Continued Impacts of COVID-19 on Faculty at UCCS

Presented by Faculty Assembly

COVID Impact Task Force

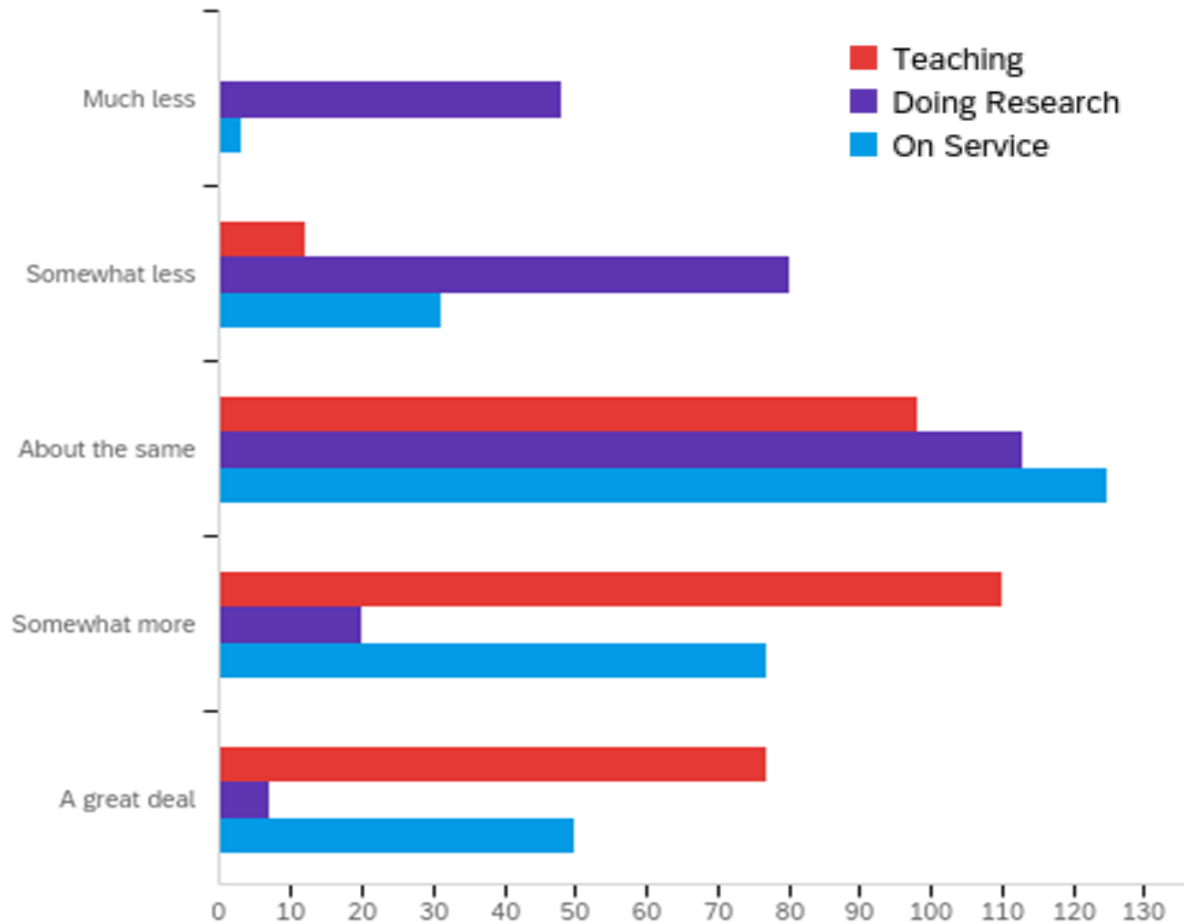October 8th, 2021

Survey & Sample

- **Survey Themes**
  - Time
  - Wellbeing
  - Teaching/Research/Service impacts and need
  - Caregiving
- **Demographics**
  - 314 respondents
  - 43% IRC, 21% Tenure Stream/Track, 36% Tenured
  - 39% Men, 51% Women, .5% transgender, 9% prefer not to respond
  - 71% White/European American, 12% Person of color, 4% Other, 13% Prefer not to report
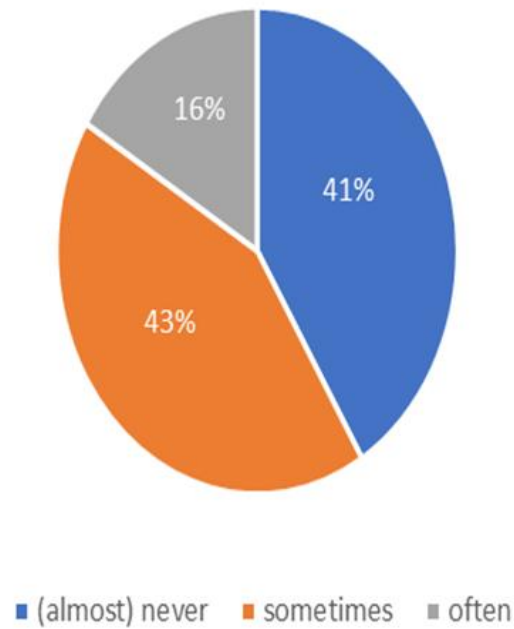
The Significance of Time

