

Mills College

HERI Faculty Survey 2008

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Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Academic Assessment

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This report prepared by The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Academic Assessment using data collected in the 2004 and 2008 HERI Faculty Surveys.

HERI Faculty Survey 2008

Introduction

In 2008 Mills participated in a national survey of faculty in colleges and universities conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA (HERI). Mills also participated in this survey in 2004. The data available from the survey administrations includes both Mills faculty data and data from a national sample of private, 4-year, non-sectarian institutions. This report includes a discussion of the issues that were given priority in the 2004 survey report including both the 2004 and the 2008 data, providing a longitudinal perspective. In addition, this report centers on the current issues that call for our attention: the goals of the strategic plan, the College's institutional learning goals stated in our mission, and the pedagogies that support student-centered learning and the assessment of learning objectives. The questions, therefore, which provide the focus of this report are:

- Have faculty attitudes on governance and campus-decision-making changed since 2004, and if so how? How do their current attitudes compare to the faculty at the national sample of private, 4-year non-sectarian institutions?
- Have faculty attitudes about their work changed since 2004? In what ways? How does their current perspective compare to the national sample?
- Has the use of "active learning," pedagogies as defined in the 2004 report as cooperative learning, group projects, and experiential learning such as community service, changed since 2004, and if so, in what ways? How does the use of these pedagogies by Mills faculty compare to the national sample?
- How well do faculty practices, perceptions, and priorities align with the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan goals? How do these compare with the national sample?
- How well do faculty practices, perceptions, and priorities align with the College's overall learning goals? How do these compare with the national sample?
- To what extent are faculty familiar with and practice "student-centered learning" pedagogies that support our educational effectiveness?
- In what ways are the faculty currently involved in the assessment of student learning?

Methodology

The Survey

The survey—a web-based survey—included 45 standard questions and 20 Mills-specific questions. The Mills items were designed by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Academic Assessment in conjunction with the Office of the Provost.

Survey Administration

The survey was administered jointly by HERI and Mills. The survey participants were asked to participate in the survey via an email that gave a short description of the survey project, had the required information concerning human subjects and information on how to opt out of the survey, and included a personal access code with which to access the web-based questionnaire.

Since spam filters have been found to be much more aggressive than a few years ago, The Director of Institutional Research alerted the IT Department at Mills of the incoming mail to the webmail addresses so that settings could be adjusted to be sure that the emails were not blocked by the Mills email system and sent an email in advance of the invitation to alert the faculty to the upcoming survey and the address from which the survey was being sent in order to prevent the emails from going into their spam filters, or junk mailboxes.

Mills provided HERI with names and campus/departmental email addresses for each person in the sample. The Director of Institutional Research used the HERI Faculty Survey templates to compose an email invitation and reminder emails as well as providing HERI with a Mills logo to put on the emails to make it clear that the survey was from Mills. HERI used the email addresses to send the prepared emails to the faculty. Only those faculty who had not yet responded were sent reminder emails.

The first email invitation was sent on April 28. Unfortunately, due to a technical error at HERI, the invitations were not received by the faculty when first sent. After a few days during which HERI was analyzing the problem and ultimately fixing it, the surveys were sent.

Because completed surveys were collected electronically by HERI, faculty participation in the study was completely confidential. Mills received a data file and summary statistics from HERI but has no method of determining who is included in the final tally of respondents.

The Sample and Response Rate

Mills sent surveys to all full-time faculty and part-time faculty who had taught a course within the previous two years (Fall 2006 through Spring 2008). A total of 347 surveys were delivered, 97 to full-time faculty and the remaining 250 to part-time faculty. One hundred and four surveys were completed for an overall response rate of 30%.

Since comparative data provided by HERI, where comparisons are made between Mills and other institutions, is based on full-time undergraduate faculty, the Mills data reported here is based only on the responses of full-time faculty. A total of 57 out of 97 full-time faculty completed the survey for a response rate of 59%. The sampling error for proportions is ± 8.1 for the data reported for Mills based on the entire sample of completed surveys (N=104) and ± 8.4 for the surveys completed by full-time faculty only (n=57).

Survey Demographics

Within the responses of the full-time faculty, the divisions of Education, Fine Arts, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and Other are underrepresented, and Letters and Social Science are overrepresented. (See Table 1.) In terms of gender and ethnicity, males are overrepresented, females are underrepresented, Whites are slightly overrepresented, as are Black/non-Hispanic, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native with Asian/Pacific Islander and Other underrepresented. (See Tables 2 and 3.)

Table 1. Academic Division¹

Division	Sample Full-Time	Completed Full-Time
Education	11%	7%

¹ Nine full-time faculty identified their field as "other" or "technical." These were put in "other" category.

