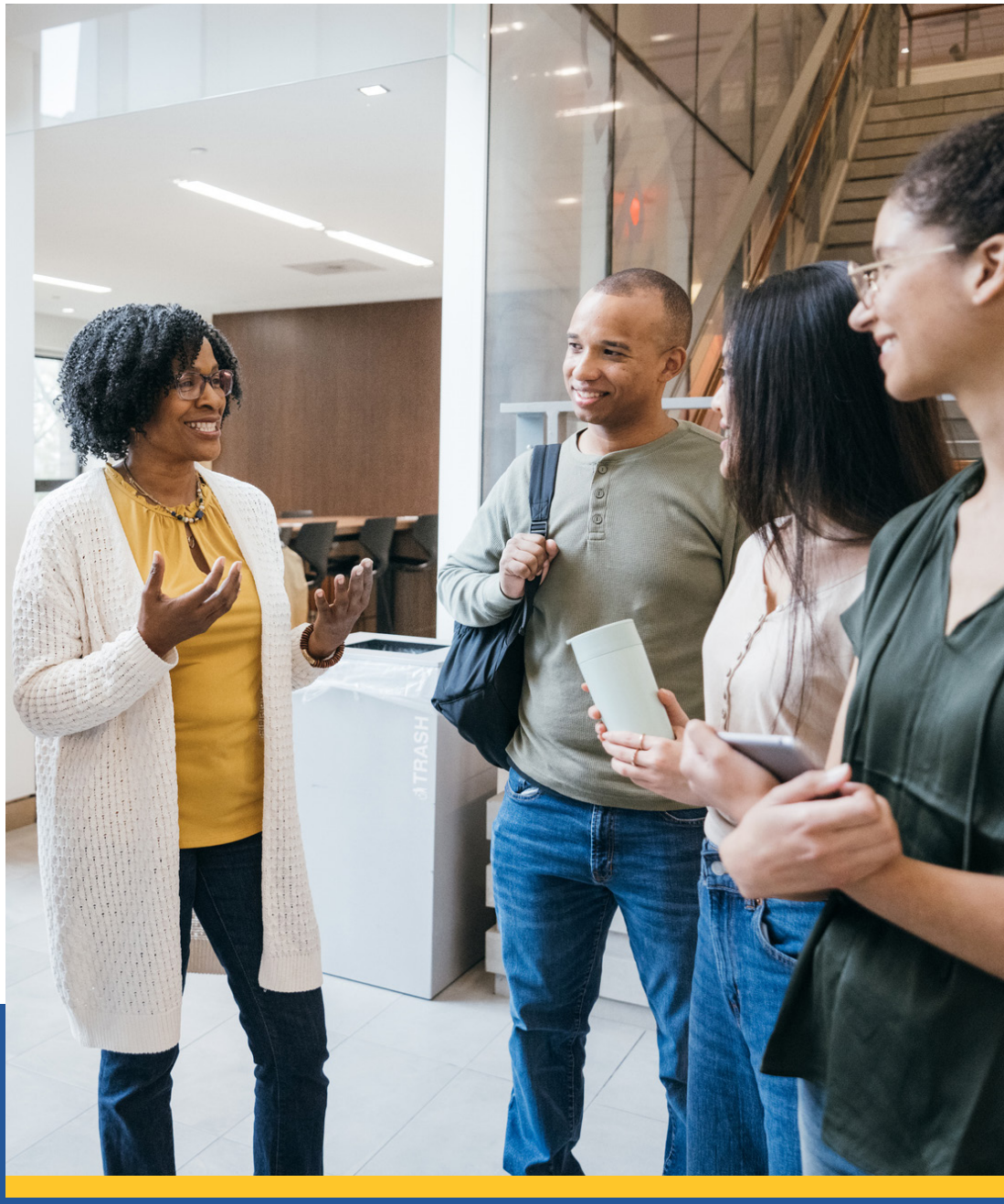
FACE on Faculty



Faculty, Academic Careers, and Environments (FACE)

Pilot Study and Field Test Report

by:

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Background and Purpose

> ***The purpose of the Faculty, Academic Careers and Environments (FACE) project is to understand who faculty are, what their academic careers look like, and how the environments in which they work shape their ability to thrive as instructors, researchers and public scholars in the community.***

The purpose of the Faculty, Academic Careers and Environments (FACE) project is to understand who faculty are, what their academic careers look like, and how the environments in which they work shape their ability to thrive as instructors, researchers and public scholars in the community. This report describes the two-year pilot study of how best to create a national study of faculty working at non-profit colleges and universities of all types across the country, given the social media and survey research environment of the 2020s.

The National Center for Education Statistics discontinued the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) in 2004, creating a significant gap in our understanding of postsecondary faculty in the United States, including who they are and how their working conditions shape their opportunity to be effective. Since 2004, two major developments have significantly changed the landscape for academic employment: the increasing reliance on contingent academic labor, and significant investments into increasing the hiring and retention of historically-minoritized faculty (including faculty of color, LGBTQ+ faculty, and faculty with disabilities). Additionally, the Covid-19 pandemic shifted the work of faculty significantly; in some cases, it dramatically altered their connection to campus and with students.

The need for current, comprehensive, and nationally representative data on faculty has been acknowledged widely, including in recently published books, national reports, and journalistic articles, stemming from the many changes in faculty work and environment and the need for updated policies and practices on campus guided by data (Koren et al., 2024).

Background and Purpose

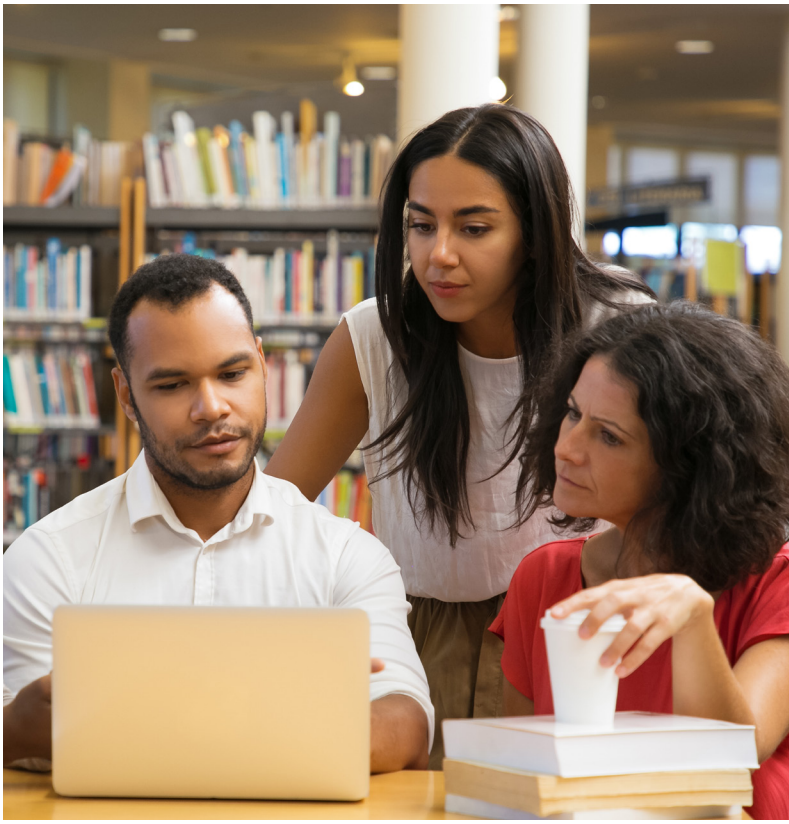
There are a wide range of roles, responsibilities, and day-to-day working conditions among the professoriate. The FACE pilot study examined the process of capturing the experiences of the academic workforce broadly, including all of the part-time and full-time professionals who do faculty-like work — related to instruction, research, and/or public outreach — regardless of whether they were designated as faculty. It sought to capture the experiences of tenure-line and contingent faculty across disciplines and across not-for-profit sectors of higher education (including public and private, two-year and four-year, and minority serving institutions [MSIs]). It is especially important to capture different institutional contexts as faculty lives and experiences vary.

The FACE pilot study was funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), as noted in the section on Project Funding below. Given NSF's focus on the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce and STEM education, FACE was designed to enable comparisons between academic professionals working in STEM fields and those working in other fields. In addition, by capturing the complete educational histories of survey participants, FACE enables us to identify individuals with STEM degrees who may be teaching or working in non-STEM fields (and vice versa).

Research Team

The FACE project is led by Principal Investigator **Adrianna Kezar** at the **University of Southern California**. Kezar is the Dean's Professor of Leadership, Wilbur-Kieffer Professor of Higher Education, and Director of the Pullias Center for Higher Education. FACE is an extension of the Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success based at the Pullias Center.

John W. Curtis is a research and evaluation consultant working primarily on diversity, equity, and inclusion in US higher education. He served as consultant to USC for the FACE project.



Emily R. Koren is a Postdoctoral Scholar in the Pullias Center for Higher Education at the Rossier School of Education.

Co-Principal Investigator **KC Culver** is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education Administration at the **University of Alabama** (UA). Cheng Hua, Kellen Jones, and Taheerah Mujahid served as UA graduate research assistants on the project.

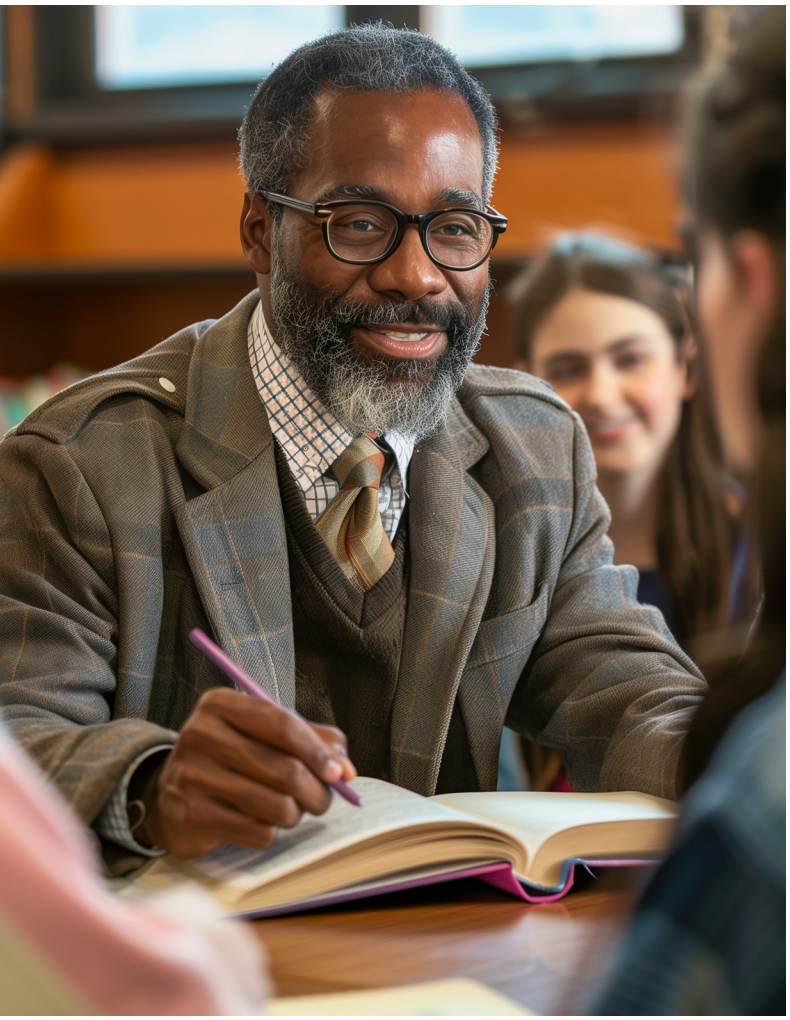
Co-Principal Investigator **Caren Arbeit** is a researcher in the Education and Workforce Development division of **RTI International**, an independent nonprofit research institute that specializes in education and workforce research. The RTI team also included Nicole Tate, Laura Burns Fritch, Robert Steele, and Herschel Sanders.

