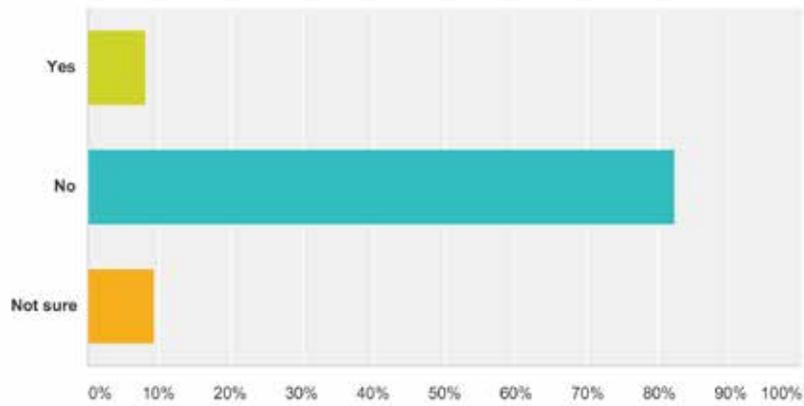


	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	36.58%	41.88%	13.44%	7.20%	0.90%	5,446	1.94
	1,992	2,281	732	392	49		



Q3 Do you feel you are fairly compensated for your work?

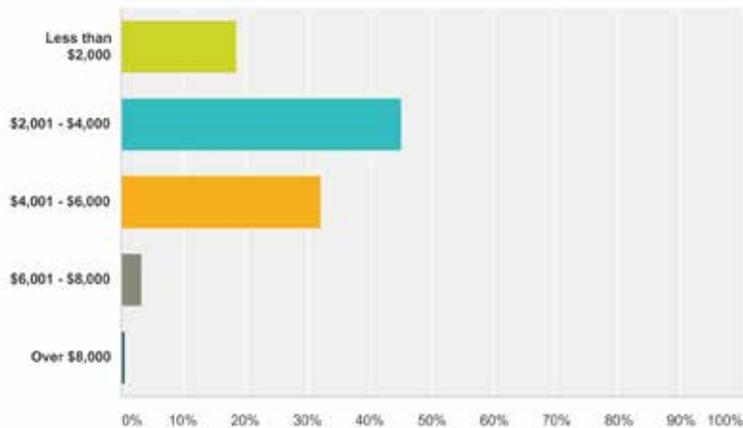
Answered: 5,529 Skipped: 45



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	8.19%	453
No	82.35%	4,553
Not sure	9.46%	523
Total		5,529

Q4 In an average month (not counting summer school or intersession), what is your CSU faculty take-home pay after taxes and benefits are taken out?

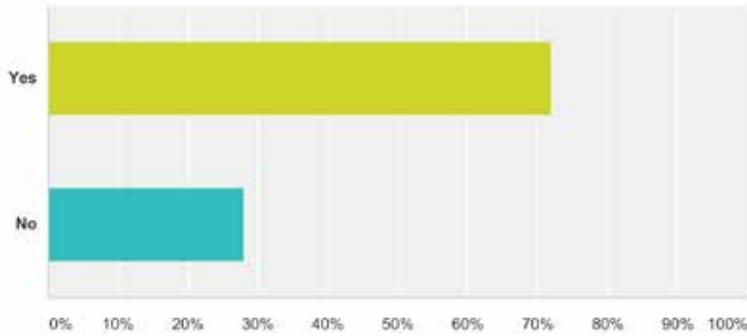
Answered: 5,522 Skipped: 52



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Less than \$2,000	18.65%	1,030
\$2,001 - \$4,000	45.04%	2,487
\$4,001 - \$6,000	32.16%	1,776
\$6,001 - \$8,000	3.42%	189
Over \$8,000	0.72%	40
Total		5,522

Q5 Have you taken on additional work beyond your primary assignment to make ends meet?

