

Faculty Wellbeing Survey Report

2025-2026 Survey

Prepared by the Faculty Wellbeing Committee

Executive Summary

The Faculty Wellbeing Committee conducted a survey to better understand the factors driving faculty stress, burnout, and professional fulfillment, and to identify the resources and strategies faculty believe would most improve their wellbeing. A total of 190 faculty members completed the quantitative portion of the survey, and 149 provided open-ended written responses that were coded and analyzed for recurring themes.

Although the response rate was low, the consistency and specificity of the responses provide a meaningful signal that the issues raised merit further attention and follow-up. Across both the quantitative ratings and open-ended responses, faculty consistently pointed to institutional leadership and communication, administrative burden, workload and staffing shortfalls, and compensation as the most significant drivers of burnout and dissatisfaction. At the same time, faculty identified clear opportunities for improvement, including stronger mentorship infrastructure, greater transparency from leadership, and targeted investment in support staff. This report summarizes the survey data, highlights the dominant themes with representative faculty voices, and presents the Committee's recommendations for next steps.

1. Respondent Overview

Quantitative survey responses were received from 190 faculty members across the University, representing a range of academic ranks and schools.

Respondents by Academic Rank

Current Rank	Frequency	Percent
Assistant Professor	75	39.47%
Associate Professor	49	25.79%
Professor	48	25.26%
Other	8	4.21%
Assistant Professor, Clinical	2	1.05%
Clinical	2	1.05%
Professor, Clinical	2	1.05%

Professor, Other	2	1.05%
Assistant Professor, Other	1	0.53%
Associate Professor, Other	1	0.53%
Total	190	100%

Respondents by School

School	Frequency	Percent
School of Medicine	106	55.79%
Emory College of Arts and Sciences	43	22.63%
Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing	11	5.79%
Oxford College	10	5.26%
Candler School of Theology	7	3.68%
Rollins School of Public Health	7	3.68%
Goizueta Business School	5	2.63%
School of Law	1	0.53%
Total	190	100%

Respondents' tenure at the University ranged widely, with a median of 10 years of service (mean of 12.5 years; range of 1 to 34+ years), reflecting perspectives from both early-career and long-tenured faculty.

2. Quantitative Findings: Drivers of Stress and Burnout

Faculty rated how frequently a series of factors contributed to their stress and burnout, using a five-point scale (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Very Often). The table below summarizes the share of respondents indicating each factor occurred “Often” or “Very Often.”

Stress/Burnout Factor	Often or Very Often (%)
Competing demands (teaching, research, clinical care, service)	55.26%
Pressure to prioritize metrics (e.g., RVUs, publications) over purpose-driven work	44.74%
Excessive administrative burden	44.21%
Negative institutional climate or morale	41.05%
Misalignment between my values and institutional priorities	38.42%
Strained relationships with leadership	24.74%
Lack of recognition or appreciation	32.11%
Unrealistic or unclear expectations about promotion, tenure, or productivity	30.00%
Lack of mentorship or supportive networks	20.52%

Strained relationships with colleagues	10.00%
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Additional wellbeing indicators reinforce these findings: 53.16% of respondents reported a lack of joy or satisfaction in their daily work “Often” or “Sometimes,” and 41.05% of respondents rated institutional climate or morale as negative “Often” or “Very Often.” Competing demands across teaching, research, clinical care, and service emerged as the single most frequently cited contributor to stress and burnout.

3. Qualitative Themes from Open-Ended Responses

In addition to the rating-scale questions, 149 faculty members provided open-ended written responses describing what contributes to their stress and burnout and what resources would most improve their wellbeing and professional fulfillment. These responses were coded into recurring themes, grouped under two broad categories: Institutional factors and Interpersonal factors. Themes below are ordered by the number of participants who raised them.

Institutional Themes

Leadership (96 references, 68 participants)

Faculty expressed a strong desire for clearer decision-making, follow-through, and shared governance, along with concern about top-down changes made without faculty input.

“Lack of transparency from administration.”

“The tone of leadership and admin staff. Inefficient support and a negative attitude. Top-down decisions (made without any of my or my colleagues' input) that directly affect my work in negative ways. Strong hierarchy rather than collegial, mission-focused leadership and decision-making. Treated with disrespect, dismissal, or anger.”

Administrative Burden / Bureaucracy (87 references, 61 participants)

Faculty described the burden of navigating research and administrative systems (RAS, OTT, IRB, Insight), excessive forms and meetings, and a resulting decline in morale.

“Administrative tasks running into patient care responsibilities and not enough time to feel like I am able to do both well without working overtime/nights/weekend.”

“Too much clinical work with almost no time to do the paperwork, other than at night and on weekend.”

Workload / Staffing (78 references, 55 participants)

Respondents cited high administrative, teaching, and clinical loads paired with insufficient support staff as a major source of strain.

“Hire qualified staff and retrain or remove underperforming personnel.”

"I spend way too much of my time trying to address issues related to having inexperienced staff, as well as unacceptable response times from OTT for items like DUAs."

Compensation / Benefits (72 references, 49 participants)

Faculty noted that pay and benefits have not kept pace with expectations or inflation and called for greater salary transparency.

"The (almost) lack of increase in salary for the new fiscal year was very demoralizing, especially when we receive so many emails from leadership stating what a great year it has been."

"Lack of alignment of salary for academic productivity and value."

Transparency and Clarity (60 references, 43 participants)

Faculty asked for more consistent, straightforward communication from leadership regarding administrative, policy, and salary decisions.

"It would be helpful if to start our leadership stopped telling us how great everything is and acknowledge that many of us are overwhelmed by the changes to campus culture and the classroom."

"True transparency and respect for faculty."

Policies / Politics (35 references, 28 participants)

Some respondents described distress related to the broader political climate and the institution's response to related policies.

