

Mexican Academics at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century: who are they and how do they perceive their work, institutions and public policies (a preliminary analysis)

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In 1992 Mexican faculty were surveyed within the International Survey of the Academic Profession implemented by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Gil-Antón, 1996). Together with the study on the Traits of Diversity (Gil-Antón *et al.*, 1994), this survey constitutes an essential reference point in assessing the evolution of the academic profession in México.

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Since then, a series of studies on academics has been carried out that has shaped a specific area of research within higher education (García Salord, Grediaga Kuri, Landesmann Segall & Padilla González, 2003).

By the time the two identified surveys were carried out, Mexican higher education had been for almost two decades in a very intense period of growth and transformation. While in 1960 there were 50 higher education institutions (HEI) with approximately 10,000 faculty in total and only 300 (3%) full-time faculty working in them, by the early 1990's there were approximately 31,000 (27%) ft faculty employed, out of a total of around 114,000 positions located in 372 HEI.¹¹ More importantly, however, the rules by which the Federal Government funded higher education had changed from a benevolent to an evaluative perspective (Martínez Romo, 2006).

Fifteen years after the Carnegie survey, a new appraisal of the academic profession has been underway during the last three years under the international project of the Changing Academic Profession (CAP), initially promoted by William K. Cummings. Since the early 90's, higher education has been subject to intense external processes that have affected academics and the work they do: higher expectations of relevance, internationalization and a new management perspective are salient dimensions that have changed and whose influence in the academic profession need to be assessed. The following report describes an analysis of the preliminary data from the Mexican faculty surveyed, but before going into it we will make some comments on the context in which the academic profession in Mexico has developed.

Growth during the last 50 years has been overwhelming: between 1960 and 2006 faculty has increased from about 10,000 to 260,000, which implies an increment of a quarter of a million of new academic positions in the country as a whole. But maybe the most relevant aspect has been not so much growth, but rather a change in the perception held by governmental and institutional authorities regarding academics. In general, before 1990 there was practically no knowledge whatsoever about the academic profession, the central actor of university activity. The studies mentioned earlier were initial and showed that, beyond contract types and teaching load figures (information necessary for administrative service), faculty were social subjects: persons with career trajectories, disciplinary variation and different levels of job satisfaction. They

¹¹ In appreciating this small number of HEI it should be recognized that the notion of what constitutes a single institution has changed since that time. Notwithstanding such a situation, the number of HEI by the early 1990's was relatively small.

varied in the ways in which, by type of institution, they confront, each day more extensively, academic life as a profession and not merely as a complement to external professional activities. In addition to changes in the perspective of the authorities, those studies helped to shape a specific area of study in the context of the field of higher education. In other words, there was a transition from the notion of teachers/professors, to that of academics, and the way things are labeled is not trivial.

Looking back to the 17 years that separates us from the early 1990's, there is no doubt that at least one of the axes of the evaluation policies of the Mexican government towards HEI rested in programs targeted at academics, under the assumption, not entirely unrealistic but perhaps incomplete, that Mexican HEI would be as strong and creative as its academics. By the middle of the crisis of the 80's – between 1982 and 1990 purchasing power decreased by about 60% – the National Researchers System was created with the purpose, at least partially, of allowing faculty associated with research to recover their purchasing capacity, their standard of living. Already in the 90's, a wider program for income recovery had begun: there were no generalized salary increments common in the past, but rather additional payments based on output evaluation – merit pay – that were intended not only to remedy the income decrement but also modeled another type of an academic career. In this process the Program for the Improvement of the Professoriate (PROMEP, *Programa para el Mejoramiento del Profesorado*) was created, with the goals of strengthening the academic training of professors in service by means of graduate scholarships, an increase in the number of full-time appointments and, afterwards, by supporting the strengthening collegial spaces for faculty development.

In short, the tendency was for transition from a faculty body composed basically of part-time faculty, to one with a significant proportion of full-timers; from one with a licentiate degree at the most, to one with graduate studies, preferably a doctorate; and from one composed of isolated individuals, to one with an intense collegial life.