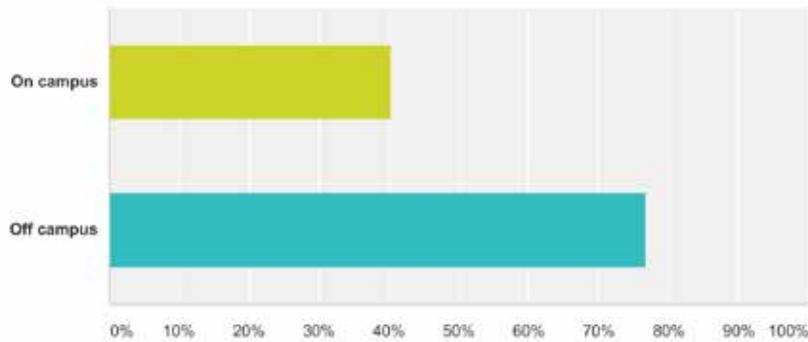
Answered: 5,524 Skipped: 50



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	72.07%	3,981
No	27.93%	1,543
Total		5,524

Q6 If you have taken on additional work, is it on or off campus?

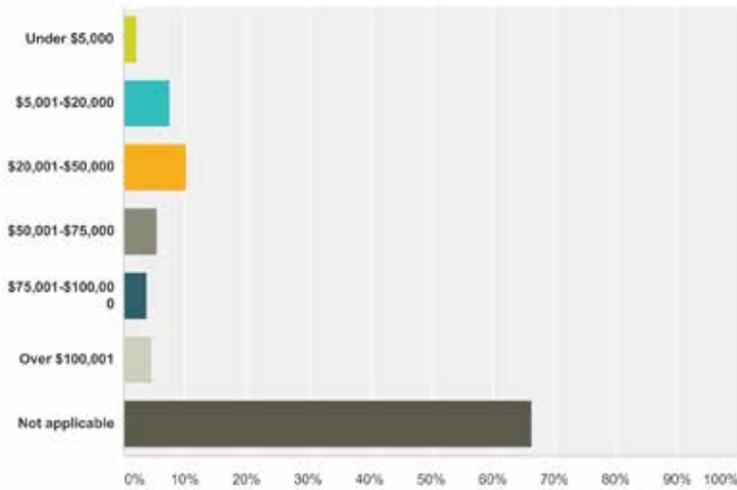
Answered: 4,067 Skipped: 1,507



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
On campus	40.20%	1,635
Off campus	76.79%	3,123
Total Respondents: 4,067		

Q7 If you are still paying off student loan debt, how much do you still owe?

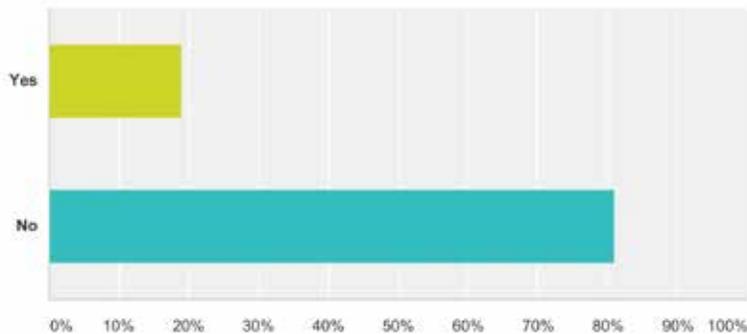
Answered: 5,307 Skipped: 267



Answer Choices	Responses	
Under \$5,000	2.05%	109
\$5,001-\$20,000	7.44%	395
\$20,001-\$50,000	10.27%	545
\$50,001-\$75,000	5.33%	283
\$75,001-\$100,000	3.79%	201
Over \$100,001	4.65%	247
Not applicable	66.46%	3,527
Total		5,307

Q8 Considering salary alone, would you recommend your job as a CSU educator to students or to colleagues at other institutions?

