2020
FALL TEACHING SURVEY FINDINGS
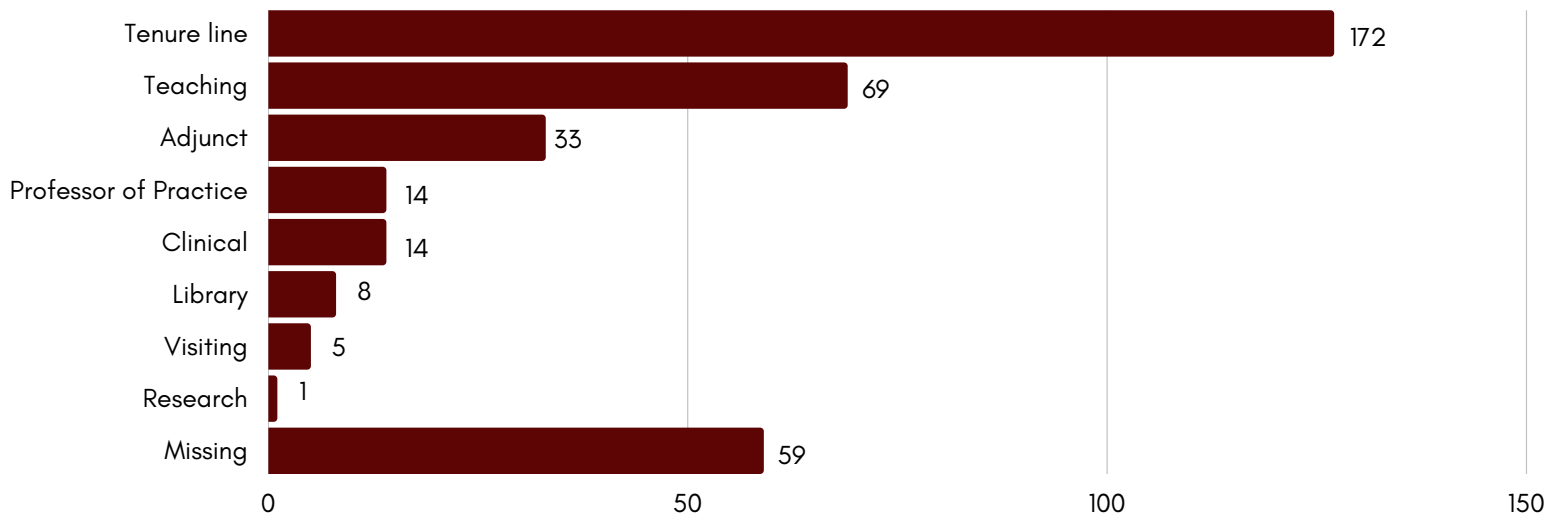
UNIVERSITY *of* DENVER
OFFICE OF TEACHING & LEARNING

UNIVERSITY *of* DENVER
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Prepared by:
Leslie Cramblet Alvarez, PhD
Director, Office of Teaching and Learning

Qualitative analysis by: Christina Paguyo, PhD
Director of Assessment, Office of Teaching and Learning

Bar chart – Respondents:
- Tenure line: 172
- Teaching: 69
- Adjunct: 33
- Professor of Practice: 14
- Clinical: 14
- Library: 8
- Visiting: 5
- Research: 1
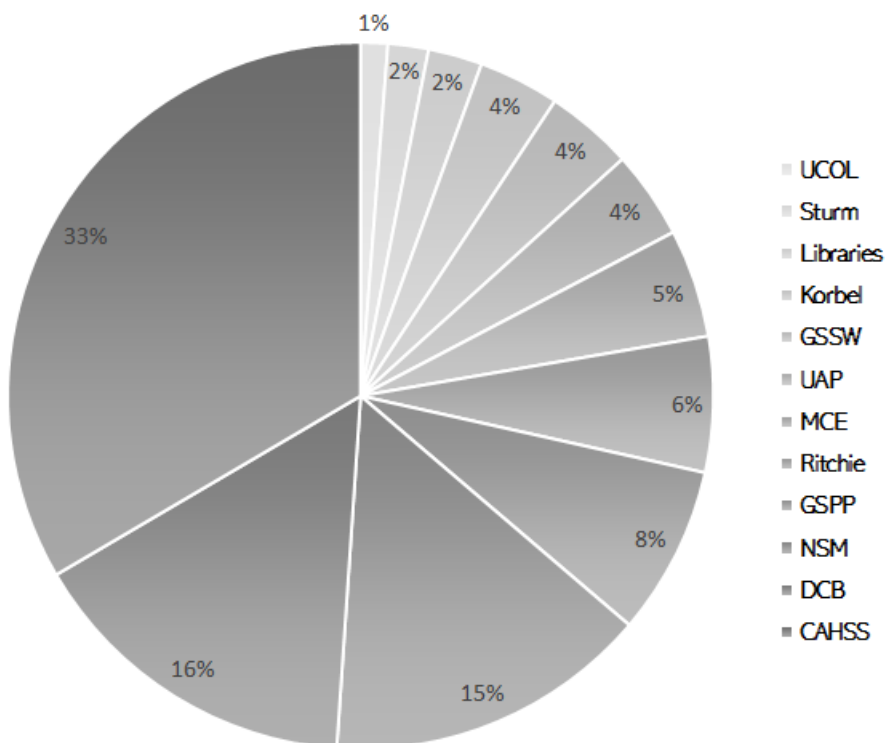- Missing: 59