- Faculty are spending more time on teaching and service than research

Group differences:

- Caregivers are spending less time on research

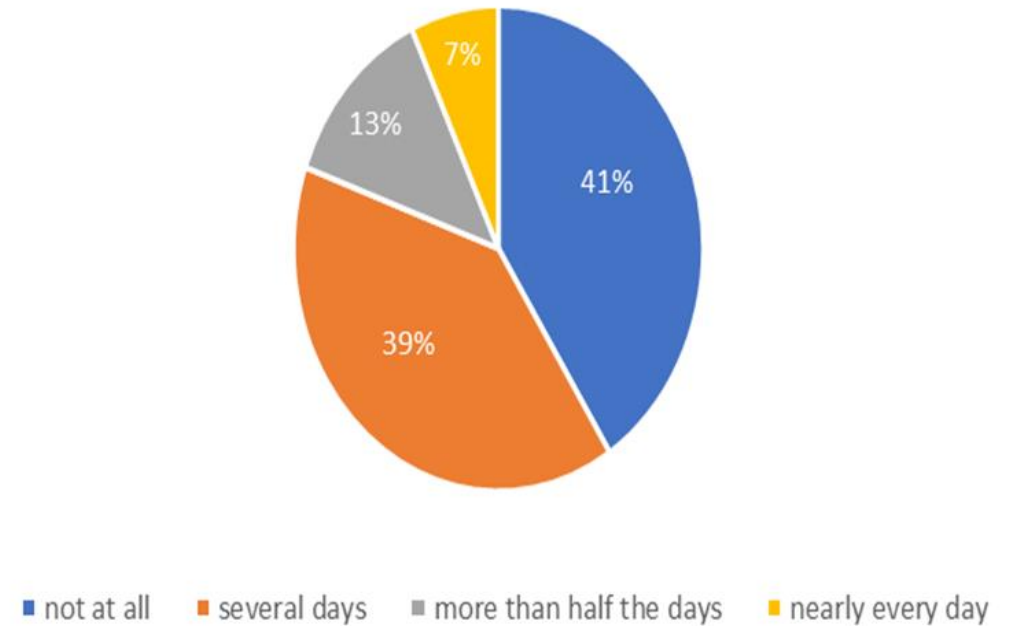- Women-identified faculty are spending more time on service than men

Faculty Wellbeing

Stress: frequency in the past month

41% (almost) never
43% sometimes
16% often

Women faculty > Men faculty (p = .051)

Anxiety: frequency in last 2 weeks

41% not at all
39% several days
13% more than half the days
7% nearly every day
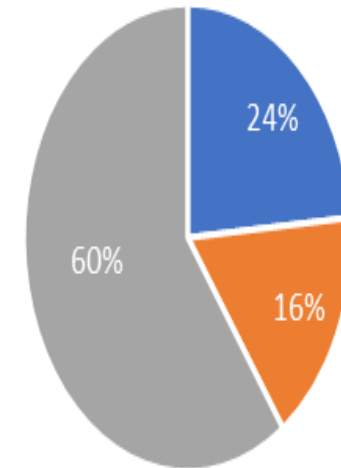
Women faculty > Men faculty (p = .022)

Connected and Supported

How connected do you feel to UCCS?

26%
11%
63%
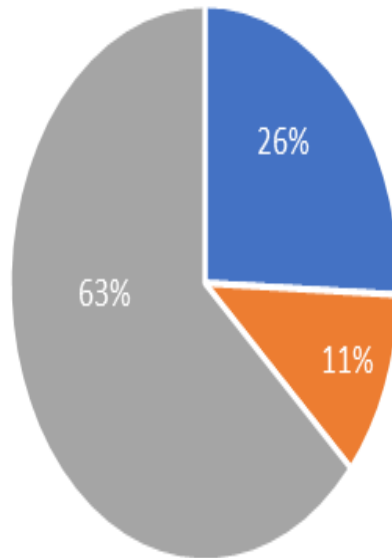
disconnected ■ neither ■ connected

How supported do you feel by the university?