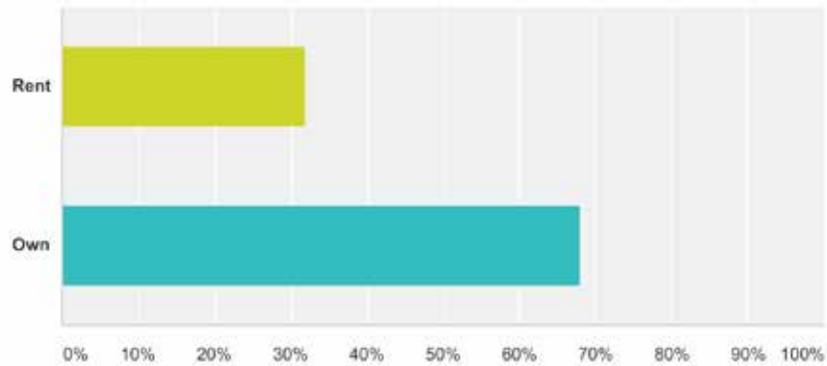
Answered: 5,468 Skipped: 106



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	18.93%	1,035
No	81.07%	4,433
Total		5,468

Q9 Do you rent or own your home?

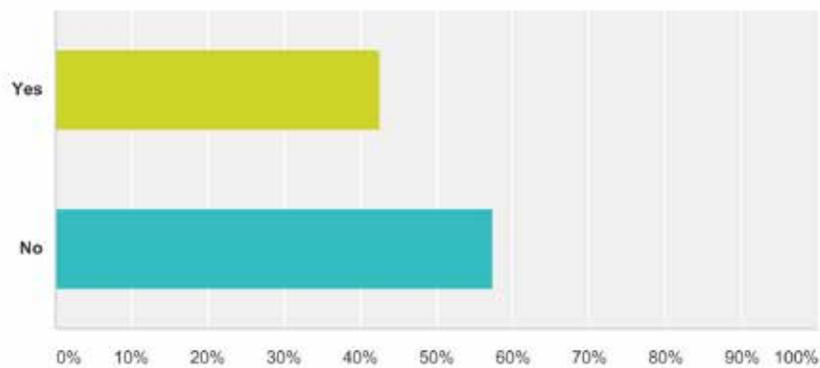
Answered: 5,487 Skipped: 87



Answer Choices	Responses	
Rent	31.98%	1,755
Own	68.02%	3,732
Total		5,487

Q10 Has your income level prevented you from purchasing a home?

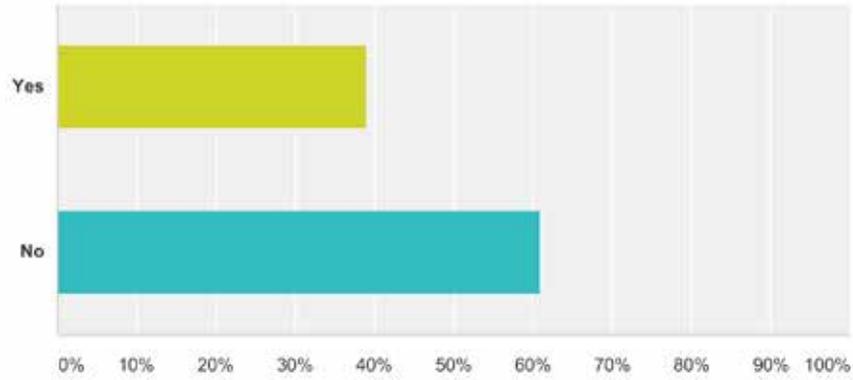
Answered: 5,286 Skipped: 288



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	42.60%	2,252
No	57.40%	3,034
Total		5,286

Q11 On your present salary, are you able to afford housing in the community where your campus is located?