More extensive author biographies and collaborating organizations' descriptions are provided at the end of the report.

Purpose of the Pilot Study

The purpose of the two-year pilot study was to develop the research methods for the FACE project. We designed the methods, instrumentation, and project management for this complex, two-stage sampling study and conducted a field test to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of each of these three components of FACE to facilitate success at scale.

FACE aims to fill significant gaps in our knowledge about faculty members' identities and careers, the environments in which they work, their work experiences, and outcomes.



A nationally-representative study is critical to understanding the organizational, behavioral, and psychosocial factors influencing academic employment. In particular, there is a need for data that illuminate faculty in terms of their intersectional identities and roles, thereby allowing a better understanding of the composition of the academic workforce and efforts to diversify it, as well as how faculty's working conditions shape outcomes for faculty, students, and higher education overall.

In addition to creating the infrastructure for FACE, this development and field test pilot study was intended to advance our understanding of survey research methods, as described further in the next section on study design. Further, by identifying how to effectively market the study, recruit participants, provide incentives, and conduct follow-up, we hoped also to advance knowledge related to reaching respondents whose voices are often excluded from survey data.

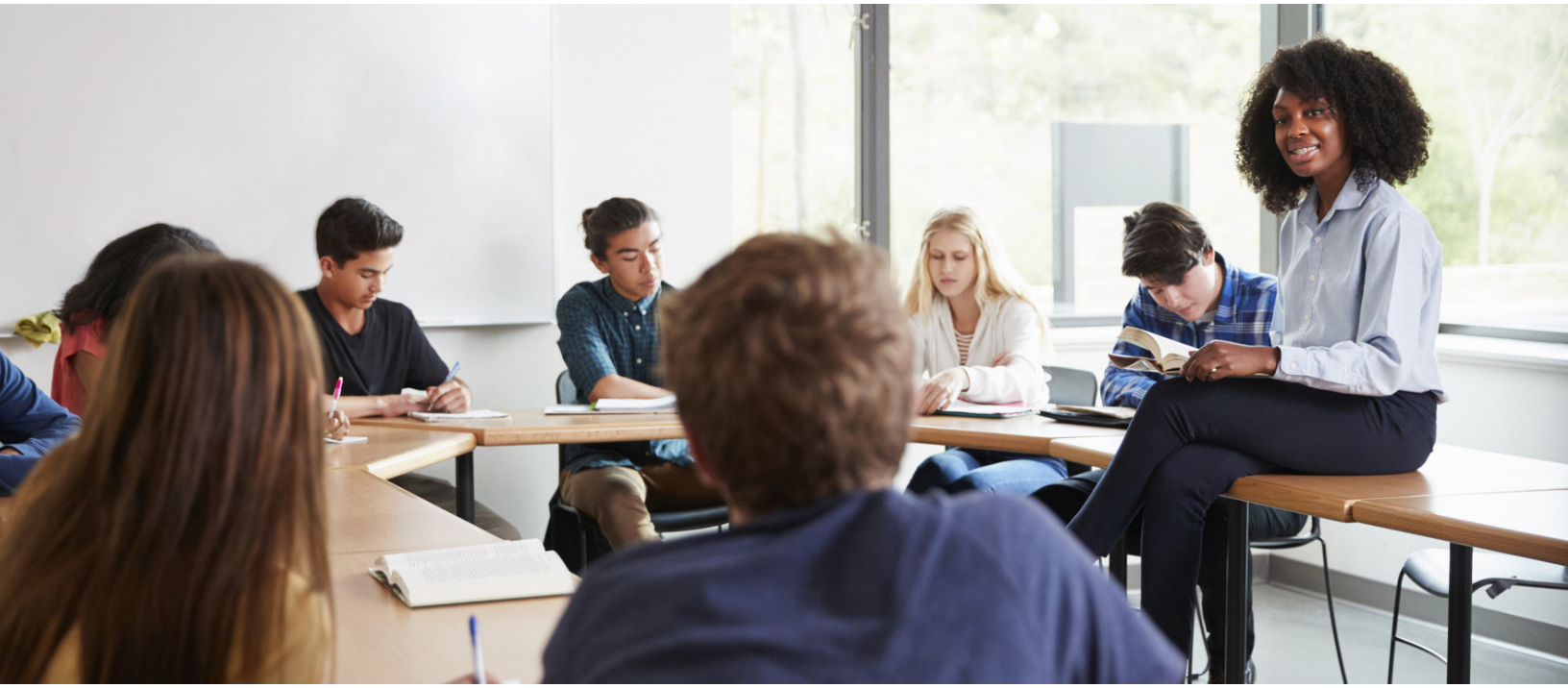
The main activities of the pilot study were completed between June 2022 and May 2024. A detailed timeline is included as Appendix A.

Pilot Study Design

> ***An important innovation in the FACE pilot study was to 'decouple' the two stages for the field test. This decoupling strategy for the field test can be a model for researchers who are fielding other multi-stage studies.***

The FACE pilot study built on the legacy of NSOPF and introduced an important innovation. To create a nationally-representative sample of academic professionals, NSOPF employed a two-stage sampling design: The first stage was a sample of institutions utilizing a basic set of categories, or sampling strata, that reflected differences in both institutional mission and employment practices. The second stage was sampling individuals from the sampled institutions who met the study criteria. FACE also uses a two-stage sampling design; this section describes each of these stages in turn and introduces an important innovation that made the pilot study feasible within a compressed two-year timeframe.

Two-stage sample designs typically field test the stages sequentially, just as one would execute them at scale. An important innovation in the FACE pilot study was to "decouple" the two stages for the field test. We created a sample of



institutions and worked through the process of contacting them and inviting them to participate in the institutional component of the study. At the same time, we developed an individual questionnaire and field tested it immediately with both a non-probability sample of individuals recruited through various communications methods, and with individuals identified by three purposely invited focal institutions.

This decoupling strategy for the field test can be a model for researchers who are fielding other multi-stage studies. The success of this strategy relies on actively recruiting individuals who meet the sampling criteria and engaging their motivation to participate in a survey study.

Sampling: Institutions

More than 6,500 institutions offer postsecondary education in the United States and its territories, and these institutions are eligible to participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. The U.S. Department of Education's annual Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data collection provides basic data on these institutions, effectively serving as the institutional population of which the FACE study population is a subset.

The FACE pilot universe (as of fall 2022) comprised 3,186 Title IV-eligible public and private non-profit institutions that offered associate's or higher degrees and were located in the 50 states or the District of Columbia. Given the limited funds available for institutional recruitment in the pilot study, the team limited the institutional population to private nonprofit and public degree-granting institutions.

The universe also excluded standalone medical, dental, or nursing schools, to the extent those could be identified, and individuals in those institutions. Institutions with multiple schools were asked to exclude any medical, dental, and nursing schools; given the clinical focus of the faculty, those schools have different employment structures and working conditions.

Institutions were sampled in six strata derived initially from the 2018 Carnegie Classification of institutions (Carnegie). The strata were created by clustering Carnegie codes based on the number of academic personnel reported at the institutions in the 2021 IPEDS Human Resources data, so that the FACE pilot strata do not correspond directly to the Carnegie Classification:

- Special focus institutions and private associate degree colleges
- Public associate degree colleges
- Baccalaureate colleges and smaller master's degree universities
- Larger master's and professional doctoral universities
- Doctoral universities: high research activity ("R2")
- Doctoral universities: very high research activity ("R1")

A sample of 300 institutions was selected using systematic selection with probability proportional to size (PPS), with an oversample of 10 MSI. To achieve the oversample, each unit was categorized as either an MSI or not an MSI, creating 12 temporary strata. Within each stratum, the largest units ("certainties") were identified by selecting a preliminary sample using systematic selection with PPS. Units with a 100% probability of being selected were set aside and another sample was drawn using the same method. The certainties and sample were then combined to create the complete sample of 300 units in six strata.

The institutional sample size varied among strata to take into account the varying percentages of instructional, research, and public service staff in the strata (Table 1). For example, the special focus and private associate degree stratum consists of a large number of institutions that employ a relatively small number of academic personnel. Given their smaller academic workforce size, we sampled fewer of these institutions to reduce the burden on them; for similar reasons, the four-year institutions with smaller numbers of academic personnel were also sampled at a lower rate. In addition, within each stratum, minority-serving institutions were given extra weight to increase their probability of being sampled.

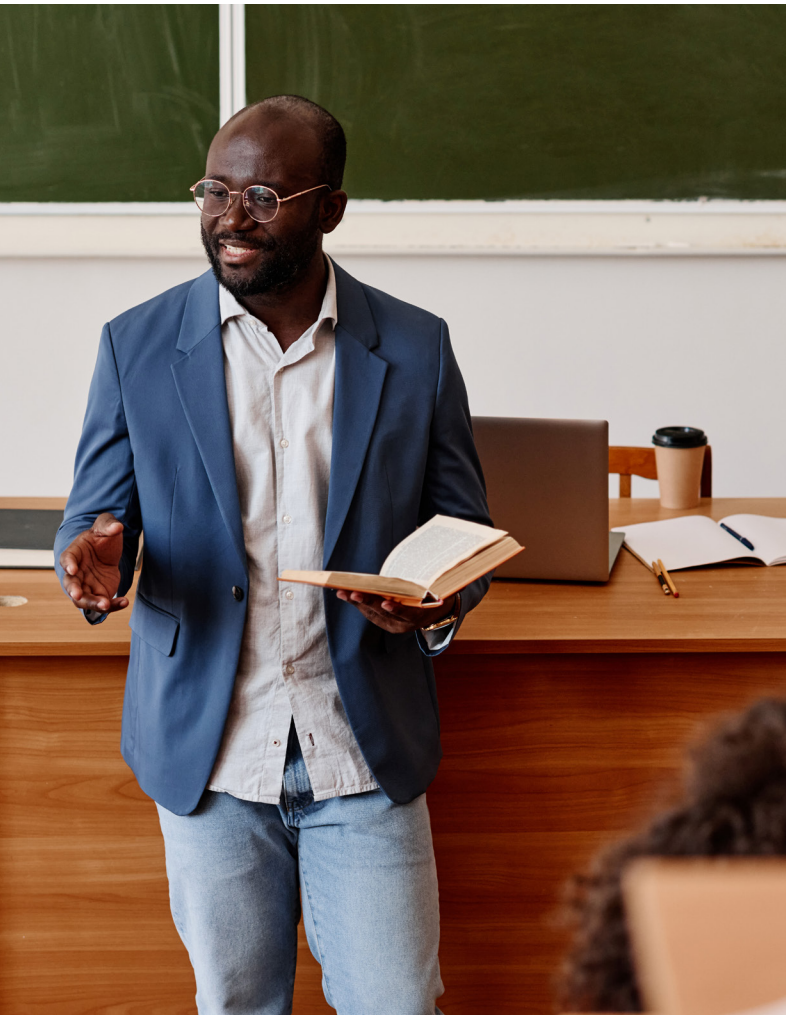
TABLE 1. FACE Pilot Sample Strata

	UNIVERSE		PILOT SAMPLE		Median number of FACE staff
Strata	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	
Total	3,186		300		203.5
Special focus and private associate degree	758	23.8	10	3.3	30.0
Public associate degree	970	30.4	94	31.3	265.0
Baccalaureate and smaller masters	746	23.4	56	18.7	173.5
Larger masters and professional doctorate	450	14.1	62	20.7	465.5
Doctoral universities: high research activity ("R2")	131	4.1	31	10.3	1024.0
Doctoral Universities: very high research activity ("R1")	131	4.1	47	15.7	2065.0

In addition to the institutions identified by sampling, we secured agreements with three purposely-invited focal institutions to engage in the full two-stage process. The three institutions were a large research university, a regional public university, and a relatively small community college. Although they do not constitute a representative sample, these three institutions of varying size and mission provided a pool of potential respondents to test various aspects of the individual survey instrument and the process of contacting individual respondents based on a roster supplied by the institution.

