

IRC FACULTY SURVEY 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This summary presents findings from a survey of CU Denver IRC faculty (Instructional, Research, Clinical and Lecturer titles) conducted by UCDALI (University of Colorado Denver Association of Lecturers and Instructors) in Spring 2025. With this survey, UCDALI aimed to compile updated information on IRC faculty experiences and areas of concern, gauge the impacts of recent IRC-focused initiatives, and begin to establish legacy data to track how experiences and perspectives trend over time.

The 2025 survey focused on five key areas: **Workload, Compensation, Job Security, Professional Development, Communication and Community**. These areas encompass significant aspects of faculty work life, they have notable points of intersection, and their interactions significantly inform overall faculty perspectives on their work and the University. Survey responses suggest that when it comes to IRC faculty work-life, CU Denver is doing well in some areas but needs to do more and better in others. Determining how to respond effectively, rapidly where possible and steadily where more time and investment are needed, is essential given the critical role IRC faculty play in the CU Denver mission and in the educational lives and successes of its students. In conducting this survey and sharing its results, UCDALI calls upon our administrative partners to give due consideration to the data contained herein, and to engage this survey as an essential tool in decision-making and resource allocation.

UCDALI sent a Qualtrics survey to all IRC faculty in February 2025. A total of **133 IRC faculty** completed the survey, representing about **18.4%** of CU Denver's ~722 IRC faculty. Responses came from all [IRC titles](#) (Instructor Series, Research Series, Clinical Series, Lecturer) with Instructors and Lecturers comprising 71% of the sample.* All schools, colleges and the Auraria Library are represented. The survey collected both quantitative data, primarily using Likert scales, and qualitative responses to open-ended prompts. This summary highlights the Likert ratings, aiming for broad insights about where things are going well, where improvement is needed, and how significant the challenge is. By parsing the data in this manner, UCDALI hopes to stimulate discussions across the University in light of the values embraced in CU Denver's [2030 Strategic Plan](#), the commitment espoused in the [Provost's IRC Roadmap](#), the distinctive character of Denver's faculty, and the needs of our students and our larger community.

UCDALI's assessment of "doing well" versus "needs improvement" is based on a basic quartile division of the Likert scales, with the upper quartile, equivalent to a rating of 75 out of 100, serving as the baseline metric (fig. 1). Ratings above Q3 indicate acceptable satisfaction and positivity, while lower ratings convey areas where the University is struggling to adequately serve and support IRC faculty.

* One respondent self-identified as Research faculty. Due to the limitations of this sample size, these responses are omitted in the following pages. However, we recognize the importance of CU Denver's research professionals and hope to take this opportunity to better understand the experiences and needs of Research faculty at CU Denver.

Likert Scale Ratings

Quartile Organization and Assessment

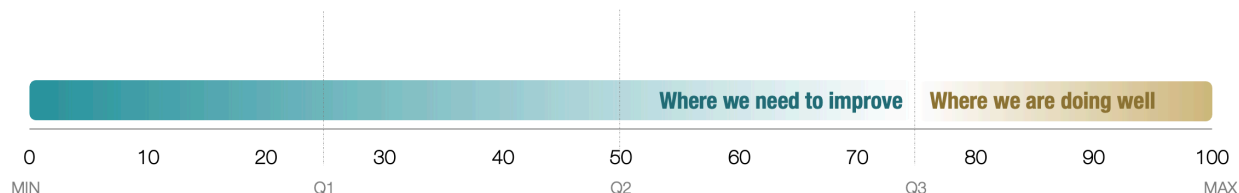


Figure 1: Likert scale ratings and quartile organization

This summary looks primarily at the overall average (OA) rating of all respondents on the Likert-style questions (fig. 2). It also addresses the average ratings of distinct faculty ranks where there is notable deviation from the OA. The following sections correspond to the five key survey areas. The brief discussions synthesize average ratings and draw upon responses to open-ended questions to provide a sense of faculty perspectives on the range of surveyed issues. In general, OAs fall between Q1 (25) and Q3 (75), indicating moderate opinions across surveyed areas. However, OAs for questions related to job security, inclusion, advancement, and salary fall the lowest, indicating that problems in these areas are especially acute. (See Appendix for a summary table of Likert averages by faculty title track.) Additionally, it must be noted that individual responses on some questions fell below the first quartile (<25 out of 100), indicating exceptional difficulties for some faculty. Those experiences cannot be overlooked and will be addressed in greater detail in a full report, forthcoming in Fall 2025.

In addition to making both this summary and the detailed report available on the UCDALI website, it is UCDALI's hope that the areas of concern identified through this survey will inform priorities and actions for AY25-26, and that further discussion between faculty and administrators can take place early in the Fall 2025 semester to dig deeper into revelations gleaned from this data and ensure alignment of primary unit, school/college/library and campus initiatives with IRC faculty needs.