Fine Arts	22%	18%
Letters	23%	28%
Natural Sciences & Math	16%	14%
Social Sciences	18%	28%
Other¹	10%	5%

Table 2. Gender

Gender	Sample Full-Time	Completed Full-Time
Female	63%	58%
Male	37%	42%

Table 3. Race/Ethnicity

Division	Sample Full-Time	Completed Full-Time
White/ Non-Hispanic	71%	72%
Black/Non-Hispanic	6%	7%
Hispanic	6%	7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	10%	9%
American-Indian/Alaska Native	1%	2%
Other	7%	4%

Comparison Institutions

HERI provided summary data for nonsectarian 4-year private colleges and all 4-year private colleges who also participated in the HERI survey. This report includes only 4-year private, non-sectarian colleges for purposes of comparison.

Executive Summary

Governance and Campus Decision-Making

The most dramatic findings from the 2008 administration of the HERI Faculty Survey were in the area of governance and campus decision-making. Faculty attitudes in these areas were not positive in 2004 and have deteriorated significantly in the last 4 years.

- Few faculty in 2004 and significantly fewer faculty now report that the administration is open about its policies, and this difference is also significant in comparison to the national sample of private, 4-year non-sectarian institutions.
- None of the full-time faculty respondents currently report that their concerns are considered in campus decision-making, and considerably fewer faculty perceive that they are involved in campus decision-making now than in 2004. Far more faculty at the national sample of private 4-year colleges report feeling involved in campus decision-making.
- Significantly more faculty than in 2004 report that they are “at odds” with the administration, and this difference is even more pronounced when looking at Mills faculty compared to the national sample of institutions.

Faculty Work

- In spite of few faculty feeling satisfied with their relationship with the administration, most are satisfied with their job overall. However, their satisfaction with their level of autonomy and their teaching load has decreased somewhat in the last four years. At the same time, their sources of stress from faculty meetings, research and publishing demands, and teaching loads have increased.

Faculty Pedagogy

- In general, Mills faculty are moving more toward pedagogies identified as being valued by the institution as “active learning” pedagogies, such as cooperative learning, group projects, and service learning; however, they lag slightly behind the national sample of private, 4-year non-sectarian institutions on these measures.
- Faculty have decreased their use of extensive lecturing, significant in that it is the antithesis of active learning pedagogies, but the level of use is still slightly higher than the national sample.
- Faculty engaged in research with undergraduates has decreased and now lags behind the national sample.
- Specific pedagogies, such as student presentations and essay tests which support the mission learning goals of critical thinking and effective communication have declined, but remain at a level consistent with other 4-Year private colleges.
- Faculty have increasingly placed or collected assignments on the internet, which is a positive trend, given our desire to support the faculty’s assessment activities using the same technology.

Strategic Plan

Faculty attitudes are in line with the priorities set out in the College’s Strategic Plan.

- There is a desire on the part of a majority of full-time faculty to see more inclusion of diversity issues in the curriculum, and to increasing the representation of minorities in the faculty and administration.
- There is strong support for recruiting more minority students and creating a diverse multicultural campus, significantly more than indicated by the national sample.
- Most faculty consider promoting racial understanding as both an institutional and personal goal, more so than do faculty at the national sample of institutions.
- A strong majority of Mills full-time faculty support the priority the College places on developing leadership ability among its students, and exceeds that of the comparison group of institutions.
- Mills faculty are committed to academic excellence and innovation.

College Mission Learning Goals

- It appears that on most measures, Mills faculty are utilizing pedagogies supporting the College’s learning goals of critical thinking and effective and responsible communication, and at a rate either exceeding or equal to the faculty at the national sample of private 4-year institutions.

- A strong majority of Mills full-time faculty respondents consider social change to be a priority. However, looking at community services as a vehicle for social change, whereas 93% feel that “colleges should encourage students to be involved in community service activities,” less than half the faculty identify involvement in community service as a priority of the institution.

Student-Centered Learning and Assessment

- Most of the student-centered learning techniques measured on the survey are practiced by a majority of faculty; however, less than half of the faculty have defined the measurable criteria for the learning goals for their classes, are actively assessing their own courses in the aggregate, or are embedding assessment into their grading practices.
- In spite of the former, more than half the faculty feel that they make changes to their courses based on assessment findings and that these findings are also used to support positive changes to the overall curriculum and course offerings in their department.
- Given the findings mentioned, the focus on assessment at Mills needs to be concerned with helping faculty define assessment, identifying those assessment activities already taking place and working with faculty to formalize their efforts to build the “culture of evidence” that is a necessary goal for our WASC reaccreditation efforts.

Detailed Results

The focus for the discussion of the findings center around three topics: a comparison of the 2004 HERI Faculty Survey report with the 2008 HERI Faculty Survey report and the relationship of the faculty and the administration and the nature of faculty work and pedagogy which follows up on issues that were identified as important then. Following that is an analysis of the areas of the survey which correspond to the College’s Strategic Plan goals and objectives. Finally, those attitudes and actions reported that relate to student learning, particularly in relation to the learning goals that are part of the mission of the college, and measures of the degree to which faculty practice the principles of student-centered learning are discussed.