Sampling: Individuals

One of the primary objectives of the FACE project is to learn more about the careers and work environments of academic professionals working outside the tenure-line faculty employment structure. FACE is designed to capture the experiences of part-time (or adjunct) faculty members and individuals engaged in research or other work typically associated with faculty, even when they do not hold a faculty appointment. Thus, the FACE population for the pilot was all individuals employed by the institution, both full- and part-time, who were engaged primarily in undergraduate and/or graduate instruction, research, public service or community outreach, or any combination of those three functions, regardless of faculty status or faculty rank. As will be discussed in the concluding section, the population for the full-scale study will be modified based on our field test experience, but the remainder of this section describes the strategy employed for the pilot study.



We asked sampled institutions to provide rosters of individual academic professionals meeting the following pilot study population definition:

- All full- and part-time instructors, regardless of faculty rank or faculty status. These individuals may or may not also engage in research and/or public service.
- Research staff, both full- and part-time, if the majority of their work is focused on conducting research, regardless of their title, academic rank, or tenure status.
- Public service staff, both full- and part-time, if the majority of their work is focused on carrying out public service and/or community outreach activities. These include staff members who work in agricultural extension services, clinical services (but note exclusions on next page), or continuing education, regardless of their title, academic rank, or tenure status. If the staff member is located off campus, such as in an extension office, they should still be included as long as the majority of their work is focused on carrying out public service activities.
- Faculty and academic personnel who are permanent, temporary, adjunct, visiting, or acting, as well as faculty and academic personnel in the functional categories above who are hired to temporarily replace staff who are on leave with or without pay.
- Faculty and academic personnel who are on sabbatical or other leave but remain on the institution's payroll.
- Faculty and academic personnel in the functional categories above who work at branch campuses or off-campus centers associated with the institution and located within the United States.

We asked institutions to exclude the following categories of academic personnel from their rosters:

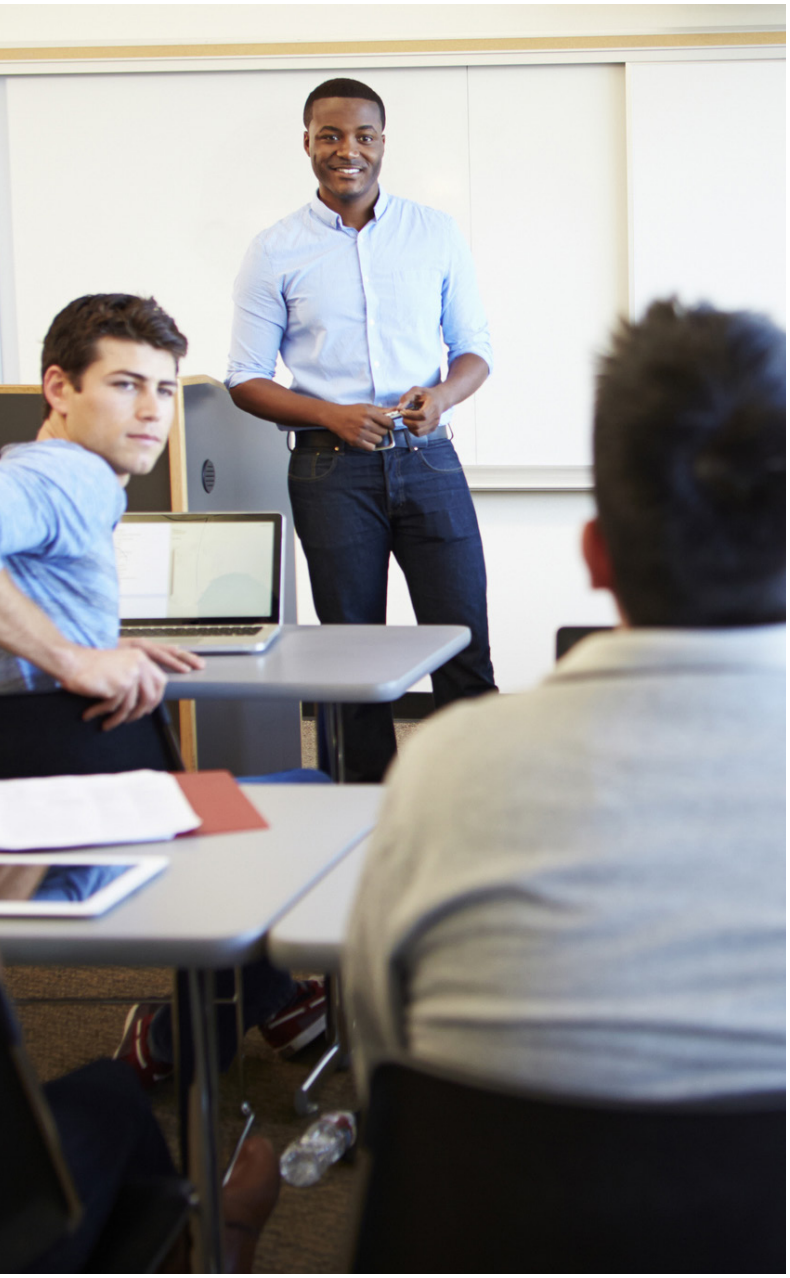
- Graduate student employees and postdoctoral fellows or trainees.
- Individuals whose workload is defined primarily (75% or more) by administrative duties.
- Individuals whose appointments are solely in separate professional schools or departments dedicated to preparing healthcare professionals (medical, dentistry, or nursing).
- Individuals volunteering their services (or whose services are not compensated by the institution), such as members of the clergy or military personnel teaching only ROTC courses. (Individuals who serve as paid part-time or adjunct faculty should be included.)
- Individuals engaged solely in non-credit instruction connected to workforce development or corporate training. (Individuals who also provide credit instruction should be included.)
- Individuals employed by a firm separate from the institution that the institution uses to outsource instruction, research, or public service.
- Individuals who work exclusively at branch campuses located in a foreign country.

Asking institutions to provide rosters of individual academic professionals allowed us to test our procedures for contacting institutions and providing definitions. We did not contact the individuals listed in the rosters provided by non-focal sample institutions. As noted above, we secured agreements with three focal institutions to supply rosters of individuals meeting the FACE population definition whom we then invited to complete the questionnaire as a limited field test of the individual sampling process and instrument.

As part of the "de-coupling" strategy described above, we also recruited a non-probability sample of academic professionals to test the individual questionnaire. As described in the section on endorsements below, we enlisted the support of several professional organizations to distribute invitations for voluntary survey participation through their own communication channels. We also sent out notices through various social media platforms. Volunteers completed the survey through an open registration process available on the project website.

"Asking institutions to provide rosters of individual academic professionals allowed us to test our procedures for contacting institutions and providing definitions."

Instrument Development



As described previously, the pilot phase of the FACE project comprises two levels of data collection, one at the institution level and one for individual academic professionals. Each level has its own instrument or questionnaire. This section describes the process the project team used to develop those questionnaires.

Conceptual Framework

Prior to developing the questionnaires, the project team spent considerable time researching and developing a conceptual framework for the entire project. Drawing on our collective experience researching faculty work, we knew we would have to make choices about which aspects of academic professionals' working and personal lives we would choose to study, the items we would include, and how we would envision the various components of academic careers, working environments, and individual identities interacting. Creating a conceptual framework was our way of being explicit about how those choices were made and how we envisioned the collected data potentially helping us understand the academic work environment in the second decade of this century. Our conceptual framework includes several different individual dimensions, spanning identities, career characteristics, and behaviors and feelings, and moving to institutional working conditions that promote wellbeing, engagement, and autonomy and out to external and socio-historical factors that shape faculty work. We included new concepts about wellbeing, for example, from the Surgeon General's recent report on workplace mental health and wellbeing (Surgeon General 2022). We also brought in the concept of meaningful participation to look at the mutual interaction between institutional policies and

practices and individual agency and choices based on past experiences, values, and motivations. Most importantly, the conceptual framework updated previous faculty frameworks by being attentive to today's work environment characterized by more contingent positions and different types of contracts, where academic professionals have less autonomy, security or clear career paths, as well as by the growing diversity among academic professionals and their workplaces.

We used our conceptual framework to decide on the key factors that shape academic work, as well as ways to describe these factors. Our individual and institutional questionnaires drew most heavily on institutional influences as those most directly affect faculty and are conditions that institutional leaders can impact and change. The individual questionnaire also explored the factors that shape faculty life and most directly intersect with institutional conditions. The individual and institutional questionnaires further include some external factors that shape faculty life, but this was a lesser emphasis since these are much more challenging for institutional leaders to impact.

After the individual questionnaire was developed, we continued to work on the conceptual framework to fine-tune all the factors that shape faculty work and may go beyond what we would be able to explore in a 30-minute questionnaire. The more detailed conceptual framework can be used to develop longer surveys institutions might use with their academic professional employees, and to guide other forms of mixed-method and qualitative inquiries. The broadened and more detailed conceptual framework also can serve as a guide for other national studies. By expanding it, we made it more flexible for use in various research studies of today's faculty.

A separate report (https://pullias.usc.edu/download/face-conceptual-framework-report/) provides an overview of the conceptual framework that was used initially to develop the questionnaires for the pilot study, and then was enhanced for potential future use in multiple types of faculty inquiries.

Instrument Development: Institutional

One important innovation in the pilot study was to talk with focus groups of institutional data providers prior to developing an institutional questionnaire; this section describes each of those processes in turn.

Data provider focus groups

Given the critical role of institutional data collection for the FACE project, we conducted focus groups with institutional researchers from different institutional contexts to inform our data collection instruments and processes. We were interested in understanding the roles of the people who would be responding to our requests at the institutional level. We hoped that speaking with the people who work with faculty data at institutions (primarily people in institutional research) would allow us to get a better sense of what data exists and what would work best for institutional researchers and other individuals who work with faculty data, such as human resources professionals, in providing us with rosters of individual academic personnel.

We conducted focus groups of institutional data providers to understand the specific data that institutions maintain on faculty, such as length and continuity of employment, advancement, office space, and instructional load; which institutional offices maintain those data; the format of the data; and institutional policies related to data sharing. The information gained from the focus groups informed the development of our institutional data collection procedures, particularly in terms of identifying survey language and definitions. Through this process, we evaluated opportunities for optimizing the use of existing institutional data to reduce the burden on institutional researchers as well as faculty respondents.

More detail regarding the data provider focus groups is provided in a separate report (Koren et al., 2024).

Institutional questionnaire and roster template

The institutional data collection consists of two instruments, an institutional questionnaire and a roster template.

The institutional questionnaire is intended to describe aspects of the academic work environment from the perspective of the institution, to complement the perspectives obtained from the individual questionnaire. We designed it to be completed by a single contact person on behalf of the institution, hopefully with only minimal consultation with colleagues, and on a factual basis rather than asking about attitudes or intentions.

To select the items for the institutional questionnaire, the project team first reviewed examples of data-collection instruments from faculty-focused studies that also include an institutional component. In the end, we drew mostly on two sources, the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (primarily the 1999 version) and the "institutional basics" section of several surveys administered by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR). We also developed several original items, including the outsourcing of instruction and the prevalence of veteran or military academic professionals.

The questionnaire itself is limited to only a few items, although several of them are in matrix format to disaggregate the situation of and benefits available to specific categories of employees. The questionnaire asks for a current count of academic personnel meeting the FACE study definition and the availability of a number of specific benefits (disaggregated by full- or part-time employment status), whether the institution has a tenure system, whether any instruction is outsourced, the collective bargaining status for academic personnel (disaggregated by employment status and role), and the percentages of employees meeting the study definition who are veterans or who have disclosed as having a disability.