How much of the above was accomplished as planned? The evaluation of 17 years with these type of policies is a task in progress, but what we can assert without doubt is that during these years the working conditions for doing academic work have changed considerably when compared to those reported in the pioneer studies. It is therefore highly important to analyze the reconfiguration of the academic profession in the country. Does the feminization trend continue? Is the age of academics a serious problem that is creating a pension crisis that puts HEI in danger? Are new academics, pioneers

in their families, entering higher education, or has the numbers of heirs in the academic profession gone up? What have been the consequences of the merit-pay systems, which have become a crucial strategy for the transformation of academic relations in terms of preferences for university tasks, the perception of the purpose of higher education, the internationalization level of the faculty and their working conditions, as well as job satisfaction in general or that related to specific facets of the work performed by academics?

The following is a preliminary analysis of the results of the CAP Mexican Study. Although it is of paramount importance to compare our results with those of the past and with those of other countries, trying to identify expected and non-expected trends, in this report such comparisons will be few. For now we will concentrate on a brief description of the results of the current study, leaving for a future report comparisons of the type described.

Method¹²

Given the magnitude of the tasks needed in order to implement the CAP survey in Mexico it was decided from the outset that a collaborative network of scholars interested in the academic profession was needed. So, 97 colleagues from 36 HEI located in all regions of the country are currently participating in the Network of Researchers on Academics. The Network translated, adapted and piloted the international questionnaire to make it relevant to our national context. Additionally, the Network helped to define the criteria under which, and in the context of CAP recommendations, the faculty sample was obtained; and, finally, our colleagues obtained, with the help of the National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (ANUIES), institutional faculty lists and applied the questionnaires of the survey. The Network leading group has been, on the other hand, in charge of inputting the data from the recovered questionnaires.

Following the practice used in higher education systems where there is no central and comprehensive list of academics, a two-stage sampling procedure was used to generate the faculty sample to be surveyed. The information used to this end was that of the 2005 Format 911,¹³ which was complemented by

¹² Due to space limitations the methods section has been reduced to a minimum. Once the survey application is finished a detailed methodological note will be elaborated.

¹³ Format 911 is a set of mandatory annually collected questionnaires that is jointly managed by the Secretariat of Public Education and the National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions.

information provided by the National Council of Science and Technology, as well as by a small number of institutions for which data were inconsistent in the 2005 Format 911.

In defining the scope of our study, an analysis of the 2005 Format 911 identified 2,029 HEI and 255,274 faculty positions associated with those institutions, of which there were 93,009 full- and part-time faculty working in them with at least a 20 hours *per* week contract (half-time). HEI were organized in seven strata and, given the purpose of the international project, teacher education and two-year institutions were singled-out and put aside, leaving 1,454 HEI aggregated in five strata, with 81,913 faculty members working in them. Finally, HEI with less than 20 faculty members meeting the criteria for being included in the scope of the study were not considered, and in this way 379 HEI and 79,389 FT and HT faculty members constituted the final institutional and faculty fields for the study (Table 1).¹⁴

Table 1. Institutional and faculty fields for the Mexican Survey of the Changing Academic Profession International Study, 2007

Type of institution	4-years and graduate HEI				4-years and graduate HEI with at least 20 FT/HT faculty			
	Institutions		Faculty		Institutions		Faculty	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Research Centers	35	2.4	4246	5.2	34	8.8	4229	5.3
Federal Public Institutions	28	1.9	19196	23.4	14	3.7	19102	24.1
State Public Institutions	108	7.4	31273	38.2	53	14.0	31062	39.1
Technological Public Institutions	224	15.4	12955	15.8	136	35.9	12666	16.0
Private Institutions	1059	72.8	14243	17.4	142	37.5	12330	15.5
Total	1454		81913		379		79389	

In the context of the institutional and faculty system just described, and in proportion to the number of faculty working in each stratum, a sample of 101 HEI was drawn in the first stage of the two-stage sampling design. Faculty lists were then obtained directly from each sampled institution and a total faculty sample of 2,826 academics was generated, which was then asked, by Network members or trained interviewers, to answer a printed or electronic version of the study questionnaire.

