University of Michigan Research Faculty Survey Summary of Results

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Executive Summary

In April, 2008, a survey was conducted to assess the career experiences and satisfaction of the Research Faculty at the University of Michigan. The survey was sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Research and the Senate Assembly Research Committee and conducted by RLS Associates. It was sent online to all 696 Research Faculty members (i.e., those who had no other faculty appointment) and was completed by 387 of them (a 56% response rate). The results are outlined in this report and summarized below. Five themes were identified as central issues.

1. Terms of Employment: What Was Communicated When Faculty Were Hired?

It is clear that people regularly accept positions as research faculty members without fully understanding the parameters and limitations of that position. This can lead to negative consequences. The discrepancy between what job candidates understood when they accepted the position and the reality of their experiences often becomes a source of dissatisfaction over time.

2. Tenure: When it is Suggested as a Potential Career Option

Many people report that they were not provided clear information concerning the terms of employment when they were hired. With time, this has an increasingly negative impact. In addition, misleading information which is sometimes provided e.g., the ease of transition to regular tenure track faculty positions, is potentially even more hazardous in the long term.

3. Promotions: When Realistic Career Paths are Not Easily Taken

Research Faculty report a great deal of difficulty getting promoted. They feel the criteria are not clear and that prescribed paths for career growth are often unavailable to them. They also report a significant lack of mentoring. All of these lead to a deepening dissatisfaction over time.

4. The Work Environment: Making it More Researcher Friendly

Professional researchers want to be a part of the University's Research Faculty primarily because of the reputation of the University, the characteristics of the particular projects they join, and the opportunity to conduct their own research, publish, etc. With time they generally begin to see the situation as less favorable than they were initially led to believe. While considerable satisfaction was reported on the survey, it clearly wanes over time. Most Research Faculty feel much less supported after two years on the job. In addition, many complain of feeling like "second class citizens" and constrained by a lack of independence in their research endeavors.

5. A Time-in-Rank Limit Policy: Research Faculty Reactions

Two questions produced a strong reaction, suggesting that the imposition of a time-in-rank limit would be very negatively received. The Research Faculty feel that they already experience an environment that makes it difficult to thrive as a researcher at the University. They note that a virtual time-in-rank policy already exists and encourages attrition by those who cannot maintain funding or who become frustrated by the research track appointments and their accompanying limitations. A formal time-in-rank limit under present conditions may be interpreted as adding insult to injury, whereas improvements in support, as recommended below, may better support University research and Research Faculty and also lay the groundwork for time-in-rank limits in the future.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations offered by RLS Associates covered five themes:

- Make sure that candidates for Research Faculty positions have full information about the terms of employment being offered.
- Motivate high performance by setting clear expectations, providing frequent feedback, and using effective reward and promotion strategies.
- Make the environment more researcher-friendly through mentoring, integration, and support.
- Schedule formal performance reviews that result in action plans to help Research Faculty grow in their positions and allow them to work effectively towards advancement.
- Hold off on imposing time-in-rank limits at least until the other recommendations have been implemented. Survey results show that regular evaluations with clear feedback and mentoring were considered far more motivating than time-in-rank limits and would be far less alienating.

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On April 2, 2008, an email was sent inviting the 696 members of the University's Research Faculty[1] to complete an online survey. The message introducing the survey explained its purpose and sponsorship as follows:

> This survey is designed to look at how well the research faculty positions in the Research Scientist and Research Professor career tracks are meeting the needs of the people filling these roles – and how the design of those positions is supporting research at the University. This survey is a joint effort of the Office of the Vice President for Research and the Senate Assembly Research Committee, chaired by Toni C. Antonucci.

At the "cutoff date", two weeks later, 387 Research Faculty members -- 56% of the population -- had completed the survey. A breakdown of the survey respondents indicates that the response rate was fairly evenly distributed by rank and gender and distributed a little less evenly by college or unit (see Appendix B for details). The magnitude and distribution of the response indicates that we can be confident that the results reported here are a fair representation of the sentiments of the University's Research Faculty as a whole.

The results of the survey are displayed in Appendices C-J. This report will examine five themes that are identified as central issues based on those results.