The roster template provides a format for institutional respondents to list the individual academic professionals meeting the study definition, with identity details, employment status, and contact information for each person. The list of individuals is intended to match the aggregate count provided in the institutional questionnaire. The roster template was provided to institutional responders in the form of an Excel spreadsheet that they could populate and then upload through an institutional portal, described in the section on data collection below.

Based on the feedback we received from our institutional data provider focus groups, we sought to balance our desire to collect as much detail as possible from the institutions in order to shorten the individual questionnaire, with the recognition that institutions might have privacy (and even legal) concerns about sharing some information considered sensitive, and that it might not be feasible for them to collect and/or provide some items we would have liked to receive.

To help us decide on the items to include in the roster template, we examined a few other large-scale studies of faculty members and other academic professionals that employ such rosters, including NSOPF and examples from data collections RTI had recently completed on behalf of government agencies. Members of the project team reviewed and discussed the pros and cons of asking institutions to provide each item. In the end, we settled on a roster template focused on several aspects of employment status (full-/part-time, job title and functional category, work unit, credit load for instructors) and identity (birth year, binary sex, and race/ethnicity/citizenship). We asked more detailed questions about identity in the individual questionnaire, so we selected the identity items for the roster as being most feasible for the institutions to provide. In addition, including identity characteristics in the roster would allow us to examine variations in individual response rates by those characteristics.

As noted previously, in this pilot study we used the rosters from non-focal institutions to understand what data institutional respondents could (and would) provide and what challenges they might encounter in providing the requested information, rather than using them to contact individual academic professionals to participate in the study. For the three focal institutions, we sent survey invitations to the individuals listed on the rosters, which provided a limited test of two aspects of the two-stage sampling process: the quality of the contact information, and for a few items, the ability to compare the information provided on the rosters with that provided by the individual respondents themselves.

The institutional questionnaire and roster template are available on the project website.

Instrument Development: Individual

Individual questionnaire

Our process for developing the questionnaire for individual academic professionals included two primary considerations: we needed to compile a set of items that would capture the working experiences of individuals across different job titles, primary functions, and institutional types, based on our conceptual framework; and we wanted to create a questionnaire that could be completed in 30 minutes or less, to minimize the burden on respondents.

As noted above, the project team had compiled a catalog of items from other survey questionnaires related to academic work and organized them by constructs (or topics) we had identified as part of our conceptual framework. Given that many of the questionnaires we reviewed reflected strong research designs, we wanted to use previously validated items when they fit our conceptual framework and populations of interest, so that we did not have to engage in extensive cognitive testing or field testing with small groups before conducting our field test. We also selected some questions from NSOPF in order to be able to compare responses from our field test with those from that study. We held an intensive research team work session in early December 2022 to review specific items used in other projects for each of our constructs. We utilized a "pair and share" division of labor for part of our time to work more efficiently, dividing the constructs for review by pairs of team members and then coming back to discuss as a full team the pairs' recommendations for items to include. We also consulted virtually with colleagues from RTI, drawing on their expertise conducting several recent large-scale studies of faculty and other academic professionals.

In addition to items from previous studies of faculty, some of which we modified, we drafted several new items ourselves to capture aspects of our conceptual framework and populations of interest that were not included in previous studies of academic work and careers.

> ***"We used the rosters from non-focal institutions to understand what data institutional respondents could (and would) provide and what challenges they might encounter in providing the requested information."***

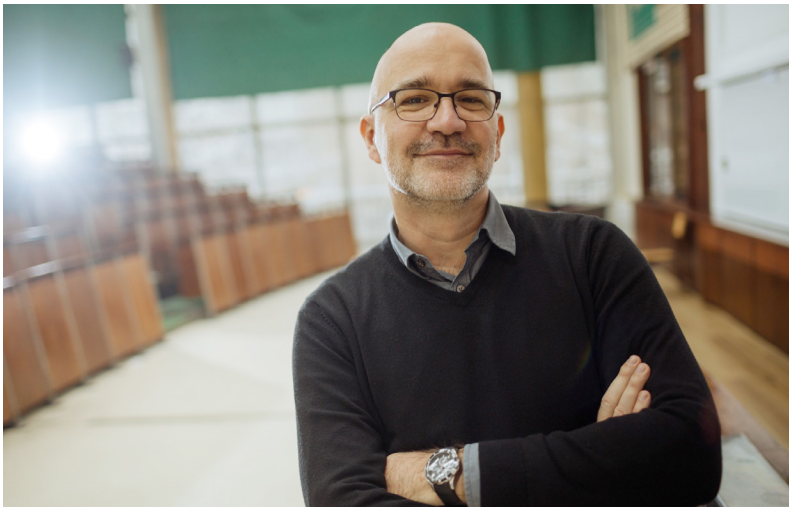
We left the intensive work session with a draft set of questionnaire items, which we then critiqued and refined in several iterations over the course of several weeks. We wanted to ensure that each of the constructs identified in our conceptual framework was covered in the questionnaire, while also balancing the need to keep the survey length manageable for individual respondents fitting each of the specific functional profiles (instruction, research, and/or public service).

Having developed a mostly final list of items, the project team began working with RTI to prepare to program the survey. This work included developing detailed specifications for each item, comprising question type, response options, and routing based on the key employment characteristics, as well as help text, pre- and post- routing logic, validations, and the original source of the item. The process of refining the specifications and programming and testing the online survey took several weeks.

In the end, the individual questionnaire included items on multiple aspects of identity and background; employment characteristics; workload; aspects of the working environment including experience of discrimination, pedagogical approaches for respondents engaged in instruction, and opportunities for participation in professional development and governance; and work satisfaction and autonomy. We included detailed follow-up questions for individuals employed in categories of particular interest. For those in part-time faculty positions, we asked about employment both within and outside of higher education and career aspirations. For researchers, we asked about funding sources and specific aspects of work autonomy.

Individual questionnaire eligibility items

When individual academic professionals responded to the online pilot study, the first section of the questionnaire consisted of several items used to determine whether those individuals fell within the pilot study population. The criteria for eligibility included functional activities, position or job title, primary employing institution, and a final question on



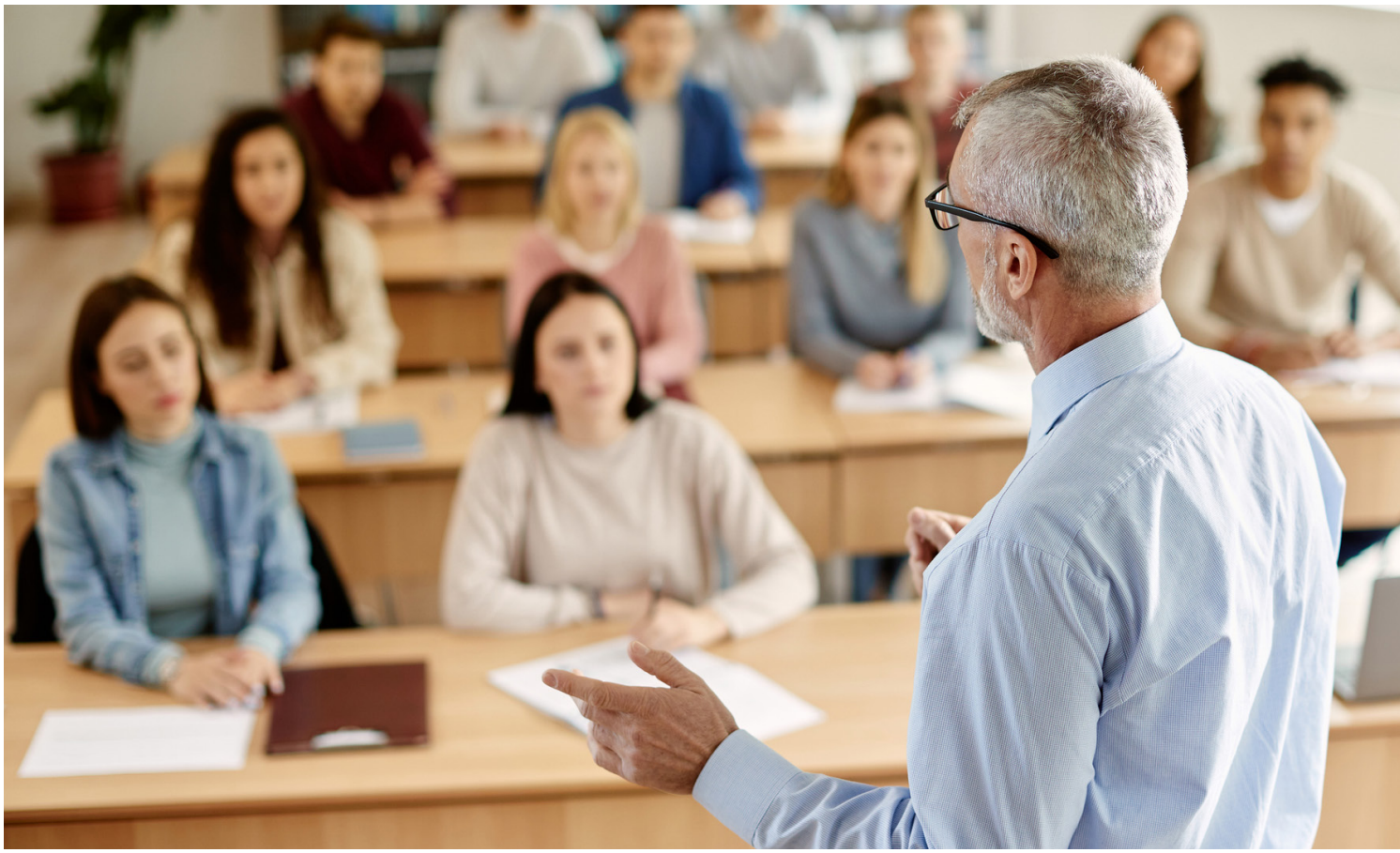
specialized healthcare units. Each of the eligibility items also included additional help text and prompts to encourage proper completion.

The item identifying the primary employing institution was specific to the non-probability sample in the pilot study. In a full-scale study with two-stage sampling, the respondent's primary institution will already be known and identified as eligible.

The responses to these four categories of items determined whether the individual respondent was eligible to participate in the FACE project. The combination of responses to these eligibility items was also used to route individuals to questions that are appropriate for the work and/or role(s) they indicated.

The individual questionnaire, including the eligibility screening items, is available on the **project website**.

Endorsements, Partnerships, and Promotion



From the outset of the pilot study, we understood that partnerships and promotion would be essential to both the institutional and individual response, as well as legitimizing the project as a whole. We viewed partnerships and promotion as ongoing activities throughout the pilot. This section describes our use of an advisory board, process for recruiting endorsements, and efforts to build awareness for the FACE project.