Although by December 21st we had recovered 1,050 instruments, this report

¹⁴ Of the faculty universe identified, approximately 79% and 21% were, respectively, full- and half-time.

presents the data from the 826 questionnaires that correspond to full-time faculty working in 49 HEI (Table 2). Because we still need to increase the total faculty response rate thus far obtained (36.7%), as well as the number of HEI represented in the sample (48.5%), the following analysis should be considered as only preliminary.¹⁵ Additionally, and as can be observed, faculty from research centers, federal public institutions and technological public institutions are under-represented, while those who work in state public institutions are over-represented. Given the nature of this report no weighting has been used to balance such situations, which again contributes to its preliminary nature. Notwithstanding the above qualifications, the report represents a first cut of the information generated by the CAP International Study.

Table 2. Institutional and Faculty sample for the Mexican Survey of the Changing Academic Profession International Study, 2007

Type of institution	Field of 4-year and graduate HEI with at least 20 FT/HT faculty				Target sample of 4-year and graduate HEI with at least 20 FT/HT faculty				Response sample, at Dec. 2007, of 4-year and graduate HEI with at least 20 FT/HT faculty			
	Institutions		Faculty		Institutions		Faculty		Institutions		Faculty	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Research Centers	34	8.8	4229	5.3	6	5.8	143	5.1	2	4.1	11	1.0
Federal Public Institutions	14	3.7	19102	24.1	14	13.8	710	25.1	5	10.2	191	18.2
State Public Institutions	53	14.0	31062	39.1	45	44.8	1101	38.9	28	57.1	582	55.4
Technological Public Institutions	136	35.9	12666	16.0	18	17.8	432	15.3	7	14.3	111	10.6
Private Institutions	142	37.5	12330	15.5	18	17.8	439	15.5	7	14.3	155	14.8
	379		79389		101		2826		49		1050	

The original questionnaire was generated collectively by members of the CAP International Study, following in several critical aspects the items used by the 1992 Carnegie survey and, very importantly, assuring that the instrument covered three main themes: relevance, internationalization and managerialism. More specifically, questionnaire items were organized in six sections: career and professional situation, general work situation and activities, teaching, research, management, and personal background and professional preparation. As said

¹⁵ Questionnaire recovery is currently underway and we expect to end it in the last week of February, 2008. Our goal is to achieve an overall response rate of 60%.

earlier, the international instrument was adapted and piloted by members of the Network who, in addition to sharing intense Internet communication, met three times during a 10-month period. The final version of the questionnaire also contained several items jointly generated with colleagues from Canada and the United States.

Some Results and Preliminary Analysis

After fifteen years the question of who the full-time faculty are is still central. Table 3 presents some of the pertinent information currently available from the Mexican CAP Survey. As it can be observed, one-third of the faculty are women (33.5%), and the mean age of faculty is 48.1 years. In the 1992 Carnegie survey the corresponding figures were 30.7% and 40.1 years.¹⁶ While only 22.1 and 9.0% of respondents reported that, respectively, their father and mother had some higher education experience at the level of a 4-year degree or higher, 70.2% reported that such was the case for their spouse or significant other companion, which speaks of tremendous social mobility dynamics for those entering the academic profession. Nationality at birth speaks of an academic body largely Mexican.

Table 3 also shows that the highest degree of almost 80% of ft faculty is some form of graduate work, with nearly 28% declaring a doctoral or post-doctoral award. At the same time, only a minority of ft faculty has experience outside the higher education sector, as only 22.3% of the survey respondents declare having at least one year of full-time experience in the public sector, and only 18.4% in the private sector, while 13.4% said the same with respect to doing independent work. In addition to reporting work experience mostly in the educational sector, respondents manifested little varied experience in higher education, as 76.3% reported that they have worked only in 1 or 2 HEI.