1. Terms of Employment: What Was Communicated When Faculty Were Hired?
2. Tenure: When it is Suggested as a Potential Career Option
3. Promotions: When Realistic Career Paths are Not Easily Taken
4. The Work Environment: Making it More Researcher Friendly
5. A Time-in-Rank Limit Policy: Research Faculty Reactions and the Reasoning Behind Them

1. Terms of Employment: What Was Communicated When Faculty Were Hired?

The first theme identified from the results is that people regularly accept positions as research faculty members at the University without fully understanding the parameters and limitations of those positions and that the discrepancy between what they understood and the real situation often becomes a source of dissatisfaction over time.

Questions on the survey ask Research Faculty members what they were told about how the position they were hiring into was being funded, what their teaching responsibilities would be, what they could expect in terms of resources for career development, and what they were told about the possibility for tenure and opportunities for promotion. One surprising finding was how many of the respondents reported that information about these terms of their employment was not communicated to them before they accepted their positions:

[1] Research Faculty contacted for this survey had titles *only* in the research track.

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Table 1
Percent of Respondents Who Said These Points Were Not Discussed Before They Accepted Their Present Positions

Before you accepted your present position, what were you told about…	Percent Who Said This Was Not Discussed		
	% Research Investigator N=120	% Research Scientists N=143	% Research Professors N=123
How the position was funded?	35%	25%	23%
Your teaching responsibilities/opportunities?	33	26	29
How much time and resources would be made available for your career development?	42	52	41
The possibility of getting tenure?	42	41	33
The possibilities for promotion to a higher level position in the future?	35	38	32

A second set of questions asked for this information in another way.

Table 2
Percent of Respondents Who Said the Following Points Were Not Communicated to Them When They Were Hired

When you were hired for your present job, to what extent were the following points communicated to you?	Percent Who Said This Point Was Not Communicated		
	% Research Investigator N=120	% Research Scientists N=143	% Research Professors N=123
That research track appointments are without University tenure.	26%	17%	22%
The source(s) of funding for the first three years of your appointment.	24	10	11
The duration of your appointment, if yours was time-limited.*	35	36	37
That you would be expected to generate your own salary support on sponsored projects.	46	24	12
Whether OVPR or your department, school or college has any obligation to bridge unfunded time for your position.	71	56	52

*Understandably, the number of people responding to this dropped considerably, presumably reflecting the number whose appointments were not time-limited.

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Note that both sets of questions displayed on Tables 1 and 2 allowed respondents to distinguish between two alternatives: "I don't remember if this was communicated," or "yes, I do remember and no, the point was not communicated".

Although the specific terms of employment may not be critical to a Research Faculty candidate who is excited at the prospect of a position to conduct his or her research at the University of Michigan, most of them have an impact on faculty members that tends to grow in importance over time. If we compare people who were told about each of these terms of employment with those who were not, we see that those who were not told were considerably more disappointed about the un-discussed term than those who had discussed it.

Table 3
How Does Your Actual Experience on the Job Compare to What You Were Initially Told?

	When The Term of Employment Had Been Communicated	When the Term of Employment Had Not Been Communicated
The time and resources available to me for career development	**2.87**	**2.63***
About whether OVPR or your department, school, or college has any obligation to bridge unfunded time for your position	**2.96**	**2.68***
My chance to work toward tenure	**2.44**	**2.28**
My opportunity for promotion (Research Scientist track only)	**2.67**	**2.34**
My opportunity for promotion (Research Professor track only)	**2.85**	**2.52**

*Scale 1=Much Less Favorable than Described, 3=Same as Described, 5=Much More Favorable than Described; An asterisk indicates that the difference between the mean score of those that were told something about the term of employment and those that were not is statistically significant ($F \leq .05$)

From Table 3, it is evident that the average Research Faculty member found the actual terms of employment less favorable than those they expected. Those that had received more information, however, reported less discrepancy between what they expected and what they experienced – and appeared to be less disappointed as a result.