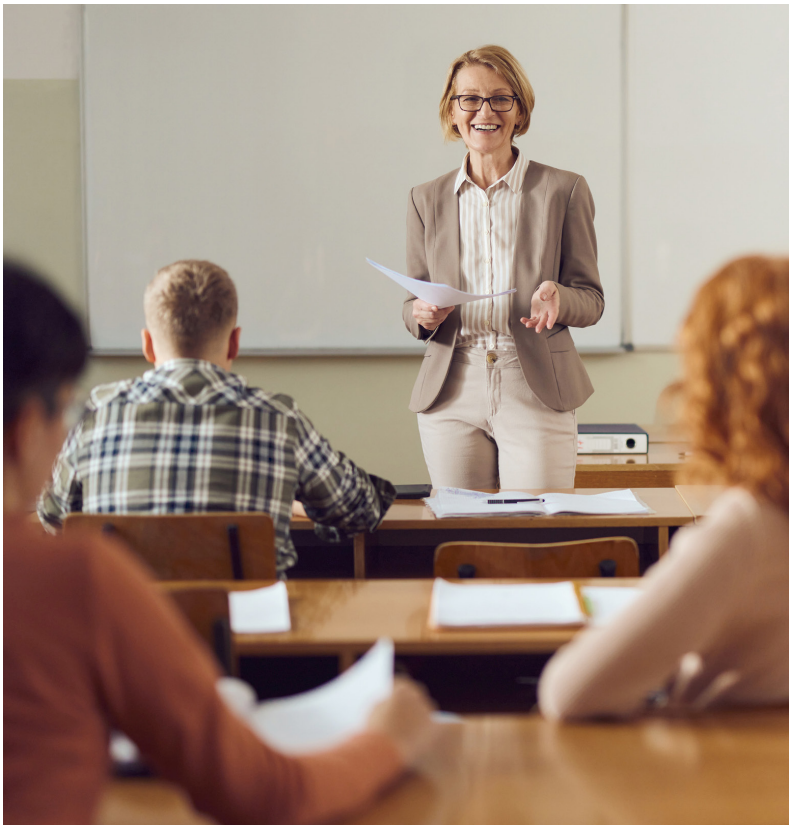
Advisory Board

From the beginning of the FACE project, we drew on the expertise of an advisory board for feedback on how to raise awareness of the project, data collection methods, and our data collection instruments. Advisory board members had expertise on survey research, faculty careers and working conditions at different institutional types, and efforts to attract and retain underrepresented minority faculty. They included representatives from all of the major non-governmental sources of data on faculty, because we wanted FACE to complement and build on existing data collections.

Endorsements, Partnerships, and Promotion

The advisory board members for the pilot study were as follows (listed in alphabetical order, with organizational affiliations for identification only):

- Todd Benson — Executive Director and Principal Investigator, Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE)
- Jackie Bichsel — Director of Research, College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR)
- Allison BrckaLorenz — Project Manager, Faculty Survey on Student Engagement (FSSE), Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University
- Li Cai — Director, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST)
- Valerie Conley — Former Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Idaho State University
- Kevin Eagan — Director, Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA
- Kimberly Griffin — Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Faculty Affairs, University of Maryland
- Audrey Jaeger — Executive Director, Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research, North Carolina State University
- Christine Keller — Executive Director and CEO, Association for Institutional Research
- Hans-Joerg Tiede — Director of Research, American Association of University Professors (AAUP)



The project team met with the full advisory board several times during the pilot study. We also met individually with board members to learn more about the projects they work with related to faculty data collection.

Endorsements

We developed a list of potential organizational endorsers whose work is relevant to the project. Some organizations were selected because they have a focus on faculty, while others were national higher education organizations that could help us obtain both institutional and individual respondents. We organized the document into two sections: organizations that primarily represent institutions and organizations that primarily represent individuals. In September 2022, we began outreach to potential partners. We consulted our advisory

board members throughout this process and provided them with regular updates via e-mail. In some cases, advisory board members provided contact information for individuals within their networks who work for these organizations. We contacted the organizations via e-mail with a project overview and invited them to endorse it if aligned with their organization's work and position-taking. We asked endorsing organizations for help in raising awareness of the project by sharing information to their members and publicizing the opportunity for individuals or institutions to participate in the field test.

Leaders at most organizations requested additional information about the project; we met with several organizational representatives over Zoom to answer questions. Some organizations never responded, while a few provided reasons why the endorsement was not possible, including they do not endorse projects, they have their own in-house survey, the project is not a good fit, or an endorsement was not possible within the requested timeframe. Once we had confirmation of the endorsement, we requested a logo and added it to our website.

THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS ENDORSED THE PILOT STUDY, LISTED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER:

American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)

American Association of University Professors (AAUP)

American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)

American Council on Education (ACE)

Aspen Institute College Excellence Program

Association for Institutional Research (AIR)

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR)

Educause

Excelencia in Education

Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB)

National Education Association (NEA)

State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO)

Institutional Partners (Focal Institutions)

As noted previously, we partnered with three institutions to engage in the full two-stage field test for the pilot study; we refer to them as focal institutions. We worked with institutional researchers from each focal institution to coordinate their participation in both institutional and individual components. We offered them a pre-publication version of the cross-campus report that emerges from the pilot study and field test.

Promotion

We engaged in various promotion efforts prior to and during the pilot study, including developing an extensive website, creating an explainer video about the project, creating a logo and identity for the project, presenting at conferences and meetings, writing articles and op-eds, and utilizing digital marketing. We regularly held team meetings to evaluate our promotion efforts and discuss future promotion goals.

Website: Prior to launching the field test, we developed a website that we have continued to update with news, endorsements, resources, information, and publications. The website was developed in consultation with a marketing professional in order to ensure it was accessible, easily navigated, and informative about the project.

Video: In today's environment, it is important to use multimedia in order to garner people's attention. We worked with a media group to develop a video to capture the overall goals and purpose of the project, which we then used to recruit partners and inform individuals about the project and encourage them to participate in the field test. The video was essential to the success of various other promotion efforts.

Branding: To ensure the project was identifiable and memorable, we worked to create a brand identity and logo for use throughout our marketing materials and ensure continuity of the look of the project.

Conferences and meetings: Our promotion efforts also included meeting with interested parties to discuss the FACE project. For example, in November 2022 we met with the Washington Higher Education Secretariat, a consortium of approximately 50 higher education associations. Between 2022 and 2024, FACE team members presented at several conferences, including the American Association of Colleges and Universities, the American Educational Research Association, the Association for Institutional Research, the Association for the Study of Higher Education (where we also joined a committee of researchers interested in faculty work), the Association of American Universities, the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology, and the University of Alabama Department of Educational Leadership, Policy and Technology Studies. Our presence at these conferences was an opportunity to formally and informally represent the project.

Digital Marketing: Through contacts from our advisory board, we worked with marketing staff from Harvard University's Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education to develop promotional materials for X (Twitter) and LinkedIn.

Articles and Op-eds: We published several articles and op-eds about the project and the importance of gathering national data about faculty, including a blog post through *Academe*, the online magazine published by the American Association of University Professors (Kezar et al., 2023), and an op-ed for *Inside Higher Ed*, one of the two most-read publications in higher education (Kezar and Harper, 2023).

Field Test Data Collection Process

> ***The FACE pilot study included three websites: a project website, an institutional data collection portal, and an individual survey website.***

RTI managed the institutional and individual data collection processes, including operating the data collection websites and help desk, contacting institutions and answering their questions about participation, contacting individual participants and responding to any inquiries, and managing all of the field test communications with both institutions and individuals.

Because it involved collecting information from human subjects, the pilot study required institutional review board (IRB) approval. At the start of the study, each of the three participating organizations pursued IRB approvals locally, but we discovered that as an NSF-funded study, the common rule requires single IRB approval (National Archives, n.d. and NSF, n.d.). We therefore pursued single IRB, with application and amendments approved through USC. We used SMART IRB to coordinate reliance agreements for RTI and the University of Alabama, which are listed as study sites; USC served as the home institution.

Websites and Help Desk

The FACE pilot study included three websites: a project website, an institutional data collection portal, and an individual survey website. The project website (http://faceonfaculty.org) provided general information about the study. This included details about the study sponsor, how the data would be used, and answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs). To encourage participation and reinforce legitimacy of the study, the FACE website included a list of postsecondary organizations and associations that endorsed FACE. The project website was designed and maintained by

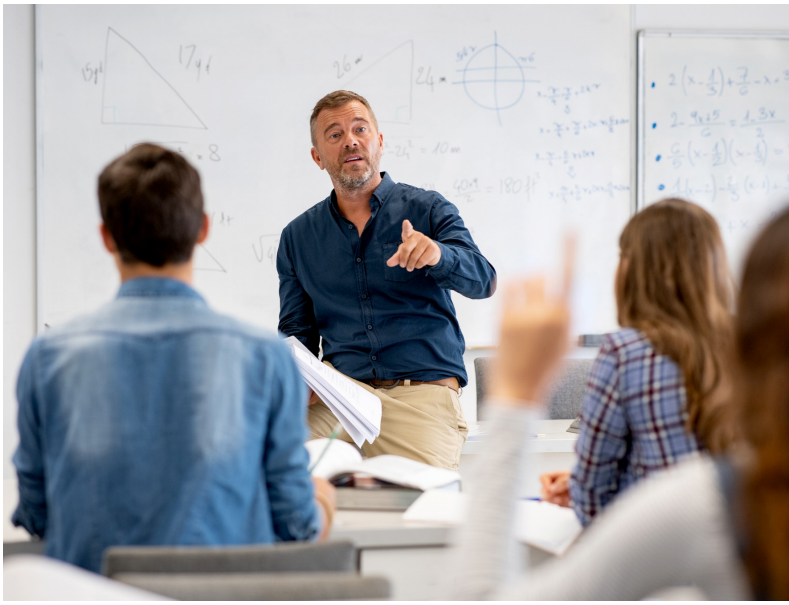
the USC Pullias Center. (As of this writing, the project website is still active, but some of the elements related to the field test data collection have been removed.)

Institution representatives could upload faculty rosters and complete a questionnaire online through the institutional data collection portal. This portal included instructions regarding the roster file, including a template and upload page. Additionally, the portal provided access to the institutional questionnaire.

The individual survey website enabled individuals invited from the focal institution rosters to log in and complete the questionnaire. Non-probability sample members first registered and were then sent an e-mail invitation to complete the questionnaire with login information.

The control system refers to the database of sample members and the integrated set of applications used to control and monitor all activities related to data collection, including contacting institution representatives and individual sample members. Through the control system applications, RTI project staff were able to document e-mail and telephone communication with sample members, track case status, and view comments from project staff or help desk agents. The institution and individual field test status were automatically updated in the control system.

All communication with institutional leaders and individual sample members included a link to the appropriate FACE data collection website, as well as a link to the project website. All of the websites included contact information for the dedicated study help desk at RTI.



Institution Contacting and Recruitment

We contacted sampled institutions and asked leaders to designate a coordinator to serve as a primary point of contact for the submission of rosters and institutional questionnaires. Any rosters provided were checked for quality and completeness several times. Of the 300 sampled institutions, 33 completed at least part of the institutional questionnaire, 21 of whom provided usable rosters of individual academic professionals. Fifteen institutions refused participation. Another three institutions participated as focal institutions, completing the questionnaire and uploading rosters to be used in the individual pilot. For the rest of this section, the institutional participants are combined, regardless of status as a focal institution.

Prior to the start of data collection, institutions and institution leaders' information was loaded into the RTI study control system. Data collection began with an e-mail to institutional leaders requesting their participation sent from the dedicated study address (face_survey@rti.org). Several months into data collection, some institutions received telephone follow-up calls to clarify any questions or respond to any concerns about participation.

Institution data collection began with contacting sampled institutions to request their participation in the study. Institutions' chief administrators were asked to confirm or designate a campus coordinator to act as a primary point of contact for the submission of rosters and subsequent data collection activities. We sent the first e-mail to presidents of sampled institutions to inform them about the FACE study and request their participation in March 2023. (Appendix B provides a list of pilot study communications.)

In addition to the list of endorsing organizations available through the project website, some of the messages to institutional representatives highlighted one organization germane to that institution specifically as having endorsed the study.

Help desk staff began follow-up telephone communication to some institution leaders' offices after several e-mails had been sent with no response. At the request of multiple institutions, meetings were held to discuss the pilot study.

Roster Collection: Once leaders agreed to participate and named a coordinator, RTI project staff and help desk agents provided detailed instructions for uploading rosters and completing the questionnaire. Coordinators submitted rosters through a secure upload application on the institutional portal. The rosters were reviewed for quality and completeness and staff followed up with coordinators to address any issues identified.

