

2008 CFAR FACULTY SURVEY RESULTS
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This report presents the findings from the “2008 CFAR Faculty Survey” administered to adjunct, tenured, full- and part-time faculty via email near the end of the 2008 Spring semester. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the academic needs of lower-division students (freshmen and sophomores) and upper-division (juniors and seniors) students in order to refine and develop relevant support services through the Center for Academic Resources (CFAR).

The survey first asked respondents if they had taught freshmen and/or sophomores in the past year (2007-08). Those who responded “yes” to this question were directed to a set of questions asking about the skillfulness of lower-division students in various academic areas; those that responded “no” were asked if they had taught juniors and/or seniors in the past year. Respondents that indicated “yes” – they had taught juniors and/or seniors – were directed to a set of questions asking about the skillfulness of upper-division students in academic areas. Those that responded “no” to both questions — that is, they did not teach freshmen, sophomores, juniors or seniors — were directed to the end of the survey.

Of the 1,125 teaching staff contacted, 248 (or 22%) completed the survey. Of the 248 respondents that completed the survey, 178 (or 72%) indicated they had taught freshmen and/or sophomores; and 70 (or 28%) indicated they had taught juniors and/or seniors (see Table 1).

Table 1. Survey Respondents That Indicated They Taught Either Lower-division students or Upper-division students		
<i>Over the past year, did you teach freshmen and/or sophomores?</i>	N	%
Yes	178	71.8
<i>Over the past year, did you teach juniors and/or seniors?</i>		
Yes	70	28.2
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	248	100.0

RESULTS FOR FRESHMEN/SOPHOMORES

Respondents who indicated they had taught freshmen and/or sophomores in the past year were asked about the preparedness of lower-division students for upper-level undergraduate courses. Over one-third of respondents (32%) indicated that “most” of the freshmen and/or sophomores they taught in the past year were prepared for upper-level undergraduate courses (see Table 2).

Of the freshmen and/or sophomores I taught over the past year, _____ are prepared for <u>upper-level undergraduate</u> level courses.	N	%
None	2	1.1
Some	41	22.8
About half	76	42.2
Most	57	31.7
All	2	1.1

Respondents were asked to indicate the quantity (i.e., none, some, about half, most or all) of freshmen and/or sophomores they had taught in the past year who were skillful in various academic activities. Respondents who indicated “about half,” “some” or “all” were grouped for comparison purposes into one category: *about half or more*. Some of the findings are summarized below (for complete results, refer to Table 3):

Over 90% of faculty respondents indicated that *about half or more* of the freshmen and/or sophomores they taught in the past year were skillful in...

- ...completing assignments on time.
- ...utilizing Blackboard.

Over 80% of faculty respondents indicated that *about half or more* of the freshmen and/or sophomores they taught in the past year were skillful in...

- ...demonstrating aptitude in taking objective exams.
- ...utilizing the Internet for academic purposes.
- ...utilizing the course syllabus.
- ...working in groups.

Over 30% of faculty respondents indicated that *about half or more* of the freshmen and/or sophomores were skillful in...

- ...critically evaluating assigned readings.
- ...asking for advising-related assistance as necessary.
- ...supporting oral claims with appropriate evidence.

Fewer than 20% of faculty respondents indicated that *about half or more* of the freshmen and/or sophomores they taught were skillful in...

- ...networking with faculty.

Table 3. Faculty Respondents That Taught Freshmen and/or Sophomores in the Past Year (in percentages)

Of the freshmen and/or sophomores I taught in the past year, [none, some, about half, most or all] were skillful at...