375
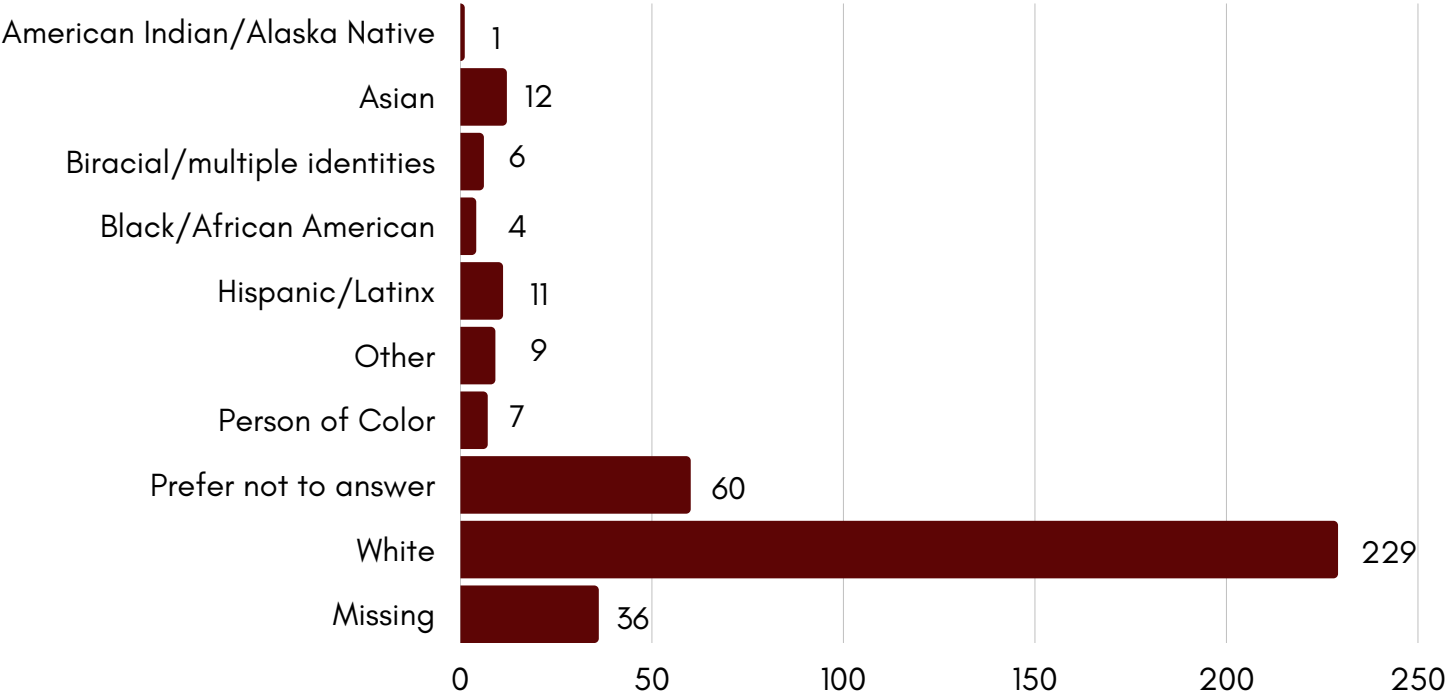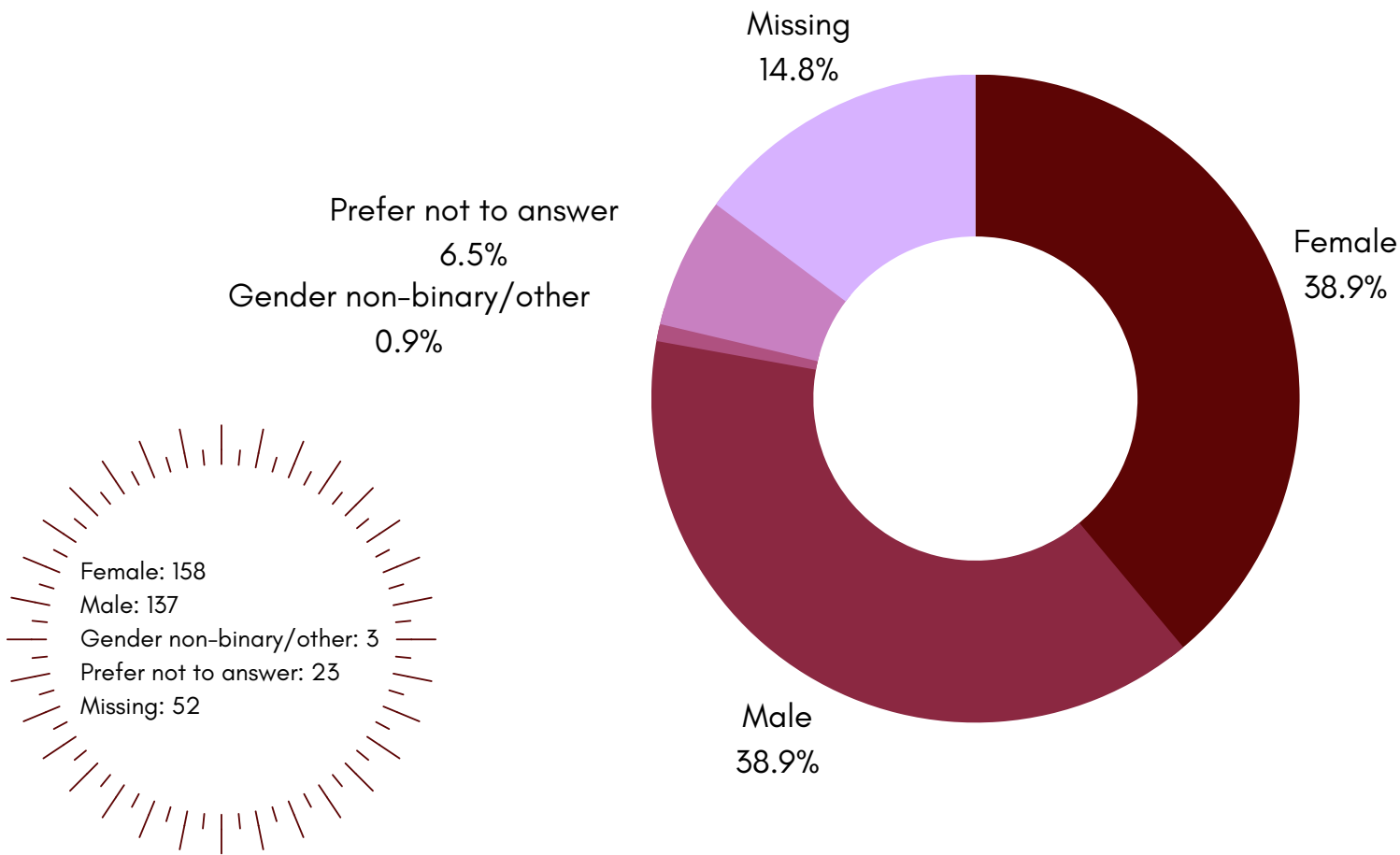Faculty responded

