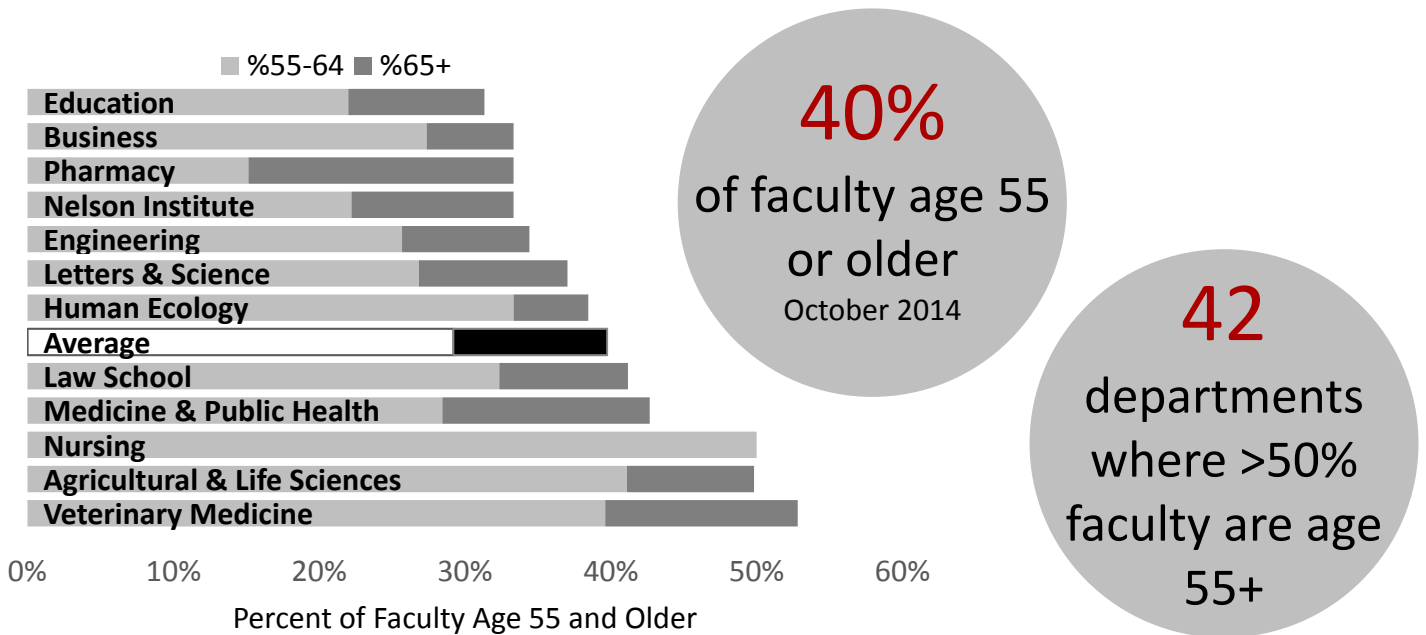


# Faculty Age and Retirement Patterns

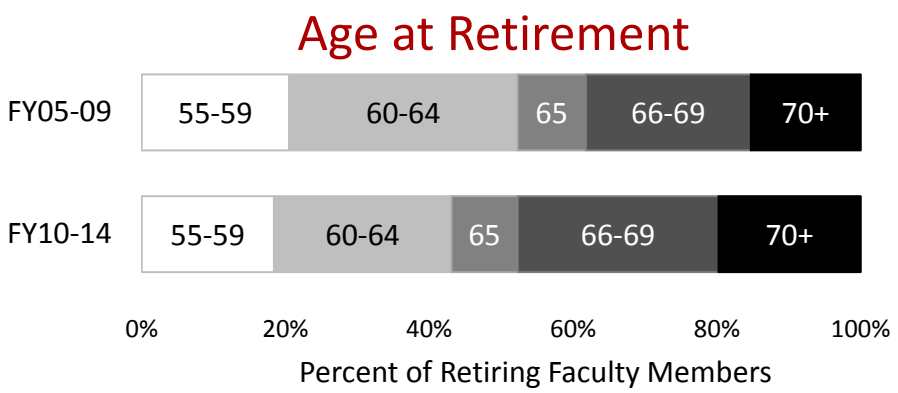
In an idealized university, new faculty members are generally hired in their early 30s and retire in their mid 60s. If they spent their careers at UW-Madison and retired after 30-35 years of service, approximately 33% of the faculty would retire every 10 years, or about 3% annually.