24%
16%
60%

unsupported ■ neither ■ supported

Connected and Supported

- *"I'm just burnt out at this point, and I don't know how to come back."*

- *"Reduce the stigma surrounding working from home! An assistant to the dean told my colleague that they were not giving out the Teams link for the hybrid option for attending a meeting to everyone, because "people just want to stay home in their pajamas", and so was vetting people who wanted a link to make sure they had a legitimate "medical emergency" in order to access the hyflex option. People have children who are quarantined, family members who are in the hospital...if they need to attend virtually, and are still engaged, why is their engagement/participation minimized?"*

- *"In person teaching and activities, but only once it is (truly) safe to do so."*

- *"Actual support so we can do our jobs (teaching and research primarily) properly.   Fewer "THANK YOU" words from administration and actual help would be great. I realize this might not be possible, of course, and I recognize the administration has worked hard in a difficult situation. Still, emotionally is just seems like they expect us to go beyond what is reasonable indefinitely. That isn't appropriate."*

- *"More compassion/empathy from administrators and colleagues."*

- *"I honestly don't know. I feel connected to colleagues, but I think the university leadership (starting with Deans and above) really doesn't understand the volume of work that I have been doing nor appreciate it. I don't think they know the current struggles faculty are facing. I am not sure how to feel more connected because I guess it starts with leadership trying to connect with us."*

- *"Give a pay increase to IRC faculty. Junior IRC faculty routinely have to seek extra jobs to make ends meet, and the insecurity of IRC positions has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Increasing pay for IRC positions would increase stability and morale for roughly half of faculty on campus, which would have a positive impact on all of us."*

- *"I feel supported at the department and college level, but feel that hands are tied in terms of increasing support to allow for more flexible relaxed work and increased help for caregiving"*

- *"Applicable changes with work that demonstrate we don't keep filling out surveys with nothing to show for it. Lots of TALK about COVID-related struggles, monetary changes are decided upon and implemented immediately, and yet faculty assistance remains propped up at the gates of circular discussion."*
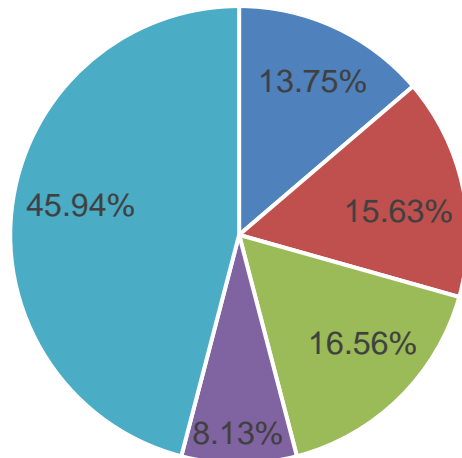
Self-Care Activities
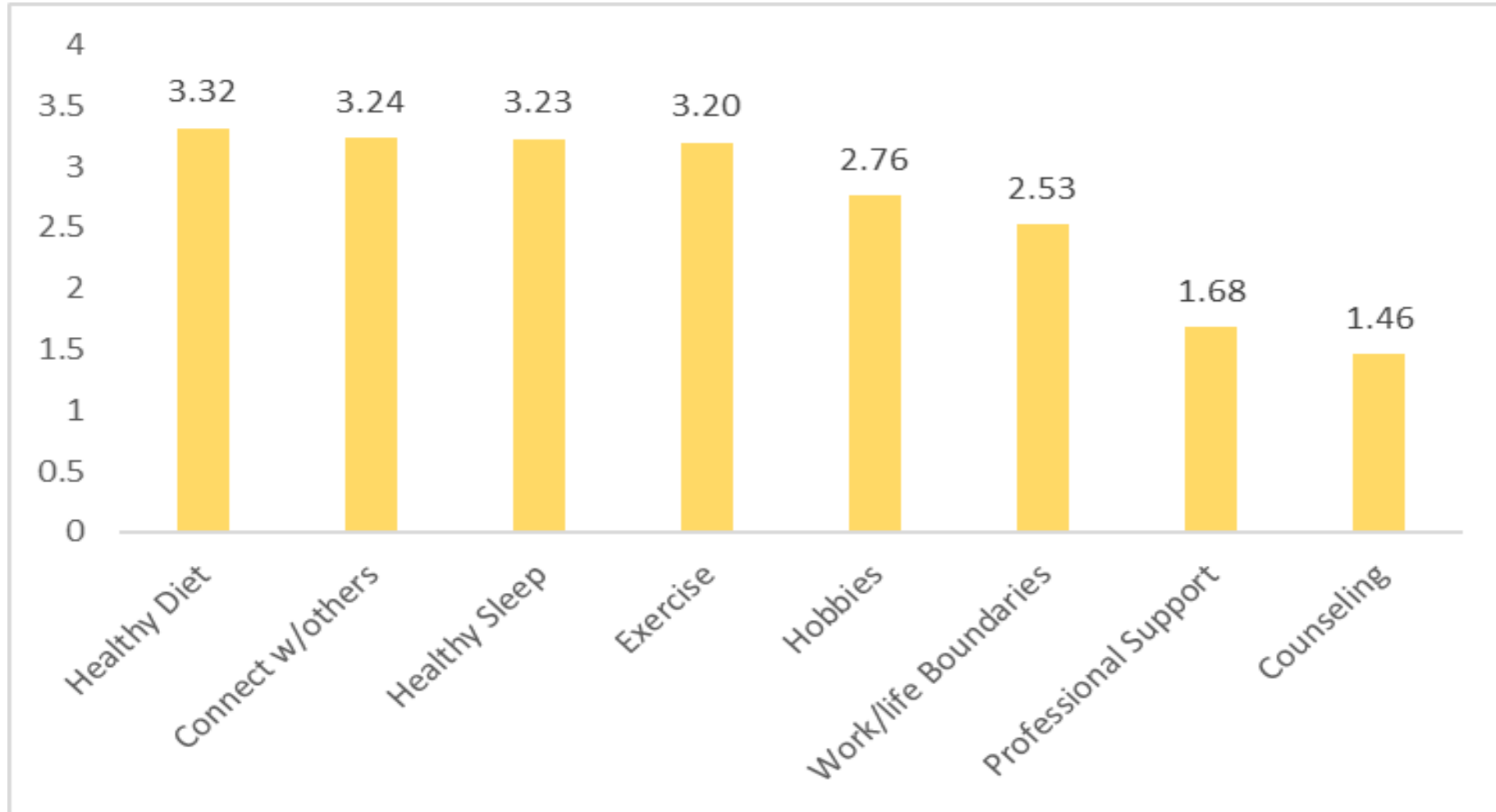
Response scale: 1-4
1 = not at all
2 = infrequently
3 = a moderate amount
4 = frequently