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Respondents were asked about the personal and professional effects of COVID, their teaching experience this fall, and what they would like to see from the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL). The survey was open for a period of two weeks from October 19–30, 2020 (weeks 6–7 of the quarter). Only teaching-related results are reported here.

PARTICIPANTS

Faculty respondents represented all academic units and series. The majority of respondents identified as tenure line faculty. CAHSS had the most respondents, 108 followed by:
DCB: 50
NSM: 48
GSPP: 25
Ritchie: 20
MCE: 16
UAP: 13
GSSW: 13
Korbel: 12
Libraries: 8
Sturm: 6
UCOL: 4

Pie chart legend (top to bottom): UCOL, Sturm, Libraries, Korbel, GSSW, UAP, MCE, Ritchie, GSPP, NSM, DCB, CAHSS

Pie chart values: 1%, 2%, 2%, 4%, 4%, 4%, 5%, 6%, 8%, 15%, 16%, 33%

IDENTITIES REPRESENTED

Missing
14.8%

Prefer not to answer
6.5%

Gender non-binary/other
0.9%

Female
38.9%

Male
38.9%

Female: 158
Male: 137
Gender non-binary/other: 3
Prefer not to answer: 23
Missing: 52

| Identity	Count
American Indian/Alaska Native	1
Asian	12
Biracial/multiple identities	6
Black/African American	4
Hispanic/Latinx	11
Other	9
Person of Color	7
Prefer not to answer	60
White	229
Missing	36

