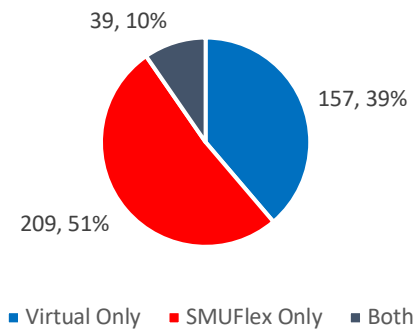


## Report on Fall 2020 Faculty Survey (September)

The first of three planned surveys for the fall 2020 semester was administered in the window of September 8-11 during the third week of the fall semester with the stated goal of providing an optional opportunity for faculty to provide feedback on their experiences of the first 2-3 weeks of the fall semester. 472 faculty participated in the survey, out of 1,154 full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, instructional staff, and graduate teaching assistants who are teaching this fall across all undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree-seeking and non-credit programs. Of these 472 respondents, 77.8% of faculty who started the survey completed it (367 of 472). This report summarizes the characteristics of the faculty who participated in the survey, provides descriptive summaries of options selected for the multiple-choice items, and synthesizes themes that emerged from their responses to open-ended questions.

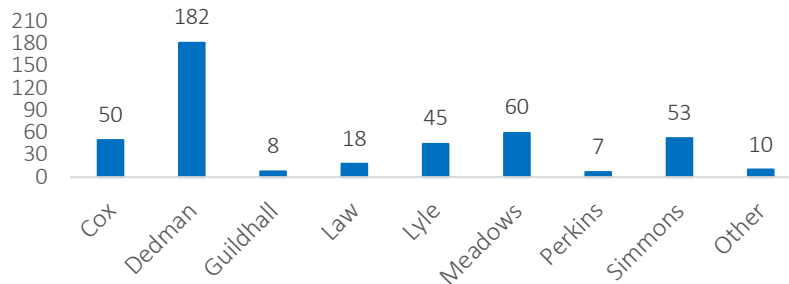
### Characteristics of Faculty Who Completed the Survey