Teaching

Q29 Because of the pandemic, have you been asked to take on additiaon teaching duties (select all that apply)

- ■ New course or course(s)
- ■ Overload(s)
- ■ Additional students due to sections being collapsed
- ■ Other
- ■ None

"The word "asked" is a problem. I, and other faculty members took on a lot of extra teaching duties when we went remote - particularly in redesigning lab courses to remote. So - we weren't asked, but we had to do it or we wouldn't have been able to teach many classes."

Hidden Impacts

- *"Changing a course's format requires almost as much work as creating an entirely new course."*
- *"Moving a course online impacted me like a new teaching duty!"*
- *"Video Production with triples the time frame of teaching"*
- *"Independent studies due to cancelled classes"* (from IRC faculty)
- *"Additional students in courses because of a department that is chronically understaffed, an issue made worse by pandemic constraints"*
- *"Due to a class cancellation, I have been asked to create a new course"*
- *"Helping faculty convert to online"*

What do you need to facilitate your teaching?

- **Equipment/Facilities/Technology**
  - *"Support for our contractual obligations! I purchased all my own necessary home hardware & software for teaching, I am purchasing my own software for research, etc. I brought my own computer monitors from home to use in my university office. This is just more than FEELING unsupported; many of us ARE unsupported."*

- **TA or Grader/Smaller Classes**
  - *"More assistance when possible, e.g., TA for every 40-50 students or larger classes capped at 40-50"*
  - *"Manageable class sizes"*

- **Caregiving/Health Needs**
  - *"More consistent childcare. My greatest hurdle is constantly being put into quarantine because of exposure of my children at their elementary school. I just came out of a 3 week quarantine."*

- **Time**
  - *"Offloads to prepare for teaching especially developing high quality online classes. Not having to make an argument when requesting a modality shift such as going to f2f to remote synchronous fewer classes; allow more students in each section of fewer classes"*

IT
- *"IT support, reliable internet and webcam connections in classrooms"*
- *"More frequent training opportunities to use the new technologies in the classrooms."*

FRC/Instruction Support
- *"More stipend opportunities to learn online pedagogy strategies. The FRC's TOP is fantastic. More of this!"*

Flexibility/Administration/College Support
- *"An acknowledgement from the administration that there has been a huge shift in how we do things. I know they are aware of that, but it seems like they don't always take that into account over the past few semesters. So they tell us to take time to take care of ourselves, or tell us that the past years assessments are going to be different, but then do not actually take the steps to alleviate the amount of time it took to re-learn how to teach..."*

- *"I'd like us to train department chairs in fostering an equitable process for course assignments and teaching schedules. In my department, some faculty routinely have fewer preps while others routinely have too many preps a semester."*