Faculty were asked about their experiences teaching this term. With regard to modality, respondents were prompted to "check all that apply". The vast majority (n=238) identified "online", followed by hybrid (n=88), face to face (n=79) Hyflex (n=69), and face to face that has evolved to Hyflex (n=68).
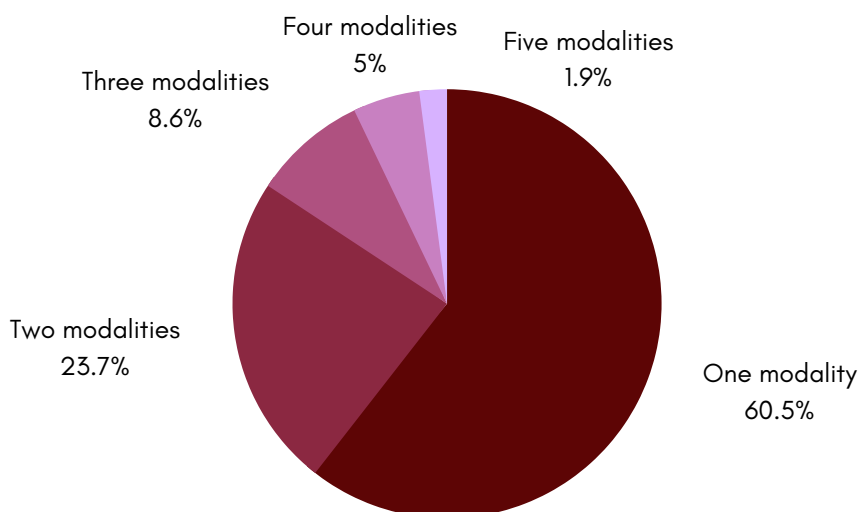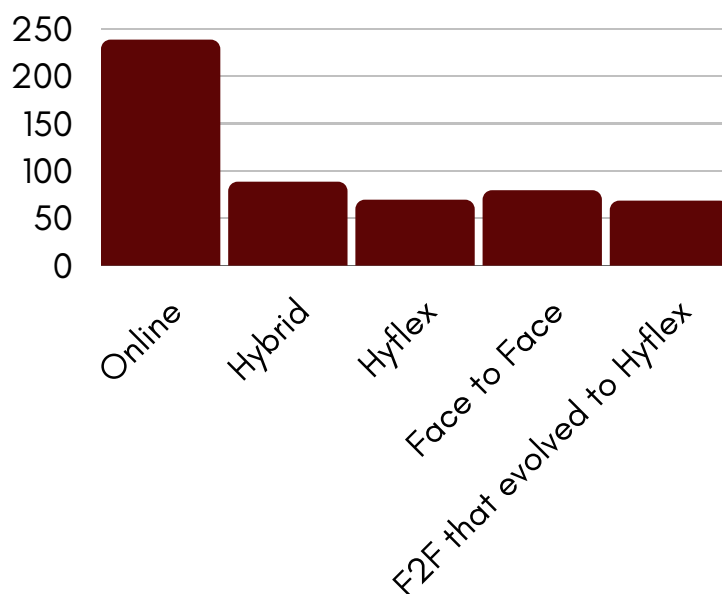
Despite variations in modality, most faculty indicated that they are teaching in one (n= 204) or two (n=80) modalities.

Faculty were also prompted with a forced-choice question, "When thinking about your teaching experience this term, which of the following captures your current experience". Most (n=215) identified "as expected" and the rest were evenly split between "worse" (n=59) and "better" (n=59) than expected.
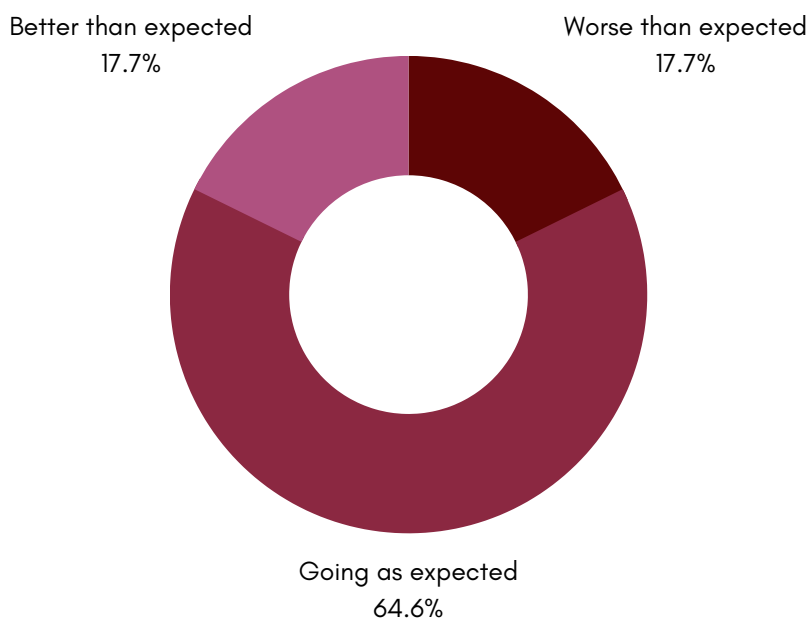
Next, faculty were invited to elaborate on their current teaching experience through an open-ended question, "Would you like to share anything specific about your teaching experience (whether positive or negative) this term?" Preliminary analysis of open-ended survey responses yielded five themes:

I. Challenges of Teaching in All Modalities: Whether professors are teaching F2F, hyflex, or 100% online, faculty face significant challenges.

The uncertainty of knowing which students will be in class and which will be on Zoom. Difficult to plan any small group discussions when the in-person and online student numbers constantly fluctuate.

The Hyflex space is the worst of both worlds but seems a necessary evil for our current environment. It has been so difficult to teach in two modalities at the same time and offer the same level of care and concern for the classroom experience.

II. Time Constraints: Faculty noted that teaching during the era of COVID-19 takes considerable bandwidth away from important activities, including research, service, and self-care.