Individual Data Collection

The FACE individual questionnaire was a single mode instrument designed for online (web and mobile) administration. Respondents advanced through the questionnaire according to skip logic based on information reported by the respondent in the eligibility section. The questionnaire consisted of several survey screens organized by content area that each included either a single or multiple questions; screen-specific help text; the response options for each question; and navigation buttons.

Individual Incentive Experiment: Field test participants from the focal institutions were offered a $20 incentive, paid through an electronic gift card. Respondents at one institution were offered an additional $5 to respond in the first week after their initial contact. The response rates did not significantly differ with the varying incentive amounts.

Individual Contacting and Recruitment: Using the addresses provided in institution rosters from the three focal institutions, RTI sent a notification e-mail to 2,165 individual addresses. E-mails provided sample members with unique login information and links to the data collection website and FACE study website. See Appendix B for a list of pilot study communications. The web survey was available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week throughout data collection.

Institutional Data Collection Results

Overall, of the 300 sampled institutions invited to participate in the FACE field test, 80 (27%) provided a response to our invitations, including those who actively refused to participate. Eleven percent provided at least some institutional data, while 7% participated fully by completing the institutional questionnaire and uploading a roster (Table 2).

These data collection results highlight the need for a long recruitment stage for the full-scale project, along with changes to the recruitment protocol. While the response rate is lower than expected, the institutional data provide important information about potential challenges for a full-scale two-stage study. The "Lessons Learned" section below includes some observations drawing on this institutional response.

TABLE 2. Institutional responses by field test response, upload status, and sampling strata

	All Schools	No Activity	Refusal	Logged In	Partial Survey	Completed Survey	Survey and List
Sampling Strata							
Total (number)	300	220	15	32	5	7	21
Special focus and private 2 year	10	7	0	1	0	1	1
Public two year	94	71	2	12	0	2	7
Smaller four year and master's	56	44	3	4	2	2	1
Larger master's and smaller doctoral	62	42	3	8	3	0	6
R2 doctoral	31	25	1	3	0	0	2
R1 doctoral	47	31	6	4	0	2	4
Percent of response status by stratum							
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Special focus and private 2 year	3.3	3.2	0.0	3.1	0.0	14.3	4.8
Public two year	31.3	32.3	13.3	37.5	0.0	28.6	33.3
Smaller four year and master's	18.7	20.0	20.0	12.5	40.0	28.6	4.8
Larger master's and smaller doctoral	20.7	19.1	20.0	25.0	60.0	0.0	28.6
R2 doctoral	10.3	11.4	6.7	9.4	0.0	0.0	9.5
R1 doctoral	15.7	14.1	40.0	12.5	0.0	28.6	19.0
Percent of stratum by response status							
Total	100	73.3	5.0	10.7	1.7	2.3	7.0
Special focus and private 2 year	100	70.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	10.0	10.0
Public two year	100	75.5	2.1	12.8	0.0	2.1	7.4
Smaller four year and master's	100	78.6	5.4	7.1	3.6	3.6	1.8
Larger master's and smaller doctoral	100	67.7	4.8	12.9	4.8	0.0	9.7
R2 doctoral	100	80.6	3.2	9.7	0.0	0.0	6.5
R1 doctoral	100	66.0	12.8	8.5	0.0	4.3	8.5

Individual Data Collection Results

The final FACE individual field test included 538 participants (Table 3). Of the 2,165 academic professionals invited from the focal institutions, 401 participated in the survey and 367 were eligible. Overall, response rates varied from 17% to 27% among individuals at the three institutions, designated as Schools 1-3 in Table 3. The eligibility rate ranged from 89% to 92% among the focal institutions and was 83% among self-registered respondents (the non-probability sample). Table 3 shows the number of individuals invited, logged in, and eligible to participate.

TABLE 3. Cases invited, logged in, and eligible for the individual survey

	Invited	Logged In		Eligible	
Sample	**Number**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Self-registered	150	137	91.3	114	83.2
Invited	2,165	401	18.5	367	91.5
School 1	1,648	287	17.4	264	92.0
School 2	167	45	26.9	40	88.9
School 3	350	69	19.7	63	91.3
Total	**2,315**	**538**	**23.2**	**481**	**89.4**

NOTE: There were 150 sample members who started the self-registration process but only 137 ended up completing the registration.

Individual Data Collection Results

Focusing on the 481 eligible participants, the completion and breakoff rates tell us about participant engagement once beginning the survey (Tables 4 and 5). Looking at completion and breakoff, self-registered respondents completed at a lower rate (76%) than invited respondents, while respondents from School 2 had the highest completion rate (98%).

TABLE 4. Eligible cases that ended up completing or breaking off on the individual survey

	Eligible	Completed		Breakoff	
Sample	**Number**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Self-registered	114	87	76.3	27	23.7
Invited	367	319	86.9	48	13.1
School 1	264	222	84.1	42	15.9
School 2	40	39	97.5	1	2.5
School 3	63	58	92.1	5	7.9
Total	**481**	**406**	**84.4**	**75**	**15.6**

Analyses included determining whether individual participants broke off at different rates by category of activity. Overall, 16% of individual participants broke off, with a range of 13-16% breakoff across the single categories (Table 5). Looking at combinations of activity responses, individuals solely involved in public service had the highest breakoff rate (33%), followed by research-only staff (24%), and combined public service and instructional professionals at 18%.

TABLE 5. Eligible cases that ended up breaking off on the individual survey

	Eligible		Breakoff	
Individual Type	**Number**	**Percent of respondents**	**Number**	**Percent who broke off**
By single categories				
Instructional	400	83.2	62	15.5
Public Service	173	36.0	23	13.3
Research	232	48.2	133	14.2
Combinations of responses				
Instructional only	189	39.3	31	16.4
Public Service only	3	0.6	1	33.3
Research only	45	9.4	11	24.4
Instructional and research	73	15.2	10	13.7
Research and public service	32	6.7	1	3.1
Public service and instructional	56	11.6	10	17.9
Research, instructional, and public	82	17.1	11	13.4
None	1	0.2	0	0.0
Total	**481**	**100.0**	**75**	**15.6**

Data Quality Review

> ***Members of the project team have engaged in extensive review and analysis of the data collected during the pilot study to help us improve the questionnaires and the process of working with sampled institutions for the planned full-scale national study.***

Members of the project team have engaged in extensive review and analysis of the data collected during the pilot study to help us improve the questionnaires and the process of working with sampled institutions for the planned full-scale national study. This section summarizes the process we used to assess the data collection. The results of that data quality review will be included in a separate report, currently in preparation, and have already informed some of the "lessons learned" that are presented in the following section.

Because the number of institutions that provided data was relatively low—36 institutions completed at least part of the institutional questionnaire and 21 of them submitted rosters of academic professionals—a qualitative case study approach was used to explore patterns in the institutional data. In the case study, we looked for patterns in the completion of institutional questionnaire items and tried to infer whether some items were more difficult to complete than others. We also reviewed the rosters for completeness and compared them with questionnaire data in two ways: we compared the roster data with the counts of academic professionals by functional category reported in the institutional questionnaire; and, for

the three focal institutions, we compared individual identity and career characteristics listed in the rosters with the self-reported characteristics of the named individuals who responded to the individual survey.

In addition to reviewing the institutional data, we also received feedback on the institutional questionnaire from our advisory board. We have assembled those comments into a single document, to be consolidated with the case study as we consider potential revisions to the institutional questionnaire, roster, and institutional data collection process.

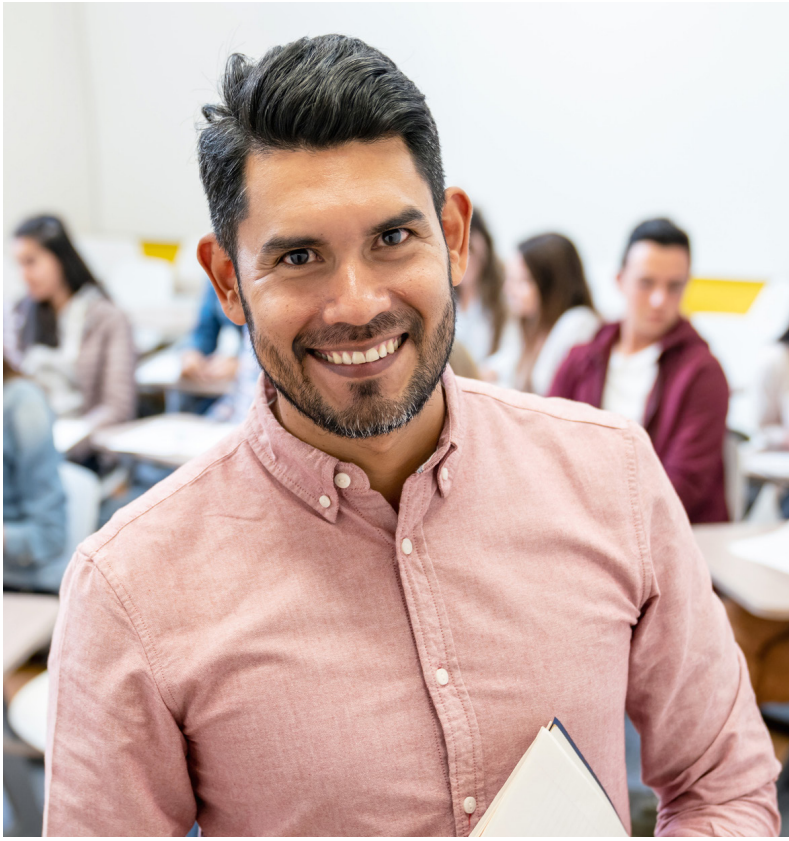
The individual questionnaire provided us with a greater number of respondents in a variety of employment situations, which enabled a quantitative evaluation of the effectiveness of the individual items. We employed a number of techniques to review the individual data:

- We examined the response and non-response patterns for each item, including descriptive statistics, score on the Index of Qualitative Variation, and the frequency with which respondents selected options such as "prefer not to answer," "other," "not applicable," or "none of the above."
- For those individuals who did not complete the entire questionnaire, we tabulated the "break off" points at which they stopped responding. We also have specific data on the length of time respondents spent on each screen. These data provide potential indications of items that were unclear, viewed as not relevant, or difficult for respondents to answer.
- Many of the items on the individual questionnaire are organized into sets with common response options, such as agree/disagree or important/not important. We reviewed these sets of items for indications of "straightlining," a response pattern of assigning the same response option to multiple items within a set. Straightlining can be an indication that the respondent is moving quickly through the questionnaire without giving proper consideration to the substance of the items.
- The individual questionnaire also included three items for which we utilized innovative approaches to data collection: self-identified disability, dependents, and sexual orientation and gender identity. We will present more detail on the analysis of data from these items in the separate data quality report.

We have assembled the results of this analysis of individual questionnaire data and consolidated it with feedback on the individual questionnaire we received from our advisory board. The result is a "revision priority" list of potential changes to be implemented in the individual questionnaire for the full-scale study.

Lessons Learned

The project team engaged in ongoing evaluation throughout the pilot study. The lessons we have learned can help others who are interested in developing and launching similar projects, with a focus on survey data collection related to faculty and higher education. We begin with general lessons we learned and then discuss lessons specific to research at the institution level, followed by lessons specific to research related to individual faculty members.



General Lessons

Timing is very important for institutional and faculty participation

Spring is a busy time in higher education. Our field test launched in spring, with data collection extending into summer. This time of year is challenging in academia due to graduation, contract end dates, and summer travel and priorities. Researchers should consider collecting data in mid-fall or early spring to minimize competing priorities among data providers in higher education. Researchers should also be mindful of other data collection efforts, including federal data collections (e.g., NCES and NCSES), state data collection, and other projects that request similar data from the same stakeholders. For studies of faculty, it is important to coordinate timing with that of other faculty-focused projects in higher education, including COACHE, CUPA-HR, and the HERI faculty survey.