#### Teaching Modality

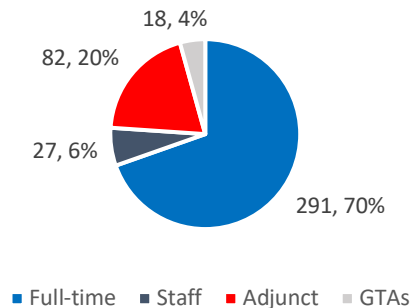


#### School

##### Number of Faculty Survey Respondents by School

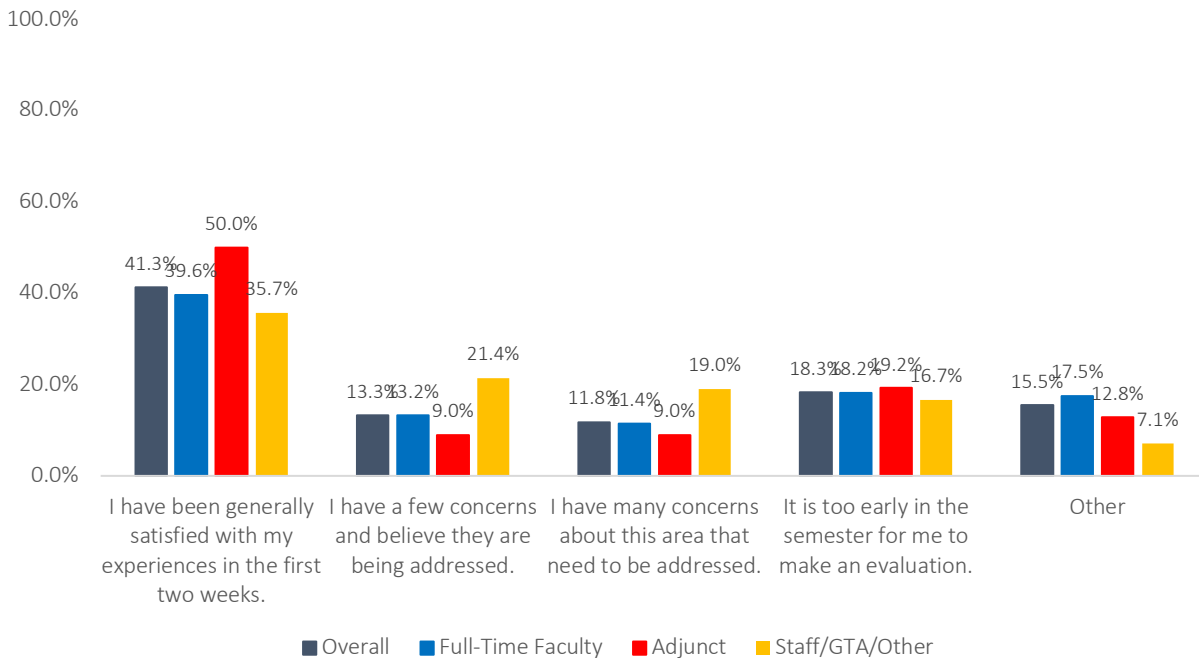


#### Role



## Pledge to Protect

How have members of the SMU community (students, faculty, and staff) upheld the values of the SMU CAN Pledge to Protect (commitment to social distancing, wearing masks, and maintaining a safe campus)?



### Key Takeaways on the Pledge to Protect

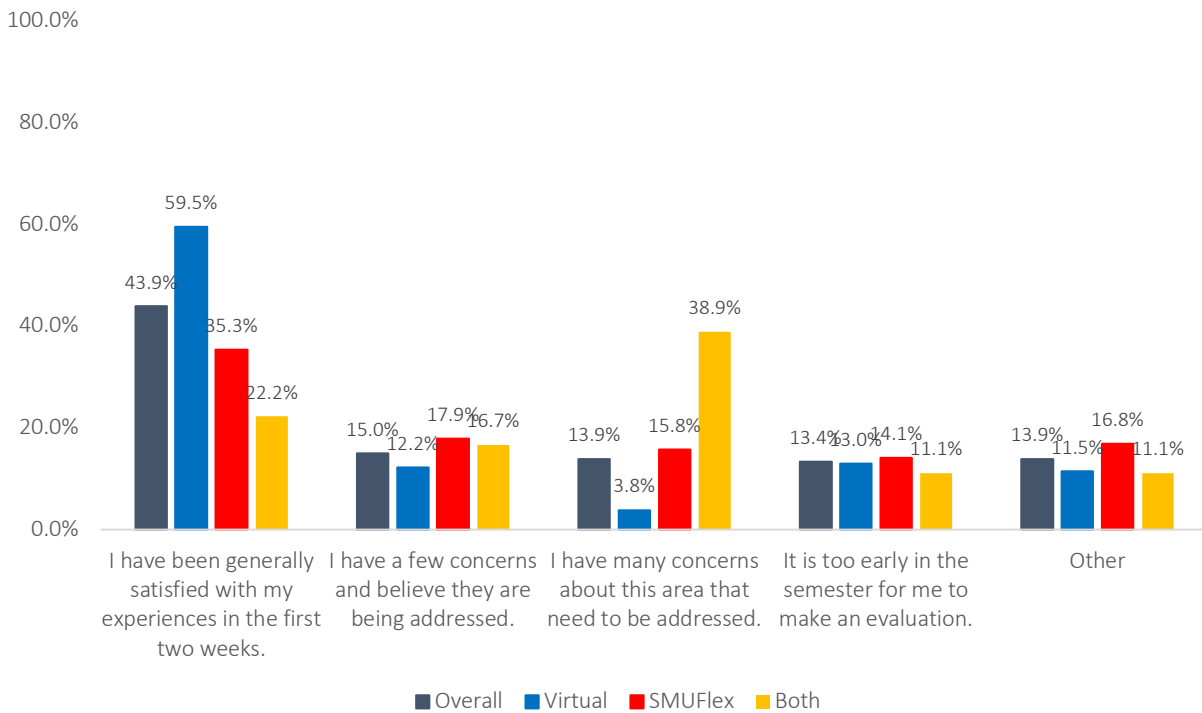
- 41.3% of employees responded that they have generally been satisfied with their experiences in the first two weeks.
- A smaller share of faculty reported having “many concerns” in terms of the Pledge to Protect (11.8%).
- Instructional staff and graduate teaching assistants reported more than other groups that they had many concerns about this area (19% as compared to 9%-11.8%).

