

College faculty harshly judge their bosses, students

NEW YORK (AP) — College students often are willing to cheat and are obsessed with grades and careers but lack basic skills they should have learned in high school, according to a poll of professors.

Two-thirds of the 5,450 campus faculty polled by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching believe there has been a widespread lowering of standards in U.S. higher education.

Three-quarters consider their students "seriously unprepared in basic skills," and 68 percent believe colleges spend too much time and money teaching students what they should have learned in high school.

"Public education, despite six years of reform, is still producing inadequately prepared students," concluded the survey, "The Condition of the Professoriate: Attitudes and Trends, 1989." It was the fourth survey of its kind since 1969.

Fifty-five percent agreed that most undergraduates at their schools "only do enough to get by," 70 percent believed students have become more grade-conscious, and 84 percent agreed that students have become more careerist in their concerns.

Forty-three percent said students are more willing to cheat to get good grades.

Professors were hardly more flattering about their bosses: 64 percent rated the administration on their campus either "fair" or "poor," a percentage hardly changed from

On the other hand, more faculty members expressed overall satisfaction with their professional lives than five years ago.

Only 20 percent thought that this is

a poor time for young people to consider academic careers, compared with 50 percent in 1984.

Seventy-seven percent felt exciting things were taking place in their disciplines, and an identical percentage disagreed with the statement, "If I had it to do over again, I would not become a college teacher."

Nearly half — 49 percent — believed job prospects have improved for undergraduates in their fields.

Forty-eight percent rated their salaries as good or excellent, up from 40 percent five years ago. But two-thirds still believed their salaries have failed to keep up with inflation.

The campus adage "publish or perish" appears as true as ever: 54 percent believed it's difficult to gain tenure without publishing, compared with 55 percent in 1984. In 1975, just 46 percent felt that way, and in the first such Carnegie survey, in 1969, the number was 41 percent.

Professors in all disciplines but engineering also gave a ringing endorsement to liberal arts: 56 percent agreed that undergraduate study in America would be improved if there were less stress on specialized training and more on liberal education, compared with 51 percent in 1984.

Only 19 percent of engineering faculty felt that way.

"The good news is that faculty are more committed to liberal education than five years ago. And our conclusion is that the profession is healthier now," said foundation president Ernest L. Boyer in an interview.

"On the dark side are the harshly negative faculty feelings about the academic preparation of their students."

The survey, conducted in February by mail by the Wirthlin Group, of McLean, Va., had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 1 percentage point.

There are approximately 489,000 full-time college faculty in U.S. institutions of higher education, according to federal statistics.