

GSE Emeriti Faculty Survey

Overview

A survey of 20 items was sent to 49 Graduate School of Education emeriti faculty in January 2002. After seven weeks, there were 28 responses, providing a 57% response rate. Of these, three responses indicated that the faculty member was too ill or no longer interested in having an intellectual connection with GSE. One respondent wrote “can’t answer, interest and availability incompatible” and another indicated “no interest” to each survey item, but both did answer the background information section and were included. Thus, there were 25 viable responses. 17 of the surveys were postmarked from Western New York, indicating a strong local presence of emeriti faculty. (In addition, 5 were postmarked from Florida, 2 from Arizona, 2 from the Midwest, and 2 from New England.)

The survey was divided into three parts. The first part asked for general background information about each faculty member (e.g., department, how long retired, etc.). The second (main) part of the survey, asked the faculty members how they wanted to remain in contact with GSE now that they have retired. The items in this part of the survey emphasized a connection through modern communicative technology, such as e-mail. The third part of the survey had an open-end format, allowing faculty members to write about the kind of relationship that they wanted to have with GSE.

Results – Part 1

A large portion of the GSE emeriti faculty were male; of the 25 usable responses, only two were females. All three departments were represented. The emeriti faculty respondents have been retired approximately four years and generally stay in close contact with GSE. 68% keep in touch with GSE either weekly or monthly and the same percentage read the GSE alumni newsletter. The emeriti faculty appear to have embraced e-mail; only two respondents indicated they do not use e-mail, and the average was 78 e-mails sent per month (the high respondent wrote that he sends between 300 and 350). However, most faculty have not visited the GSE homepage, suggesting that they use e-mail more than the Internet.

Item	Response
Gender	Female (2), Male (23)
Department	CEP (5), OAP/ELP (9), LAI (10) (one respondent circled both ELP and LAI)
Number of years retired from GSE	3.7 years (average)
Approximate number of e-mails sent per month	Numeric response average – 78 per month Written responses: “many” (1) “varies” (1)
How often do you keep in touch with	Never (3), Weekly (8), Monthly (7),

people at GSE?	Yearly (4); also, “seldom” (1)
Do you read the GSE Alumni Newsletter?	No (6) Yes (15), “occasionally” (1)
Have you visited the GSE homepage?	No (12), Yes (11)

(Note: the total response number does not equal 25 in all cases due to incomplete answers.)

Results – Part 2

The following chart lists the survey items, their average (rated on a scale of 0 “no interest,” 1 “little interest,” 2 “some interest,” and 3 “much interest”), and their rank from 1 (highest) to 20 (lowest):

Item	Mean	Rank
a.) mentoring a GSE faculty member	.61	17
b.) mentoring a GSE student	.65	14
c.) assisting with professional networking for someone from GSE	.61	17
d.) having access to UB scholarly materials and databases	1.87	1
e.) helping plan research projects with GSE faculty member or student	.91	7
f.) being on a listserv that announces relevant academic information for your field	1	6
g.) having publishing opportunities with a GSE faculty member or student	.86	9
h.) critiquing research of a GSE faculty member or student before it is published	.91	7
i.) participating in GSE-sponsored online colloquia about topics of interest to you	.65	14
j.) helping to write a history of GSE	1.17	4
k.) participating in a GSE-sponsored online conference to present your research findings	.48	19
l.) being a guest lecturer at GSE	1.23	3
m.) giving consulting help to a GSE faculty member in starting/developing a new academic program	.74	11
n.) getting help from a GSE faculty member or student in a an academic or research area	.70	12
o.) acting as a consultant for a course/program offered by a GSE faculty member	.78	10
p.) evaluating a GSE course/program	.43	20
q.) participating in a course offered by GSE through distance education technology	.65	14
r.) being part of a GSE-related scholar support group	.70	12
s.) getting a newsletter that gives summaries of research conducted,	1.41	2

articles published, and conferences attended by GSE faculty and students in your field		
t) being part of a database of GSE-related faculty members or students	1.09	5

There were 14 items that received less than a “1” or “little interest” rating, suggesting faculty were not interested in pursuing these areas. Although these items were ranked low, such as “a.) mentoring a GSE faculty member,” several respondents indicated that they would be willing to pursue this activity.

Results – Part 3

This part allowed faculty to elaborate on their responses and address other topics not mentioned in the survey. The following are selected quotations from the emeriti faculty:

Emeriti faculty are still intellectually active:

“Although I have shown little or no interest in most of the topics you listed, I continue to contribute to UB (by teaching, writing, etc.)”

“...am teaching a web-based course for ELP...”

“I am very active in research and publishing”

Emeriti faculty have changed their focus:

“I have found my interests changed after retirement”

“I appreciate the contact. However, I have made the decision to ‘fully’ retire and do not have interest in pursuing past academic research and/or scholarly activities”

“My limited interest reflects limited physical activity”

Additional concerns, needs, and recommendations of emeriti faculty:

“I would like to maintain my office as I continue to finish up GSE related projects... Access to e-mail and the Internet through UB is very important as is access to the library...”

“After I give up my office, I would still like a place ‘to hang my hat’ and a secure place to leave some books and files... Perhaps, if GSE provided an Emeritus Center with desks, computers, etc., a more congenial environment could be created that would encourage retired faculty to come on campus more often”

“I would like to encourage a more social contact with retired/current faculty (i.e., meet for breakfast once a month)”

“If there are any centers at GSE where I could help because of my background in urban education, race relations, etc.”

“We need to send UB info to emeriti faculty! Emeriti faculty should be honorary members of GSEAA. Directory (of emeriti faculty) should be compiled. Could emeriti faculty have some computing services like current faculty members? Services/contact needed”

“I might be interested in teaching a mini-course”

“Re: history of the school, I threw out tons of relevant information when I cleaned out my office. Perhaps you can alert retiring faculty members to the prospect of saving the material – perhaps to collaborate with a faculty member who is interested in the history of education”

Two faculty members indicated that they would welcome contact from GSE students or faculty in their (new) home area:

“I would be willing to be a St. Louis area contact for a prospective GSE student (especially at the doctoral level) or prospective faculty member”

“Since I cannot travel to Buffalo because of my wife’s health, I would be happy to meet any students or faculty who may visit Martha’s Vineyard. Indeed, GSE should do a summer course here. Think of how much fun that could be”

In addition to these responses, the emeriti faculty were asked if they would submit their name and e-mail address for follow-up contact; 17, or 74% of the respondents provided this information.

Overall, the data suggest that GSE emeriti faculty are hard to define collectively. However, the respondents did indicate more than a little interest in five items: having access to UB scholarly materials and databases; getting a newsletter that gives summaries of research conducted, articles published, and conferences attended by GSE faculty and students in your field; being a guest lecturer at GSE; helping to write a history of GSE; and being part of a database of GSE-related faculty members or students. Identifying these five areas represent a first step toward developing initiatives to strengthen the relationship between GSE and its emeriti faculty.