### Summary of Open-Ended Responses (Pledge to Protect)

- In the text responses to questions related to the Pledge to Protect, by far the most common concern expressed was with student adherence to the guidelines outside of class. While faculty felt that students were mostly wearing masks and respecting others’ health and safety in class, they expressed the concern that students were not always maintaining proper distance and wearing masks in other campus spaces inside and outside. Another slightly less commonly voiced concern was that, while students may be adhering to the guidelines of the Pledge to Protect on campus, they are engaging in behavior off campus that is in clear violation of the Pledge. One repeated recommendation was clearer guidance on when and where students should be wearing masks.

## Overall Classroom Experience

How has the overall experience been of teaching in the first two weeks?



### Key Takeaways on Overall Teaching Experience

- Overall, 43.9% of responding faculty reported being satisfied with their teaching experiences in the first two weeks
- Faculty teaching virtually were the most likely to be satisfied and the least likely to have many concerns (59.5% and 3.8%, respectively).
- Faculty teaching in both formats were least likely to be satisfied and more likely to have many concerns (22.2% and 38.9%, respectively). Faculty teaching in both formats were considerably more likely to have many concerns than faculty in other formats.

### Summary of Open-Ended Responses (Overall Teaching Experiences)

In general, faculty reported positive teaching experiences during the first two weeks of the Fall semester. More than half reported either general satisfaction with their overall teaching experience (43.9%) or few concerns which they believed are being addressed (15.0%). 13% of faculty believed it was too early to evaluate their overall teaching experience, while almost 14% acknowledged having many concerns that need addressing.

The following themes emerged from the open-ended responses offered by faculty:

- Faculty reported that SMU's OIT and ATSD support has been strong, consistent, and helpful. Many responses pointed to a recommendation to provide special awards to OIT/ATSD.

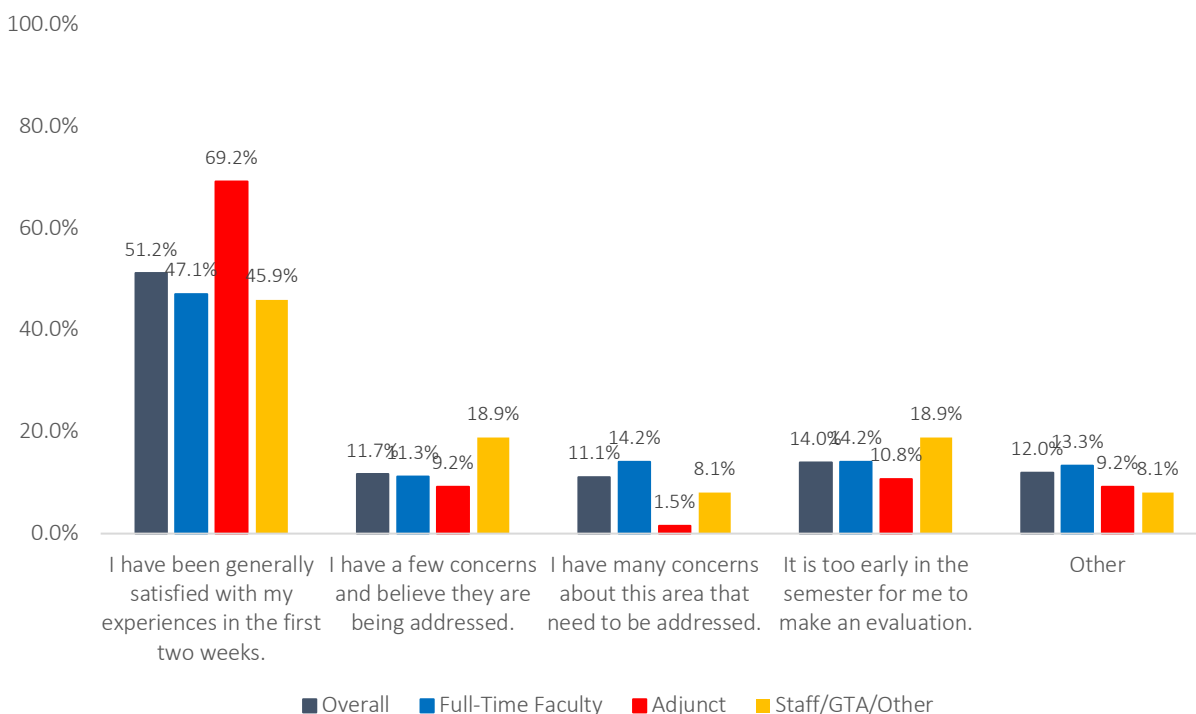
- Faculty with experience in the SMUFlex model described unique challenges:
  - The model was described as time consuming and mentally taxing.
  - A preference emerged for offering either fully in-person or fully virtual courses in the spring (forego the SMUFlex rotation model).
- Faculty reported that some students seem to be disconnected and disengaged:
  - Faculty reported that students are not attending in person (but rather on Zoom), submit assignments late, are not turning on cameras, and are easily frustrated and discouraged by technology mishaps.
  - Faculty indicate they are sending regular correspondence to encourage students.
- Faculty reported concerns about inadequate and/or inefficient technologies:
  - Issues with sound quality, microphones, inconsistency with technology set-up across classrooms, and poor or cumbersome Zoom functionality.
- Faculty teaching SMUFlex reported that not all classrooms, podiums, and technology are cleaned regularly (entering classrooms that were left unclean and/or without cleaning products)