Responses to data requests are facilitated by institutional leaders' buy-in

Both institutional and individual response rates can be strengthened when institutional leaders (such as presidents and provosts) buy into the project. While we knew that getting buy-in would be important, our approach was global in terms of getting endorsements from presidential and faculty organizations who could promote the project on our behalf. This strategy did not give enough emphasis to individualized outreach to the leadership at each campus we contacted. Researchers should develop a process for developing awareness specifically targeted to institutional leaders based on characteristics like their title or institution type.

Recruitment for institutional participation takes a good deal of time and strategic approaches, especially for new projects

We spent about two months recruiting institutional participation, which was not enough time given the need to identify the right people and get in touch with them. The timeline should be even longer for new projects that leaders are not already aware of. Future projects should build in six to

nine months' lead time prior to launch to share information with stakeholder groups, including outreach that provides a project summary and timeline, conduct a webinar series related to faculty data, and raise awareness of the project through presentations and talks at national conferences and meetings, as well as through a social media presence.

Contacting institutional representatives to request participation requires multi-faceted approaches

Campuses have a lot of turnover, so expect to have to check rosters and names and to identify people after sending initial letters of contact. Also anticipate that the first round of outreach will not reach all the intended recipients. Researchers should plan time and a process for getting in touch with the right people on campus. Additionally, researchers should plan to use social media and other methods of dissemination before and throughout data collection to engage institutional decision-makers.

> ***"We learned that projects like FACE benefit from developing more substantial partnerships with key organizations that can take a more active role in direct outreach to institutional leaders and faculty in sampled institutions."***

Endorsing organizations need ongoing engagement and their own direct outreach plan

We hoped that inclusion of endorsing organizations on our website would help to obtain institutional and faculty buy-in to participate. Some organizations also demonstrated support through inclusion of information about our project in their newsletters, via e-mail, and on social media. However, we learned that endorsing organizations may not be equipped to be as active as needed to raise awareness and get buy-in from institutional leaders and academic personnel. Therefore, we learned that projects like FACE benefit from developing more substantial partnerships with key organizations that can take a more active role in direct outreach to institutional leaders and faculty in sampled institutions. Researchers should consider co-sponsoring webinars and talks with partnering organizations, as well as developing templates for e-mails, websites, and other means of communications that partnering and endorsing organizations can tailor and use to promote the project. It is beneficial to also develop a timeline for partnering and endorsing organizations that keeps them engaged several months before the launch of data collection until data collection closes.

An accurate understanding of motivations to participate is necessary to foster participation

We conducted focus groups with institutional data providers to learn more about their needs and motivations for participating, and we believed that monetary incentives would motivate individual faculty participation. However, during our field test, we learned that motivations were different from what we expected. Institutional leaders want some form of direct benefit, in terms of benchmarking across institutions or a data report they can use for re-accreditation or similar purposes. Individual faculty were motivated when institutional leaders strongly encouraged their participation; monetary incentives were less important to them than we anticipated.

Regular feedback from an advisory board was a helpful resource

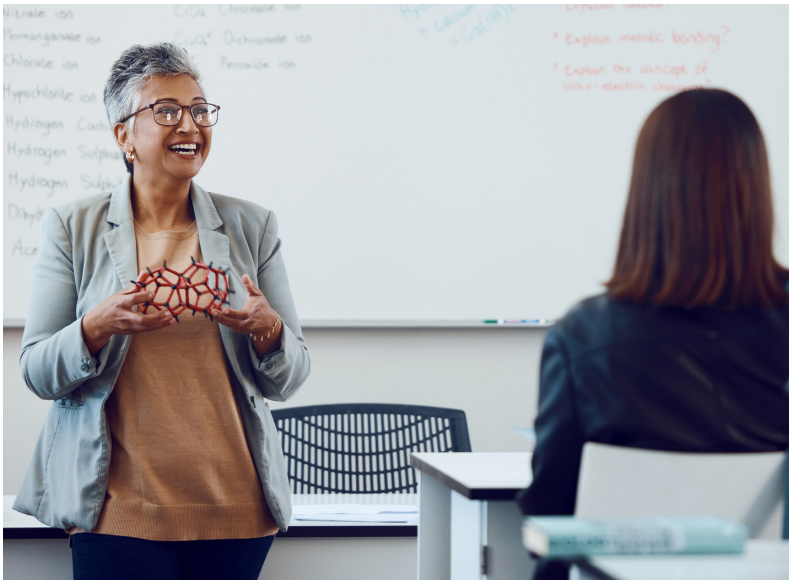
We received feedback about the instruments, recruitment methods, and timing that can be incorporated into future iterations of a study. Researchers should utilize advisory boards actively to benefit from their expertise.

Use a holistic and rigorous process for cleaning and analyzing data quality

We used several metrics for analyzing data quality based on best practices in survey research: examining variance, looking for straightlining, examining response patterns among particular groups (e.g., part-time faculty, research faculty), tabulating item break-off, and others. However, in examining responses at both the institutional and individual levels, we discovered that some respondents who appeared to skip certain items were likely communicating a meaningful response, such as zero time spent on certain activities or that specific benefits did not apply to them. Additionally, write-in responses made it evident that some respondents do not pay attention to definitions and examples provided through "hover" cues, so relevant information must be made clear within the text of the questionnaire. Researchers should consider using a holistic review of data quality in addition to commonly used tests in order to identify issues such as these.

Research collaborations across institutions require coordination and awareness of organizational norms around IRB

We began the study by having each of the three participating organizations pursue IRB approvals locally, but quickly discovered that processes and standards varied such that getting all necessary approvals might require extensive time and resources. The single IRB process used the SMART IRB system to facilitate the required reliance agreements. While we successfully moved to a single IRB agreement, differing norms across organizations persisted, requiring a good deal of coordination. Researchers should discuss the role of each organization in developing IRB protocols, required materials for submission, and processes for ensuring that local IRB standards are being met.



Lessons for Collecting Institutional Data

Develop robust DUA and IRB processes to address common areas of concern for institutions

Campuses are rightly worried about data security and employee privacy. Researchers should discuss the role of each organization in developing IRB protocols, required materials for submission, and processes for ensuring that local IRB standards are being met. Meeting with local IRB personnel may be helpful.

Several campuses requested data use agreements (DUAs) to ensure that our use of data would be limited to approved purposes. Some institutional liaisons also inquired about our IRB approval, to ensure data collection met necessary standards. Researchers should anticipate the heightened level of concern and develop processes for engaging in DUA and/or IRB that reflect careful attention to the ways data are protected throughout the study process.

Additionally, we utilized informed consent language based on a template provided by one of our organizations; while this choice made our own IRB process easier, the length and complexity of it discouraged participation among some institutions and individual participants. Researchers should ensure that informed consent is concise and uses accessible language in order to motivate participation.

A highly complex process is needed to identify the right offices, liaisons, and authority structure for obtaining data from institutions about their employees

Our approach was to send an e-mail requesting participation to each sample institution's president; we also sent e-mails to leaders such as the provost, head of human resources, and head of institutional research when we had contact information for them. In the future, we would not solely take this approach.

Institutional data related to faculty is collected by multiple people or units and not in a coordinated way. Obtaining data about faculty requires institutions to pull data across different offices. And the units that collect different types of data (e.g., courseload, demographics) may differ by institution, making it difficult to help provide campus liaisons with specific instructions about where they may need to go to obtain data. The decentralized nature of data practices also makes it difficult to know which unit is best positioned to be a liaison for coordinating faculty data collection. On one campus it may be the provost's office, another faculty affairs, human resources, or institutional research.

Even if you identify the right unit/person as liaison, they may not have the authority to release data. Legal counsel or the president's office may also need to weigh in. Researchers should plan to adopt a more distributed approach to contacting institutions and supporting their participation.

Institutions need hands-on support throughout the data collection process

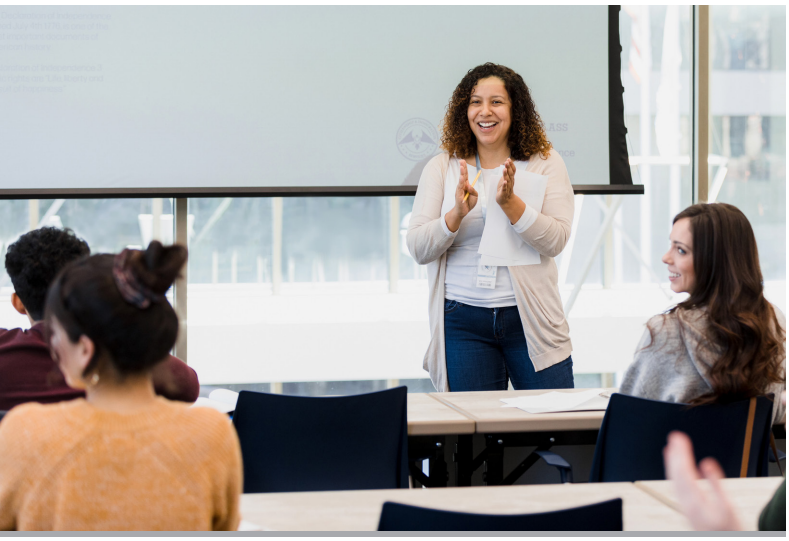
We anticipated that our biggest challenge would be getting institutions to agree to participate. However, we found that institutions needed to have more ongoing outreach to fulfill our data request. In future data collection, we will offer more individualized and continuous support. For instance, after our initial contact with an institution, we will follow up, asking for a meeting with relevant stakeholders and responding to any questions. We are also planning to develop some short videos to demonstrate how to generate and submit a roster of currently employed faculty, as well as making sure there are enough staff available to help institutions be successful in submitting needed information and to work through any data privacy or security questions that might arise.

Minority-serving institutions require targeted outreach and support

Through our outreach to MSIs, we identified a need for a targeted strategy. Some minority-serving institutions, such as HBCUs and tribal colleges, may be experiencing survey fatigue and participating may create a larger burden for them amidst chronic underfunding and limited resources. Leaders at these institutions may also have different motivations for participating or may feel the study methods do not work for their population. However, the MSI category is very diverse, so researchers should develop a sustained, multi-faceted strategy for targeting and obtaining MSI participation. One possibility would be to work with several MSI organizations to craft such a strategy.

Clearly identify required data and provide flexibility to institutions in terms of the inclusion and format of other desired data

Our project asked institutions to provide a roster with contact information, demographics, and role-specific information for all current faculty who met specific criteria. Institutions were also asked to complete a questionnaire that included aggregate personnel counts, information about the prevalence of faculty veterans and faculty with disabilities, and benefit availability. Institutional data providers did not view these data requests as linked; some institutions provided rosters but did not enter personnel counts on the questionnaire. Many respondents also provided some, but not all, of the requested information, both in rosters and in the questionnaire. This selectivity likely related to the availability and ease of obtaining specific data points, as well as perceptions of what may constitute a privacy concern. The end result was incomplete data across institutions for many of our items, which is less useful for gaining an overall understanding. Researchers should carefully consider the necessity of each data point requested and provide support for institutions to produce that data.



Lessons for Collecting Data from Individual Faculty

Nonprobability sampling allows for simultaneous testing but getting engagement is challenging

We used an innovative approach to nonprobability sampling that allowed us to conduct both institutional and individual field tests simultaneously. Specifically, we invited individuals identified by three purposely-invited focal institutions and also recruited faculty nationally through social media, word of mouth, and communications from our endorsing organizations. Decoupling in this way allowed for a shorter pilot study timeline, as we were not dependent on stage one sampling response to complete a field test of our individual questionnaire. However, we received fewer responses than expected from our open recruitment strategies, underscoring that faculty are more likely to respond to individualized invitations.