Another most relevant aspect for understanding the academic profession is related to the way faculty see their work and the activities that they engage in (Table 4). More specifically, while 57.5% of respondents declare that they prefer teaching over research, 42.5% reported an academic preference of research over teaching. However, preference for mainly teaching almost tripled preference for mainly research (17.6 vs. 6.0%). Thinking in terms of Boyer's notion of scholarship (1990), Table 4 speaks of Mexican faculty reporting a

¹⁶ This and other 1992 Carnegie figures were generated on the basis of the original database provided by Manuel Gil-Antón.

notion of academic work that includes, collectively, the elements of all of its four types (teaching, discovery, integration and application). It is quite interesting, additionally, to observe that application is the form of scholarship most often accepted as part of academic work (87.8%), followed by teaching (70.2%), integration (67.8%) and finally by research (57.8%). As it is well known, Mexican higher education has historically been associated with the training of professionals: in this context, application could be the form of scholarship with which faculty are more familiar and most comfortable.

Table 3. Personal information of respondents to the 2007 Mexican Survey of the Changing Academic Profession International Study ($N_t = 826$ full-time)

Demographic Aspect	Value
Women (99.2)*	33.5%
Mean age (98.4)	48.1 years
Standard Deviation of age (98.4)	9.5 years
4-Yr University Educational Attainment of father (93.6)	22.1%
4-Yr University Educational Attainment of Mother (95.6)	9.0%
4-Yr University Educational Attainment of Spouse/SO (75.9)	70.2%
Mexican nationality at birth (98.3)	95.7%
Highest degree of faculty surveyed (96.4)	
Less than B.A., B.S.	0.5%
B.A., B.S.	20.7%
Specialty	4.5%
Masters	46.5%
Doctorate	25.0%
Post-doctorate	2.8%
At least 1 year of full-time experience in various labor sectors since attainment of first degree (100)	
Higher education institutions	89.2%
Research centers	12.6%
Public sector	22.3%
Not for-profit organizations	2.5%
Private sector	18.4%
Independent work	13.4%
Experience in 1-to-2 higher education institutions (100)	
	76.3%

* Numbers in parenthesis are the percentages of valid responses with respect to $N_t = 826$.

An interesting result in the context of previous findings is the extent to which academic work, although not necessarily at the same institution, has now become the major source of income for Mexican ft faculty. Almost three of every four faculty (72.4%) reported that their income from their academic activities represented the vast majority of their income (90% - 100% of it), while only 14.7% indicated that such income was about half or less of their income

(Table 4). In the 1992 Traits survey the corresponding figures were, respectively, 60.5 and 22.8%.¹⁷

Finally, Table 4 shows that 87.7% of the respondents to the survey reported a high or very high level of general job satisfaction, a figure close to the 83.9% reported by full faculty working in a public state university towards the end of the 1990s (Galaz-Fontes, 2002). In agreement with this result, only 8.0% agreed or strongly agreed that they would not become an academic if they had to do it again.

Table 4. Perception of various aspects of academic work of respondents to the 2007 Mexican Survey of the Changing Academic Profession International Study (N_t = 826)

Faculty academic preference (percentages) (97.5)*	
Mainly in teaching	17.6%
In both, but leaning to teaching	39.9%
In both, but leaning to research	36.5%
Mainly in research	6.0%
Faculty agreeing or strongly agreeing that	
academic work is best defined as teaching and tutoring students (98.3)	70.2%
academic work is best defined as doing and reporting original research (97.9)	57.8%
academic work is best defined as including application of academic knowledge in real-life settings (98.2)	87.8%
academic work is best defined as including integrating main results and trends in one's field (97.3)	67.8%
teaching and research are hardly compatible (99.3)	10.9%
Faculty's appraisal of their academic income in relation to all of their income (98.4)	
All income (90% - 100%)	72.4%
More than half of your income (60% - 89%)	12.8%
About half of your income (40% - 59%)	7.0%
A minor complement of your income	5.5%
An insignificant part of your income (0% - 9%)	2.2%
Faculty job satisfaction	
Faculty reporting a high or very high job satisfaction in general (99.0)	87.7%
Faculty agreeing or strongly agreeing that if they had to do it again they wouldn't be an academic (98.3)	8.0%

* Numbers in parenthesis are the percentages of valid responses with respect to N_t = 826.