	About half or more	None	Some	About Half	Most	All
1. ...networking with faculty.	14.3	19.0	66.7	4.8	7.9	1.6
2. ...making use of instructors' office hours as necessary.	21.9	6.5	71.6	10.1	11.2	0.6
3. ...critically evaluating assigned readings.	36.2	2.5	61.1	24.8	10.8	0.6
4. ...asking for advising-related assistance as necessary.	38.1	5.0	56.8	12.9	22.3	2.9
5. ...supporting oral claims with appropriate evidence.	38.6	1.3	60.1	24.2	13.7	0.7
6. ...making use of Teaching Assistants as necessary.	39.4	3.9	56.6	11.8	23.7	3.9
7. ...asking for course-related assistance as necessary.	39.6	1.2	59.3	16.9	22.1	0.6
8. ...applying course knowledge to new settings.	43.8	2.1	54.1	25.3	17.1	1.4
9. ...utilizing library resources.	45.0	8.3	46.7	18.3	22.5	4.2
10. ...expressing ideas in class.	47.3	0.6	52.1	29.3	16.2	1.8
11. ...distinguishing personal values from formal statements.	47.5	3.8	48.9	22.6	24.1	0.8
12. ...synthesizing course concepts.	47.6	2.9	49.4	27.6	18.2	1.8
13. ...supporting written claims with appropriate evidence.	56.1	0.6	43.2	30.3	25.8	0.0
14. ...analyzing course concepts.	62.5	1.2	36.3	30.4	29.8	2.3
15. ...utilizing course terminology.	63.0	0.0	37.0	27.2	31.2	4.6
16. ...working with course materials independently.	64.5	1.3	34.2	25.3	32.9	6.3
17. ...demonstrating aptitude in taking problem-solving exams.	66.3	1.9	31.7	36.5	27.9	1.9
18. ...summarizing major ideas from assigned readings.	66.7	0.0	33.3	34.6	29.5	2.6
19. ...demonstrating aptitude in taking essay exams.	73.2	0.0	26.9	36.1	35.2	1.9
20. ...demonstrating competence in written assignments.	76.7	1.3	22.0	33.3	38.4	5.0
21. ...comprehending key points of assigned readings.	77.0	0.0	23.0	32.3	42.2	2.5
22. ...working in groups.	81.6	1.4	17.0	19.0	48.3	14.3
23. ...utilizing the course syllabus.	82.1	0.6	17.3	19.6	56.0	6.5
24. ...utilizing the Internet for academic purposes.	85.5	3.3	11.2	7.2	50.0	28.3
25. ...demonstrating aptitude in taking objective exams.	87.3	0.7	11.9	29.1	56.7	1.5
26. ...utilizing Blackboard.	94.6	0.7	4.7	7.4	50.3	36.9
27. ...completing assignments on time.	96.0	0.0	4.1	7.6	82.6	5.8

Note: Percentages that comprise the majority of responses are in bold.

RESULTS FOR JUNIORS/SENIORS

Respondents who indicated they had taught juniors and/or seniors in the past year were asked about the preparedness of upper-division students for the workplace and for graduate school. Nearly half of respondents (49%) indicated that “most” or “all” of the juniors and/or seniors they taught in the past year are prepared for the workplace, while about 16% of respondents indicated that “most” of the juniors and/or seniors they taught in the past year are prepared for graduate school (see Table 3).

Table 3. Preparedness of Upper-division students for Graduate School and the Workplace		
Of the juniors and/or seniors I taught over the past year, ___ are prepared for the <u>workplace</u> .	N	%
None	1	1.4
Some	12	17.1
About half	18	25.7
Most	28	40.0
All	6	8.6
Of the juniors and/or seniors I taught over the past year, ___ are prepared for <u>graduate school</u> .	N	%
None	3	4.3
Some	35	50.0
About half	19	27.1
Most	11	15.7
All	0	0.0

Respondents were asked to indicate the quantity (i.e., none, some, about half, most or all) of juniors and/or seniors they had taught in the past year who were skillful in various academic activities. Respondents that indicated “about half,” “some” or “all” were grouped for comparison purposes into one category: *about half or more*. Some of the findings are summarized below (for complete results, refer to Table 4):

Over 90% of faculty respondents indicated that *about half or more* of the juniors and/or seniors they taught in the past year were skillful in...