Awareness and buy-in for participation is best developed through institutional representatives or external groups whom faculty trust

We sent contacting materials to faculty on behalf of the research team, with PI signatures and organizational logos; we thought that approach would provide credibility for the study to motivate participation. However, we found that faculty were more likely to participate when they received clear, repeated encouragement from institutional leaders with whom they were familiar. Researchers should consider developing contacting templates that institutional leaders such as presidents and provosts can tailor to easily communicate their encouragement to participate, with outreach repeated at several points in time. Researchers should also consider the involvement of other institutional representatives who might also foster buy-in for participation; for faculty, these representatives might include faculty senate leaders, union leaders, and leaders of identity-based groups. However, we are not sure if this might also pose problems at campuses where faculty and administrators do not have positive relationships. We had endorsements from

external groups such as AAUP and faculty unions which may be more important to participation on some campuses. More exploration of this issue is needed to develop an overall strategy for faculty participation.

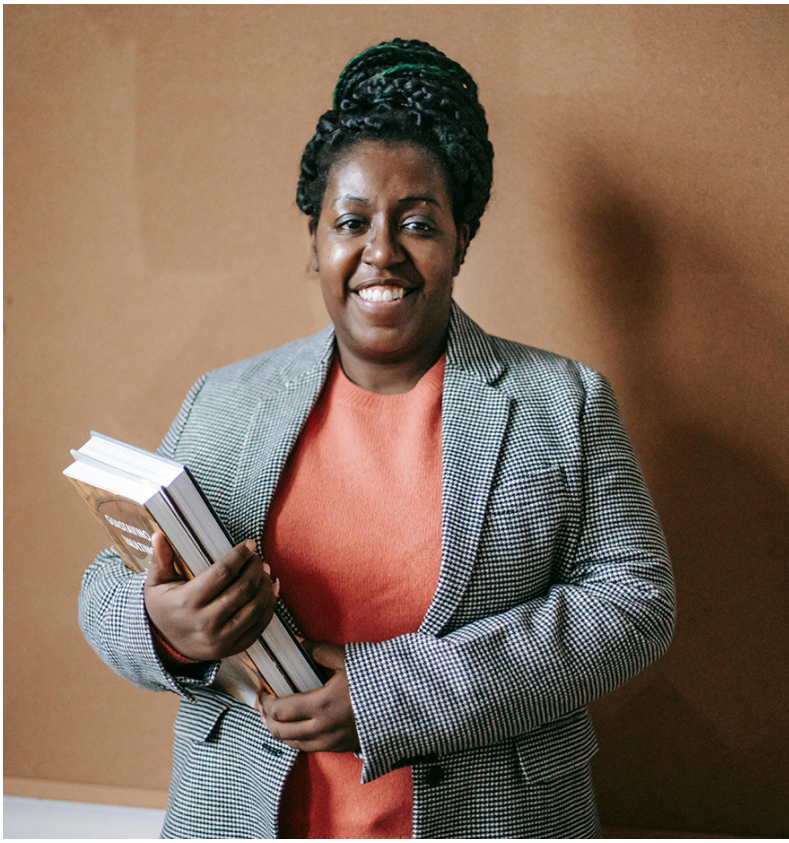
Reduce the burden of participation decisions through succinct, direct messaging and simple consent processes

In our field test, we provided extensive background information about our project and a lengthy consent form that required an investment of time and energy to read. In the next iteration, we will instead use a "learn more" link that directs potential participants to the FAQ page, and a short, simple informed consent to make the decision to participate as easy as possible. Messages should also create urgency around due dates, and the timing of messaging—and participation—should be coordinated with any incentive offers.

Ensure the population of interest is clearly defined, contacting materials are relevant, and survey items are strongly aligned with individual roles

While many existing efforts to collect data on faculty define their population narrowly (e.g., limited to full-time faculty, instructional faculty, or tenure-line faculty), we employed a wide definition that included any personnel whose primary responsibilities related to the academic triad of teaching, research and scholarship, and/or public outreach and community engagement. However, the diversity of individuals who do faculty work requires thoughtful and intentional approaches in order to be inclusive.

In particular, we found that public outreach faculty didn't find the contacting materials or survey items relevant; they had lower participation than faculty in other roles and respondents often broke off after only minimal survey participation. Given their low participation rates and relatively low share of faculty nationally, we will exclude them from our population in future iterations. Researchers interested in collecting data for this group would need to include different survey items, as well as



developing contacting materials and branding that specifically connect to their relatively unique roles in extension offices, museums, public policy centers, and the like.

Additionally, our branding, messaging, and screener questions should be more explicitly inclusive of part-time faculty and community college faculty. These tools are critical to recruit and engage these groups. Researchers should consider conducting focus groups to get feedback about these materials with different groups included in the population of interest, so that the materials developed are attuned to the members of these groups.

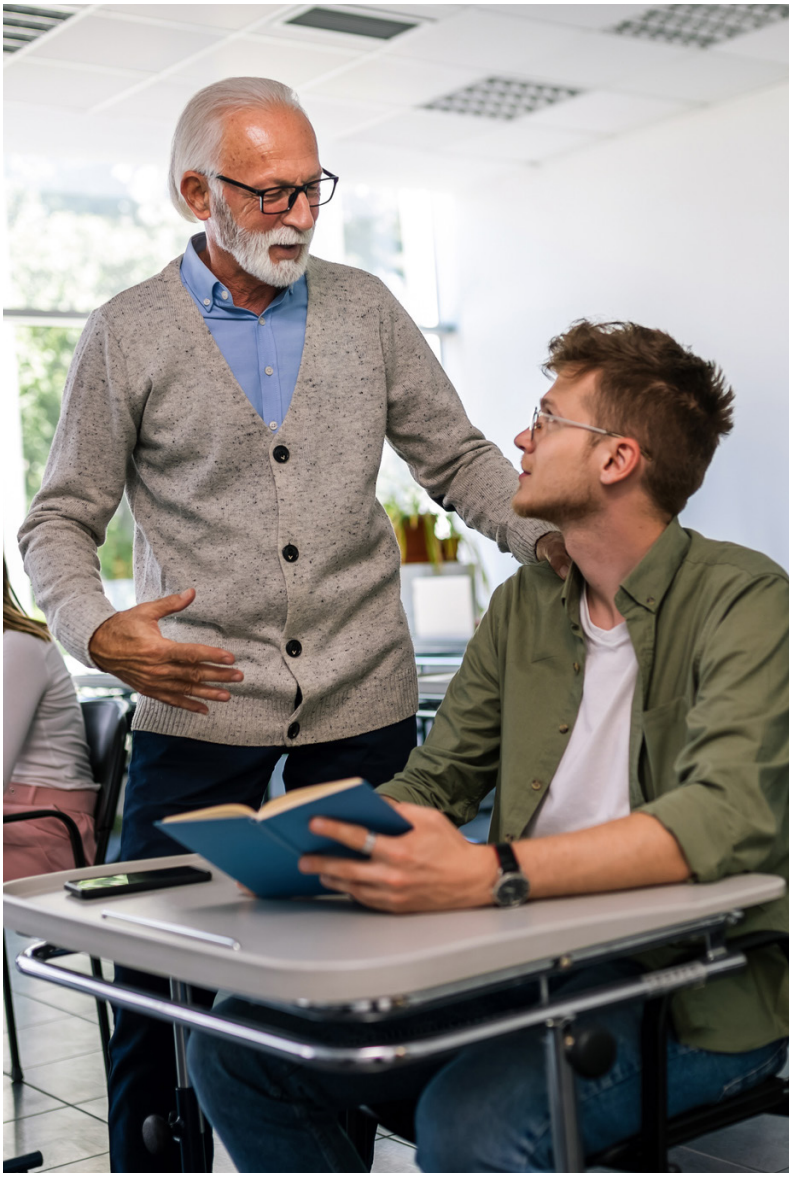
Plan multiple methods for boosting response rates among different groups

In our field test, we contacted faculty solely through e-mail. Our response rate, while on par with other faculty survey efforts, could have been improved through the use of multiple contacting methods. Researchers should consider phone follow-up as their budget allows. Projects should also invest in a case management system that allows for contacting and responding to different groups.

Making survey items relevant and organizing them strategically fosters participation

Faculty respond and stay engaged when they feel the questions they are asked are relevant to their work. In our analysis of data quality, we found that some groups chose to skip items or break off from the survey when asked about aspects of faculty work that were not relevant for their position; for instance, faculty whose scholarship is artistic or performance-based skipped items related to the number of articles submitted and published. Therefore, researchers should ensure that the most relevant and engaging items are asked first in the survey, with demographic items at the end. Routing and the language used are also important, so that respondents are only asked about items that are most relevant to them, with language that is inclusive of their experience.

At the same time, we found that once faculty decided to participate, most willingly responded to items they found relevant, even if the items asked about potentially sensitive dimensions of their identities, activities, and work experiences. For instance, more than 96% of respondents who saw items related to hourly time spent on various activities provided responses; this response rate was 97% or higher for items related to religious/spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation, and disability status.



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Appendix A

Pilot Study Timeline

	Institution-Level Data Collection	Individual-Level Data Collection	Project Management and Evaluation
June – Sept. 2022	Conducted focus groups with institutional representatives Evaluated existing efforts to collect institutional data Determined data collection methods (e.g., timing, messaging)	Evaluated existing efforts to collect data from faculty Identified and evaluated potential faculty-level items and constructs Determined data collection methods (e.g., timing, messaging)	Met regularly as research team Met with advisory board Identified organizational endorsers and shared recruitment materials for faculty field test Hired postdoctoral researcher and graduate student assistants
Oct. – Dec. 2022	Created and validated institutional sampling strata using IPEDS data Developed, tested and programmed institutional data collection forms, instructions, and questionnaire	Created and validated individual-level sampling frame using IPEDS data Developed and programmed individual questionnaire	Met regularly as research team Developed project website, video and logo Obtained endorsements Implemented data sharing processes
Jan. – May 2023	Field tested institutional data collection with pilot sample	Field tested individual questionnaire with nonprobability pilot sample	Met regularly as research team Met with advisory board

Appendix A

Pilot Study Timeline

	Institution-Level Data Collection	Individual-Level Data Collection	Project Management and Evaluation
June – Aug. 2023	Continued field test of institutional data collection with pilot sample Developed and submitted institutional full-scale project proposal Created a facsimile for the institutional questionnaire Obtained feedback from focal institutions on data collection process Developed conceptual framework article	Developed and submitted individual full-scale project proposal Created a facsimile for the individual questionnaire	Met regularly as research team Evaluated and refined plan for scaling project Updated project website to reflect pilot project progress
Sept. 2023 – May 2024	Cleaned data Created descriptive statistics Completed conceptual framework article	Cleaned data and upcoded open-ended responses Created descriptive statistics Evaluated validity and reliability of individual questionnaire	Met regularly as research team Met with advisory board Evaluated field tests at both levels Created a meta feedback document Wrote Pilot Test Report Presented information about the project at conferences

Appendix B

Institution and Individual E-mail Communication

Communication	Date	Institution	Individual
President Invitation	March 9, 2023	X	
President Reminder	March 30, 2023	X	
Individual Study Announcement	April 27, 2023		X
Individual Survey Invitation (with survey link and login credentials)	May 1, 2023		X
Coordinator Reminder (to upload faculty roster)	May 5, 2023	X	
Individual Survey Reminder	May 17, 2023		X
President Reminder – Name Coordinator	May 18, 2023	X	X
Individual Invitation – Focal Institution	May 25, 2023		X
Individual Reminder – Focal Institution	June 15, 2023		X
Institution Reminder – Participation Request	June 21, 2023	X	X
Individual Reminder	June 30, 2023		X
Individual Reminder: “2 days left”	July 5, 2023		X
Individual Reminder: “Ends today”	July 7, 2023		X

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