Currently, faculty members are retiring at historically low rates (2.8% annually) and the average age of the faculty is increasing (from 49.1 years in 2000 to 51.1 years in 2014; 40% of faculty are now age 55 or older). Understanding age and retirement patterns contribute to the development of meaningful staffing plans.

A more detailed report is attached and available at, [apir.wisc.edu/facultystaff-trends.htm](http://apir.wisc.edu/facultystaff-trends.htm)



Between FY 2004-05 and FY 2013-14  
an average of 2.8% of faculty retired each year.



## UW-Madison Faculty Age and Retirement Patterns

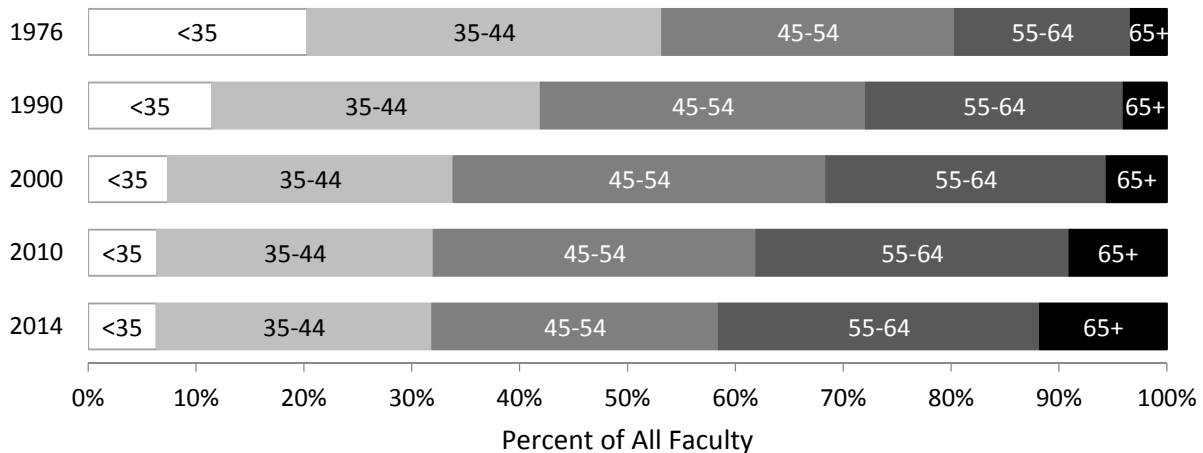
### Age Distribution of All Faculty Members

Figure 1 shows the distribution of faculty by age in 1976, 1990, 2000, 2010 and 2014. Since 1976 there has been an increase the proportion of faculty who are 55 or older.

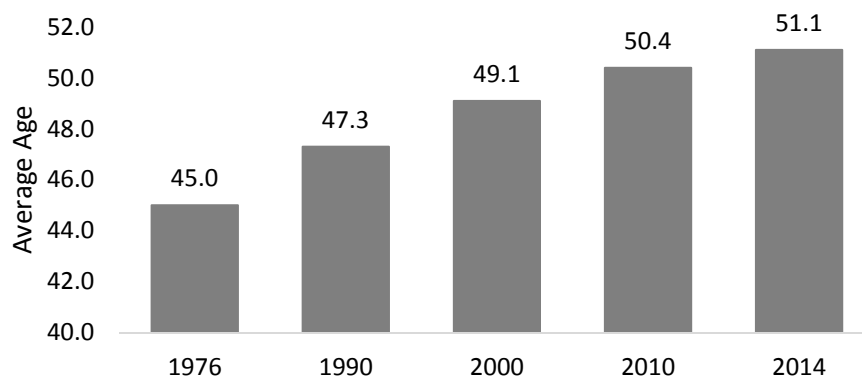
- The size of the faculty in 2014 (2,200) is similar to 2000 (2,173); however, the percentage of faculty age 55 or older increased from 31 percent in 2000 to 42 percent in 2014.
- The percentage of faculty age 65 and older increased from 5 percent in 2000 to 12 percent in 2014.

As shown in Figure 2, since 1976 the average age of UW-Madison faculty members has increased by more than five years (from 45.0 in 1976 to 51.1 in 2014).

**Figure 1**  
**Distribution of UW-Madison Faculty by Age Group**  
**Age as of October 1 in given year**



**Figure 2**  
**Average Age of UW-Madison Faculty**  
**Age as of October 1 in given year**



**Faculty Member Age by School/College and Department**

Figure 3 shows the proportion of faculty by age by school/college in October 2014. The number of faculty in each school/college is shown in parentheses. Appendix 2 has information on faculty age by department.