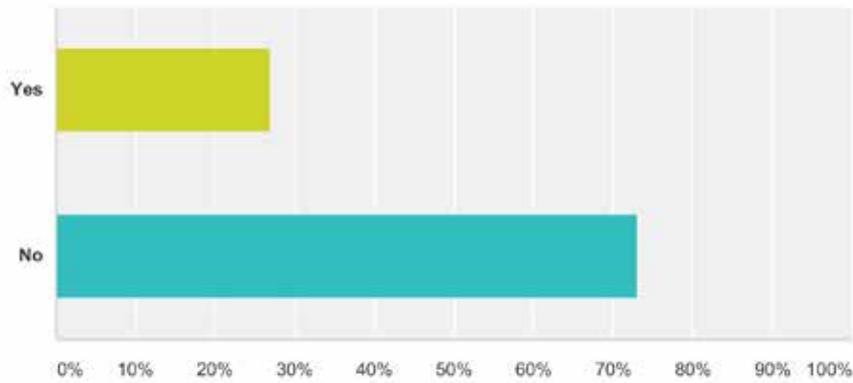
Answered: 5,394 Skipped: 180



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	39.14%	2,111
No	60.86%	3,283
Total		5,394

Q12 Do you have roommates or live with extended family to make ends meet?

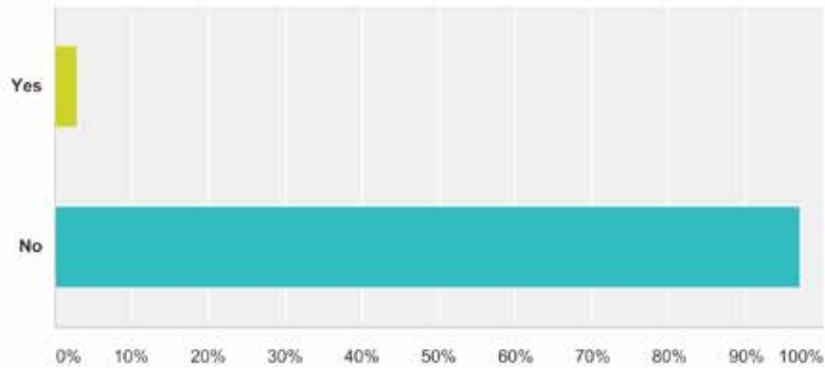
Answered: 5,447 Skipped: 127



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	26.93%	1,467
No	73.07%	3,980
Total		5,447

Q13 Have you had a lender foreclose on your home while you have been employed in the CSU?

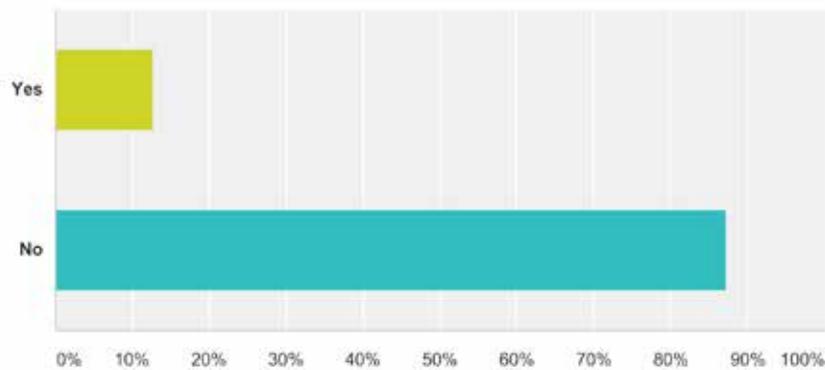
Answered: 5,441 Skipped: 133



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	3.01%	164
No	96.99%	5,277
Total		5,441

Q14 Have you ever qualified for any income-based government services while working for the CSU?