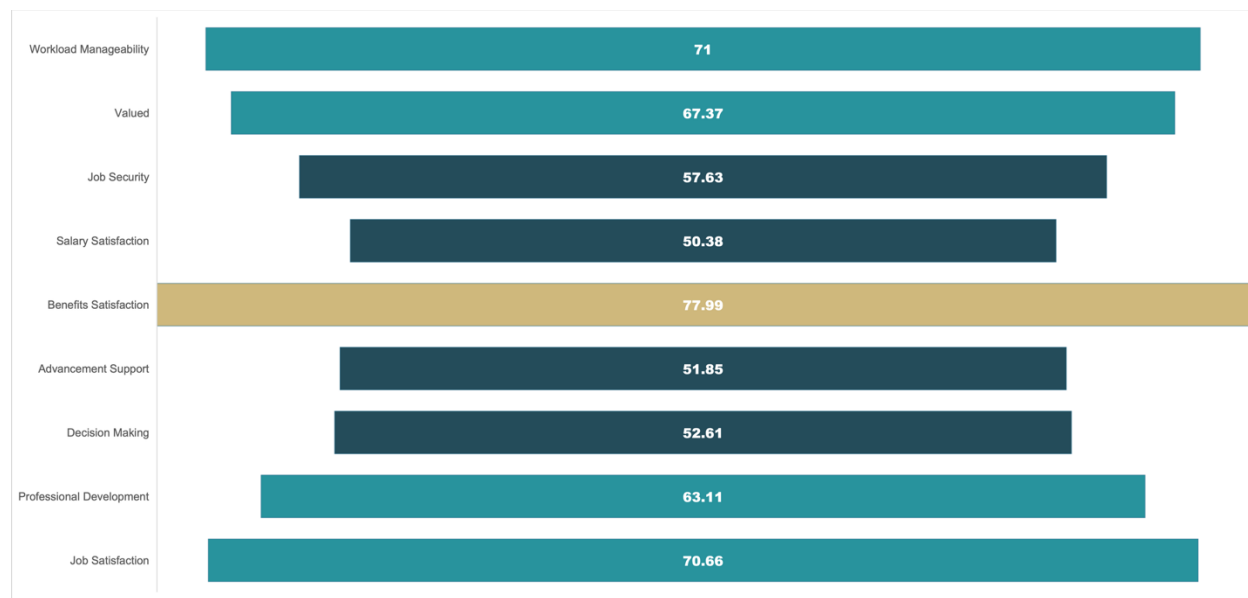


Figure 2: Overall Average (OA) ratings for select survey topics. **Gold** = Above upper quartile (75). **Teal** = 60-75. **Slate** = <60.

WORKLOAD

This part of the survey aimed to better understand perceptions about workload, how work manifests relative to time, and how faculty see their work trending in recent years. Responses indicated that most IRC faculty see their workloads as generally manageable with an **average overall rating (OA) of 71 out of 100**. However, Teaching Professor Track (TPT)/Clinical Teaching Track (CTT) faculty and Senior Instructors noted lower feelings of workload manageability compared to other roles with **average ratings of 67.05 for Senior Instructors, 66.92 for Assistant Professors, and 55.20 for Associate Professors**. Additionally, **85%** of respondents estimated they **worked more than a baseline 40 hours per week** to complete their work, with nearly **36%** estimating they **regularly worked 7 or more additional hours** weekly. **Increases in workload** since 2021 were also reported by **64%** of respondents.

JOB SECURITY

On the question of job security, the **OA of 57.63 out of 100** shows most respondents feel somewhat secure in their position but carry a level of uncertainty about their employment with the University. **Lecturers** reported less security than rostered IRC faculty with an **average rating of 52.47 out of 100**. However, **Associate Teaching/Clinical Professors** had the **lowest average rating at 46.69 out of 100**. Across the board, faculty ratings for how valued they feel by their unit, school/college, and the University, taken as a whole, were higher (**OA of 67.37**); variations by rank were consistent with job security ratings with **Lecturers (62.71)** and **Associate TPT/CTT (59.54)** being lower.

The survey also tried to gauge the impact of the recent push for more Multi-Year Contracts (MYCs) on faculty perceptions of job security. Rostered faculty who indicated they currently have a MYC were asked to rate how positively the MYC had impacted their feelings of job security. The **average rating of 59.08 suggests that faculty with MYCs feel slightly more secure** than they did prior to receiving a contract. Open-ended responses related to value and job security frequently noted MYCs as a possible measure for increasing security. However, this perception is not universal: Numerous responses questioned the actual level of security MYCs offer. Others emphasized an essential difference between the financial relief associated with dismissal provided for in the contract terms and the employment security afforded by tenure.

COMPENSATION

Faculty compensation has struggled to keep pace with workload, general inflation, cost of living in the Denver area, and salaries both in private industry and at peer institutions. UCDALI recognizes that work to address these issues is ongoing across campus at different administrative levels. At the same time, the pace of this work is slow, and responses to salary-related questions show that many IRC faculty have yet to see substantive increases in compensation that adequately reflect both workload and the critical roles they play in student success and in advancing the teaching, research and service missions of the University.