The distribution of faculty by age varies among the schools/colleges.

- In October 2014, overall 40 percent of faculty members were age 55 and older, including 11 percent age 65 and older.
- Higher proportions (50 percent or more of faculty age 55 and older) are found in the School of Veterinary Medicine, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and School of Nursing.
- The Schools of Education, Business, Pharmacy and the Nelson Institute each have 33 percent of fewer faculty age 55 or older.

**Figure 3**  
**Faculty Age by School/College**  
**October 2014 (Sorted in Descending Order by Percent Age 55 or Older)**

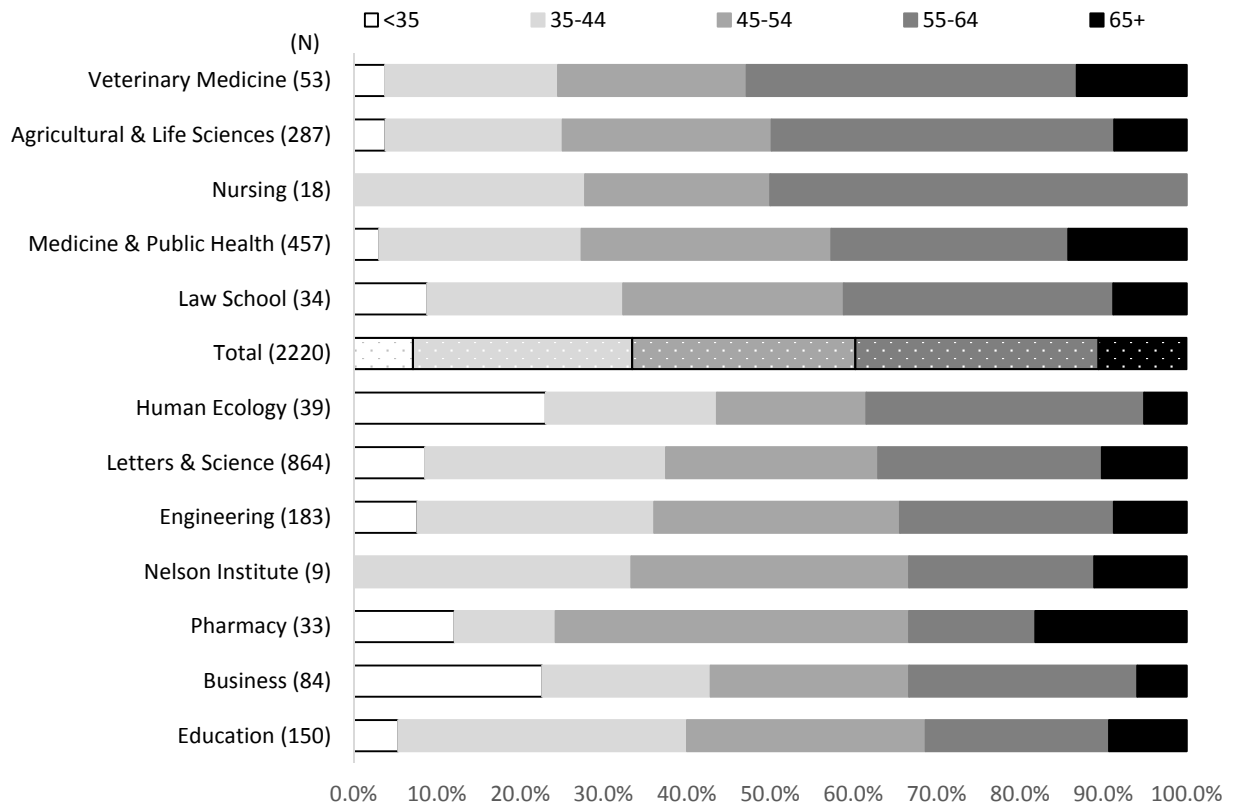


Table 1 compares schools/colleges by the number and percentage of faculty age 55 and over between 2010 (when we last analyzed this topic) and 2014. Overall, the percentage of faculty age 55 and older increased by two percentage points between 2010 and 2014.

Compared to the overall increase of two percentage points, six schools/colleges have increases that are higher than average. The School of Nursing had the largest directional change as a percent, with 76 percent of its faculty age 55 and older in 2010 down to 50 percent in 2014, a difference of 26 percentage points. The School of Medicine and Public Health has the largest change in the number of faculty age 55 or older, increasing by 33 between 2010 and 2014.