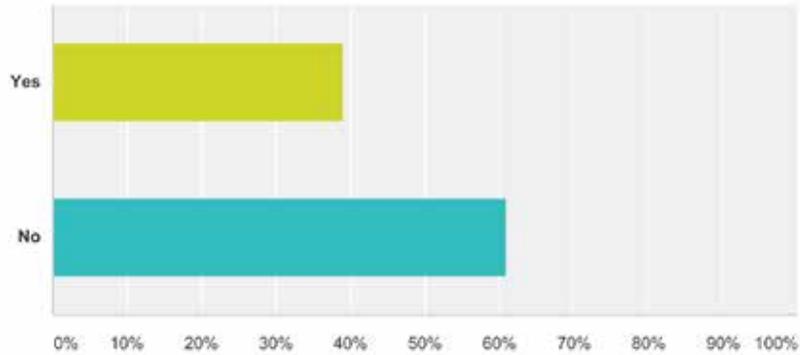
Answered: 5,404 Skipped: 170



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	12.64%	683
No	87.36%	4,721
Total		5,404

Q15 Do you currently have an emergency savings account with at least the recommended 3 months of income?

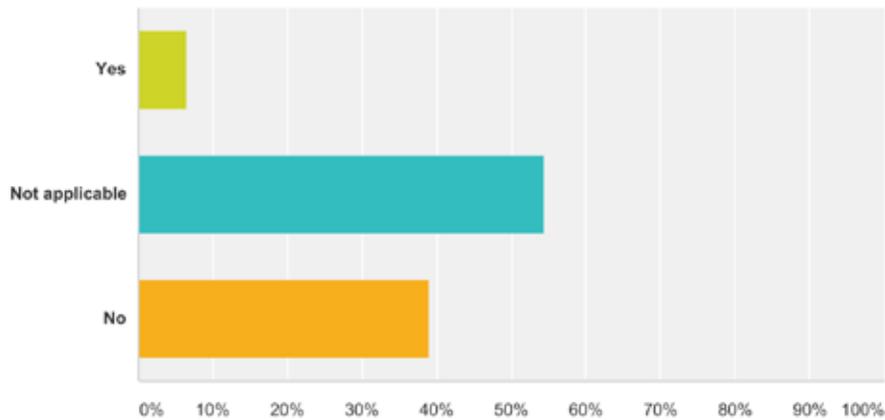
Answered: 5,475 Skipped: 99



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	39.07% 2,139
No	60.93% 3,336
Total	5,475

Q16 If you have college-bound or older children, were you able to save and prepare for their college expenses or student loan obligations as much as you had expected?