Moving away from preferences into more factual considerations, Table 5 shows that the vast majority of faculty see themselves as mainly devoted to teaching undergraduates, as 80.3% of the respondents consider such activity as the primary or secondary function in importance within their work. Whereas graduate teaching is only primary or secondary in importance for 20.9% of the

¹⁷ This and other 1992 Traits figures were generated on the basis of the original database provided by Manuel Gil-Antón.

survey respondents, something that speaks of the structure of the Mexican higher education system. Research is a primary or secondary responsibility for 39.3%, while 26.3% reported the same for administration. Extension and external partnerships were only reported to be of primary or secondary importance in their work by 8.1 and 7.7% of the faculty.

Table 5. Information regarding various aspects of the work carried out by respondents to the 2007 Mexican Survey of the Changing Academic Profession International Study (N_t = 826)

Faculty stating that each function is their first or second in importance (100)*	
Undergraduate teaching	80.3%
Graduate teaching	20.9%
Research	39.3%
Extension	8.1%
External partnerships	7.7%
Administration	26.3%
Mean number of hours involved in different activities as reported by faculty (85.4)	
Teaching	13.1
Teaching-support activities	9.4
Research	8.9
Non-paid services	0.9
Paid services	0.9
Collegial activities	2.6
Administration	6.1
Professional development	2.4
Union activities	0.2
Other activities	1.7
Research issues	
Faculty reporting doing research (97.7)	66.2%
Faculty with international collaboration (63.4)	28.8%
Of those reporting international collaboration, faculty reporting work with colleagues from various countries (18.3)	
Spain	41.1%
United States	33.1%
Argentina	15.2%
France	10.6%
Canada	9.3%
United Kingdom	5.3%

* Numbers in parenthesis are the percentages of valid responses with respect to N_t = 826.

Table 5 also presents the way in which faculty respondents to the survey allocate their time in various types of activities. Faculty reported an average of 13.1 hours *per week* devoted to teaching, 9.4 hours to teaching-support activities, 8.9 hours to research, 6.1 hours to administrative activities, 2.6 and 2.4 hours to collegial activities and professional development and, finally, less than 2 hours *per week* in each case to service, union and other activities. In total, faculty

reported that they work, as a group, approximately 46.2 hours *per week* on average.

While 39.3% of the respondents reported that research was their primary or secondary function in importance, 66.2% of the faculty responding to the survey reported that they carry out research activities and, largely within that group, 28.8% indicated that they are involved in some sort of international collaboration. Of these, in turn, 41.1% reported that they collaborate with colleagues from Spain, 33.1% with colleagues from the United States, 15.2% with colleagues from Argentina, 10.6% with colleagues from France, 9.3% with colleagues from Canada and, finally, 5.3% with colleagues from the United Kingdom (Table 5).

Table 6. Information regarding the perception of the working conditions of respondents to the 2007 Mexican Survey of the Changing Academic Profession International Study

Faculty rating good or excellent each of the following facilities	
Classroom (98.2)	42.8%
Teaching technology (98.7)	41.6%
Laboratories (85.4)	35.4%
Research equipment and instruments (88.5)	28.2%
Computer facilities (98.7)	46.1%
Library holdings and services (98.7)	43.5%
Cubicles and faculty offices (98.8)	41.0%
Telecommunications (internet, networks, phones) (97.6)	46.2%
Faculty rating good or excellent each of the following support staff	
Secretarial support (96.1)	32.8%
Teaching support staff (91.7)	22.6%
Research support staff (84.9)	15.1%
Financial support: Faculty rating good or excellent each of the following financial support	
Teaching financial support (88.0)	17.8%
Research financial support (83.9)	10.3%
Faculty rating good or excellent institutional support for each of the following developments	
National academic mobility (85.8)	19.3%
International academic mobility (82.3)	16.9%
University-society linkages (82.8)	15.2%
Faculty stating that working conditions have improved somewhat or a lot in	
higher education institutions (96.0)	45.3%
research centers part of HEI (80.4)	44.7%
independent research centers (75.9)	44.5%

¹ Numbers in parenthesis are the percentages of valid responses with respect to $N_i = 826$.

