Because we now have four generations in the workplace, and for a host of other reasons, recruiting and retaining faculty members is becoming more complex and challenging, making the identification of “what faculty want” a top priority. As Traditionalists (born 1900–1945) and some Boomer (born 1946–1964) faculty retire, department chairs need to develop competitive packages to recruit younger Boomer, Generation X (born 1965–1981), and Millennial (born 1982–2000) faculty to fill these vacancies, and, in many cases, they need to rethink and modify existing policies and practices from a bygone era that no longer mesh well with the values and lifestyles of new faculty. Of course, “generational personalities” (see Table 1) are generalizations that do not fit everyone in his or her specific category; however, many chairs, deans, and provosts are finding these constructs to be useful as they converse about faculty roles, values, and attitudes toward the work and the workplace.

Boomers want flexibility in mid- to late career to balance the various roles of eldercare, parenting, and career while rethinking their lives as the possibility of retirement approaches. Many want the time and flexibility to enjoy the fruits of their labors without surrendering their careers completely through retirement. The Xers typically want flexibility to establish their careers while spending quality time with their young families, something at which many feel their parents failed. They do not see any reason why they should have to wait until late career to enjoy work–life balance. Additional clash points, or fundamental differences in perception or opinion around work and work–life, include attitudes regarding command structures, career goals, motivation, changing jobs, and expectations for performance reviews, training, career paths, career pace, and productivity (Lancaster & Stillman, 2003; Trower, 2008).

As of the 2004 Survey of Postsecondary Faculty, 22 percent of all faculty at accredited institutions of higher education in the United States are Traditionalists, 57 percent are Boomers, 21 percent are Xers, and 0.1 percent are Millennials (Forrest Cataldi, Fahimi, & Bradburn, 2005).
Table 1. Typical Characteristics by Generational Membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key descriptor</td>
<td>Loyal</td>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td>Skeptical</td>
<td>Realistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort Size</td>
<td>75 million</td>
<td>80 million</td>
<td>46 million</td>
<td>76 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common events</td>
<td>2 world wars, Great Depression</td>
<td>Vietnam War, civil rights and women’s movements</td>
<td>Triple divorce rates, parents “downsized”</td>
<td>Columbine, rapid technology advances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notion of command</td>
<td>Chain of command</td>
<td>Change of command</td>
<td>Self-command</td>
<td>Don’t command, collaborate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career goals</td>
<td>Build a legacy</td>
<td>Build a stellar career</td>
<td>Build a portable career</td>
<td>Build a parallel career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation/rewards</td>
<td>A job well done</td>
<td>Money, title, promotion</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Make a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job changing</td>
<td>Carries a stigma</td>
<td>Puts you behind</td>
<td>Is necessary</td>
<td>Part of the daily routine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career paths</td>
<td>Slow and steady</td>
<td>Ladder</td>
<td>Lattice</td>
<td>Rubik’s Cube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training attitudes</td>
<td>I learned it the hard way; you can too</td>
<td>Train them too much and they’ll leave</td>
<td>The more they learn, they more they stay</td>
<td>Continuous learning is a way of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance reviews</td>
<td>No news is good news</td>
<td>Once a year; well documented</td>
<td>Sorry to interrupt again, how am I doing?</td>
<td>Feedback whenever I want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity measures</td>
<td>Inputs and outputs matter; face time good</td>
<td>Input matters most; face time crucial</td>
<td>Output is all that matters; face time unimportant</td>
<td>Output/collaboration key; face time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career pace</td>
<td>Prove yourself with loyalty; pay dues</td>
<td>Prove yourself with long hours; pay dues</td>
<td>I want to know all my options now</td>
<td>Where can I go from here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-life balance</td>
<td>No balance; work until retirement</td>
<td>Want late-career balance</td>
<td>Want balance across career path</td>
<td>Want flexibility to balance all activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work and life priorities</td>
<td>Work comes first; wife at home</td>
<td>Work comes first; dual career or divorced</td>
<td>Work and family/personal life equal; dual career</td>
<td>Life and meaningful work equally important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Modified from Lancaster and Stillman (2003) and Trower (2008).