**Table 1**  
**Change in Older Faculty by School/College between 2010 and 2014**  
**Sorted by Percentage Point Change in Faculty Age 55 or Older**

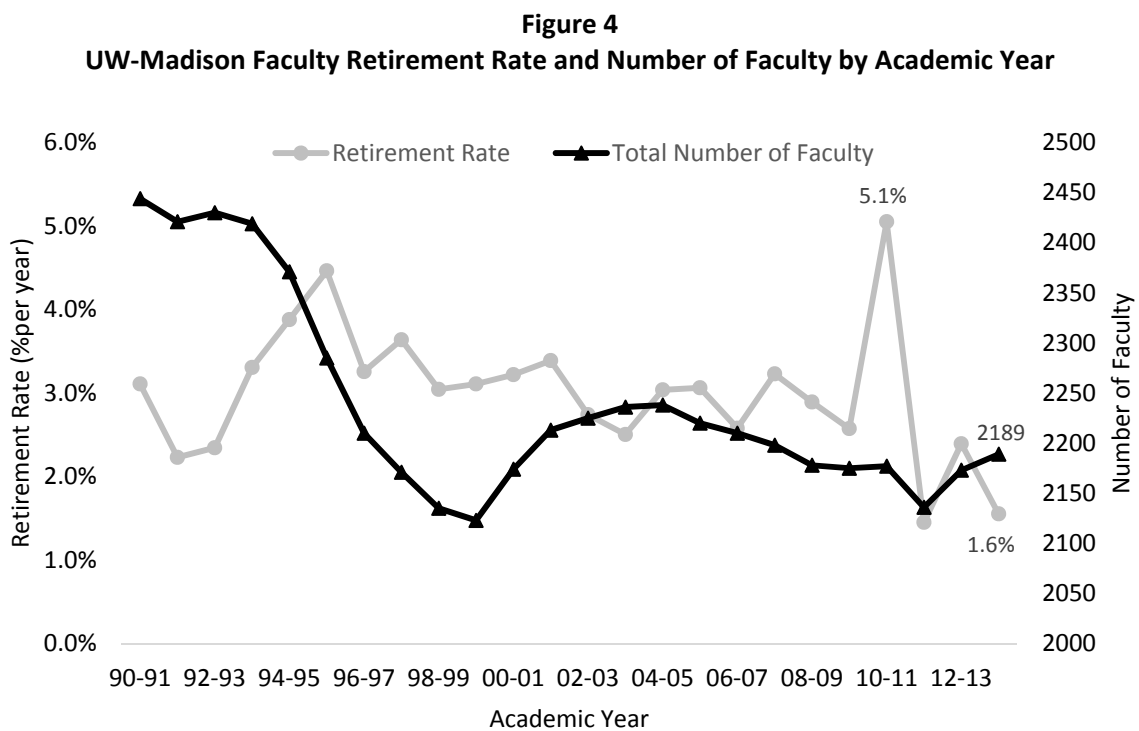
	Faculty Age 55 or Older					
	October 2010		October 2014		Change 10-14	
	#	%	#	%	#	% pt.
A45 Law School	13	34	14	41	+1	+7
A07 College of Agricultural and Life Sciences	132	45	143	50	+11	+5
A87 School of Veterinary Medicine	25	48	28	53	+3	+5
A56 School of Pharmacy	9	28	11	33	+2	+5
A19 College of Engineering	56	30	63	34	+7	+4
A53 School of Medicine and Public Health	162	40	195	43	+33	+3
<b>University Total</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>+56</b>	<b>+2</b>
A48 College of Letters and Science	307	36	320	37	+13	+1
A27 School of Human Ecology	14	37	15	38	+1	+1
A40 Nelson Institute for Environ. Studies	3	33	3	33	0	0
A93 Division of Continuing Studies	6	75	6	75	0	0
A12 School of Business	28	36	28	33	0	-3
A17 School of Education	53	37	47	31	-6	-6
A54 School of Nursing	16	76	9	50	-7	-26

\*There is one faculty member who is the sole faculty member in their unit. This units are not shown individually but the faculty member is included in the university total.

## Faculty Retirement Trends

Figure 4 (details in the Appendix 1) shows the retirement rate for faculty members as well as the total number of faculty members. Retirement rate is the number of faculty that retired divided by the total number of faculty. Prior to 2011, faculty were considered “retired” if they were age 55 or older when they left their position at UW-Madison. Beginning in 2011, faculty are considered “retired” if they left UW-Madison and have an action reason of “Retirement.” Additional information is contained in the methodology section following the Appendices.