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There is also some evidence that people who did not have full communication about their terms of employment before they were hired are now less satisfied with their jobs than those who accepted their positions based on more comprehensive information. While the average response to the question, "Overall, how satisfied are you with your present job?" is 3.42 on a scale where 1=very dissatisfied and 5=very satisfied, those who accepted positions without full discussion often scored much lower:

Table 4
Candidates Hired Without Full Information and Present Job Satisfaction

People who were not told about …	Average Satisfaction Score
How the position was funded?	**3.24**
Your teaching responsibilities/opportunities?	**3.21**
How much time and resources would be made available for your career development?	**3.30**
The possibilities for promotion to a higher level position in the future? (Research Scientist Track)	**3.26**

Recommendation: Hiring schools, departments, and units should make sure that candidates for Research Faculty positions are told about all the key terms of employment, even if the candidate does not specifically ask about them. Although such information may result in some refusals to accept the jobs offered them, in the long run, there is a good chance that the candidates who do accept will be more satisfied with the terms under which they are employed.

2. Tenure: When it is Suggested as a potential career option

While not providing information on the terms of employment appears to have an ongoing negative impact on Research Faculty members, offering misleading information may be even more hazardous over the long term.

While many Research Faculty members would like to move to tenure track positions, the possibility of moving from research track to tenure track is slim. From 2001 to 2008, only 5% of the Research Faculty actually moved to tenure track positions during that seven-year period.

In spite of the unlikelihood of this option, 19% of the respondents said that they were told that they could "qualify for tenure by moving from this position to a tenure track position in the future".[2] In addition, 15% of those in the Research Scientist track and 14% of the Research Professor track respondents said they discussed moving to a tenure track position as a strategy

[2] By rank, 25% of the Research Investigators, 14% of those in Research Scientist positions, and 18% of those in the Research Professor track were told of this option.

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for promotion in the future. Given the infrequency of movements between these tracks, mentioning tenure track as a viable option appears misleading. And, as we will see, it carries with it some drawbacks over the longer-term.

Among those who were told that they could qualify for tenure by moving from their position to a tenure track position in the future:

- 28% said that their chance to work toward tenure was much less favorable than they had been told and 21% said it was less favorable
- Research track faculty who think they can make this move are frustrated by the lack of support they get from their departments to move into tenure track positions and, in their open-ended responses, talk about pursuing strategies intended to achieve this end (teaching, serving on dissertation committees, publishing) that may be dysfunctional in their roles as Research Faculty members.
- People who were told this tended to be less satisfied with their present positions. Their mean score on this question was 3.27, while those who were told other information about tenure had an average mean score of 3.47
- Finally, when asked, "Where would you like to see your career ten years from now?" 49% of this group said they would like to see themselves "Moving into a tenure-track faculty position at UM" (while only 29% of all respondents held onto that possibility).

Recommendation: It should be made very clear to candidates for the Research Faculty that University tenure is not available for research track appointments, and that movement from the research track to the tenure track is very rare. Clearer, more realistic guidelines about appropriate paths for promotion are needed.

3. Promotions: When Realistic Career Paths are Not Easily Taken

One of the most common complaints about the terms of employment for Research Faculty involves the difficulty many have in getting promoted. In open-ended responses to this question, respondents say they do not know the College's or Department's criteria for promotion, that prescribed paths for career growth appear to be unavailable to them, and that they receive little or no support or mentoring to help them move up in rank.

Confusion about promotions often appears to begin at hiring, when candidates are not given clear, realistic information.

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Table 5
What Are Research Faculty Told About Their Chances for Promotion?

	Research Investigators N=120	Research Scientists N=140	Research Professors N=118
a) told there was no chance for a promotion.	**3%**	**1%**	**1%**
b) told what I needed to do to qualify for a higher level position in the Research Scientist career track.	**15**	**28**	**N/A**
c) told there was a possibility of moving to a job in the Research Professor career track.	**18**	**16**	**N/A**
d) told what I needed to do to qualify for a higher level position in the Research Professor career track.	**N/A**	**N/A**	**47**
e) told there was a possibility of moving to a tenure-track position.	**20**	**11**	**14**
f) Promotions and other career track options were never discussed.	**35**	**38**	**32**
g) I don't remember whether or not this was discussed.	**8**	**6**	**7**
Total	**99**	**100**	**101**

The most realistic and best answers to the question, What possibilities do I have "for promotion to a higher level position in the future?" are listed in Table 6 along with the percentages of people who were actually given that information.

