

# Faculty Retention and Departure at The University of Texas System

Jessica M. Shedd and Mehary T. Stafford

The University of Texas System

## INTRODUCTION

Institutions invest heavily in the recruitment and retention of their faculty. Though some level of faculty departure is normal and expected, extreme faculty turnover may become problematic for an institution as faculty departure is associated with costs related to hiring, short-term replacement costs, and disruptions of course offerings and mentoring students, among other impacts (Betts & Sikorski, 2008; Kaminski & Geisler, 2012; Xu, 2008).

## CALL FOR A FACULTY RETENTION ANALYSIS

The number of tenured and tenure-track faculty at University of Texas System institutions has reached well over 7,000 — growing from approximately 5,500 in fall 2000.

Given the growth in faculty numbers and the large investment UT System institutions make in their faculty, an examination of retention and attrition rates of tenured and tenure-track faculty at the University of Texas System was commissioned.

## METHODOLOGY

- All tenured /tenure-track faculty with an academic rank of assistant, associate or full professor during the fall 2007 and 2012 time period were included .
- Faculty retention and departure status was determined using the data for each fall from 2007 through 2012. If a faculty member was reported in one fall and not reported in any following fall semesters, that faculty member was determined to have left UT System.
- Analyses were conducted by setting fall 2007 and fall 2009 cohorts for 3 groups of faculty:
  - all tenured and tenure-track faculty
  - newly hired tenured and tenure-track faculty
  - newly tenured faculty
- An age of 65+ at the time of departure was used as a proxy for retirement.

Note: UT Brownsville is excluded because of complications in faculty data reporting due to the partnership with Texas Southmost College (TSC).  
UT Health Science Center at Tyler did not report any tenured/tenure-track faculty.  
UT Health Science Center at Houston did not report newly hired faculty for fall 2007.