"Zero support from institution related to federal funding elimination resulting in cadres of colleagues having awards cancelled. Misalignment of my values with the values demonstrated by the institution."

Funding (22 references, 20 participants)

Faculty raised concerns about core cost increases, financial uncertainty, and the need for bridge, pilot, or internal funding support.

"High staff turnover and budget reductions have made it very difficult to plan for the future or figure out how to get things done."

Classroom Culture (14 references, 10 participants)

A smaller number of responses focused on readiness, accountability, and the impact of generative AI and shifting student demographics on the learning environment.

"Rapid changes in campus culture reflecting top-down decision-making with little to no faculty input... AND NOW—GENERATIVE AI IS DESTROYING MY PEDAGOGY."

Interpersonal Themes

Mentorship / Career Development (43 references, 37 participants)

Faculty expressed a strong, often unmet need for mentoring—including mid-career mentoring—sponsorship, and guidance for advancement.

“I don't have a mentor. This is a problem. I've been navigating academia and the transition from assistant to associate professor on my own. I've tried to find these relationships but they always seem to fall apart so I just gave up.”

“There is NO mentoring or sponsorship opportunities. There is no orientation to new leadership roles.”

Recognition / Appreciation (36 references, 27 participants)

Respondents described feeling undervalued for both visible and invisible labor, including teaching, service, and mentorship contributions.

“Not being valued for the work we do but rather how much work we do.”

“Value clinical care, recognize the intense burden it places in this day and time and that one of the best solutions for burnout is to support people being away from the source of stress.”

Performance Metrics (35 references, 32 participants)

Faculty raised concerns about pressure to meet productivity metrics (e.g., RVUs) at the expense of quality of care, education, and research time.

“Demands of having to teach more (coordination of courses, not mere guest lectures) in larger & larger classes, yet judged for promotion on # of grants funded & # papers published.”

“The metrics that are not clear to us or well explained and often change.”

Workplace Culture (32 references, 26 participants)

Faculty described dissatisfaction with interpersonal dynamics and a shift away from collegial, team-oriented culture.

“There is a high level of moral distress and fatalism. Relationships with friends and colleagues who have joined leadership roles have suffered from this. It feels like a 'dog eat dog' mentality and not the unified division or dept that we once were.”

“No professional or personal connection with anyone at the university except support staff.”

Work Flexibility / Agency (9 references, 7 participants)

A smaller group of respondents desired greater control over how and when their work gets done, including work-from-home flexibility.

“Continuing to support WFH, telemedicine, and other policies to let bright hardworking motivated faculty decide when to get their work done and how best to accomplish that.”

4. Top Themes by Survey Question

When asked specifically about strategies to support wellbeing, sources of impactful support, and drivers of stress, faculty responses clustered around the following themes:

Survey Question	Top Themes	Mentions
Q1. Which strategies or resources would best support your well-being and professional fulfillment?	Compensation / Benefits	31
	Leadership	30
	Transparency and Clarity	29
Q2. What types of support would have the greatest positive impact on your wellbeing?	Administrative Burden / Bureaucracy	45
	Mentorship / Career Development	24
Q3. Which factors most strongly contribute to your sense of stress and burnout?	Leadership	48
	Workload / Staffing	40

Notably, compensation, leadership, and transparency dominate faculty suggestions for improving wellbeing, while leadership and workload/staffing are the two factors most frequently cited as direct contributors to stress and burnout—underscoring leadership and communication as the single highest-leverage area for institutional action.

5. Recommendations and Next Steps

Based on the survey findings, the Wellbeing Committee has identified the following priority actions:

1. Establish Ongoing, Collaborative Faculty Feedback Mechanisms

To ensure sustained progress and responsiveness, the Wellbeing Committee will provide input into regular, coordinated faculty surveys as part of broader, university-wide efforts. These surveys will be designed collaboratively to minimize redundancy and allow benchmarking across departments. Just as important as data collection is closing the loop:

the committee will share results transparently, identify action items, and report back on progress over time.

2. Strengthen Mentorship Infrastructure

School and departments should formalize mentorship programs for early and mid-career faculty. Sponsorship—active advocacy for career advancement—should be emphasized alongside traditional mentorship, and increased opportunities to recognize unsung heroes and silent achievers should be identified. Recognizing and rewarding mentorship efforts (e.g., through academic credit or compensation) will help ensure sustainability and engagement. Consideration should also be given to implementing a peer coaching program throughout the institution. This will be one area of focus of the Wellbeing Committee in the upcoming academic year.

3. Strategically Invest in Support Personnel

Survey findings highlight a mismatch between clinical/research workload and available support staff. Targeted investment is needed in high-impact roles such as medical assistants, administrative assistants, and research coordinators, particularly in areas with the greatest operational strain. Workforce planning should incorporate workload metrics to ensure equitable distribution of support.

4. Reduce Administrative Burden and Improve Workflow Efficiency

Administrative complexity was identified as a driver of dissatisfaction and inefficiency. Efforts should focus on streamlining key processes across RAS, OTT, IRB, and Insight platforms. This includes reducing redundant forms, minimizing unnecessary meetings, and simplifying approval pathways. Importantly, administrative support should shift from a gatekeeping model to a “do-it-with-you” approach—embedding knowledgeable personnel who can actively assist faculty in navigating workflows.

5. Enhance Transparency and Communication from Leadership

Faculty expressed a need for clearer, more consistent communication around key institutional processes, including promotion and tenure, workload expectations, and compensation frameworks. Leadership should provide regular, structured updates that include not only outcomes but also the rationale behind decisions. Early and meaningful faculty engagement—through forums, advisory groups, or pilot initiatives—can improve alignment, trust, and adoption of new policies.