Table 6
The Percentage of Staff Who Were Told of the Most Realistic Paths to Promotion

Career Track	Best Answers	Percentage of those Who Received One of the Best Answers
Research Investigators	a) told there was no chance for a promotion[3], or b) told what I needed to do to qualify for a higher level position in the Research Scientist career track, or c) told there was a possibility of moving to a job in the Research Professor career track	36%
Research Scientists	a) told there was no chance for a promotion, or b) Told what I needed to do to qualify for a higher level position in the Research Scientist career track	29%
Research Professors	a) told there was no chance for a promotion, or c) told there was a possibility of moving to a job in the Research Professor track	48%

[3] It is assumed that in time-limited appointments, there are times when there is truly no chance for promotion

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Note that more than half of the respondents in each of the categories of career track were given information about options that are less realistic than these – or were given no information about this at all. It is therefore not surprising that Research Faculty are by and large disappointed with the opportunities they actually have.

Table 7
How does your actual experience on the job compare to what you were initially told about the following?

	Mean*	Much Less Favorable Than Described	Less Favorable Than Described	Same as Described	More Favorable Than Described	Much More Favorable Than Described	N/A or Don't Know
My opportunity for promotion Research Investigators (N=107)	**2.52**	16%	15%	35%	4%	3%	27%
My opportunity for promotion Research Scientists (N=125)	**2.48**	12	21	40	5	0	21
My opportunity for promotion Research Professors (N=108)	**2.74**	10	14	53	7	2	13

*** Scale: 1=Much Less Favorable, 5=Much More Favorable; Mean does not include N/A or Don't Know**

Also note the large percentage of "Don't Know's". In addition, once on the job, respondents are not getting the support for the mentoring they want or the promotions they feel they deserve.

Table 8
Support for Mentoring and Promotions

I am getting the support I want from the people in my unit or department to:	Mean*	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A or Not Important
Research Investigators							
Get mentoring around my career growth.	**2.89**	14	26	18	30	7	4
Get the promotions I feel I deserve.	**2.70**	11	28	29	15	5	12
Research Scientists							
Get mentoring around my career growth.	**2.66**	19	24	23	25	3	6
Get the promotions I feel I deserve.	**2.83**	12	22	31	24	3	8
Research Professors							
Get mentoring around my career growth.	**3.15**	14	14	23	29	13	8
Get the promotions I feel I deserve.	**3.31**	8	13	28	26	16	8

***Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree; Mean does not include N/A or Don't Know,**

Members of the Research Faculty tend to drop out of these career tracks before they are promoted, as is evident from number of people in each rank.

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Table 9
Number of People by Rank

Rank	N*
Research Investigator	258
Assistant Research Scientist	163
Associate Research Scientist	51
Research Scientist	30
Research Assistant Professor	126
Research Associate Professor	29
Research Professor	39
	696

*N's were calculated in April, 2008

Table 9 shows that Most Research Faculty are only at entry level in their career tracks. While there are 163 Assistant Research Scientists, for example, there are less than a third that number at the Associate level and only 18% of that number at the Research Scientist rank. Parallel to that, there are 126 Research Assistant Professors and not a quarter of that number at the Associate level. People don't get promoted often, and those at the top of their career path have been generally in those positions for many years. Thirty-six percent of all full Research Scientists and 33% of full Research Professors have held those positions for at least 8 years. Furthermore, only 30% of all survey respondents have been in the research track at this University longer than 7 years – and that is likely to be representative of the population as a whole.

Finally, it is important to note that the longer someone is in a position, the less that person feels there is support for promotion and the less satisfied he or she tends to be. If we look at those who have not already been promoted to the highest ranks, we see that the remaining Research Faculty become less optimistic about their opportunity for promotion and less satisfied with their present jobs over time (up to 10 years):

Table 10
Belief in Support for Promotions and Job Satisfaction By Time in Position

Years in Present Position	Belief That There is Support For Me to Get the Promotions I Deserve Mean Score*	N	Satisfaction with My Present Job Mean Score*	N
0-1 Years	3.16	73	3.75	88
2-3 Years	2.94	104	3.32	113
4-5 Years	2.74	47	3.04	49
6-7 Years	2.54	35	3.17	36
8-10 Years	1.93	15	2.73	15
10+ Years*	2.58	12	3.38	13

*Another effect, possibly resignation, appears to kick in after someone has spent 10 years in the same position, reversing the direction of job satisfaction, and to a lesser extent, support for promotions; Scale for Support for Promotions I Deserve,

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1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree; Scale for Satisfaction:1=Very Dissatisfied, 5=Very Satisfied.