Every single one of my classes has involved significant overhauling that even with the tools provided by OTL and trainings, has been time consuming in ways I could have never imagined.

I am incredulous that the University is proceeding with faculty evaluations this fall, in light of everything faculty is doing to support and retain students.

Teaching online is more work; I'm fine with that, but it leaves less time for other expectations of the job (service and research) that I couldn't care less about right now.

III. Impacts upon Students: Despite quantitative data that indicates acceptable levels of student engagement and competence with technology (see page 9), some faculty shared examples of students being disengaged, anxious, and stressed, which negatively impact their ability to learn, let alone complete basic tasks. Additionally, some professors voiced concerns regarding the number of students with accommodations, while other faculty wondered how DU can better train students to use Canvas.

An unusually high number of DPS students and students with other special circumstances has put additional pressure on me as a teacher. 40% of my class has a documented accommodation.

Next, faculty were invited to elaborate on their current teaching experience through an open-ended question, "Would you like to share anything specific about your teaching experience (whether positive or negative) this term?" Preliminary analysis of open-ended survey responses yielded five themes:

III. Impacts upon Students (continued)
Students are struggling so much with self-care and self-efficacy. I thought we would all be in a slightly better place after summer, but they aren't submitting work or even just basically checking in. All of my go-to strategies of reaching out to them personally just aren't working right now. I'm very concerned about student retention.

My students are stressed, like extremely stressed. The level of DSP profiles, extensions, extra instructions, poor concentration etc is unprecedented. They also seems to be helpless through simpler tasks (deadlines, some basic tech issue like opening pdfs etc).

IV. Technological Challenges: Despite investments in technology and numerous classroom overhauls to prepare for Hyflex capability, faculty are feeling that their technology needs are not fully met.

[C]ameras in the highflex [sic] classrooms are not of sufficient quality to allow the online students to see the screen in the room; this should have been a priority, otherwise what is the point of having the camera at all?

Not all classrooms have equal technology. Using my laptop to juggle Zoom, PowerPoint, Canvas, Documents, attendance, etc, is extremely cumbersome. Some classrooms have desktop computers which is much better...Super high risk to be dependent on one piece of equipment.
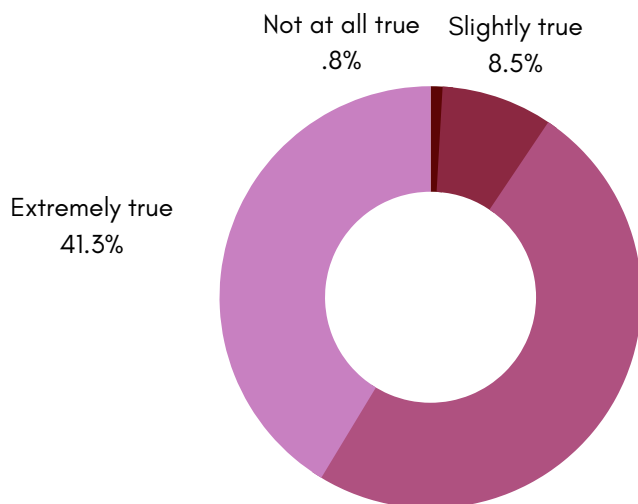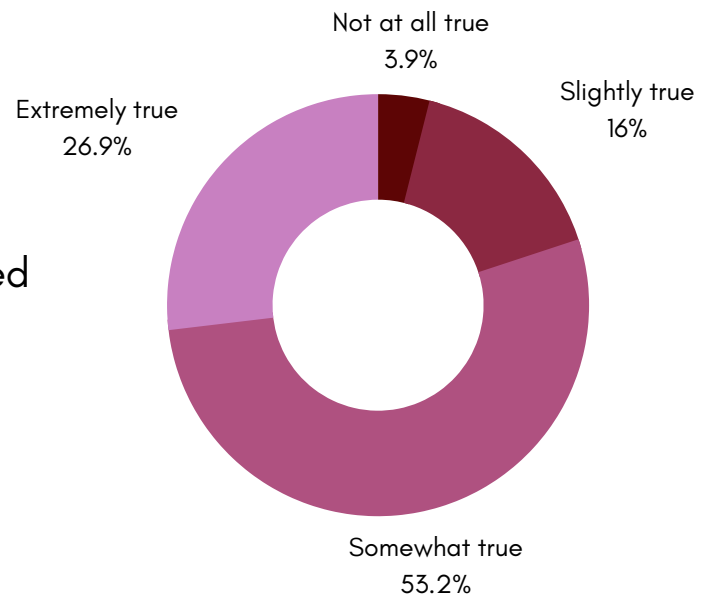
V. Ethos of Fatigue and Burnout: Exhaustion and worry are prevalent concerns expressed in the survey among many professors.

...in my more than 20 years of successful teaching I have never spent all day, ever [sic] day, every week on teaching and advising. The burden of this has been intense and is not livable. I will continue to support my students and invest heavily in my teaching, but it is making my personal life, stress level, level of exhaustion impossible.