The following requests emerged from comments within this area:

- Suggestions were forwarded to consider additional attendance options, such as a hybrid models to allow for more seamless, unified instructional delivery (e.g., create more sections of smaller, in-person-only classes; shift the primary instructional mode to Zoom while creating in-person experiences that complement instruction)
- Suggestions were provided to turn to the training and resources of OIT (e.g., enhance crowd-sourcing of rigorous, high-quality resources/pedagogical tools; invite OIT to provide training to faculty on topics such as connecting with students via Zoom)
- Suggestions were provided to be aware and to publicly recognize that faculty are doing all they can.
- Faculty suggest finding ways to encourage students to attend class on their designated days within the context of the COVID-19 attendance policy.
- Faculty suggested offering students more clarity on when/how to attend via Zoom if they prefer to participate via Zoom on their designated red/blue days
- Faculty requested guidelines for how to address veracity of student Zoom attendance issues (Zoom drops, internet stability, etc.)
- Faculty requested additional guidance that articulates how faculty should respond to students who use Covid as an excuse to miss class.
- Faculty suggested setting up options in Canvas to allow students to sign in for in- person attendance on their rotation day.
- Suggestions included: 1) provide cameras that allow entire room to see one another, as camera positions don't allow for facing Zoom students and back is to projector screen; and 2) provide each classroom with a podium and lapel microphone for faculty use
- Faculty requested funds for at-home technologies when teaching remotely

## University Communication

How useful have the newsletters, town halls, and department-level communications been?



### Key Takeaways on Communication

- Overall, just over half of faculty (51.2%) reported being generally satisfied with university communication.
- 11.7% of faculty reported having a few concerns that they believe are being addressed, and 14.0% indicated it is too early in the semester for them to make an evaluation
- Adjunct faculty were reported being satisfied with university communication (69.2%) at a higher percentage, while less than half of full-time faculty and staff reported being satisfied.
- Full-time faculty were particularly likely to report having many concerns with communication (14.2%).
- Instructional staff and graduate teaching assistants were particularly likely to report having a few concerns with the belief that they are being addressed (18.9%).

### Summary of Open-Ended Responses (Communication)

11.21% (37) of the faculty had many concerns captured in the various write-in fields and, in these cases, indicate the number of instances that a particular concern was cited:

- 11 comments focused on a lack of faculty involvement in decision-making, including sub-themes of non-responsiveness to addressing faculty concerns, and a general distrust in the administration.