Table 6 presents the way in which faculty that answered the CAP questionnaire perceive various working conditions. In relation to infrastructure between 40% and 50% of the respondents see the majority of aspects considered (cubicles and faculty offices, teaching technology, classrooms, library holdings

and services, computer facilities, and telecommunications) as good or excellent, while less than 40% consider laboratories and research equipment and instruments at that level.

In relation to various supports for academic work, the perception of respondents is generally low. Such is the case of support staff (32.8, 22.6 and 15.1% see, respectively, support from secretarial, teaching and research staff as good or excellent), financial support for either teaching or research (17.8 and 10.3%, respectively), and specific support for national and international mobility (19.3 and 16.9%), as well as for promoting university-society linkages (15.2%; see Table 6). Nevertheless, between 44.5% and 45.3% of faculty respondents to the survey considered that, compared to when they began their academic careers, working conditions have improved somewhat or a lot in HEI, research centers as parts of HEIs and in independent research centers (Table 6).

Table 7 presents data related to the faculty's perception of various research related issues. So, 59.6% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the assertion that pressure for obtaining external funding has increased since they were first hired. Practically half (50.1%) of respondents think that high expectations to increase productivity are a threat to research quality, while only 39.2% reported the same opinion regarding high expectations of useful research. Finally, while 55.6% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that research funds should be allocated to the most prestigious researchers, 43.1% manifested the same level of agreement with the assertion that at their institution the best research is carried-out by SNI members.

Table 7. Opinion over various issues regarding research by respondents to the 2007 Mexican Survey of the Changing Academic Profession International Study

Faculty agreeing or strongly agreeing with the following statements related to funds and orientation of research	
Pressure to obtain external funds has increased since your first contract (62.1)*	59.6%
At this institution emphasis is made on commercial or applied research (71.5)	25.2%
Research funds should be allocated to the most prestigious researchers (80.1)	55.6%
Faculty agreeing or strongly agreeing with the following statements regarding research productivity	
High expectations to increase research productivity are a threat to the quality of research (77.7)	50.1%
High expectations of useful results and application are a threat to the quality of research (77.2)	39.2%
At this institution the best research is carried-out by faculty member of SNI (70.2)	43.1%

* Numbers in parenthesis are the percentages of valid responses with respect to $N_i = 826$.

A fundamental component of the context in which academics perform their work is its relationship with the administrative sector of their institutions.

Table 8 presents data on several aspects related to the way academics perceive this sector and its functioning. First, 55.8% of respondents identify their institution management style as top-down and at the same time only 38.0% report that communication between management and academics is good. Second, administrative processes are perceived as cumbersome by 44.7%, while 41.5 and 32.5% of respondents report a supportive attitude from administrative personnel for, respectively, teaching and research. Irrespective of the previous opinions, 74.5% of respondents express the view that the administration supports academic freedom (Table 8).

In relation to personal influence in the shaping of key academic policies, it is reported to be the highest the closer is the organizational unit to faculty members: 22.2%, 48.5% and 64.9% at the institutional, Faculty/school and departmental levels, respectively. Finally, 40.3% of respondents think that top-level administrators provide competent leadership. In short, it appears that there is a considerable gap between Mexican faculty and HEI administration and therefore, there is a considerable amount of improvement possible (see Table 8).