Juggling childcare and quarantines due to exposure is very overwhelming and impacting my ability to turn around grading, planning, etc.

Faculty were asked their perceptions of certain student experiences and whether student needs resulted in additional work. Faculty reported that students seem engaged, competent at using the necessary educational technology this term. Moreover, faculty are not spending a significant amount of time teaching students to use the necessary technology.

Students seem engaged
M=3.00

Not at all true
3.9%

Slightly true
16%

Extremely true
26.9%

Somewhat true
53.2%

Not at all true
.8%

Slightly true
8.5%

Extremely true
41.3%

Somewhat true
49.2%

Students seem to be competent users of the required technology
M=3.31

Extremely true
5.5%

Somewhat true
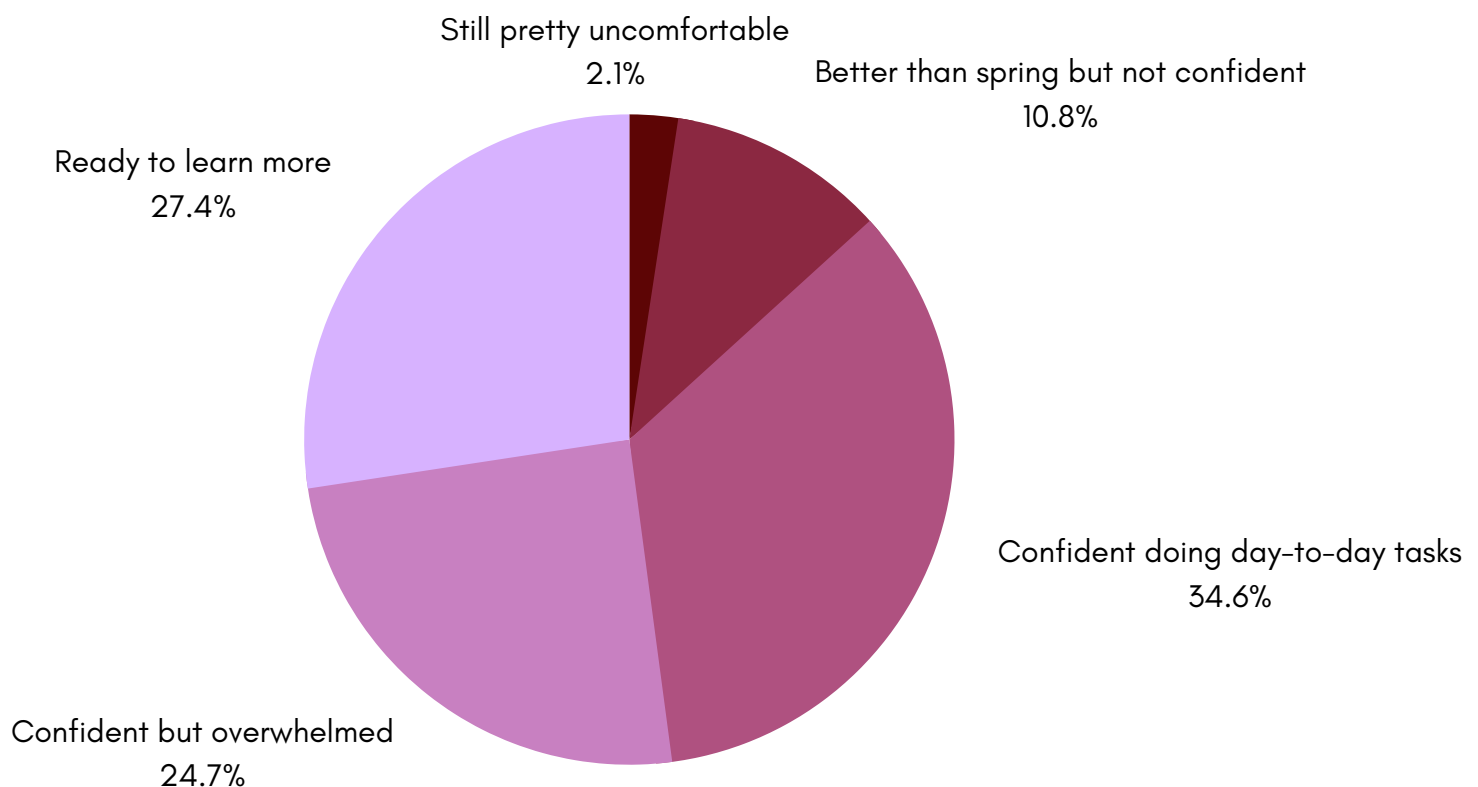16.1%

Not at all true
44.8%

Slightly true
33.6%

I spent a lot of time helping my students learn to navigate the needed educational technology
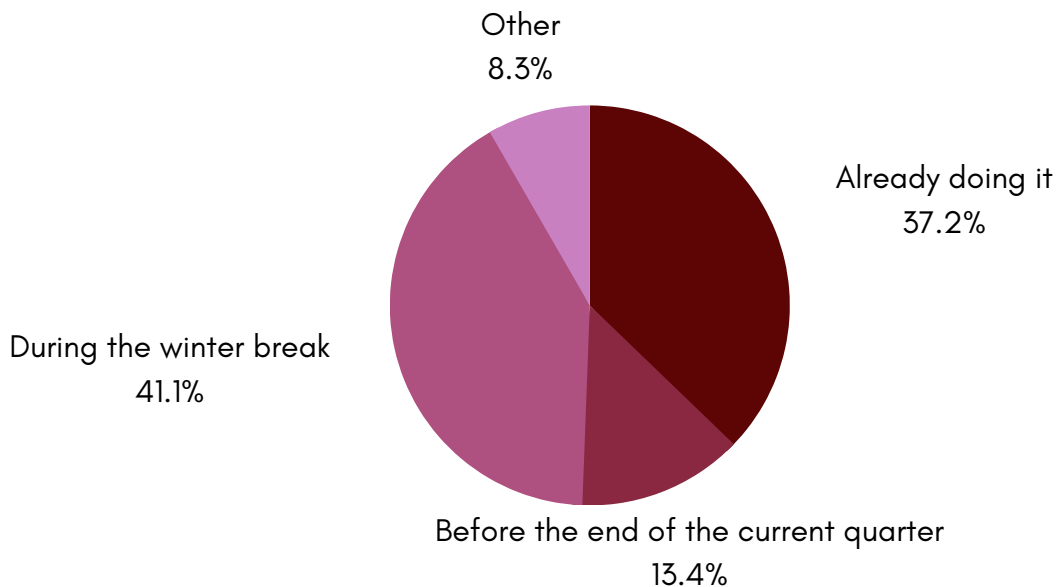*M=1.82*
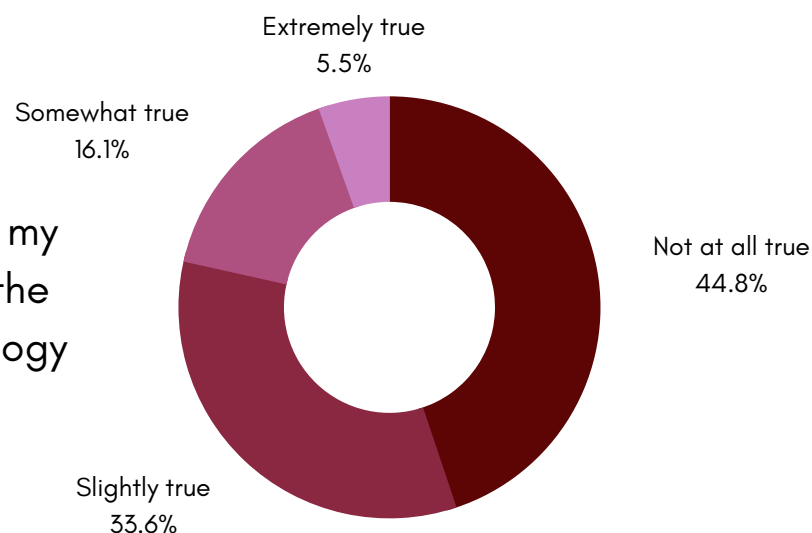
In May, we asked faculty about their confidence in several educational technology-related areas. This fall, we asked about faculty's self reported confidence in Zoom and Canvas as well as other areas related to teaching and learning. Confidence in Zoom increased from May while confidence in Canvas decreased.

Using the slider, please help us understand your confidence and knowledge in the following areas (0-low; 100-high).	Mean 0-100
Canvas	79.2
Zoom	81.2
Developing community in my classes	62.1
Adapting activities to a socially distanced classroom	58.8
Engaging in inclusive teaching in my current teaching environment/s	66.7
Teaching in a Hyflex setting	51.2
Using the technology in my classroom/s	73.1
I have all the technology I need in my classroom/s	63.8
I know what an instructional designer does and how I can be helped by one	55.4

When it comes to technology related to teaching (broadly defined) how would you characterize yourself today?

Still pretty uncomfortable
2.1%

Better than spring but not confident
10.8%

Ready to learn more
27.4%

Confident doing day-to-day tasks
34.6%

Confident but overwhelmed
24.7%

Several questions were aimed at understanding what supports are needed by OTL and IT to assist in preparation for the coming quarters.