Comparison to 2004 HERI Faculty Survey

Governance and Campus Decision-Making: In the area of governance, in 2004 it was reported that 21% of the full-time faculty indicated that the administration is open about its policies, where in 2008, only 2% of the faculty report that the administration is open about its policies. Looking at this issue among the non-sectarian 4-year private colleges, 22% of faculty report that the administration is open about its policies. Thus, it appears that significantly fewer faculty report the perception that the administration is open about its policies now than in 2004, and that this attitude is shared by a fewer full-time faculty at the comparison institutions. Regarding faculty involvement in college-level decision-making, in 2004 32% of the faculty reported feeling that they were involved, and in 2008 only 19% reported that they are involved. None of the respondents in 2008 reported that administrators consider faculty concerns when making policy. The comparison group reports 63% of the faculty involved in college-level decision-making and 19% feeling that administrators consider faculty concerns when making policy. Thus, even fewer faculty feel that they are involved in campus decision-making in 2008 than in 2004, with the percentage who feel involved falling dramatically short of that at the comparison institutions. (See Figure 1.)

In other areas of governance identified in the 2004 survey report, the data indicates more deterioration in faculty attitudes and perceptions reported in 2008. In 2004, 35% of the faculty respondents found the statement, "The faculty are at odds with the administration," to be very descriptive, compared to 61% in 2008 and 17% across the group of comparison institutions. This indicates that the frequency of this perception has grown dramatically since 2004, and is now more than three times as prevalent among Mills faculty as those at the comparison institutions.

Faculty perceptions of the recognition they receive for their teaching has also declined in the last four years, except in the area of working with underprepared students. However, this is still not a positive finding since so few feel they received recognition either then or now. Eight percent of the faculty respondents in 2004 found the statement, "Faculty are rewarded for their work with underprepared students," as very descriptive, compared to 9% in 2008 and 9% among comparison institutions. "Faculty are rewarded for being good teachers," was found to be very descriptive by 23% of the faculty respondents in 2004 and 14% in 2008, compared to 25% among the group of comparison institutions. What is interesting here is that the levels reported by Mills faculty in 2004 are consistent with the current levels reported by faculty at the comparison institutions, but have declined over the last four years and so are now considerably lower.

In terms of faculty integrating technology into their work, again, the perception that they are recognized for this was low in 2004, and even lower now. In 2004, 19% of the respondents identified the statement "Faculty are rewarded for their efforts to use instructional technology," as very descriptive compared to 11% in 2008, and 18% among the national sample of faculty at private colleges. Again, if the levels at the comparison institutions now are any reflection of what they were then, Mills faculty perceptions were not much different in comparison in 2004, but have declined since. The importance of this measure is that an emphasis is being placed on the use of technologies such as Blackboard, and these technologies will also support the assessment of learning, so it is in the best interest of the institution to support the use of technology not only by providing access to it, but by rewarding those who are willing to use it, in spite of the temporary discomfort or disorientation that that change might cause. (See Figure 1.)

Full-Time Faculty agree that:	2004	2008	Private 4-Yr Non-Sectarian Colleges
The administration is open about its policies.	21%	2%	22%
The faculty is involved in campus decision-making.	32%	19%	63%
Faculty concerns are considered when making campus policy.	N/A	0%	19%
Faculty are “at odds” with the administration.	35%	61%	17%
Faculty are rewarded for being good teachers.	23%	14%	25%
Faculty are rewarded for their efforts to use instructional technology.	19%	11%	18%
Faculty are rewarded for their work with underprepared students.	8%	9%	9%

FIGURE 1. RESPONSE COMPARISON ON GOVERNANCE AND CAMPUS DECISION-MAKING POLICIES

In conclusion, it appears that an already weak relationship between faculty and administration has gotten weaker in the last four years, to the point where a majority feel that they are “at odds” with the administration and most feel that neither their contributions nor their concerns relative to campus decision-making are valued. Few faculty feel that their contribution as teachers is recognized.

Faculty Work: In contrast to the apparent deterioration of the relationship of the faculty and administration, overall job satisfaction has increased. It was reported as “satisfactory” or “very satisfactory” by 72% of the faculty respondents in 2004 and 75% of the faculty respondents in 2008. This compares to 79% of the faculty respondents among the comparison institutions, which indicates that Mills faculty are not quite as satisfied overall as their colleagues at the national sample of institutions. On specific measures, salary and benefits were reported as satisfactory or very satisfactory by 47% of the faculty in 2004, 53% of the faculty reported that their salary was satisfactory or very satisfactory, and 51% reported that benefits were satisfactory or very satisfactory in 2008. Forty-eight of faculty at the comparison institutions reported that their salary was satisfactory or very satisfactory and 61% reported their benefits in that category. (See Figure 2.)