Between 2004 and 2014 the average retirement rate for faculty members was 2.8%. The annual retirement rates during this time period fluctuated between a high of 5.1% in 2010-11 to a low of 1.5% in 2011-12. In 2010-11, more faculty retired than average due to uncertainty regarding state employee benefits. In contrast, a lower percentage of faculty retired in subsequent years.

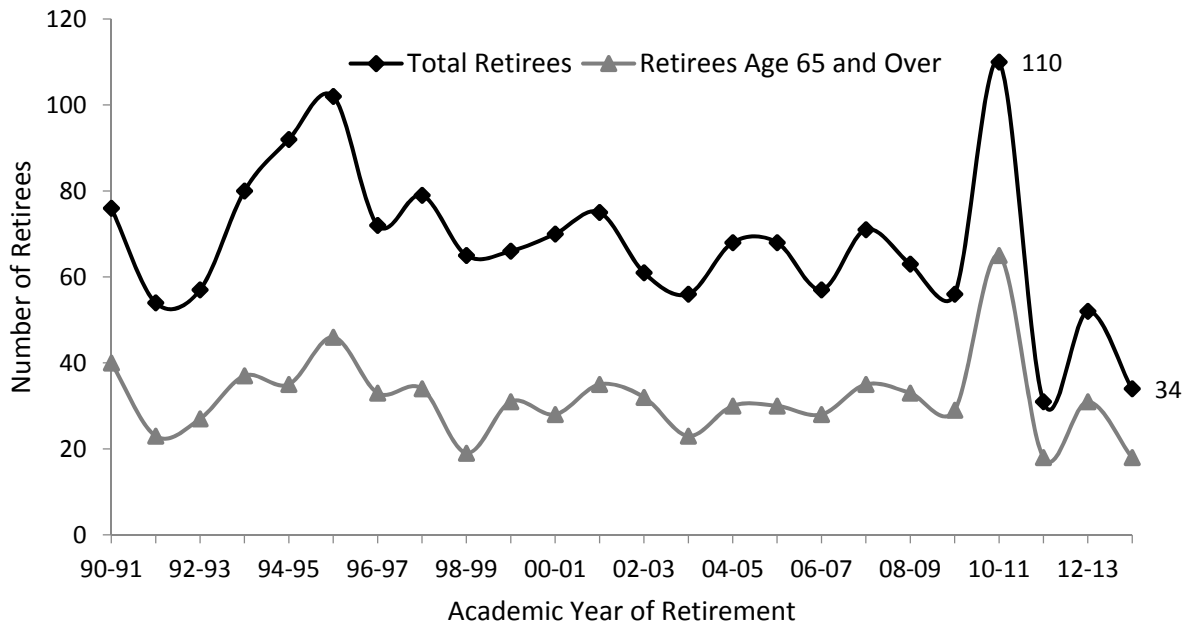


\*Early retirement incentives were available for a short time in 1989-90. In 1994-95, a post-retirement plan was implemented to allow retired faculty to teach part-time for a few years after retirement.

Between 1990 and 2014, an annual average of 6% of faculty age 55-64 retired each year and 22% of faculty age 65 and over retired.

Figure 5 shows the number of UW-Madison faculty who retired in each year between 1990 and 2014.