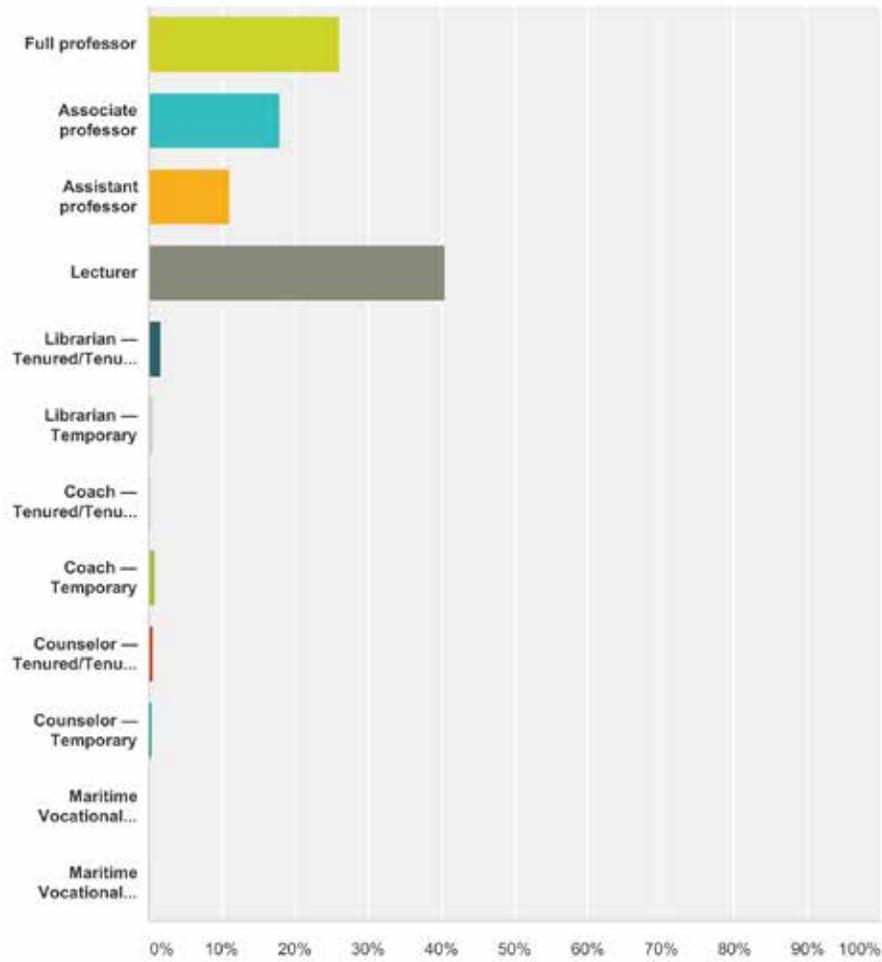
Answered: 5,495 Skipped: 79



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	6.46% 355
Not applicable	54.56% 2,998
No	38.98% 2,142
Total	5,495

Q17 What is your title?