In spite of these increases, there is a slight decline in other measures of faculty work. In 2004, 88% of the Mills full-time faculty rated the level of autonomy and independence they experience as satisfactory, while 81% reported this in 2008. 87% of faculty at the comparison institutions reported the same. Mills faculty reported their teaching load as satisfactory in 65% of the cases in 2004, compared to 53% in 2008 and 58% among comparison institutions. Satisfaction with the clerical support they have was reported by 43% in 2004 and 60% in 2008, compared to 62% at other institutions. In terms of their relationship with the administration, 38% of Mills faculty reported this as satisfactory in

2004 and 30% in 2008, compared to 62% of faculty at the other institutions. (See Figure 2.)

Full-Time Faculty Satisfied with:	2004	2008	Private 4-Yr Non-Sectarian Colleges
Overall Job	72%	75%	79%
Salary	47%	53%	48%
Benefits	47%	51%	61%
Autonomy and Independence	88%	81%	87%
Teaching Load	65%	53%	58%
Amount of Clerical Support	43%	60%	62%
Relationship with Administration	38%	30%	62%

FIGURE 2. FACULTY SATISFACTION LEVELS ON WORK-RELATED ISSUES

Sources of stress identified by more than half the faculty in 2004 included faculty meetings, committee work, research and publishing demands and teaching load. These areas remain sources of stress for more than half the faculty respondents in 2008 as well, with slight increases in the proportion of faculty identifying them as such in every area except committee work.

In 2004, it was reported that faculty meetings and committee work were sources of stress by 60% and 58% of the full-time faculty respectively. In 2008, 67% reported that faculty meetings are a source of stress and 58% reported that committee work is a source of stress. These figures among faculty at the comparison institutions were 52% and 61% respectively. It should be noted that nearly all faculty in 2004 reported that they spend some time each week engaged in committee work or other administrative duties, with most spending less than five hours per week on these activities. This has not changed in 2008 among Mills faculty respondents. Of the comparison institutions, the overall percentage is the same; however 40% of the faculty spends greater than four hours each week engaged in committee work and other administrative duties compared to 23% at Mills. This could account for the greater percentage of faculty at the comparison institutions reporting committee work as a source of stress. (See Figure 3.)

Research and publishing demands as a source of stress were reported by 57% of the full-time faculty in 2004. This has increased to 65% in 2008, compared to 55% for the comparison institutions. Teaching load as a source of stress was reported by 67% of Mills full-time faculty in 2004, and 72% in 2008, with 66% of faculty at the national sample of 4-year private, non-sectarian institutions reporting the same. (See Figure 3.)

Full-Time Faculty Sources of Stress	2004	2008	Private 4-Yr Non-Sectarian Colleges
Faculty Meetings	60%	67%	52%
Committee Work	58%	58%	61%
Research and Publishing Demands	57%	65%	55%
Teaching Load	67%	72%	66%

FIGURE 3. FULL-TIME FACULTY REPORTED SOURCES OF STRESS

Faculty Pedagogy: As an institution, Mills values pedagogies supporting “active learning” such as class discussion, cooperative learning, group projects, service learning, and experiential learning (field work). As an antithesis to these pedagogies, and in the context of the current climate emphasizing “student-centered” learning, where more interaction between students and between students and faculty is valued, a decrease in the use of extensive lecturing is considered positive. In 2004, 88% of the faculty reported incorporating class discussions into most or all of their courses, and nearly 50% indicated that they use extensive lecturing. In 2008, 79% of the faculty respondents reported incorporating class discussions, and 44% reported using extensive lecturing. Among the comparison institutions, 85% incorporate class discussions, and 39% use extensive lecturing. Therefore, while Mills faculty have decreased their use of extensive lecturing, they are somewhat behind the national sample of private 4-year non-sectarian schools on this measure. Considering the decrease in extensive lecturing, the decrease in the use of class discussion could be due to an increase in other teaching methods which support student-centered learning, as can be seen in the discussion later in this report.

Active learning pedagogies in the form of cooperative learning, group projects, service-learning and experiential learning were reported by faculty respondents in 2004 as being incorporated into all or most of their courses by fewer than half the faculty. In 2008, 60% of the faculty respondents reported using cooperative learning, compared to 44% in 2004, 30% reported using group projects, compared to 29% in 2004, 14% reported incorporating service learning, compared to 9% in 2004, and 25% reported using experiential learning (no data could be found for this measure on the 2004 questionnaire). This compares to 62% of faculty respondents from the comparison institutions reporting using cooperative learning, 36% incorporating group projects, 20% using service learning, and 32% including experiential learning in their pedagogy. Thus, Mills faculty are moving more toward pedagogies valued by the institution as active learning pedagogies, but are slightly behind other private 4-year non-sectarian colleges on these measures.

Providing undergraduates opportunities to engage in research is also valued by the institution. In 2004, 68% of the faculty reported as having worked on research projects with undergraduates compared to 44% in 2008 and 63% among the group of comparison institutions. Thus, it appears that Mills is moving away from research and is now engaged in this practice considerably less than in 2004, and in comparison the national sample.

