

Abbreviated Questions and Summary of Comments

Introduction

The original comments (raw data) were summarized from all survey respondents in this section with the software Wordle.¹ These summarized comments reflect the dominant themes expressed.

QUESTION 12: “What was adequate to help me meet my teaching and research responsibilities”?

This year (2012) the development program did not lack support. However, we need more strategies and constantly need to look at the availability of different planning and teaching strategies during the year. The administration needs to increase salaries preventing constantly having to hire new people. This may be financial drain may prevent the recruitment of students. Dissatisfied staff makes for dissatisfied students. However, the administration is constantly looking forward to the needs of AUC from technology and also to job enhancement opportunities. I strongly recommend that the administration continue developing job benefits for professors.

QUESTION 13: “How satisfied were you with the aspects of your recruitment process”?

Faculty orientation was good and Louise did a good job and was wonderfully helpful to frustrated and almost angry AUC department heads and faculty. Louise mentored understandably bitter Egypt faculty who are never paid nor receive much tenure. Many faculty members, for a number of years, have not received orientation/introductions/resources/housing. Perhaps in two years (the future) there will be a position and someone hired to pay full attention to needless supervisors and establish locally correct and clear HR and so as not to be recipients of unhealthy information. Meanwhile there are people acting like Saints but still over the years have a lack of attention. The time has arrived for the level of planning to become adequate to those denied fair treatment for so long.

QUESTION 14: What affected your decision to join AUC?

AUC’s reputation!!! Teaching students, the courses and the time for leave may have been a factor. The housing administration, the numbers of work evaluations was less appealing. The instability of the overall climate of Egypt is real and many foreign people are hesitant to take positions, it is less true for people who have already experienced the life here. Though I was concerned about my children and their academic progress, joining the faculty, or the administration or even being a plumber was worth the instability and the commute is generally assumed to be good. AUC is an American-based college in Egypt with many courses and teaching opportunities was the reason I decided to work here.

¹ <http://www.wordle.net/>

QUESTION 15: What are the factors in your decision making you stay or leave AUC?

The opportunity for research and practice make me want to stay. Sometimes the students and the environment are anything but optimal. Work in Egypt at a university is less innovative and the students are less motivated. So it is difficult at times to work in my department. Terminal degrees are unimportant to me. Collegiality and innovative teaching methods are, and AUC sometimes lacks the discipline and the facilities for that. At the same time, one can find collegiality in the research departments. I would like to publish which is part of the professionalism found at AUC. Although, ambivalent at times but I am motivated to publish... and of course budget is of one the main concerns.

QUESTION 16: What is the most significant factor affecting faculty retention in your department?

The research opportunities! The faculty and the teaching benefits and the department salary are good at AUC. The lack of work ethic ironically has not hindered our department. Other departments say it is NOT good but for our department the retention has been good. I think housing is always important in taking a job and if it is difficult, people leave. The benefits at AUC are good and even though living in Cairo can be difficult, AUC's teaching ratio and benefits lessen the anxiety in our department at least.

Leadership is sometimes poor and can make one want to leave but, again, I guess the bottom line is salary, collegiality and research faculty and research opportunities that make those in our department faculty want to stay.

QUESTION 25: How has the campus affected your teaching or research ability?

The time it takes to get to the campus is a problem and the commute is long. Faculty working hours are unnecessarily increased thereby. Campus service tries to make up for it. But sometimes I would prefer to work at downtown. Nevertheless the community in Cairo has many activities and this increases opportunity for research and service in the community.

On the other hand, right now, it may be better to be far from the Tahrir Campus. I am engaged in quality research right now and the problem still remains the bus!! As I look back at my time in Tahrir. I see that the far reduced interaction with students that attend everyday or the evening at this campus has pros and cons. Speakers would significantly enliven things at the campus. Campus life needs to be enlivened. Yeah, that's it. That would inspire research. Social and cultural life affects teaching and quality of courses as well.

Question 28: Suggest improvements to the tenure process or annual review process.

Faculty review needs to be based on merit. The annual evaluation and review process should be in service to the research and teaching not to the faculty itself. Therefore, the criteria should be clear and the university system here does not really support clarity and transparency. One needs to know the tenure questions you are to be asked ahead of time so you can improve and prepare. Perhaps, it should be a two-phase process. First, you get your review and then you have time to change what is needed. All departments that have tenured professors would still give them a review and feedback. In addition, the teaching load increases need to be taken into consideration in the process.

Students' input should inform the process for the system to work. Benchmarks should affect contracts. Currently developed AFR's are useless actually. At least that is my opinion. Perhaps they have not been clearly explained? I feel strongly about this. How numbers, performance, and work promotions really work and knowledge is allowed to flow in the departments is a process that increases trust and should be in the handbook. Yes, contracts count, but fair reasons for them being terminated or extended needs to be made clear.

QUESTION 32: What has caused you stress over the past two years.

The AUC administrators and faculty relations in the departments are factors. One negative statement from a senior faculty member spreads throughout the department. We make a statement in confidence and they spread throughout the university. This is especially stressful. AUC administrators took a renewed interest in faculty stress in February. Inappropriate comments from students regarding religion especially Saudi ones made the level of stress incredibly high. One senior administrator needs to address this. Day to day life on the campus can be extremely stressful in this regard, e.g., inappropriate comments. Things take time but this (inappropriate comments) is ridiculous. Policies on housing, research and all the other little words are irrelevant until the issue of the senior administrator is addressed.

QUESTION 35 Comment about negative statements you heard from other faculty regarding religion and gender.

Professional conduct is lacking. Faculty comments are just as bad as students' remarks. The colonialist mentality remains in many ways. This is a school but it seems rather to be a microcosm of all the negative, hostile, power-driven, rank oriented biases of colonialists. Learning has been compromised by intolerant and inappropriate comments and attitudes toward gender and religion that can be heard every day in subtle and not so subtle ways in the offices and halls of the school. Education is needed regarding the insidious effects of conscious and unconscious gender and religious intolerance. What does inappropriate or negative statements really mean? These are useless words if not defined in context. Are people too overwhelmed and over burdened and incapable of thinking clearly about these issues. And what are the implications for AUC as a school? Again, policies must be clear from the top down and rigorously enforced while educating from the bottom up.

QUESTION 36: What do you like most about AUC?

AUC has an interesting multicultural student body and faculty. There are opportunities for researching and teaching alongside colleagues and students from a number of different countries. I also like being in Egypt. Of course, the physical environment and the facilities are quite good especially for Egypt.

QUESTION 37: What would you like to change about AUC?

1. Longer hours of bus service
2. Faculty hiring policies
3. Students being involved in more research

4. More cultural and social activities on campus
5. Transparency from administration

QUESTION 38: Other Comments

I think an HONEST survey from AUC faculty/administration is needed to begin to meaningfully evaluate and better understand what makes an institution like AUC work. I think all the "pieces" and certainly the money is there to make AUC a model of global education as well as a better local resource for this new time in Egypt