Research

Assistant professors: To what extent did COVID-19 negatively impact your progress toward tenure in research?
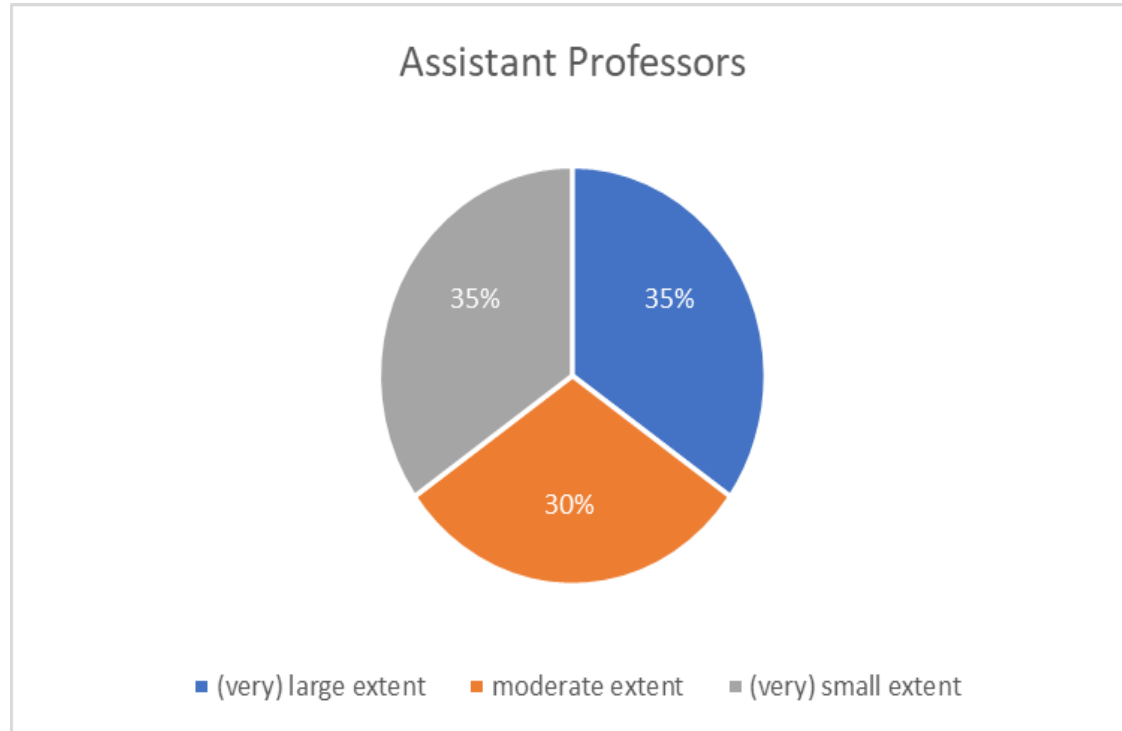
Associate professors: How has COVID-19 affected your timeline for promotion to full professor?

Assistant Professors

35% (very) large extent
30% moderate extent
35% (very) small extent

■ (very) large extent ■ moderate extent ■ (very) small extent

Associate Professors

36% Same timeline
23% Wait 1 yr
20% Wait 2-3 yrs
21% On hold

■ Same timeline ■ Wait 1 yr ■ Wait 2-3 yrs ■ On hold
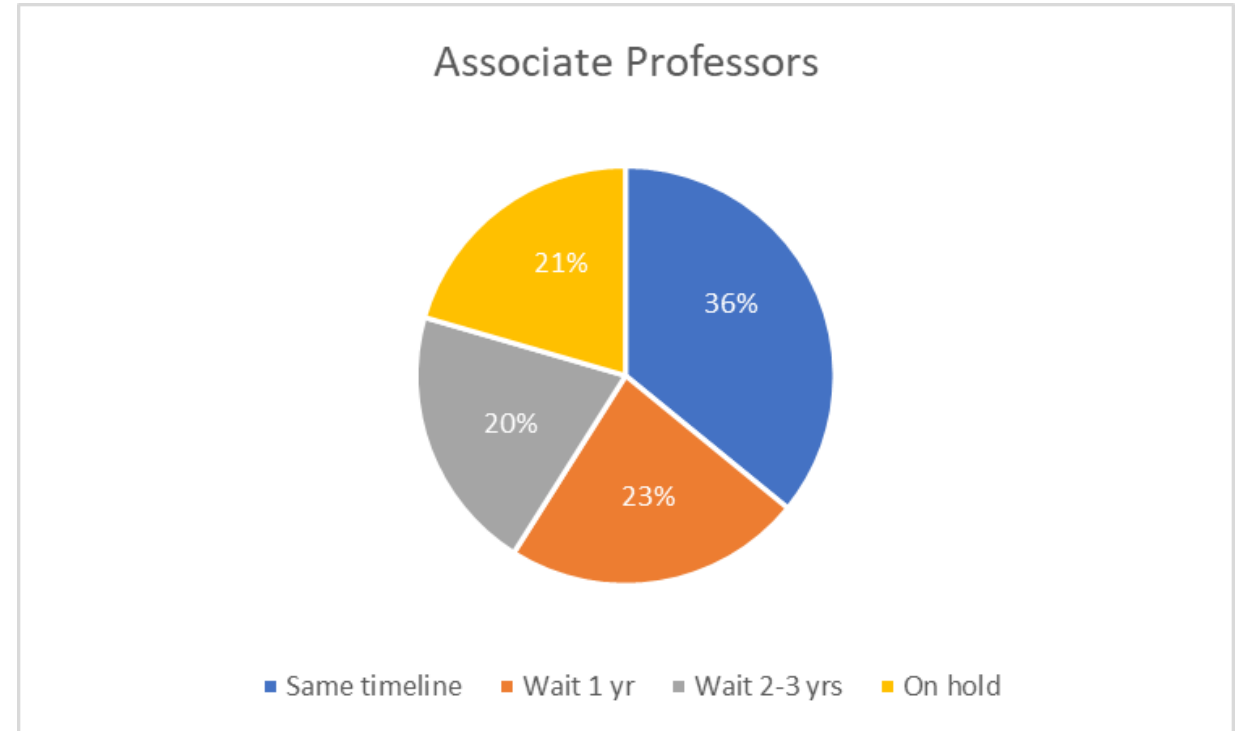
Research Needs