The use of technology in the classroom can support active learning pedagogies. In 2004, 55% of the Mills full-time faculty respondents had reported that they had placed or collected assignments on the internet. In 2008, this was reported by 74% of the faculty respondents, which is in line with the comparison institutions. This is a positive trend,

given our desire to support the faculty's assessment activities through the same technology and the students' increasing expectations concerning the use of technology.

Teaching Methods Used by Full-Time Faculty	2004	2008	Private 4-Yr Non-Sectarian Colleges
Class Discussions	88%	79%	85%
Extensive Lecturing	49%	44%	39%
Cooperative Learning	44%	60%	62%
Group Projects	29%	30%	36%
Service-Learning	9%	14%	20%
Experiential Learning (Field Studies)	Exact % Unknown	25%	32%
Working with UGs on Research Project	68%	44%	63%
Placed or Collected Assignments on the Internet	55%	74%	74%

FIGURE 4. TEACHING METHODS USED BY FULL-TIME FACULTY

Strategic Plan

Responses by full-time faculty on the 2008 HERI Faculty Survey considered relevant to the Strategic Plan were those measures pertaining to the campus environment with regard to the diversity of the community and attitudes regarding racial understanding and tolerance, student leadership, innovation, intellectual development, and sustainability.

Diversity

Several measures on the HERI Faculty Survey are concerned with diversity issues. Faculty opinions about diversity-related characteristics of the College, their perceptions of the priority that the institution places on diversity issues, and their own attitudes toward diversity were measured. Overall, the faculty are overwhelmingly aligned with the emphasis being placed on diversity issues in the Strategic Plan.

In terms of those characteristics that describe the institution, a strong majority of the faculty either "somewhat" or "strongly" agree with the statement, "Racial and ethnic diversity should be more strongly reflected in the curriculum." Of the full-time faculty who responded, 93% agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that Mills should hire more faculty of color. Only 14% feel that "there is a lot of campus racial conflict here," and 90% agree that "faculty of color are treated fairly here." The percentages on these measures for the 4-year private non-sectarian colleges were 63%, 76%, 12%, and 91% respectively. (See Figure 5.) These figures indicate a desire on the part of full-time faculty to see more inclusion of diversity issues in the curriculum, and more diverse faculty hires, both of which are goals of the Strategic Plan. On these measures, then, either the faculty is supportive of the plan, or the plan is supportive of the faculty, or both.

Statements on Diversity Descriptive of the Institution	Mills 2008	Private 4-Yr Non-Sectarian Colleges 2008
Racial and ethnic diversity should be more strongly reflected in the curriculum	70%	63%
The institution should hire more faculty of color	93%	76%
Faculty of color are treated fairly here	90%	91%

FIGURE 5. STATEMENTS ON DIVERSITY DESCRIPTIVE OF THE INSTITUTION

Along with hiring more faculty of color, another goal of the Strategic Plan is to increase the diversity of the student population. The responses of the full-time faculty indicate that 79% recognize that “to recruit more minority students” is of “high” or “highest” priority on the Mills campus, and 88% of the respondents recognize that, “to create a diverse multicultural campus environment,” is of equally high priority. In comparison, among the faculty at the national sample of institutions, only 53% and 58% respectively see this as a priority on their campuses.

The Strategic Plan also calls for increasing the diversity of the administration. Seventy-two percent of the faculty respondents, identified “to increase the representation of minorities in the faculty and administration” as a priority of the institution. This compares to 46% of full-time faculty at the comparison institutions.

Consistent with these perspectives, only 9% of Mills faculty agree “strongly” or “somewhat” that “promoting diversity leads to the admission of too many underprepared students,” and, conversely, 98% of Mills full-time faculty respondents agree that, “a racially/ethnically diverse student body enhances the educational experience of all students.” This compares to 20% and 94% respectively at comparison institutions. It appears that the faculty recognize these Strategic Plan initiatives as a priority, and also that their attitude regarding diversity is completely aligned with these priorities.

Also supporting the conclusion that faculty attitudes are in line with the Strategic Plan diversity goal, 88% of the faculty identified “enhancing students’ knowledge of and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups” as a “very important” or “essential” goal for undergraduates. This compares to 78% of full-time faculty at the national sample of institutions. “Teaching tolerance and respect for different beliefs” was rated as “very important or essential” by 93% of Mills faculty and 85% of faculty at the comparison institutions. Finally, developing an “appreciation for multiculturalism” was considered a “high” or “highest” priority by 84% of the Mills faculty respondents compared to 62% of the faculty respondents at the comparison institutions, and 83% of Mills full-time faculty identify “helping to promote racial understanding” as a “very important” or “essential” personal goal, compared to 58% of full-time faculty at the institutions making up the national sample of 4-year private institutions. (See Figure 6.)