Other
8.3%

Already doing it
37.2%

During the winter break
41.1%
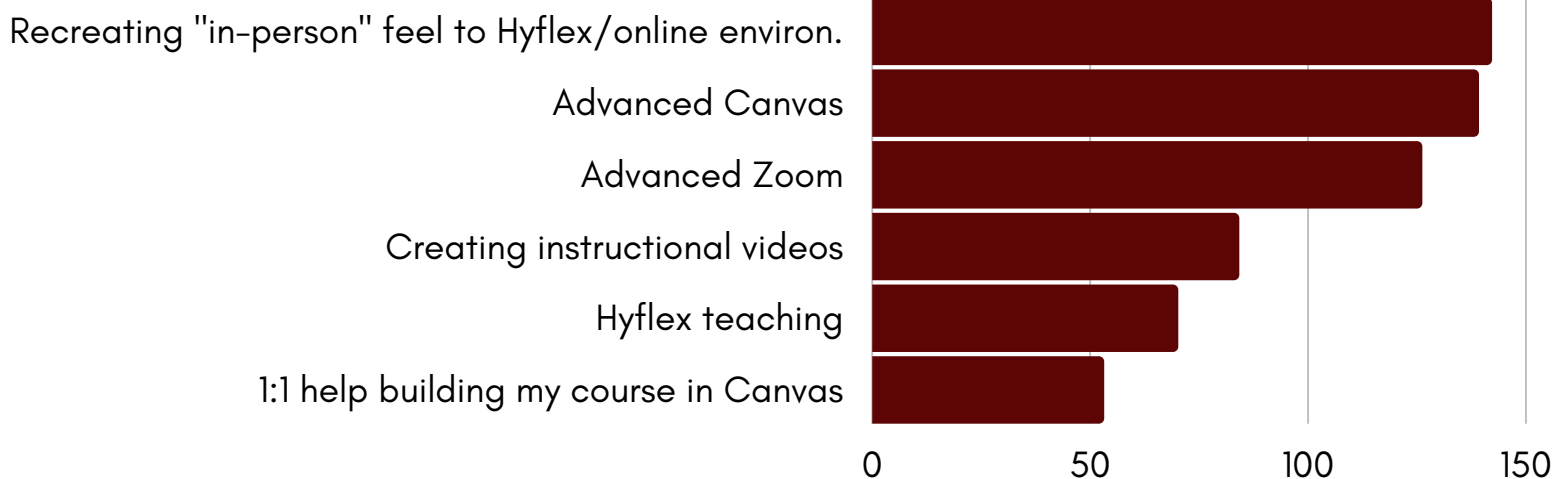
Before the end of the current quarter
13.4%

Faculty were asked to identify when they anticipated beginning to plan for the winter/spring and most identified that they were already doing it or would be over the break.

When asked about preferred modality (by ranking) and topic (check all that apply item) of OTL programming, most preferred "one off" and asynchronous sessions, primarily in the areas of advanced Canvas and Zoom.

1   Synchronous, "one off" sessions
2   Asynchronous supports I can access any time
3   1:1 sessions aimed at creating specific deliverables
4   Synchronous institute-style (multiple day) sessions

Top 6 items checked

Recreating "in-person" feel to Hyflex/online environ.
Advanced Canvas
Advanced Zoom
Creating instructional videos
Hyflex teaching
1:1 help building my course in Canvas

0   50   100   150

Faculty are feeling stressed, worried, and burned out

Both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that faculty are feeling higher levels of stress and worry, greater teaching and administrative burdens, and are spending a significant amount of time preparing for the new classroom demands resulting from the pandemic. Faculty of color and particularly women of color are reporting greater impacts in these areas and additional impacts related to inadequate working environments and racial trauma.

Faculty impression of student experience is mixed

While quantitative data about faculty impressions of student engagement is generally positive, open-ended data tells a more complex story. Faculty noted that students are feeling stressed, and are less responsive (including with regard to assignment completion), yet there are also reports that students are grateful for the in-person experiences and engagement is rich.

Classroom technology is still posing challenges

There has been significant investment in classroom technology and IT Campus Partnerships has been working overtime to equip classrooms with the necessary technology to support Hyflex teaching. Even so, there are technological needs that have not been met. IT Campus Partnerships is already aware of many of the concerns that have been reported in this survey and has been working to address them in anticipation of winter/spring.

Teaching is more time intensive and investments in teaching and learning are not yet felt

Many faculty reported the challenges of both preparing for and teaching in the new educational environment. There was worry about teaching evaluations and concerns about even familiar courses feeling like a new prep. Though significant investments have been made both in classroom technology and supports through the OTL, faculty reported not feel fully supported. Moreover, many faculty do not understand what Instructional Designers do which was a key investment in OTL services.

Faculty want bite-sized and asynchronous supports

Faculty want more bite-sized programming and resources that can be accessed asynchronously as well as being ready for more advanced training, particularly in the areas of Zoom and Canvas. There is also a great desire for programming that assists in recreating an in person feel in hyflex and online environments. The OTL will provide programming aimed at developing community and encouraging engagement in distance settings.

Faculty are feeling more confident with teaching technology but are still overwhelmed

Though faculty are reporting higher confidence in some areas related to educational technology, there are still some opportunities for growth. Most noted that they felt confident with day-to-day teaching tasks and many expressed a desire for professional development opportunities that allow for continued growth or the "advanced version". Still, there are many faculty reporting being overwhelmed by all the technology needed, even if they are proficient users.

This survey was a collaboration of:
Kate Willink, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
Theresa Liguori Hernandez, Assistant Vice Chancellor, IT/Campus Partnerships
Leslie Cramblet Alvarez, Director, Office of Teaching and Learning

Acknowledgements:
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We appreciate your feedback on earlier versions of this survey and encouraging participation in your unit.