Recommendation: One of the most effective ways to reward excellent performance and to motivate more of the same is through promotion. Effective promotion practices can focus people on the standards the University wants to maintain for Research Faculty and, in doing so, can increase both their productivity and their satisfaction with their jobs. There should be standard descriptions for each rank (across schools, departments, and units, if possible), clearly defined policies around promotion, and transparent processes for initiating requests for promotion and deciding the outcomes of those requests.

4. The Work Environment: Making it More Researcher Friendly

Professional researchers want to be a part of the University's Research Faculty primarily because of the reputation of the University, the characteristics of the particular projects they join, and the opportunity they believe they would have to conduct their own research, publish, etc. (See Appendix C, Question 9). As they settle in on the job, they generally begin to see the reality of the experience as less favorable then they were initially led to believe. When asked, "How does your actual experience on the job compare to what you were initially told about the following [terms of employment], the average score for all the terms of employment listed was 3.00, on a scale where 1=Much less favorable than described, 3=Same as described, and 5=Much more favorable than described (See Appendix C, Question 10). Even with this, however, job satisfaction is high among the survey respondents at all ranks.

Table 11
Overall, how satisfied are you with your present job?

Rank	N	Mean	Very Dis-satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Neither Satisfied Nor Dis-satisfied	Satis-fied	Very Satis-fied
Overall	**367**	**3.42**	**6%**	**16%**	**21%**	**40%**	**15%**
Research Investigator	**111**	**3.33**	**8**	**16**	**22**	**40**	**13**
Research Scientist	**138**	**3.38**	**5**	**20**	**21**	**41**	**14**
Research Professor	**118**	**3.55**	**7**	**12**	**21**	**40**	**20**

That said, though, perhaps the better question is "How sustainable is your satisfaction with your present job?" Forty-nine percent of the respondents to this survey have only been part of the Research Faculty for two years or less. Eighty-eight percent of them have been at the University in the Research Faculty career track less than eight years. What happens to Research Faculty members over time? And is maintaining this high attrition rate in the best interest of this University and its ability to conduct high-quality research?

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The first set of clues probably lies in the issue of promotions, discussed above. Although we can not be sure from these data, it appears that those who are not satisfied with their rate of promotion leave before their eighth year as research faculty members, often to find positions at other institutions where promotion and/or tenure is more likely.

For Research Investigators, especially, the extent to which the support they get in their departments over time provides another clue:

Table 12
Research Investigators: Perceptions of Support
By Number of Years Served as a Research Faculty Member

I am getting the support I want from the people in my unit or department to:	Research Investigators 0-2 Yrs	Research Investigators 3-7 Yrs	Sig.
Further my own professional growth.	**3.52**	**2.95**	*
Conduct my own research.	**3.81**	**3.19**	**
Do the work I want to do.	**3.78**	**3.07**	**
Get the promotions I feel I deserve.	**3.02**	**2.47**	*
Eventually move to a tenure track position.	**2.70**	**2.13**	*
Enhance my professional reputation.	**3.76**	**3.00**	***
Apply for my own funding.	**3.75**	**3.51**	
Get feedback on my performance.	**3.46**	**2.83**	**
Teach, train, serve on dissertation committees, etc.	**3.00**	**2.42**	*
Get mentoring around my career growth.	**3.21**	**2.47**	**
Write grants as an independent investigator.	**3.70**	**3.25**	
Submit publications as a senior author.	**3.51**	**2.85**	*
Have authorship status commensurate with my role.	**3.85**	**3.36**	*

Mean does not include N/A or Don't Know, scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree;
*=F≤.05, **=F≤.01, ***=F≤.001

Research Investigators report having strong levels of support from those in their units and departments in their first two years as Research Faculty, but support appears to drop off considerably after that. It is not clear to what extent (a) the level of support actually declines, or (b) the faculty member's perception of it wanes as his or her needs grow. In any case, the research environment summarized by the scores of the Research Investigators who have been faculty members for more than 3 years is significantly less favorable than that experienced (or optimistically perceived) during the first two years. While the numbers are too small to allow careful analysis, the downward trend may reverse after the eighth year. Research Investigators

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who have been in their positions eight years or more perceive stronger support than those in the 3-7 year group – or have become more comfortable with the support available to them.