Table 8. Opinion on various administrative issues of respondents to the 2007 Mexican Survey of the Changing Academic Profession International Study (N_t = 826)

Faculty agreeing or strongly agreeing with various statements regarding institutional administration (%)	
At my institution there is a top-down management style (95.8)*	55.8
At my institution there is good communication between management and academics (98.4)	38.0
I am kept informed about what is going on at this institution (98.3)	32.8
At my institution there is a cumbersome administrative process (94.3)	44.7
At my institution there is a supportive attitude from administrative personnel towards teaching (96.6)	41.5
At my institution there is a supportive attitude from administrative personnel towards research (88.4)	32.5
The administration supports academic freedom in teaching (96.8)	74.5
You are somewhat/very influential in helping to shape key academic policies at the level of the department or similar unit (93.1)	64.9
You are somewhat/very influential in helping to shape key academic policies at the level of the faculty, school or similar unit (91.8)	48.5
You are somewhat/very influential in helping to shape key academic policies at the institutional level (90.4)	22.2
Top-level administrators are providing competent leadership (97.6)	40.3

* Numbers in parenthesis are the percentages of valid responses with respect to N_t = 826

As stated in the introduction, various higher education policies have generated several programs targeted at faculty. Three very important ones are merit-pay systems, the Program for Faculty Improvement (PROMEP)

(Urbano-Vidales, Aguilar-Sahagún, & Rubio-Oca, 2006) and the National Researchers System (SNI: *Sistema Nacional de Investigadores*). Table 9 presents the general opinion of the faculty surveyed regarding such programs.

Table 9. Opinion on four public policies targeted at academics of respondents to the 2007 Mexican Survey of the Changing Academic Profession International Study

Percentages of faculty participating in each of the following public-policy programs ($N_i = 826$).				
Institutional merit-pay system				46.9
PROMEP (Program for the Improvement of the Professoriate) profile				27.2
PROMEP academic body				37.8
SNI (National Researchers System)				14.6

Percentages of faculty agreeing or strongly agreeing on various statements regarding four public policies targeted at academics ($N_i = 826$).				
Statement	Institutional merit-pay systems	PROMEP profile	PROMEP academic body	SNI (National Researchers System)
It has positively impacted my professional development (66.5; 36.2; 40.1; 22.0)*	57.0	55.5	44.7	65.9
It has allow me to concentrate on my academic work as my main activity (67.1; 35.4; 38.3; 20.9)	56.0	45.5	36.4	59.5
It has allow me to improve my teaching (66.5; 35.0; 37.7; 20.1)	54.1	48.8	37.6	42.8
It has allow me to improve my research (59.9; 34.7; 38.5; 20.9)	44.6	49.8	47.8	64.2
In general, I am satisfied with this program (67.2; 35.4; 38.4; 21.5)	51.7	56.5	45.7	65.2

* Numbers in parenthesis are for each program, respectively, the percentages of valid responses with respect to $N_i = 826$.

In the first place, faculty members participate in the programs at issue to quite different extents: 14.6%, 27.2%, 37.8% and 46.9%, respectively, for SNI, PROMEP Profile, PROMEP Academic Body and institutional merit-pay systems. Second, the economic relevance that institutional merit-pay systems and SNI have is noteworthy, as 56.0% and 59.5% agree or strongly agreed, respectively, with the assertion that those programs have allowed faculty to focus on their academic work as their main activity. Third, each of the four programs is reported to have a positive impact on teaching (54.1% in the case of merit-pay systems) and research (64.2% in the case of SNI), but differentially. Fourth, global satisfaction is largest for SNI (65.2% agree or strongly agree with the corresponding assertion), second for PROMEP Profile (56.5%), third for institutional merit-pay systems (51.7%) and fourth for PROMEP Academic Body (45.7%). The SNI program, however, is the program in which fewest faculty

members participate. So, it appears that all of these programs do have a significant margin for improvement.

Concluding Remarks

Although preliminary, the following points can be made with a reasonable assurance. In relation to the profile of Mexican faculty there are four issues. First, Mexican ft faculty still has to improve regarding its proportion of women, currently at around 33.5%. Second, Mexican faculty is increasingly mature, with an average age of 48.1 years. It is a proper time to attend to retirement and other issues facing an increasingly aging academic body. Third, there is a growing proportion of faculty members with doctoral and post-doctoral awards. There is an important challenge in assuring that this training translates itself into better teaching, research and service. Fourth, in a context of higher expectations for relevance, it is a matter of concern that faculty report little work experience outside HEI.