These responses give a completely consistent picture of faculty attitudes regarding diversity, and, again, indicate that the faculty is overwhelmingly in agreement with this Strategic Plan goal. As far as what the comparison measures are telling us, it is difficult to know if in the minds of the faculty at the national sample of institutions, their campuses have already achieved the diversity level they would like, or if they are not as committed to diversity as Mills. However, given the high percentage of faculty at the

national sample of institutions who feel that a diverse student body enhances the educational experience for all students, and that teaching tolerance is a high priority for most, it is likely that faculty attitudes there are similar to those at Mills but that diversity issues simply are not currently getting the same level of attention there.

Diversity Goals, Priorities, and Attitudes	Mills 2008	Private 4-Yr Non-Sectarian Colleges 2008
Recruiting more minority students	79%	53%
Creating a diverse, multicultural campus	88%	58%
Increasing the representation of minorities in the faculty and administration	72%	46%
A racially/ethnically diverse student body enhances the educational experience of all students	98%	94%
Promoting diversity leads to the admission of too many underprepared students	9%	20%
Enhancing students' knowledge of and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups	88%	78%
Teaching tolerance and respect for different beliefs	93%	85%
Developing an appreciation for multiculturalism	84%	62%
Helping to promote racial understanding as a person goal of faculty	83%	58%

FIGURE 6. DIVERSITY GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND ATTITUDES WITHIN THE INSTITUTION

Leadership

Leadership has been defined by the Mills faculty as “reflecting the confidence to take initiative, to assume responsibility, and to act in an ethical manner.” Student leadership measures on the 2008 HERI Faculty Survey include, “To develop leadership ability among students” which was considered to be an issue of “high” or “highest” priority at Mills by 72% of the faculty, compared to 69% at comparison institutions and, “To develop moral character” which 63% of the Mills full-time faculty identify as a very important or “essential” goal of the college, compared to 73% at the comparison institutions. (See Figure 7.) While a strong majority of Mills full-time faculty support the priority the College places on developing leadership ability among its students, it is not clear from this data that the relationship between leadership and ethics are necessarily shared by all faculty, nor can we know if faculty were equating ethics with morality when responding to this survey. Certainly fewer Mills full-time faculty feel a responsibility for

the development of students' moral character than faculty at the comparison institutions, which were also non-sectarian.

Academic Excellence and Innovation

As a measure of the faculty's recognition and support of the institution's strategic planning goal of "academic excellence," 95% of the faculty believes that "to promote the intellectual development of students" is an issue of "high" or "highest" priority at Mills, compared to 89% at comparison institutions. While only 49% of the faculty agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that "faculty at Mills feel that most students are well prepared academically," 98% identify the faculty as being "strongly interested in the academic problems of undergraduates." In addition, 77% of the Mills full-time faculty feel that the statement "it is easy to see faculty outside of regular office hours" is very descriptive of Mills and almost none of the faculty (4%) feel that students are treated like "numbers in a book." Sixty-three percent of the faculty feel that the institution takes responsibility for educating underprepared students. These measures are comparable to the national sample of institutions. (See Figures 7 and 8.)

Innovation measures on the 2008 HERI Faculty Survey included the goal to "develop creative capacities" for undergraduates which was rated "very important" or "essential" by 86% of Mills faculty and 84% of faculty at the comparison institutions. (See Figure 7.) Conformity among the students, as the antithesis of innovation, was considered "descriptive" or "very descriptive" of the Mills campus by only 4% of the faculty compared to 27% of the comparison institutions. It is clear that Mills faculty are committed to academic excellence and innovation.

Leadership and Academic Excellence	Mills 2008	Private 4-Yr Non-Sectarian Colleges 2008
Goals and Priorities		
Developing Leadership Ability Among Students	72%	69%
Developing Moral Character Among Students	63%	73%
Promoting the Intellectual Development of Students	95%	89%
Developing Creative Capacities	86%	84%

FIGURE 7. LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Descriptive of Institution Supporting Academic Excellence		
Faculty feel that most students are well-prepared academically.	49%	50%
Faculty here are strongly interested in the academic problems of undergraduates.	98%	95%
It is easy for students to see faculty outside of regular office hours.	77%	77%
The institution takes responsibility for educating underprepared students.	63%	67%

FIGURE 8. QUALITIES DESCRIPTIVE OF THE INSTITUTION SUPPORTING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Sustainability

The only measure related to sustainability was the personal goal of “becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment,” which 39% of the faculty felt was “very important” or “essential.” This compares to 36% of faculty at comparison institutions.

Mission Goals

The College mission calls for students to be educated to think critically, communicate responsibly and effectively, accept the challenges of their creative visions, and effect thoughtful changes in a global, multicultural society. Creativity, in the form of innovation, is part of the Strategic Plan as well, and is discussed in that section, leaving measures on critical thinking, effective communication, and effecting thoughtful changes in society to be discussed here.