- *"I would really like the ability to have a semester where I teach in person and then a semester where I teach only online. My current research involves access to field sites, in person interviews and focus groups. I can't easily travel when I teach 2-3 days in person during the week. A course release 1 semester per year would also help as I try to get my research back on track. I would also like support to hire a graduates student to both mentor and collaborate with on these research projects."*

- *"Need $ support and decreased teaching loads to get research productivity back to where it was. As a qualitative researcher, my new projects were effectively cancelled. I worry about not having new data for years."*

- *"Realistically, I don't think there will ever be a balance between these aspects of our workload. While attention to research will get lip service, until our teaching loads are reduced teaching will always take more time."*

- *"My research this and next year is on track due to work started before COVID. So my annual merit performance rating is fine. But the work I should be engaging in now has come to an abrupt halt. I am unable to collect the data I need in order to generate future research papers and the articles that come out of them. I'd like to see at least a temporary liberalization of what constitutes acceptable intellectual contributions. Note, I've published over 50 articles so this is not an excuse to dumb down our academic standards. However, the effects of COVID will show up for me in 2-3 years. By that time we may be past this crisis and well have forgotten that there is a lag period associated with good research."*

- *"Honestly, if the service and administrative responsibilities were less then I could continue my research. Teaching online is not a problem. Redoing the schedule multiple times and all of the other nonsense is what killed my research agenda."*

To what extent is the availability of a tenure clock extension helpful in addressing the impacts of COVID-19 on you?

Pie chart:
- small extent: 57%
- moderate extent: 11%
- large extent: 32%
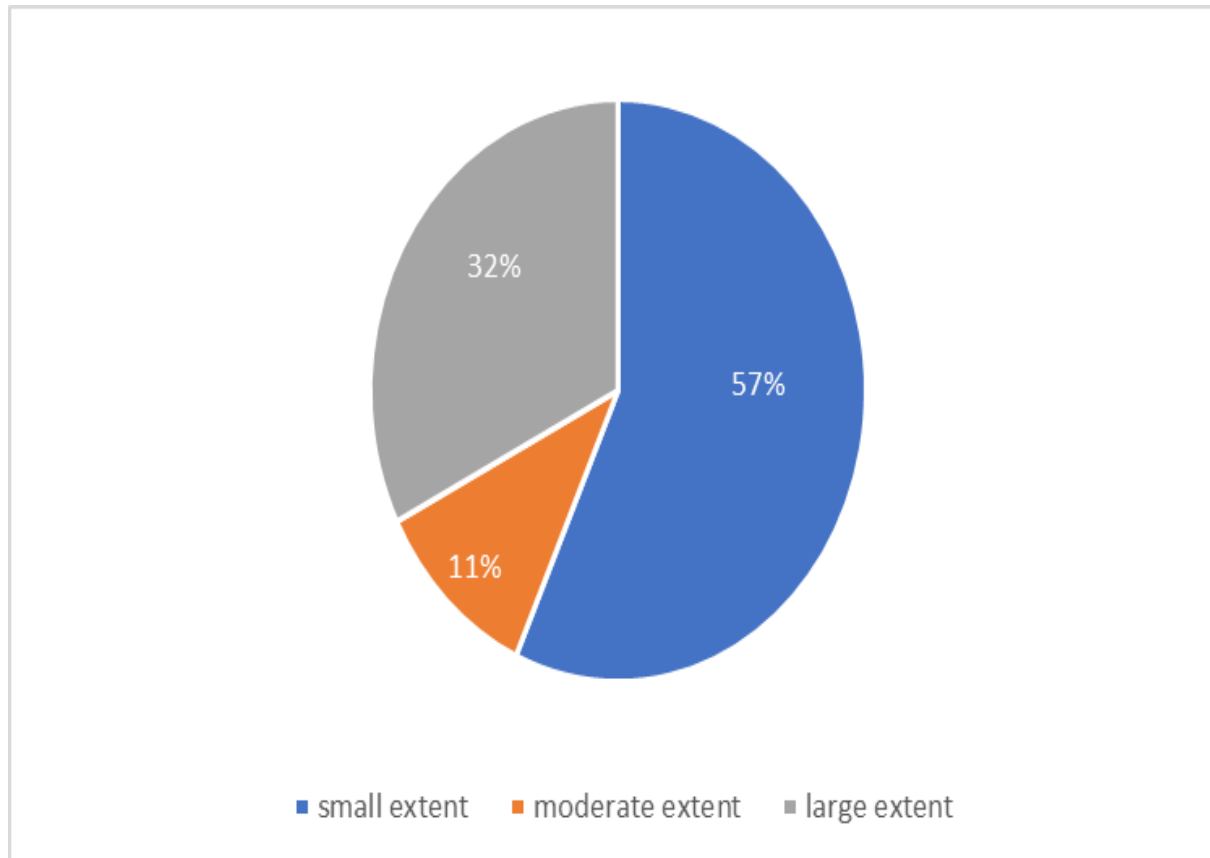
Financial Support
- *"Summer pay to cover cost of child care"*