In relation to how academics see their work three points can be made. First, Mexican faculty are mainly interested in teaching (57.5%), although there is an important proportion of academics that report research as their central preference (42.5%), and an even higher proportion that states that they do research (66.2%). It would be interesting to ask further about the notion of research that underlies such declarations. Second, Mexican faculty think that application of academic knowledge should be a central component of academic work (87.8%), even more so than think in the same way about teaching (70.2%) and research (57.8%). The professionally-oriented tradition in Mexican undergraduate higher education should be brought into the analysis of this interesting situation. Third, in sharp contrast to the situation prevailing in the early 1990s, Mexican ft faculty have increased their economic professionalization, as 72.4% of them report that their academic work provides them with 90-100% of their income. In general, the vast majority of Mexican academics (87.7%) reported a high or very high level of overall job satisfaction.

In relation to the actual academic work we can highlight three points. First, Mexican faculty is largely a teaching profession, although there are significant proportions of them that see research and administration as their first or second function in importance. Second, congruent with their perception of their work, the number of hours devoted to teaching is more than double the time reported in doing research activities. Finally, of all ft faculty, 28.8% reported international collaboration, with Spain and the United States being the countries

where Mexican faculty identify the most collaboration with colleagues. An internationalization strategy for Mexican higher education should consider such results.

In relation to the faculty's perception of their working conditions, the situation is in general regular (*e.g.*, 42.8% rate good or excellent classrooms), but low in those aspects having to do with research (*e.g.*, 28.2% rate good or excellent research equipment and instruments). Support aspects having to do with personnel and funds are seen as low (*e.g.*, 22.6% and 17.8% rate good or excellent, respectively, teaching support staff and teaching financial support), as well as for programs of academic mobility (*e.g.*, 19.3% rate good or excellent support for national academic mobility). Finally, less than half of the survey respondents think that working conditions have improved in HEI since they were first hired.

In relation to research, 59.6% of respondents reported more pressure to obtain external funds since they were first hired. Quality of research, on the other hand, is seen by half of the faculty as compromised by a concern to increase productivity (50.1%), but not so much by a concern for applicability (39.2%). Finally, less than half of the respondents think that the best research is carried out by faculty members of the National Researchers System (43.1%).

In relation to the way in which faculty perceive administration at their institution the picture is one of a divided world between the administration and the academy. Faculty indicate that academic freedom is supported by the administration (74.5%), but beyond that there is a perception of a top-down management style (55.8%) with low communication levels (38.0%) and a low supportive attitude from the administration towards teaching (41.5%) and research (32.5%). Regarding influence by individual faculty members, a relatively high level is reported at the departmental level (64.9%) but this rapidly diminishes at more remote organizational levels (48.5 and 22.2% respectively at Faculty and institutional levels).

Finally, items having to do with various programs derived from relatively recent important national policies speak of their differential impact and, therefore, of the need to more closely analyze their nature and dynamics, as their sole implementation is no warranty that they will have the expected results. It is expected that studies like the one we are reporting will contribute significantly to this task.

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RIHE International Seminar Reports

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No.12, September 2008**

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Research Institute for Higher Education

HIROSHIMA UNIVERSITY

The Changing Academic Profession in International Comparative and Quantitative Perspectives

Edited and Published by

Research Institute for Higher Education

Hiroshima University

2-2, Kagamiyama 1-chome

Higashi-Hiroshima, 739-8512 Japan

TEL: +81-82-424-6240, FAX: +81-82-422-7104

<http://en.rihe.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/>

Printed by:

Takatoo Print Media Co.Ltd.

3-2-30, Senda-machi, Naka-ku, Hiroshima City

730-0052, Japan

TEL: +81-82-244-1110, FAX: +81-82-244-1199

September 2008

ISBN978-4-902808-45-2