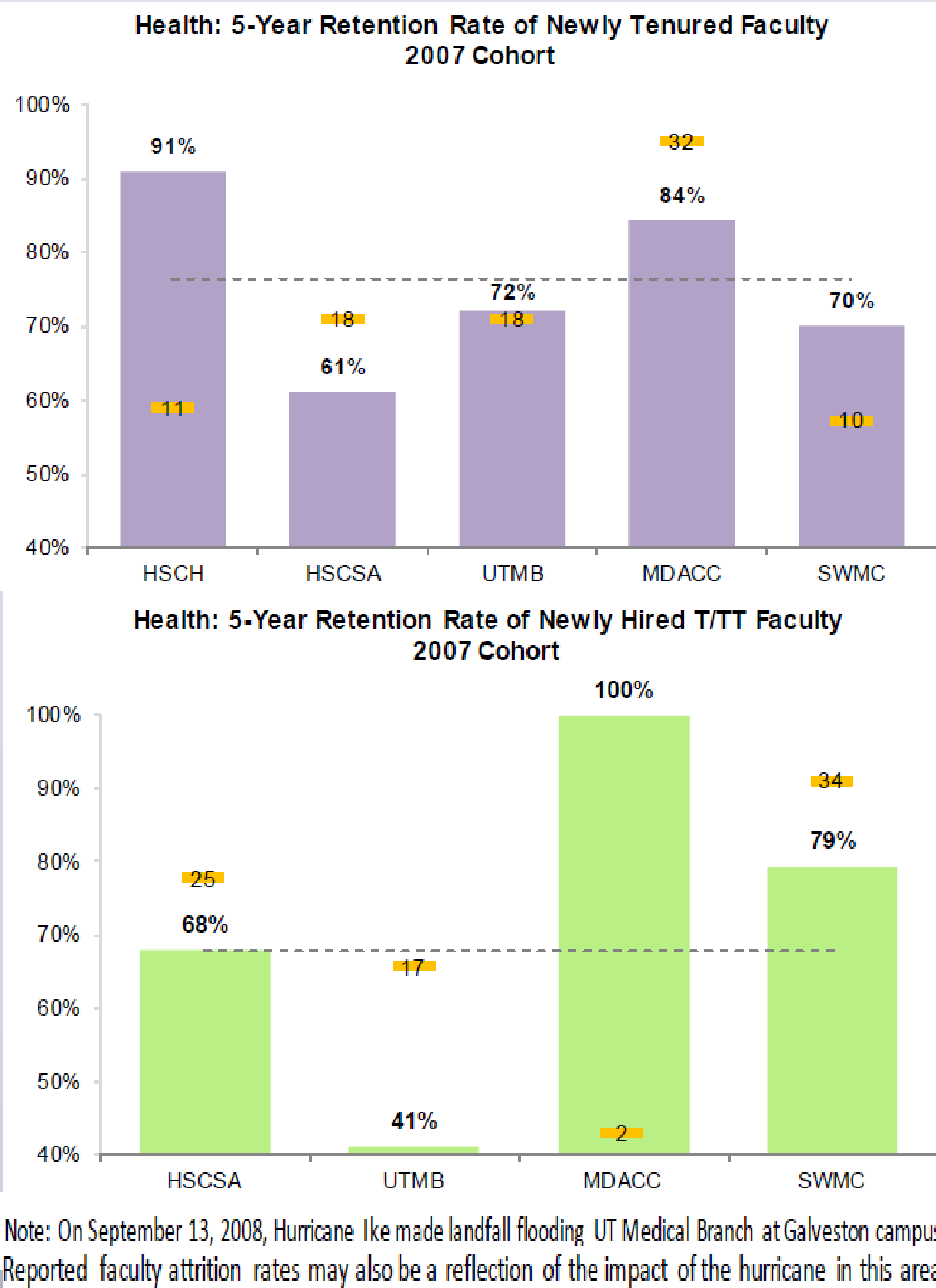
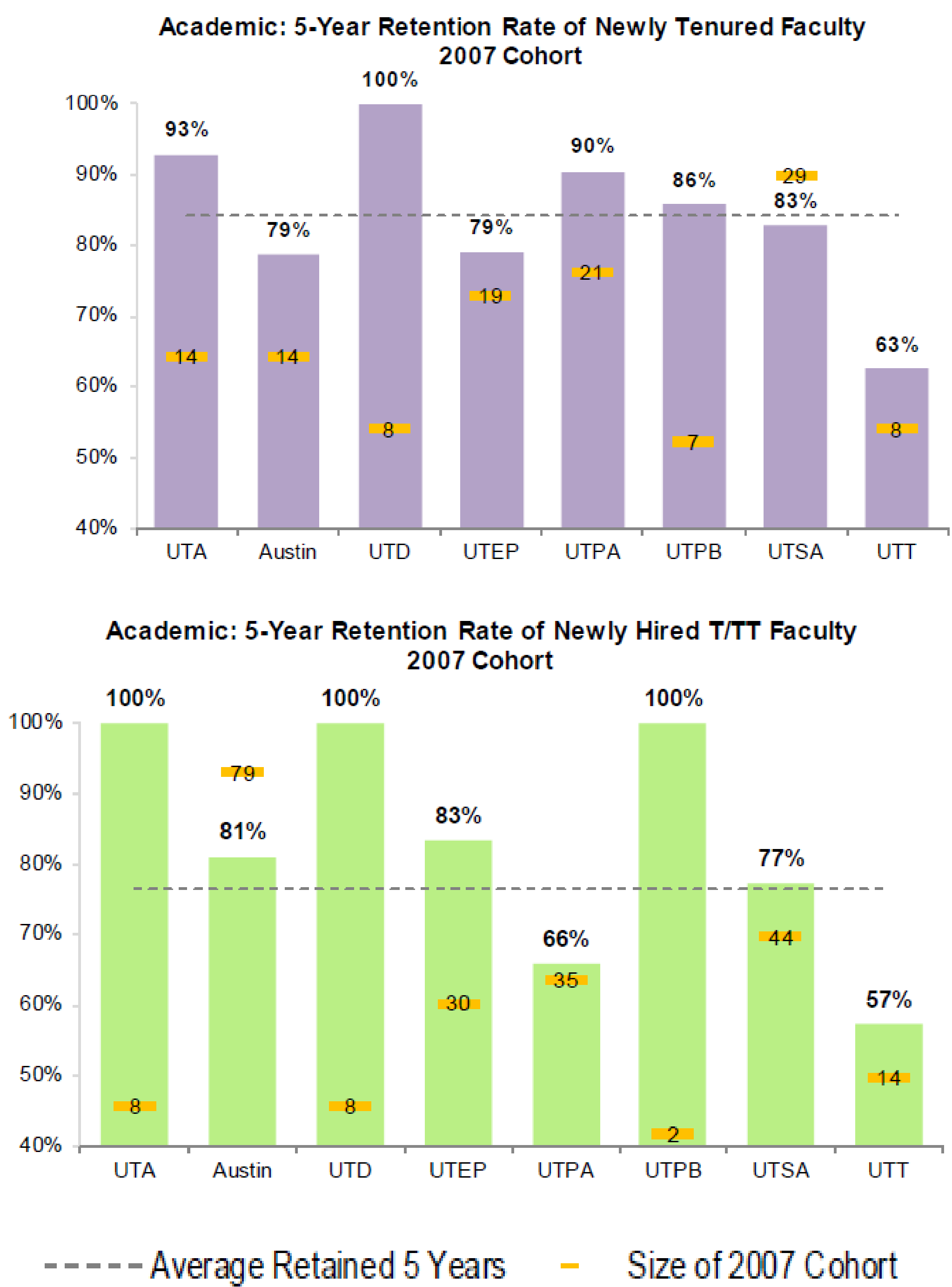
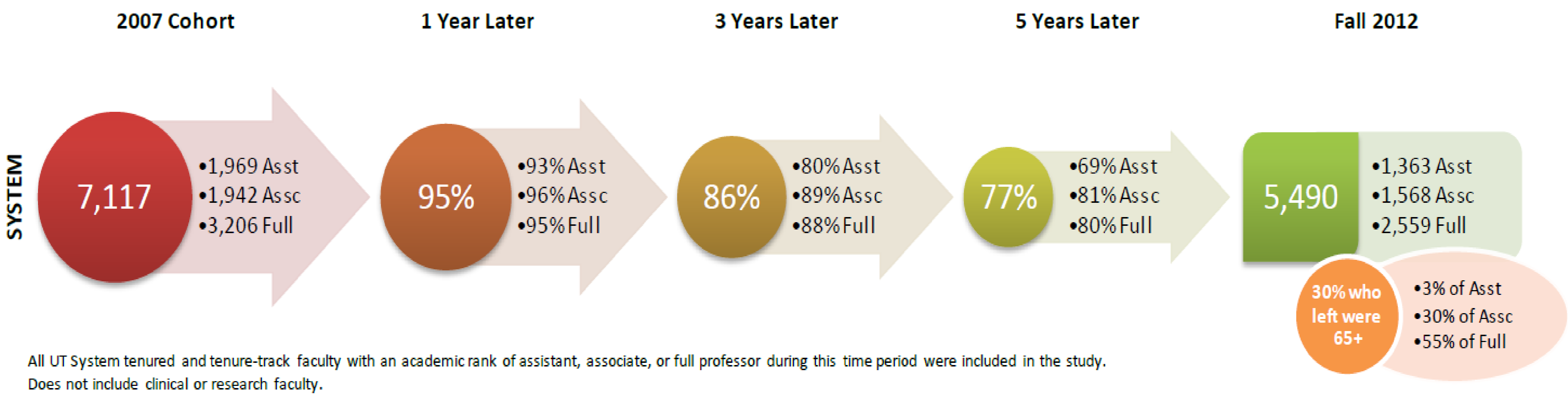
Data Source: The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board , 2007-2102 CMB008 reports.



## THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS SYSTEM

*Nine Universities. Six Health Institutions. Unlimited Possibilities.*

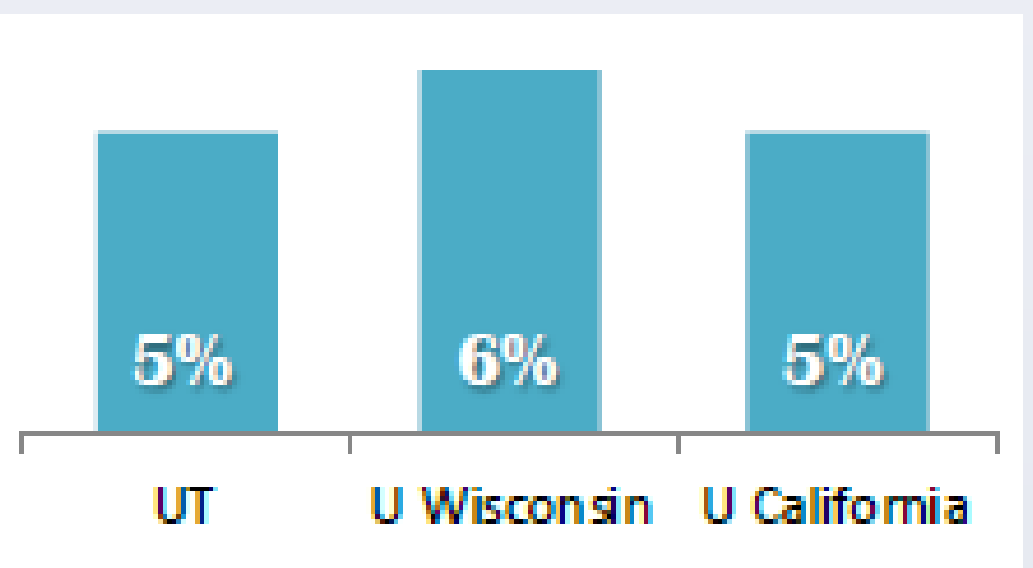
### 5-Year Retention of Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty by Rank



## MORE FINDINGS

### Overall/All Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty

- Of all tenured and tenure-track faculty at UT System in fall 2007 and fall 2009, 95% and 96% respectively, remained at UT System the following Fall. As shown below, these overall annual attrition rates for tenured and tenure-track faculty of about 4% and 5% were found to be consistent with results from other similar studies at university systems and institutions.



- The three-year retention rate drops to 86% and after five years, the fall 2007 cohort had a rate of 77%.
  - Of those leaving after five years, 30% were 65+ years old. Further, over half of full professors who left were at least 65 years old prior to departure.
- One-, three-, and five-year retention rates differed by academic rank, with assistant professors retained at lower rates than associate and full professors.

### Newly Hired Faculty

- Newly hired faculty had one-year retention rates reaching 96 percent, a three-year rate of 86%, and five year rate of 74%.

### Newly Tenured Faculty

- Newly tenured faculty had one-year retention rates reaching 98%, while three-year rates were as low as 89%. The five-year rate for was 81%.

## REFERENCES

- Betts, K. S., & Sikorski, B. (2008). Financial bottom line: Estimating the cost of turnover and attrition for online faculty and adjunct. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 11(1).
- Kaminski, D., & Geisler, C. (2012). Survival analysis of faculty retention in science and engineering by gender. *Science*, 335, 864-866.
- Teodorescu, D. (2012). Examining faculty recruitment, retention, promotion, and retirement. In Howard, R. D., McLaughlin, G.W., Knight, W.E., & Associates (Eds.), *The handbook of institutional research* (pp. 65-81). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- The Badger Herald (2013). More than 1,000 faculty members left UW system in past two years. Retrieved May 7, 2014 from <http://badgerherald.com/news/2013/12/04/1000-faculty-members-left-uw-system-past-two-years/#.U3txYnaCdo5>.
- Xu, J.X. (2008). Faculty turnover: Discipline-specific attention is warranted. *Research in Higher Education*, 49(1), 40-61.