We also conducted multivariate analysis to determine the chief satisfaction determinants associated with considerations for leaving one’s present institution among women full professors. Chief among these factors are the relationships senior women have with campus administrators and the social relationships they have with other faculty members at their institutions. When senior women are satisfied with these relationships, they are significantly less likely to consider leaving an institution. However, senior women who are satisfied with their visibility for professoriate positions at other institutions and organizations were more likely to consider leaving.

Dissatisfaction with clerical and administrative support, with health and retirement benefits, with course assignments, and with teaching loads were other factors in women’s consideration of leaving. Satisfaction with the quality of students was important to retention but was overshadowed by teaching load. That is, lower satisfaction with the quality of students was related to staying at an institution only if satisfaction with teaching loads remained high. In fact, teaching load was a slightly stronger predictor of the retention of senior women than satisfaction with salary. This may stem from the additional time, revealed in the survey, that senior women spend on teaching. Finally, satisfaction with office or lab space was also a predictor of retention.

Retaining Senior Women
Keeping morale high and attending to many areas of faculty satisfaction will be important for institutions that face budget constraints in the coming years. Findings from the 2007–08 HERI faculty survey strongly suggest that building community is important to the retention of tenured academic women at their home institutions, and a strong community can be established without a cost. Efforts by administrative leaders to improve relations with senior women and to create an environment conducive to positive social relationships among faculty will go a long way toward helping an institution retain senior women. Shared decision making in the process of making cuts and identifying areas for innovation engender trust and engagement among senior women. Further, health and retirement benefits and faculty office and lab space are important to faculty satisfaction and need to be sustained even in an era of constrained resources.

Short-term budget-related changes in teaching and teaching load may affect women more than men. Among the possible ways to offset the increased dissatisfaction and increased stress from larger teaching loads would be to increase, even in these difficult times, either clerical or administrative support. Equity in distribution of teaching loads, course assignments, and teaching assistants will be important. Deans and department chairs play a key role in this area and can help ensure that we continue to support senior women even if salaries remain static in the coming years.

Figure 1
Salary Satisfaction and Intent to Leave, by Academic Rank and Gender

Source: Higher Education Research Institute, 2007–08 Faculty Survey.