**Figure 5**  
**Number of UW-Madison Faculty Retirements by Year of Retirement**

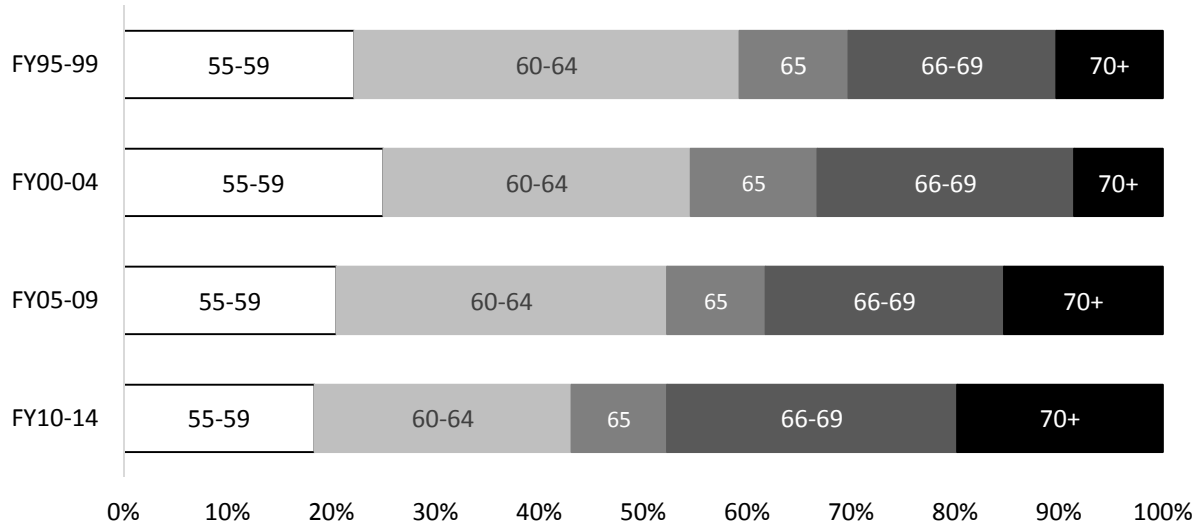


\*Early retirement incentives were available for a short time in 1989-90. In 1994-95, a post-retirement plan was implemented to allow retired faculty to teach part-time for a few years after retirement.

Figure 6 shows the distribution of faculty by age at retirement, grouped into five year periods.

- Since the period FY00-04, the percentage of faculty who are aged 70 or older when they retired has increased and now represents 20 percent of retirees.
- The percentage of faculty retiring when they were less than age 65 has decreased each time period since FY95-99 and now represents 43 percent of retirees.

**Figure 6**  
**Distribution of UW-Madison Faculty by Age at Retirement**



## **Interpretation and Conclusions**

In an idealized university, new faculty members are generally hired in their early 30s and retire in their mid 60s. If they spent their careers at UW-Madison and retired after 30-35 years of service, approximately 33% of the faculty would turnover every 10 years. If retiring faculty members are replaced with young, early career faculty members then this renewal cycle is stable from year to year. The reality is more complex. Notably, this report shows that faculty are tending to retire at older ages and work into their late 60s and 70s.

There are both costs and benefits to faculty retirements. Retirements of higher salary faculty members can result in significant salary savings but these savings are offset in part by high recruitment and startup costs for new faculty. The loss of retiring faculty members' expertise and prominence might be balanced by the opportunity to explore new academic directions. Understanding faculty age and retirement patterns contribute to the development of meaningful staffing plans.

The overall age of faculty is increasing, therefore we would expect an increase in the number and percentage of faculty retiring. However, faculty members are retiring at historically low rates and at older ages.

Forty two UW-Madison departments have approximately half or more of their faculty who are age 55 or over. These departments may eventually expect higher than average retirement rates as faculty reach mid 60s and older. Deans and department chairs may find it useful to anticipate and plan for these changes so that the academic health and vigor of schools/colleges and departments is maintained.



**Appendix 1**  
**Number of UW-Madison Faculty Retirements by Year of Retirement and Age Group**

	Total Retirees Age 55 and Over			Retirees 55-64		Retirees 65 & Over	
	#	Mean Age at Retirement	% 55+ Retiring	#	% 55-64 Retiring	#	% 65+ Retiring
1990-91	76	64.6	11	36	6	40	41
1991-92	54	64.4	8	31	5	23	25
1992-93	57	63.6	8	30	5	27	27
1993-94	80	64.5	11	43	7	37	32
1994-95	92	63.5	13	57	10	35	33
1995-96	102	63.7	15	56	10	46	42
1996-97	72	63.6	11	39	7	33	32
1997-98	79	63.0	12	45	8	34	33
1998-99	65	62.3	10	46	8	19	18
1999-00	66	63.2	10	35	6	31	26
2000-01	70	62.9	10	42	7	28	23
2001-02	76	63.0	11	41	7	35	28
2002-03	61	64.4	9	29	5	32	23
2003-04	56	63.2	8	33	6	23	16
2004-05	68	63.5	9	38	7	30	19
2005-06	68	64.3	9	38	7	30	19
2006-07	57	63.3	8	29	5	28	15
2007-08	71	63.8	9	36	6	35	19
2008-09	63	65.4	8	30	5	33	18
2009-10	56	63.5	7	27	4	29	15
2010-11	110	66.3	13	45	6	65	33
2011-12	31	64.8	4	13	2	18	10
2012-13	52	64.7	6	21	3	31	15
2013-14	34	65.1	4	16	2	18	8
<b>Total/Avg.</b>	<b>1,616</b>	<b>63.9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>22</b>

\*The "Total/Avg" row is a weighted average. The "% retiring" is the proportion of all faculty in the age group who retired in that year.