The patterns of scores are similar for Assistant Research Scientists, but the differences between the first two years and succeeding five years are less often statistically significant.

Table 13
Assistant Research Scientists: Perceptions of Support
By Number of Years Served as a Research Faculty Member

I am getting the support I want from the people in my unit or department to:	Assistant Research Scientists 0-2 Yrs	Assistant Research Scientists 3-7 Yrs	Sig.
Further my own professional growth.	**3.23**	**2.88**	
Conduct my own research.	**3.50**	**3.28**	
Do the work I want to do.	**3.83**	**3.52**	
Get the promotions I feel I deserve.	**2.75**	**2.59**	
Eventually move to a tenure track position.	**2.48**	**1.91**	*
Enhance my professional reputation.	**3.32**	**3.02**	
Apply for my own funding.	**3.38**	**3.12**	
Get feedback on my performance.	**3.18**	**2.71**	
Teach, train, serve on dissertation committees, etc.	**2.89**	**2.57**	
Get mentoring around my career growth.	**3.00**	**2.34**	*
Write grants as an independent investigator.	**3.48**	**3.25**	
Submit publications as a senior author.	**3.54**	**3.56**	
Have authorship status commensurate with my role.	**3.54**	**3.67**	

Mean does not include N/A or Don't Know, scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree;
*=F≤.05, **=F≤.01, ***=F≤.001

For Research Assistant Professors, on the other hand, the pattern of these scores tends to show less of a drop off in support over time than for the other two entry-level ranks – and sometimes it appears that there is even an increase in support (although no difference is large enough to reach statistical significance).

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Table 14
Research Assistant Professors: Perceptions of Support
By Number of Years Served as a Research Faculty Member

I am getting the support I want from the people in my unit or department to:	Research Assistant Professors 0-2 Yrs	Research Assistant Professors 3-7 Yrs	Sig.
Further my own professional growth.	**4.00**	**3.52**	
Conduct my own research.	**4.00**	**3.96**	
Do the work I want to do.	**3.73**	**3.90**	
Get the promotions I feel I deserve.	**3.46**	**3.27**	
Eventually move to a tenure track position.	**2.77**	**2.96**	
Enhance my professional reputation.	**3.67**	**3.65**	
Apply for my own funding.	**4.40**	**4.24**	
Get feedback on my performance.	**4.00**	**3.69**	
Teach, train, serve on dissertation committees, etc.	**3.33**	**3.00**	
Get mentoring around my career growth.	**3.87**	**3.59**	
Write grants as an independent investigator.	**4.27**	**4.31**	
Submit publications as a senior author.	**3.43**	**3.96**	
Have authorship status commensurate with my role.	**3.93**	**4.03**	

Mean does not include N/A or Don't Know, scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree;
*=F≤.05, **=F≤.01, ***=F≤.001

A third set of clues about why Research Faculty tend to leave by their eighth year appears in the open ended-responses. Those who were dissatisfied with their present positions wrote about the sources of that dissatisfaction. A summary of their comments appears as Appendix I. The most common issues raised, in order of frequency of mention, were:

1. Funding issues (25 responses in this category):
Chasing funds is distracting for these faculty members, especially when they often receive no guidance in formulating their funding applications and have situations that make it difficult to convince funding agencies that they qualify as independent investigators. In addition, they see no longer-term commitment to themselves, and little interest or support for their research in return for the indirect costs they contribute.

2. Research Faculty are treated as if they were "second class citizens" (21 responses in this category):
People who described issues in this category talked about the lack of a start-up package of some sort -- space and administrative support at least – to help them either pursue funding or work on

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projects already secured; they also mentioned things that isolate them: small things like the time card requirement and less liberal library privileges and bigger things like the exclusion from departmental activities in general, and their inability to provide support to students (especially those on their projects) and to influence governance issues that impact their work life.

3. Difficulties Getting Promotions (20 responses in this category):
The lack of clarity about criteria for promotion and the absence of interest in their career growth evidenced by the lack of mentoring and the barriers that departments seem to put in the way of promotions.

4. The Lack of Independence. (20 responses in this category):
Some Research Faculty work on the projects of other Principal Investigators and feel very constrained by this relationship. Many of these faculty report that their PIs exercise considerable control over the work they do, what they write, and whether or not they can pursue their own funding. Some also say that they are not given the credit due for their contributions to these projects (not listed as authors on publications, for example). For these positions to constitute genuine career tracks, promising scholars should be able to expect better funding and attribution as they mature intellectually.