Institutional Support
- *"More OSP support. More post-award support. Tuition matching for grants. More departmental GTAs and GRAs. A raise (for crying out loud). Decent IT support. Better advertising for graduate student recruitment."*

Flexibility
- *"Flexibility from the unit-head and administration trusting their faculty to do the right thing, instead of creating road-blocks"*

**Reduced teaching loads/lower caps**
- *"Time. I would argue that a universal shift to a 2-2 course load for T/TT faculty, which would enhance research productivity during the academic year while also reducing competition for students."*

Workload redistributions
- *"Stop overloading junior faculty who cannot afford to do all this uncompensated work, it hurts financially and as regards research"*
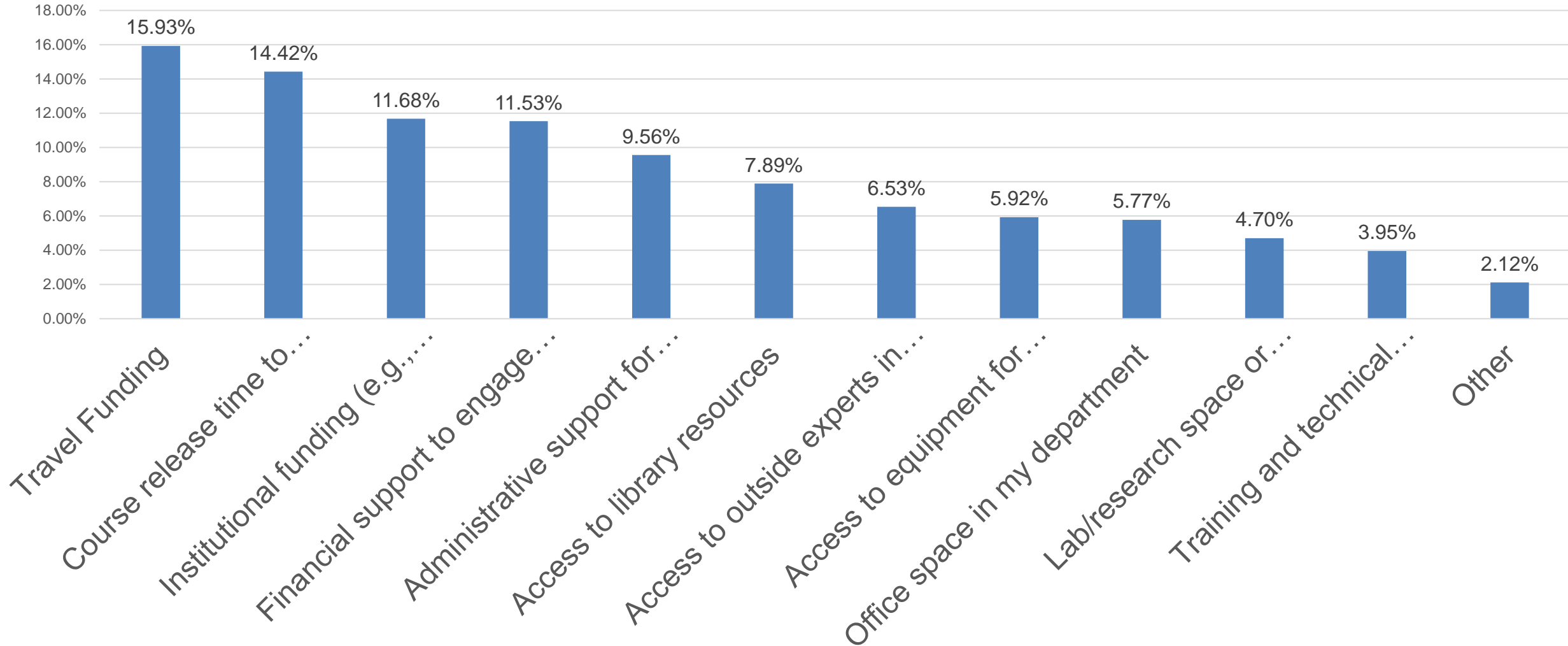
Service

What do you need to facilitate your service activities?