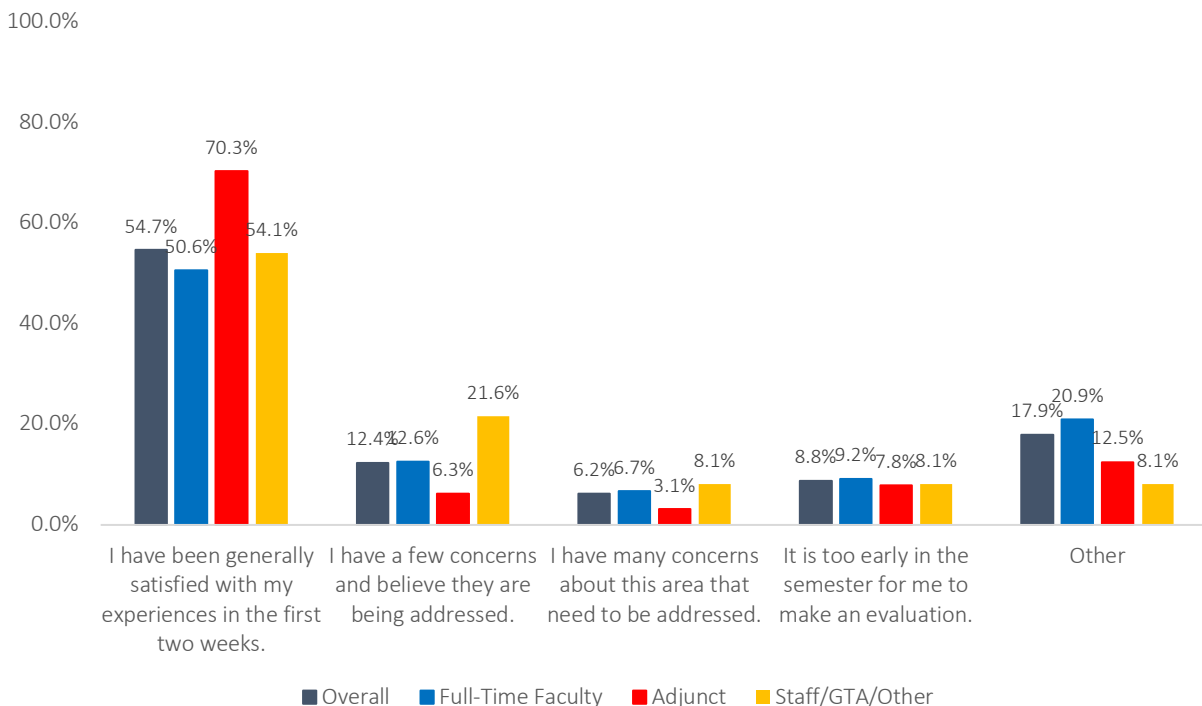
- 10 comments focused on concerns about the Town Halls, with a preference on the interactive town halls (e.g., with Faculty Senate) than on the webinar-style town halls
- 17 comments pointed to concerns with communications, with the dominant concern that of contradictory communications (11 out of the 17 comments) and a few comments in these areas: too many email sources, too dense of communications, and not enough department-level communication.
- 13 comments focused on concerns related to transparency with COVID-related issues (inadequate processes for tracking, reporting, and managing the COVID data along with general concerns around purposeful misrepresentation of the communications)
- 12 comments were positive comments about communication

The following requests emerged from comments within this area:

- Conduct class visits and engage faculty input
- Communicate realistic expectations to faculty for fall outcomes
- Allow faculty to request Virtual teaching in the spring
- Address concerns about research labs
- Address concerns about online exams
- Address department-specific communication concerns
- Website organization/newsletter content

### Operational Supports

*How have the operational supports been handled in the first two weeks (masks and cleaning supplies provided, timeliness of requests for support)?*



## Key Takeaways on Operational Supports

- 54.7% of all faculty reported being generally satisfied with operational supports.
- Adjunct faculty were significantly more likely to report being satisfied with operational supports than full-time or staff.
- Instructional staff and graduate teaching assistants were more likely to report having a few or many concerns than adjunct and, to a lesser extent, full-time faculty.

## Summary of Open-Ended Responses (Operational Supports)

**5.97% (20) of the faculty had many concerns captured in the various write-in fields and, in these cases, indicate the number of instances that a particular concern was cited:**

- 5 comments focused on contact tracing concerns
- 7 comments related to facilities cleaning concerns, including lack of cleaning supplies
- Topics that received only 1-2 comments included a specific fume hood concern, students not using cleaning supplies, OIT concerns, Mustang strong, and a cleaning supply location

The following requests emerged from comments within this area:

- Reinforce faculty to follow process to clean rooms
- Consider fewer back-to-back classes to provide time for cleaning and moving buildings
- Need for more frequent paper towel restocking
- Need more signs indicating where to wash hands
- Need more hand sanitizer stations
- Provide instructions on how to clean and not short out classroom computers
- Create rules around no food or water in Meadows
- Post cleaning protocol for office space and bathroom spaces
- Address situations when contractors are not wearing masks
- Increase testing of asymptomatic persons; consider testing faculty and students weekly
- Reinforce mask wearing in all indoor and outdoor spaces

## Recommendations about Survey Participation and Completion

- To address faculty participation in the survey for the October and November administration, a few recommendations were made to address some of the lack of completion among participants starting the survey: clarify how long the survey is; consider reducing the number of open-ended questions; and ask more specific questions about teaching modality.
- Representativeness of the responses is difficult to ascertain beyond the variables of School-/department-level affiliation; teaching modality; and institutional role.