**Appendix 2**  
**Number and Percentage of UW-Madison Faculty 55 or Older**  
**By Department**

Tenure/Tenure Track Faculty  
Departments with 5 or more total faculty

UDDS	Department Name	Total Faculty	Faculty 55+	%55+	Faculty 65+	%65+
<b>College of Agriculture &amp; Life Sciences</b>						
A0720	Agricultural & Applied Economics	22	10	45%	0	0%
A0722	Biological Systems Engineering	16	8	50%	0	0%
A0724	Life Sciences Communication	6	2	33%	0	0%
A0726	Agronomy	18	9	50%	1	6%
A0727	Animal Science	17	11	65%	3	18%
A0728	Bacteriology	19	8	42%	2	11%
A0730	Biochemistry	29	21	72%	7	24%
A0734	Dairy Science	12	5	42%	0	0%
A0736	Entomology	13	7	54%	3	23%
A0740	Food Science	11	6	55%	0	0%
A0742	Genetics	19	10	53%	2	11%
A0743	Horticulture	20	8	40%	2	10%
A0746	Nutritional Sciences	10	5	50%	0	0%
A0748	Plant Pathology	16	6	38%	1	6%
A0752	Community & Environmental Sociology	11	8	73%	0	0%
A0754	Soil Science	16	7	44%	1	6%
A0764	Forest & Wildlife Ecology	21	8	38%	1	5%
A0766	Nat Resources-Landscape Architecture	7	3	43%	2	29%
<b>School of Business</b>						
A1220	School of Business	84	28	33%	5	6%
<b>School of Education</b>						
A1710	Art	29	14	48%	3	10%
A1716	Counseling Psychology	7	2	29%	1	14%
A1720	Curriculum and Instruction	33	11	33%	5	15%
A1723	Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis	15	3	20%	1	7%
A1727	Educational Policy Studies	11	1	9%	0	0%
A1730	Educational Psychology	20	5	25%	2	10%
A1760	Kinesiology-Gen	16	5	31%	0	0%
A1762	Dance Department	8	3	38%	2	25%
A1778	Rehabilitation Psychology& Special Educ	11	3	27%	0	0%

<b>College of Engineering</b>						
A1912	Chemical and Biological Engineering	19	7	37%	1	5%
A1915	Civil & Environmental Engineering	27	8	30%	2	7%
A1925	Electrical & Computer Engineering	36	13	36%	4	11%
A1942	Biomedical Engineering	14	0	0%	0	0%
A1950	Industrial Engineering	17	4	24%	0	0%
A1962	Mechanical Engineering	30	12	40%	3	10%
A1975	Materials Science and Engineering	14	7	50%	3	21%
A1980	Engineering Physics	20	9	45%	2	10%
A1995	Engineering Professional Development	6	3	50%	1	17%
<b>School of Human Ecology</b>						
A2710	School of Human Ecology	39	15	38%	2	5%
<b>Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies</b>						
A4039	Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies	9	3	33%	1	11%
<b>Law School</b>						
A4510	Law School	34	14	41%	3	9%
<b>College of Letters &amp; Science</b>						
A4806	African Languages & Literature	6	2	33%	1	17%
A4807	Anthropology	17	7	41%	1	6%
A4808	Afro-American Studies	8	5	63%	2	25%
A4809	Art History	15	5	33%	3	20%
A4811	Astronomy	12	3	25%	1	8%
A4813	Botany	18	7	39%	2	11%
A4814	Communication Arts	25	6	24%	2	8%
A4815	Chemistry	41	19	46%	6	15%
A4817	Classics	11	3	27%	0	0%
A4818	Communicative Disorders	14	8	57%	1	7%
A4819	Comparative Literature	6	3	50%	2	33%
A4820	Computer Sciences	34	11	32%	0	0%
A4821	East Asian Languages & Literature	15	3	20%	2	13%
A4822	Economics	33	9	27%	1	3%
A4824	English	50	16	32%	7	14%
A4826	French and Italian	21	7	33%	1	5%
A4829	Geography	19	6	32%	2	11%
A4832	Geoscience	21	9	43%	2	10%
A4835	German	17	11	65%	4	24%
A4838	History	50	21	42%	5	10%