Salary satisfaction ratings were uniformly low across all roles, with an **OA of 50.38 out of 100**. This rating is consistent with comments and concerns faculty have previously shared, and with data compiled by university initiatives such as the Comprehensive Compensation Collaborative (CCC), which noted significant lags in salary relative to market medians in IRC ranks. Qualitative responses related to compensation further reveal troubling experiences for IRC faculty including lack of transparency in salary-related processes such as merit pools and promotion, inaccurate or inconsistent information about pay determinations and other salary-related processes such as grievance, and perceived retaliation through salary stagnation.

Base salary and the limited mechanisms available for increases are significant issues. **Satisfaction with benefits** for eligible faculty, by contrast, is significantly higher with an **OA of 77.99 out of 100**. However, the lack of basic benefits eligibility for Lecturers was noted in several open-ended responses.[†]

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Faculty **satisfaction with professional development (PD)** is moderate with an **OA of 63.11 out of 100**. Perceptions of **support for advancement** are notably lower at **51.85 out of 100**. **Lecturers** reported the lowest levels of satisfaction with PD opportunities (**59.04 out of 100**) and **Senior Instructors** reported the lowest scores for feeling supported to advance in their careers (**47.95 out of 100**). Asked to discuss ways to improve in this area, respondents suggested more mentorship, increased PD funding and funding stability, sabbatical-like opportunities, and removing barriers to advancement such as developing, clarifying, or improving primary unit criteria, and ensuring that the length and complexity of dossiers are appropriate to rank and related factors such as compensation and promotional pay.

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY

On issues of both **belonging (67.63)** and **work-related communications (64.55)**, OAs indicated moderate satisfaction, although open-ended responses consistently noted higher satisfaction in these areas at the unit or school/college level than at the University level. Respondents also called for greater transparency, clarity and frankness in University communications, and stronger alignment between what is said and what is done. Feelings of **inclusion in decision-making processes** are notably lower with an **OA of 52.61 out of 100**, and an **average Lecturer rating of 41.96**.

CONCLUSIONS

The summary findings shared here highlight key areas of IRC faculty work life at CU Denver. Survey responses show that IRC faculty generally feel only moderately positive about many aspects of their work lives, and that there are numerous areas in which they need more direct and robust corrective measures. Perhaps most notable, however, is that despite frustrations and even feelings of exploitation mentioned in open-ended responses, faculty frequently reported a desire to continue to dedicate their efforts to CU Denver and its students, and to teach and conduct research of the highest quality. Many comments also indicated great compassion and empathy for student perspectives and commitment to professionalism. These sentiments seem reflected in ratings of **overall job satisfaction** for which the **OA is nearly 71 out of 100**.

In all, the survey responses show that while IRC faculty have some significant concerns and may even feel outright dissatisfaction in areas of their work life, they are not only committed to their work, but they want to do this work at CU Denver: **Nearly 80% of respondents advocated prioritizing something comparable to tenure for IRC faculty. Among Lecturers, 35% indicated interest in a rostered faculty position** at the University. Faculty want to stay here. Fostering this dedication by addressing critical challenges in workload, job security, compensation, professional development, and communication and community will benefit the nearly 70% of CU Denver faculty in the IRC ranks. More importantly, doing better for IRC faculty will better equip them to mentor, support, retain and champion CU Denver's students.

[†] While benefits are largely determined at the System level, the CU Denver Lecturer population is distinct, and the campus's assertion of a people-centered vision demands an expansive view of Lecturer supports.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Likert scale averages by IRC title track. Text color coding reflects relationship to upper quartile (75): **Gold = Above** | **Teal = below**. Cell highlighting reflects deviation from upper quartile: **Sandstone = >10 points below** | **Sunset = >20 points below**

Question	Overall Average	Lecturers	Instructors	TPT/CTT
How manageable is your workload?	71.00	78.13	73.48	61.06
How well defined is your workload?	73.50	71.38	74.49	70.04
How sufficient are the resources available to support your workload?	68.31	73.88	67.34	61.04
All things considered, how valued do you feel in your current position?	67.37	62.71	73.42	66.92
All things considered, rate your feelings of job security.	57.63	52.47	63.71	55.56
Considering your workload, how satisfied are you with your current salary?	50.38	53.30	52.85	49.15
Considering your workload, how satisfied are you with your benefits package?	77.99	NA	80.06	82.38
How satisfied are you with your current professional development opportunities?	63.11	59.04	67.64	60.82
Do you feel encouraged to advance in your career? How much so?	52.15	44.29	46.66	58.30
How sufficient do you feel are the supports and resources available to advance in your career?	51.85	54.48	49.65	54.10
Do you feel a sense of belonging in your department/primary unit? How much so?	67.63	53.55	71.36	69.58
Do you feel included in the decision-making processes that most impact your role? How much so?	52.61	41.96	53.42	59.35
How satisfied are you with work-related communications across your department, college and university as a whole?	64.55	65.62	60.10	64.77
All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job?	70.66	71.92	76.55	71.04