Critical Thinking and Effective Communication

Developing the ability for students to “think critically” and promoting the ability for students to “write effectively” were identified by 100% of the faculty as “very important” or “essential” goals for undergraduates. This compares extremely closely to the 99% of faculty at the comparison institutions. In terms of their interaction with undergraduates in areas that support these learning goals, 84% of the full-time faculty respondents report that they “frequently” encourage them to “support their opinions with a logical argument” and 70% “frequently” encourage them to “revise their papers to improve their writing.” This is compared to 84% and 66% respectively of faculty at the comparison institutions. Faculty who “frequently” encourage their students to “evaluate the quality or reliability of information they receive” make up 81% of the group, compared to 75% at other institutions.

Among the methods utilized in “all” or “most” of their courses that would support critical thinking and effective communication, 46% of Mills full-time faculty report using essay exams, compared to 48% at the comparison institutions; 28% use weekly essay assignments, compared to 26% elsewhere, 25% use multiple drafts of written work, compared to 31% at the comparison institutions, 54% use term/research papers compared to 48% elsewhere, and 23% use reflective writing/journaling compared to 24%

at the comparison institutions. (See Figures 9 and 10.) It appears that Mills faculty are utilizing pedagogies supporting the critical thinking and effective communication learning goals of the College at a rate comparable to the faculty at the national sample of private 4-year institutions. However, the rates of usage of these pedagogies do not seem consistent with the priority that the faculty and the institution places on these learning goals, particularly in the area of writing.

Student presentations, a pedagogy also supporting the goal of effective communication, is used at a rate consistent with other institutions. Where 56% of the Mills full-time faculty at Mills reported student presentations as commonly required, 55% of faculty at the national sample of institutions report them as required.

Effecting Thoughtful Changes in Society

Several measures on the 2008 HERI Faculty Survey pertain to the College's mission goal of "effecting thoughtful changes in society." As a goal for undergraduate students, 70% of the faculty and 63% of the faculty at comparison institutions note that to "encourage students to become agents of social change" is "very important" or "essential." Helping students "learn how to bring about change in American society" is an issue of "high" or "highest" priority by 63% of the faculty at Mills and 42% of the faculty at the comparison institutions, and 81% of Mills full-time faculty agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that "colleges should be actively involved in solving social problems," compared to 70% at other institutions. (See Figure 9.)

Forty-seven percent of the Mills faculty note that the personal goal of "influencing social values" is "very important" or "essential" to them, with 42% holding the same view among faculty at the comparison institutions. Conversely, only 7% of the Mills faculty agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that, "realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in society." Seventeen percent of the faculty at the comparison institutions believe similarly.

Looking at community service as a vehicle for effecting social change, 74% of Mills full-time faculty respondents agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that most students are "strongly committed to community service," and 68% agree that, "many courses involve students in community service." This compares to 58% and 54% respectively among faculty at the comparison institutions. (See Figure 9.)

Interestingly, whereas 93% of the Mills faculty agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that "colleges should encourage students to be involved in community service activities," and 84% of the Mills faculty agree that "colleges have a responsibility to work with their surrounding communities to address local issues," only 44% of the faculty recognize facilitating student involvement in community service as an issue of "high" or "highest" priority for the institution, and only 14% of the Mills faculty have taught a service-learning course in the past two years.

Looking at the national sample of institutions, 63% of the full-time faculty respondents agree that colleges should encourage students to be involved in community service, and 87% agree that colleges should work with their surrounding communities, and 51% identify facilitating student involvement in community service as a priority at their institutions, with 20% having taught a service learning course within the past two years. While the percentage full-time faculty respondents at Mills who consider social change to be a priority exceeds that at the comparison institutions on every measure, including the importance of being actively involved, there is some inconsistency both at Mills and at the other institutions between the interest on the part of the faculty and the priority that they feel community service should be placed by the institution, and the priority that they perceive it to actually be for the institution.

Mission-Related Goals and Priorities	Mills 2008	Private 4-Yr Non-Sectarian Colleges 2008
Educating Students to Think Critically	100%	99%
Educating Students to Write Effectively	100%	99%
Encouraging Students to Become Agents of Social Change	70%	63%
Helping Students Learn to Bring About Change in American Society	63%	42%
Facilitate Student Involvement in Community Service	44%	51%
College's Active Involvement in Solving Social Problems	81%	70%
Take Responsibility as Institution to Work with Surrounding Communities to Address Local Issues	84%	87%

FIGURE 9. MISSION-RELATED GOALS AND PRIORITIES WITHIN THE INSTITUTION

Pedagogies Supporting Critical Thinking and Effective Writing	Mills 2008	Private 4-Yr Non-Sectarian Colleges 2008
Encourage Students To Support Their Opinions With A Logical Argument	84%	84%
Encourage Students To Revise Their Papers To Improve Their Writing	70%	66%
Encourage Students to Evaluate The Quality Or Reliability Of Information They Receive	81%	75%
Essay Exams	46%	48%
Weekly Essay Assignments	28%	26%
Multiple Drafts Of Written Work	25%	31%
Term/Research Papers	54%	48%
Reflective Writing/Journaling	23%	24%
Student Presentation	56%	55%