<b>College of Letters &amp; Science (cont.)</b>						
A4839	History of Science	7	4	57%	0	0%
A4844	Lafollette School of Public Affairs	11	3	27%	1	9%
A4849	Journalism & Mass Communication, Sch of	22	7	32%	3	14%
A4851	School of Library & Information Studies	7	1	14%	0	0%
A4854	Mathematics	46	6	13%	1	2%
A4857	Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences	13	5	38%	0	0%
A4860	School of Music	39	29	74%	8	21%
A4865	Philosophy	20	7	35%	4	20%
A4867	Physics	39	17	44%	5	13%
A4872	Political Science	33	6	18%	3	9%
A4874	Psychology	35	14	40%	1	3%
A4878	Scandinavian Studies	5	1	20%	0	0%
A4880	Slavic Languages	9	4	44%	3	33%
A4882	Social Work	16	5	31%	0	0%
A4883	Sociology	29	11	38%	4	14%
A4884	Languages and Cultures of Asia	5	4	80%	1	20%
A4885	Spanish and Portuguese	27	10	37%	0	0%
A4890	Statistics	17	6	35%	3	18%
A4892	Theatre & Drama	10	5	50%	1	10%
A4896	Gender and Women's Studies	9	1	11%	1	11%
A4897	Zoology	21	6	29%	2	10%
<b>School of Medicine and Public Health</b>						
A5309	Anesthesiology	8	4	50%	0	0%
A5311	Cell and Regenerative Biology	16	9	56%	3	19%
A5312	Biostatistics and Medical Informatics	7	0	0%	0	0%
A5312	Biostatistics and Medical Informatics	11	3	27%	1	9%
A5320	Family Medicine	8	2	25%	0	0%
A5325	Genetics	8	1	13%	0	0%
A5328	Obstetrics & Gynecology	13	6	46%	1	8%
A5331	Dept of Medical History and Bioethics	8	2	25%	0	0%
A5333	Human Oncology	11	6	55%	3	27%
A5342	Medicine	84	29	35%	8	10%
A5343	Dermatology	6	4	67%	1	17%
A5347	Medical Microbiology	12	6	50%	2	17%
A5348	Medical Physics	20	8	40%	5	25%
A5351	Neurology	8	4	50%	3	38%
A5357	Neurological Surgery	6	1	17%	0	0%
A5359	Oncology	19	11	58%	3	16%
A5360	Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences	17	11	65%	6	35%

<b>School of Medicine and Public Health</b>						
A5361	Orthopedics and Rehabilitation	13	6	46%	2	15%
A5362	Department of Neuroscience	26	16	62%	9	35%
A5363	Anatomic Pathology	14	10	71%	3	21%
A5367	Pediatrics	28	13	46%	4	14%
A5377	Biomolecular Chemistry	13	3	23%	1	8%
A5385	Population Health Sciences	22	10	45%	4	18%
A5389	Psychiatry	18	8	44%	2	11%
A5393	Radiology	16	7	44%	1	6%
A5397	Surgery	34	11	32%	2	6%
A5398	Department of Urology	5	2	40%	0	0%
<b>School of Nursing</b>						
A5450	School of Nursing	18	9	50%	0	0%
<b>School of Pharmacy</b>						
A5610	School of Pharmacy	31	9	29%	4	13%
<b>School of Veterinary Medicine</b>						
A8721	Medical Sciences	15	8	53%	1	7%
A8731	Pathobiological Sciences	17	9	53%	5	29%
A8741	Comparative Biosciences	16	8	50%	1	6%
A8751	Surgical Sciences	5	3	60%	0	0%

## Methodology

1. The source of the data used in this analysis is IADS, UW-Madison's Human Resources (appointment) data system prior to 2011 and HRS, UW-Madison's current Human Resources (appointment) Data system. Specifically, the data views UW\_ALL\_APTS\_SEN (IADS) and Ps\_Uw\_HR\_Alljob\_Vw (HRS) were used.
2. Retirement is defined as faculty age 55 and older whose faculty appointments ended during the period of October 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup> of the period of time described for data prior to 2011. Beginning in 2011 faculty with action reason coded as "Retirement" are considered retired. Age 55 is used in previous reports because it is usually the youngest age that a faculty member can retire under the State of Wisconsin retirement system. For the purposes of this report, the term "retirement" is used to mean "left employment at UW-Madison" rather than "drew on retirement benefits," which is not discernable in UW-Madison data systems.
3. Age is calculated as of October 1<sup>st</sup>.
4. Faculty members are counted in their "major appointment" department and in the school/college where that department is housed. The "major appointment" department is responsible for coordinating the faculty member's payroll, appointment and other administrative issues. This is often, but not always, the same department as the faculty member's "tenure home". The "major appointment" department is used because it allows for treatment of each faculty member once; faculty have only one major appointment department whereas faculty can have more than one tenure home and appointments in multiple departments.