Recommendation: If the University feels it is in its best interest to attract and keep the best researchers, it should do more to facilitate the success of their Research Faculty. Four things that are likely to help in that process are:

- Having written guidelines for departments and units to outline the responsibilities to support Research Faculty and what they should expect from them. Guidelines might include mentoring arrangements, resources for professional development, ways to include Research Faculty in the activities of the department or unit, expectations around independence and funding, and so on.
- Setting clear expectations at the time of hire for performance, providing special help in identifying resources and applying for funding, and career mentoring would all add to the viability of new Research Faculty.
- Scheduling a review process at least after the first three years, to assure that the department or unit provides whatever feedback and help is possible to give the faculty member the best chance of succeeding long term.
- Being open to allowing the most successful Research Faculty members to earn a more stable situation at the University. Assuming contingency at the outset probably results in the loss of some of the best candidates for long-term Research Faculty. Greater stability could be instituted by creating a level of achievement beyond which Research Faculty would have a commitment of some bridging funds if such funds were ever needed. (Criteria for achieving this level might be based on the secured funding levels and the successful completion of funded projects). The ability to achieve some stability could make the research track a more viable career choice for those who have proven track records – and could serve as a motivator for others. Finally, PIs should be encouraged to raise the published visibility of lower-rank researchers, thereby increasing their access to independent research funding.

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5. A Time-in-Rank Limit Policy: Research Faculty Reactions and the Reasoning Behind Them

The last of the five "themes" would not have arisen had it not been asked. When it was raised in two questions near the end of the survey, however, it produced a strong reaction. The first question was phrased as follows:

> In the tenure track, Assistant Professors have a time-in-rank limit of seven years. A parallel time-in-rank policy for Research track positions would mean that persons in Research Faculty positions would either be reclassified into non-faculty positions or asked to leave if they did not qualify for a promotion prior to their time-in-rank limit. Should a parallel time-in-rank policy be applied to Assistant Research Scientists and Research Assistant Professors?

361 people answered this question:

Table 15
Should a parallel time-in-rank policy be applied to Assistant Research Scientists and Research Assistant Professors?

How They Answered	N	%	# who also wrote comments
Yes	114	32%	26
No	153	43%	66
Don't Know or No Opinion	87	25%	17
Only wrote comments	7		7
Totals	361	100%	116

Negative responses outnumbered positive for every rank except for full Research Professor. The results by rank appear below in Table 16.

Table 16
Should a parallel time-in-rank policy be applied to Assistant Research Scientists and Research Assistant Professors? Results by Rank.

	Research Investigator	Assistant Research Scientist	Associate Research Scientist	Research Scientist	Research Assistant Professor	Research Associate Professor	Research Professor
Yes	33%	29%	34%	33%	28%	41%	43%
No	34	51	55	47	47	53	25
Don't Know or No Opinion	33	21	10	20	25	6	32
	100	101	99	100	100	100	100

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The question provided a space for comments – an opportunity that a surprisingly high number of people took advantage of. These comments help us better understand the reasoning behind the responses. Table 17 summarizes the comments by category, in order of frequency of mention. Verbatim responses appear in Appendix J.

Table 17
Summary of Comments Explaining Why Respondents Came Out For or Against a Time-In-Rank Policy Parallel to That of Tenured Faculty

General Response Category		Frequency of Responses in This General Category
A. Negative.	No, because it wouldn't carry tenure and salary benefits with it. It doesn't make sense without tenure, and would be somewhere between stressful to oppressive without adding any benefit.	**21**
B. Positive.	Yes, but only if other changes were made (not including tenure). It would provide a path to promotion, but if T-in-R limits were implemented, there would need to be clear criteria for promotion that make sense given the unique characteristics of Research Faculty roles.	**20**
C. Negative.	No. The Research Faculty situation is very different from tenure-track faculty. There is little parallel between the roles of research and tenure track faculty and a parallel T-in-R limit makes little sense in the research environment where researchers get far less support and often have little control over their funding or the work they are able to do.	**19**
D. Negative.	No. It would only hurt the University and its Research Faculty, so why do it? If investigators can support themselves as PIs on research grants, why not let them stay? Why throw away money and expertise because researchers have priorities other than promotion? We need some of these people to stay long term.	**18**
E. Negative.	No. Not unless a lot more support is given to Research Faculty and there are comparable start up packages, support, and assured funding. This policy will only work if Research Faculty are given the same support as tenure track faculty.	**14**
F Positive.	Yes. It would give Research Faculty more equality/respect. Implementing this policy will give research faculty more status, people should not remain in the entry level positions indefinitely and this could stimulate movement.	**12**