"Ideally, UCCS would hire more full-time faculty of color so that diversity-related service would be spread more equitably."

"More hours in the day - There is no way to accomplish all that is expected. We need more people to do the tasks that are DEMANDED of us!"

"I like virtual meetings since they don't break up my online/remote work if I am not on campus. I also feel safer due to COVID. I do like some/a few in-person gathering for some work/some social interaction."

"Time. My service load is so heavy, and if I taught one less course, this would be a huge help to my wellbeing."

"My tech is getting older and the budgets for a primary replacement computer are much lower than before."

"I am over-serviced. I'd love to see a culture where we're encouraged to look at our % of service. My service responsibilities cut into my research/writing time regularly every week."

Suggested Faculty Workload Accommodations

Q-55 What accommodations would make the balance between teaching, service, and research more manageable?

- **Reduction in course load**

- **Increase in course releases**

- **Flexibility in course delivery format**

- **Reduce Service load**

- **Reassess how we credit service**

- **Flexibility in adjusting workloads**

"We teach 5 courses per year in my department because it is required, not because student demand necessitates that load; it's a backward approach."

"Rolling offloads to effectively compensate faculty for the time they invested in going online."

"Let people adjust their workload. For some, teaching drains them. For others research drains them. Just because this system has been employed for the past 300 years doesn't mean it still needs to be this way."

Caregiving

What support would help balance the responsibilities of caregiving and work?

- Flexibility in Meeting Attendance: 82.5%
- Course Scheduling Flexibility: 82.0%
- Removal of Expiration Dates on Startup Funds: 79.5%
- Affordable, Safe, Campus Daycare: 76.5%
- Daycare Subsidies for Pre-tenure Faculty: 75.5%
- Course Support with TA or Grader: 71.9%
- Service Relief: 71.7%
- Course Releases: 70.6%
- Re-examine Tenure Timelines: 68.9%
- Requiring COVID-19 Impact Statements for Merit & RPT: 66.7%
- Re-examine Tenure Requirements: 59.6%

Caregiving Needs & Examples of Institutional Support

"Provide flexibility to faculty in how they do their job so they can take care of their families."

"Without course releases or pre-tenure sabbatical, it's likely that this Covid interruption of my research will result in me quitting this job because I can't possibly meet the expectations."

"Honestly, the only thing that would help here is more money."

"Some explicit communication from leadership in support of caregivers..."

"Some acknowledgement of the challenges of elder care."

Culture Change

- More faculty & administrative support
- Some supervisors are known to be disparaging to caregivers and there is no available recourse
- Acknowledge that promotion delays have long-lasting effects
- Service loads need to be re-conceptualized to properly acknowledge the university functions through faculty service

Policy Change

- Universal leave policies
- Pre-tenure sabbaticals
- Reimagine workload (e.g., 2-2-1)

Institutional Support

- More connection between caregivers
- Faculty Assembly Standing Committee on Caregiving
- More childcare options & drop-in childcare
- Resources such as Care.com & LinkedIn Learning

Key Takeaways

- The impacts of COVID will be long-lasting; we need a sustainable plan to address on-going challenges

- Faculty are spending more time teaching and doing service; research is suffering

- Faculty report concern over financial strain and want to see institutional supports (e.g., merit, pay equity, summer pay, retroactive raise for tenure clock stop)

- Caregivers are facing ongoing challenges and need support

- There is a substantial number of faculty reporting feeling stressed and/or anxious this semester
  – Feelings of disconnect and lack of support from the university were shared across teaching, research, and service

- Faculty report challenges related to work/life balance

- Time, flexibility, resources, and institutional supports are needed

- Faculty ask to continue remote meetings, flexible course format/scheduling, online Town Halls (free parking)

Next Steps and Discussion

- Opportunities for Further Data Inquiry
- What actions can Faculty Assembly take to support:
  - Research needs and time
  - Caregivers
  - IRC and pre-tenure workloads
  - Balancing workloads
  - Faculty wellbeing
  - Collaborating with campus leadership on institutional support and resources

Thank you

- We hope the discussion today will result in continued dialogue and meaningful action to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on faculty at UCCS.

- A big thank you to all the FA COVID Impact Task Force Members who have been working to elevate the voices of faculty, raise awareness, and promote dialogue around these long-term issues.

- Thank you to the Faculty Assembly leadership and representatives for inviting us to speak today.