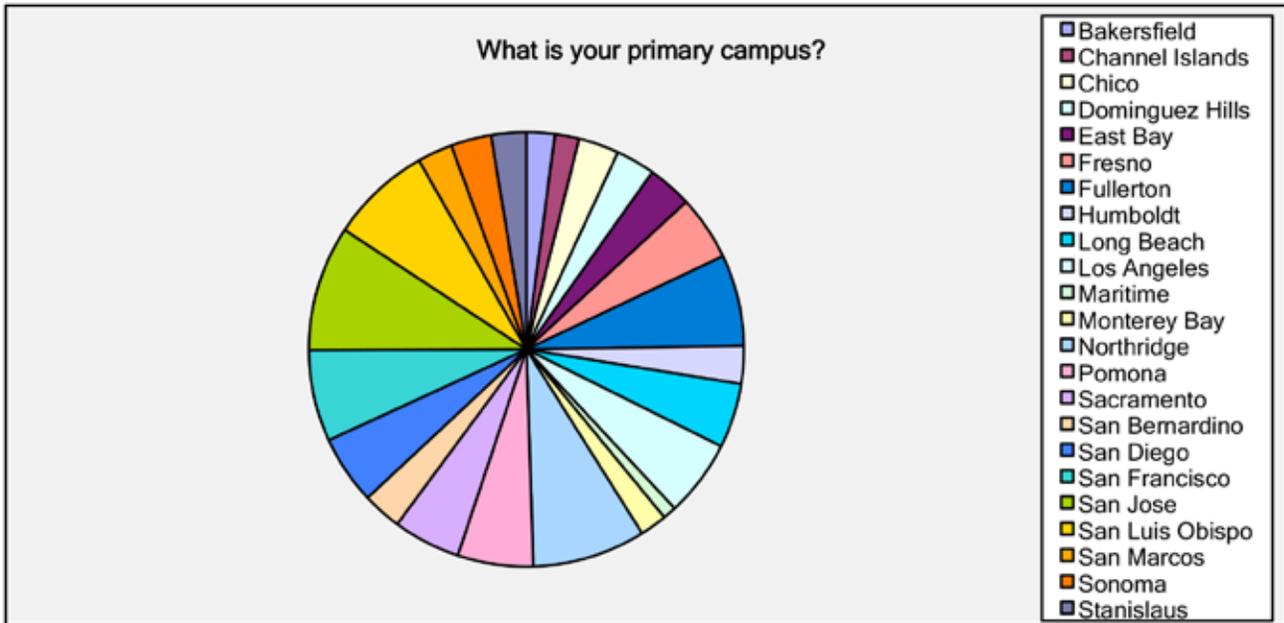
Answered: 5,518 Skipped: 56



Answer Choices	Responses	
Full professor	26.01%	1,435
Associate professor	17.85%	985
Assistant professor	11.00%	607
Lecturer	40.43%	2,231
Librarian — Tenured/Tenure track	1.76%	97
Librarian — Temporary	0.58%	32
Coach — Tenured/Tenure Track	0.29%	16
Coach — Temporary	0.80%	44
Counselor — Tenured/Tenure Track	0.67%	37
Counselor — Temporary	0.38%	21
Maritime Vocational Instructor	0.13%	7
Maritime Vocational Lecturer	0.11%	6
Total		5,518

Q18 What is your primary campus?

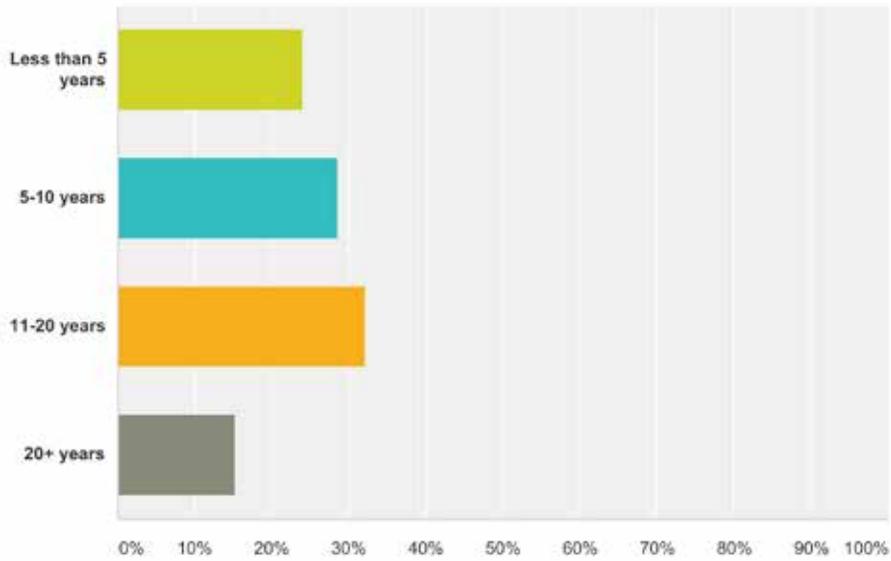
Answered: 5,446 Skipped: 128



What is your primary campus?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Bakersfield	2.1%	114
Channel Islands	1.8%	99
Chico	3.0%	166
Dominguez Hills	2.9%	156
East Bay	3.3%	181
Fresno	4.8%	262
Fullerton	6.8%	372
Humboldt	2.8%	154
Long Beach	4.8%	259
Los Angeles	5.7%	312
Maritime	1.0%	53
Monterey Bay	2.0%	109
Northridge	8.4%	459
Pomona	5.6%	306
Sacramento	5.0%	271
San Bernardino	2.9%	159
San Diego	5.1%	277
San Francisco	6.8%	373
San Jose	9.3%	507
San Luis Obispo	7.5%	411
San Marcos	2.6%	139
Sonoma	3.0%	163
Stanislaus	2.6%	144
<i>answered question</i>		5446
<i>skipped question</i>		128

Q19 How many years have you worked as a faculty member in the CSU?

Answered: 5,514 Skipped: 60



Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 5 years	23.99%	1,323
5-10 years	28.64%	1,579
11-20 years	32.17%	1,774
20+ years	15.20%	838
Total		5,514