- ...completing assignments on time.
- ...utilizing the Internet for academic purposes.
- ...working in groups.
- ...utilizing Blackboard.

Over 80% of faculty respondents indicated that *about half or more* of the juniors and/or seniors they taught in the past year were skillful in...

- ...demonstrating aptitude in taking essay exams.
- ...demonstrating aptitude in taking objective exams.
- ...analyzing course concepts.
- ...comprehending key points of assigned readings.
- ...demonstrating competence in written assignments.
- ...utilizing the course syllabus.
- ...demonstrating aptitude in taking problem-solving exams.
- ...summarizing major ideas from assigned readings.

Over 30% of faculty respondents indicated that *about half or more* of the juniors and/or seniors were skillful in...

- ...making use of instructors' office hours as necessary.
- ...networking with faculty.

Table 4. Faculty Respondents That Taught Juniors and/or Seniors in the Past Year (in percentages)

Of the juniors and/or senior I taught in the past year, [none, some, about half, most or all] were skillful at...

	About half or more	None	Some	About Half	Most	All
1. ...networking with faculty.	32.7	2.0	65.3	10.2	18.4	4.1
2. ...making use of instructors' office hours as necessary.	32.8	7.5	59.7	11.9	19.4	1.5
3. ...making use of Teaching Assistants as necessary.	44.4	5.6	50.0	22.2	22.2	0.0
4. ...asking for advising-related assistance as necessary.	44.7	7.1	48.2	17.9	23.2	3.6
5. ...asking for course-related assistance as necessary.	54.3	1.4	44.3	12.9	35.7	5.7
6. ...supporting oral claims with appropriate evidence.	58.1	1.6	40.3	35.5	21.0	1.6
7. ...critically evaluating assigned readings.	62.1	3.0	34.8	36.4	24.2	1.5
8. ...expressing ideas in class.	65.2	0.0	34.8	30.4	29.0	5.8
9. ...utilizing library resources.	65.5	3.4	31.0	15.5	39.7	10.3
10. ...applying course knowledge to new settings.	72.9	0.0	27.1	27.1	42.4	3.4
11. ...distinguishing personal values from formal statements.	73.0	0.0	37.0	31.5	39.6	1.9
12. ...supporting written claims with appropriate evidence.	74.6	0.0	25.4	35.8	35.8	3.0
13. ...working with course materials independently.	74.9	0.0	25.0	14.7	42.6	17.6
14. ...synthesizing course concepts.	76.5	0.0	23.5	36.8	38.2	1.5
15. ...utilizing course terminology.	79.9	0.0	20.0	21.4	47.1	11.4
16. ...summarizing major ideas from assigned readings.	83.3	0.0	16.7	40.9	39.4	3.0
17. ...demonstrating aptitude in taking problem-solving exams.	83.4	0.0	16.7	31.3	50.0	2.1
18. ...utilizing the course syllabus.	84.0	0.0	15.9	17.4	39.1	27.5
19. ...demonstrating competence in written assignments.	84.8	0.0	15.2	31.8	48.5	4.5
20. ...comprehending key points of assigned readings.	86.8	0.0	13.2	30.9	50.0	5.9
21. ...analyzing course concepts.	87.1	0.0	12.9	31.4	51.4	4.3
22. ...demonstrating aptitude in taking objective exams.	89.1	0.0	10.9	15.2	65.2	8.7
23. ...demonstrating aptitude in taking essay exams.	89.2	0.0	10.8	32.4	56.8	0.0
24. ...utilizing Blackboard.	92.2	0.0	7.8	0.0	37.5	54.7
25. ...working in groups.	95.3	0.0	4.7	21.9	37.5	35.9
26. ...utilizing the Internet for academic purposes.	97.0	0.0	2.9	2.9	48.5	45.6
27. ...completing assignments on time.	97.2	0.0	2.8	4.2	77.5	15.5

Note: Percentages that comprise the majority of responses are in bold.