The ideas presented here were derived from data collected as part of COACHE—the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (www.coache.org)—a research project that examines pre-tenure faculty satisfaction with key elements of their work lives and workplace. The COACHE Tenure-Track Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey assesses faculty experiences in the areas deemed most critical to junior faculty success, including (1) clarity and reasonableness of tenure processes and review; (2) workload and support for teaching and research; 3) importance and
effectiveness of common policies and practices; (4) departmental climate, culture, and collegiality; and (5) global satisfaction.

COACHE has respondents from three generations: Boomers, Xers, and Millennials; because there are so few Millennials, the sample for this article is restricted to Boomers and Xers. In addition, the analysis is restricted to assistant professors with doctoral degrees who began their academic appointment at their current institution from 2001–2006. Finally, analysis is restricted to faculty at “universities”—by basic Carnegie classification of doctoral/research universities, research universities (high and very high), and master’s large universities; two master’s medium universities; and one master’s small university. The restricted sample includes 5,173 faculty of whom 56 percent are males, 74 percent are Xers, 80 percent are married, 52 percent have no children under the age of 18 living with them at home, and 85 percent are at public institutions.

The satisfaction and success of faculty members is greatly dependent on the department chair (Quinn, 2007). The most effective chairs recognize that not all junior faculty want or need the same supports and that successful strategies for Xers may not work well for Boomers, and vice versa. Do not treat all pre-tenure faculty members alike. Generation (age) matters. Analysis of COACHE data show how.

Tenure Clarity and Reasonableness
Although all junior faculty benefit from clearly defined expectations regarding what is needed to earn tenure, be especially sure to provide these details to your Boomers. COACHE data reveal that Boomers reported less clarity on the requirements for tenure than their Xer counterparts. In particular, Boomers would benefit from explicit guidance regarding expectations for scholarship. Perhaps as a result of the lower levels of clarity regarding what is needed for tenure, Boomers also indicated less clarity than Xers about whether they will earn tenure, which could lead to increased levels of anxiety and attrition. Ensure that:
• Department, college/school, and university guidelines are provided to all tenure-track faculty.
• Guidelines are readily available on the provost’s web site or department intranet.
• Mentoring is available to all pre-tenure faculty.
• Senior faculty are coached regarding the messages they give to their junior colleagues, whether through formal or informal mechanisms.
• The workload for all junior faculty is equitable and that females and faculty of color are not “culturally taxed” with a disproportionate number of teaching, advising, and committee assignments.

Research Expectations
Ensure that:
• Boomers are clear about the expectations for research so that they have realistic appreciation of the time it will take to both conduct the research and obtain external research funding.
• All pre-tenure faculty are aware of the research support services on campus.
• All tenure-track faculty have connections for scholarly collaborations with their peers and with tenured colleagues.
Policies and Practices

All faculty should be informed of the various policies and programs available to support them, but special attention can be given to the areas of particular interest for each generation.

- For Xers, be sure to showcase any family-friendly policies and programs, whether child care, financial assistance with housing, stop-the-clock, or spousal/partner hiring.
- For Boomers, highlight mentoring; opportunities to receive feedback from peers; resources for teaching improvement and grant seeking; and establish clearly defined, periodic performance reviews and provide written summaries that follow.

Work–Life Balance

- Strive to foster a supportive departmental climate for the work–life needs of all members.
- Beware of supporting faculty parents at the expense of burdening “child-free” faculty.
- Avoid creating supports that exclude caregiving beyond that of a biological parent.
- Encourage conversations between older and younger faculty about the challenges they face with dual careers, finding daycare or eldercare, and juggling the many demands on their time.
- Implement policies equitably, fairly, and consistently.

Climate, Culture, and Collegiality

- Find ways to make Boomers feel included and valued in the department through interactions and research collaborations with senior faculty, as well as with peers. Opportunities should be available to all junior faculty, but given the generational disparities we found, perhaps Boomers need more formal invitations to participate for them to feel included.
- Be mindful of structuring junior faculty opportunities that imply “younger faculty” are the target audience, which might make junior faculty Boomers feel excluded.

Conclusion

As a department chair you occupy the pivotal seat as policy interpreter, which in turn shapes and affects all faculty, but especially pre-tenure faculty who are being socialized to what is normative in the academic workplace on your campus. That culture, in turn, dramatically affects pre-tenure faculty members’ workplace satisfaction and, ultimately, success. Our research shows that just as senior faculty differ from junior faculty in part as a function of their rank and career stage, so do junior faculty differ as a result of age and generation.

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References