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G. Negative.	No. This policy would have a negative impact on me, in my unique position. (This was especially true for mothers with young children and people who split their time between different roles, etc.)	**6**
H.	Miscellaneous Comments	**6**
		116

People who said they didn't know or had no opinion and who gave comments, tended to give answers in categories B or E – both categories being dependent upon how the policy was implemented and whether or not it included more support, clearer and more relevant criteria for promotion than are now available, longer time limits, etc.

Time-in-Rank limits were also explored as one of three possible motivators for junior level Research Faculty. The survey asked, "To what extent do you think each of the following would motivate junior level Research Faculty to advancement?" The responses are summarized on Table 18.

Table 18
Time-in-Rank, Regular Evaluations, and Mentoring
As Motivators for Junior Level Research Faculty

	Mean (N=358)	**To a Very Little Extent***	**To a Little Extent**	**To Some Extent**	**To a Great Extent**	**To a Very Great Extent**
A time-in-rank policy (as described above)	**2.84**	18%	16%	38%	20%	8%
Regular evaluations (that included feedback about what was needed for advancement)	**3.58**	4	6	36	35	18
Mentoring (to help guide faculty toward advancement)	**4.01**	2	4	22	35	37

***Scale: 1=To a Very Little Extent, 5=To a Very Great Extent**

Note that the respondents judged that instituting regular evaluations and mentoring would be far more effective in motivating people to set and meet ambitious goals than a Time-in -Rank limit would be. And, in the comments that they added, it was clear that making the work environment more supportive of research would help them the most.
A more research-friendly environment would include:

- help in identifying resources and applying for funding,
- assurance of office space and perhaps some clerical assistance,
- greater integration with other faculty in the department, and
- guidelines that ensure that some time and resources are devoted to the professional development of Research Faculty members.

Recommendation: the career development of Research Faculty should be considered an

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investment in both the faculty member and the research effort of the department or unit. The better the Research Faculty, the greater the funding and the better the resulting research.

- It is likely that the most effective way to make these investments pay off is to set clear expectations, provide mentoring and frequent feedback, and to give recognition for excellent performance.

- Recognition using the usual forms of acknowledgement, promotions, and perhaps a promise of a finite period of bridging funds for high performers, if needed, could add a welcome sense of partnering from the department, to help these faculty feel that the U has made some commitment to them (in the place of tenure).
- In addition, clarifying career paths and removing the barriers to promotions that some departments may have erected, are also central to improving the support for research requested by these respondents.
- Scheduling a performance review at the three year point with recommendations for improvement also makes a lot of sense, and scheduling a second review, perhaps even more formally, in the sixth year, would be helpful, and given the feedback gathered through this survey, probably welcome.

These are the "carrots " shown to motivate achievement.

Most Research Faculty who commented specifically about a time-in-rank limit policy, reacted as if it were the proverbial "stick" – much less effective in motivating performance than relocation, especially if there is no longer-term reward like tenure at the "finish line." The term "time-in-rank limits" alone is likely to fuel some resentment even though the concept of forcing a termination for below-standard performance appears to already be in place at the University. Research Faculty who are not funded leave, and their time-in-rank statistics give evidence that current policies already produce substantial attrition. Furthermore, time-in-rank limits could easily result in difficult situations where researchers who develop funding streams of their own are found wanting by a committee and terminated.

The Research Faculty Survey appears to have been the right thing to do at the right time. People clearly wanted to be asked for their opinions and have the opportunity to influence their work situations. This is evident in the size of the response rate, unusually high for this type of survey, and the time and care that was taken to complete the questionnaire. These faculty members will appreciate seeing the survey results and will be watching for evidence that their voices have been given a fair hearing. Most of them want to stay at the University in some capacity and will welcome efforts to make positions in the Research Track more rewarding – and more sustainable for them over time.

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