COMPARISON OF UPPER-DIVISION STUDENTS' & LOWER-DIVISION STUDENTS' SURVEY RESULTS

A comparison of responses to the junior/senior part of the survey versus the responses to the freshmen/sophomore part of the survey showed that a greater percentage of respondents indicated that *about half or more* upper-division students were more skillful than lower-division students in nearly all academic areas. For instance, about 73% of faculty respondents indicated that *about half or more* upper-division students were skillful in applying course knowledge to new settings, while about 44% of faculty respondents indicated that *about half or more* of lower-division students were skillful in this area. Moreover, three-quarters (77%) of faculty respondents indicated that *about half or more* upper-division students were skillful in synthesizing course concepts, compared to less than half (48%) of faculty respondents who indicated that *about half or more* of lower-division students were skillful in this area (refer to Table 5 for further comparisons).

Table 5. Comparison of Respondents' Perception of the Academic Skills of Upper-division students to Lower-division students

Academic Skill	Percentage of <i>about half or more</i>		Percent Difference
	Upper-division students	Lower-division students	
1. ...applying course knowledge to new settings.	72.9	43.8	29.1
2. ...synthesizing course concepts.	76.5	47.6	28.9
3. ...critically evaluating assigned readings.	62.1	36.2	25.9
4. ...distinguishing personal values from formal statements.	73.0	47.5	25.5
5. ...analyzing course concepts.	87.1	62.5	24.6
6. ...utilizing library resources.	65.5	45.0	20.5
7. ...supporting oral claims with appropriate evidence.	58.1	38.6	19.5
8. ...supporting written claims with appropriate evidence.	74.6	56.1	18.5
9. ...networking with faculty.	32.7	14.3	18.4
10. ...expressing ideas in class.	65.2	47.3	17.9
11. ...demonstrating aptitude in taking problem-solving exams.	83.4	66.3	17.1
12. ...utilizing course terminology.	79.9	63.0	16.9
13. ...summarizing major ideas from assigned readings.	83.3	66.7	16.6
14. ...demonstrating aptitude in taking essay exams.	89.2	73.2	16.0
15. ...asking for course-related assistance as necessary.	54.3	39.6	14.7
16. ...working in groups.	95.3	81.6	13.7
17. ...utilizing the Internet for academic purposes.	97.0	85.5	11.5
18. ...making use of instructors' office hours as necessary.	32.8	21.9	10.9
19. ...working with course materials independently.	74.9	64.5	10.4
20. ...comprehending key points of assigned readings.	86.8	77.0	9.8
21. ...demonstrating competence in written assignments.	84.8	76.7	8.1
22. ...asking for advising-related assistance as necessary.	44.7	38.1	6.6
23. ...making use of Teaching Assistants as necessary.	44.4	39.4	5.0
24. ...utilizing the course syllabus.	84.0	82.1	1.9
25. ...demonstrating aptitude in taking objective exams.	89.1	87.3	1.8
26. ...completing assignments on time.	97.2	96.0	1.2
27. ...utilizing Blackboard.	92.2	94.6	-2.4

RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

The survey included two open-ended questions that asked respondents to comment about the academic needs and/or preparation of lower-division or upper-division students.

Respondents who completed the lower-division students' portion of the survey were asked the following:

Please provide further comments below about the academic needs and /or preparation of freshmen and sophomores.

Respondents provided comments on academic needs and/or preparation of freshmen and sophomores in a range of areas, including study skills, note-taking and time management. A number also noted the need to develop students' reading comprehension and written communication—including grammar, spelling, organization, thesis development—and use of evidence to support claims.

Respondents who completed the upper-division students' portion of the survey were asked the following:

Please provide further comments below about the academic needs and/or preparation of juniors and seniors.

Respondents who commented on the academic needs and/or preparation of juniors and seniors focused on the need to develop students' ability to think critically and synthesize information. Some respondents noted that they often needed to review material already covered in previous courses as upper-division students either did not learn the material sufficiently or were not exposed to the material. Others noted that students often were not familiar or comfortable conducting library research or using resources beyond those available on the Internet.