FIGURE 10. PEDAGOGIES SUPPORTING CRITICAL THINKING AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Student-Centered Learning

Measures of student-centered learning consist of those practices that enhance student achievement by providing clear expectations as to how each student can succeed in a given course, providing support for student learning, and engaging in activities to assess the learning taking place in a way that identifies the level to which students are learning what they are intended to learn, and using that evidence to make both course-level and department-level improvements. These issues were measured by Mills questions and so are not comparable to other institutions.

Of the full-time faculty who responded to the survey, 68% indicated that their course syllabus includes the learning goals for the course, while 48% indicated that these goals were broken down into measurable criteria. Eighty-one percent of Mills full-time faculty believe that their students are aware, throughout the semester, of the progress that they are making in their course and what they need to do to improve. A majority of the full-time faculty (71%) regularly “check in” with their students “during class time throughout the semester to confirm that they are keeping pace with the content of the course.” Thirty-seven percent of the faculty indicated that they have peer tutoring available for students who need additional support, and 77% indicated that they send deficiency notices to students who are at risk of earning less than a “C” in the course. (See Figure 11.)

The statement “Program assessment, broadly defined, is faculty scholarship directed toward the improvement of courses, programs and student learning,” was found to be “somewhat true” or “completely true” by 43% of the faculty. Only 36% indicated that they participate in their departments’ assessment activities by conducting regular formal assessments of their own courses by comparing each student’s progress against the class as a whole to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in the aggregate. Forty-five percent feel that their grading process supports program assessment efforts by evaluating student work against the learning criteria of the course so that they have evidence of the level of progress their students are making toward each of the criteria.

Appropriate changes to their courses based on assessment findings are made by 70% of the faculty, and the results of course assessment are used by 61% of the faculty to support positive changes to the overall curriculum and course offerings in their department. For 80% of the faculty the learning goals for their course are aligned with the learning goals of their department at the appropriate level and 90% report that the learning goals for their course align with the mission of the College. Just over half the faculty (54%) indicated an interest in more information about how to better assess their courses to “help strengthen the Mills Academic Assessment Program.” (See Figure 11.)

Including the learning goals on the course syllabus is currently practiced by approximately two-thirds of our full-time faculty. As we approach our Capacity and Preparatory Review, this indicates that faculty are moving in the right direction. However, the fact that less than half of the faculty include measurable criteria for their learning goals means that more effort needs to be focused on defining the learning goals in such a way that they can be measured. This will support the ability of faculty to assess on a deep and meaningful level, the learning that is taking place.

A strong majority of faculty feel that students are aware of what they need to do to succeed in their course, that they regularly check with the students to be sure that they are keeping up with the demands of the course, and that they are sending out deficiency notices when necessary. What appears to be lacking is the availability of peer tutoring for students who are having difficulty.

While few full-time faculty respondents report that they are conducting “regular formal assessments of the overall learning in their courses,” and less than half of the faculty are embedding assessment into their grading process, a strong majority feel that they are

Faculty Practices Supporting Student-Centered Learning and Assessment	Mills 2008
The course syllabus contains the learning goals for the course.	68%
The learning goals are broken down into measurable criteria.	48%
Students are aware, throughout the semester, of the progress that they are making in their course and what they need to do to improve.	81%
Instructor regularly “checks in” with students during class time throughout the semester to confirm that they are keeping pace with the content of the course.	71%
Instructors have peer tutoring available for students who need additional support.	37%
Instructors send deficiency notices to students who are at risk of earning less than a “C” in the course.	77%
Faculty recognize program assessment, broadly defined, as faculty scholarship directed toward the improvement of courses, programs and student learning.	43%
Faculty conduct regular formal assessments of their own course comparing each student’s progress against the class as a whole to identify overall areas of strengths and weaknesses.	36%
Faculty grading process supports program assessment efforts by evaluating student work against the learning criteria of the course providing evidence of the level of progress their students are making toward each of the criteria.	45%
Faculty make appropriate changes to their courses based on assessment findings	70%
Results of course assessment are used to support positive changes to the overall curriculum and course offerings in their department.	61%
Course learning goals align with the mission of the College.	90%
Faculty are interested in more information about how to better assess their courses.	54%

FIGURE 11. FACULTY PRACTICES SUPPORTING STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

making appropriate changes to their courses based on assessment findings, and over half feel that the information is used to support their curricula. Therefore, it appears that the focus on assessment at Mills needs to be concerned less with creating assessment activities, than with helping faculty define assessment, identifying those assessment activities already taking place and working with faculty to formalize their efforts to build the “culture of evidence” that is a necessary goal for our WASC reaccreditation efforts.