

# Results of Validity Research on the Inventory on Faculty Well-Being

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The validity of the *Inventory on Faculty Well-Being* is supported by over a decade of research on the professoriate. An early version of the well-being model from which this assessment tool has been derived was used to analyze and interpret data from an extensive national study of college faculty done by the National Center on Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Menges, 1999). Since then an inventory has been created and used by a variety of colleges to assess outcomes of faculty development programs or to identify work environments associated with high and low well-being (Walker, 2002). The claim can be made that the *Inventory on Faculty Well-Being* currently has at least two forms of validity: content and predictive validity.

**Content Validity.** The *Inventory on Faculty Well-Being* has been derived from theory and research on human well-being of Ryff (1995) and numerous investigations on the quality of work life of faculty (Blackburn, 1985; Eckert & Stecklein, 1957; Rice & Austin, 1988). The *Inventory* contains items on goals, autonomy, professional efficacy (scholarship, and pedagogy for individuals & groups), and work place social relations (with students, colleagues, and administrators). It does not include items on physical health, spirituality, or the skills required to do service work.

**Predictive Validity.** If the *Inventory on Faculty Well-Being* has predictive validity it should, for example, discriminate between faculty who work in healthy supportive environments from those who not, or show different levels of well-being in faculty who fully accept being a professor from those who wished they had taken another path in life. Using criteria suggested by Rice & Austin (1988), five healthy and unhealthy colleges were selected and the data on the well-being of their faculty were contrasted. As can be seen in Figure 1, faculty at healthy colleges had stronger psychological well-being than those at less healthy colleges,  $N = 102$ . This effect was particularly evident on dimensions that faculty have less control of (e.g., recognition and collegial support). In Figure 2, the results of a study comparing faculty who accept and do not accept their careers in higher education are displayed,  $N = 354$ . Faculty who fully accept their careers had significantly stronger psychological well-being than those who were less committed to the professoriate. Differences in the expected direction were observed on all the dimensions, especially dimensions concerning social relationships with colleagues, administrators and students. Together, these two studies support the claim that the *Inventory on Faculty Well-Being* has predictive validity. However, additional research is needed showing, for example, correlations with job satisfaction indices and relevant individual difference variables such as social intelligence or optimism. Although it is likely that high faculty well-being is directly associated with student outcome variables such as engagement and persistence in learning, this research remains to be done.

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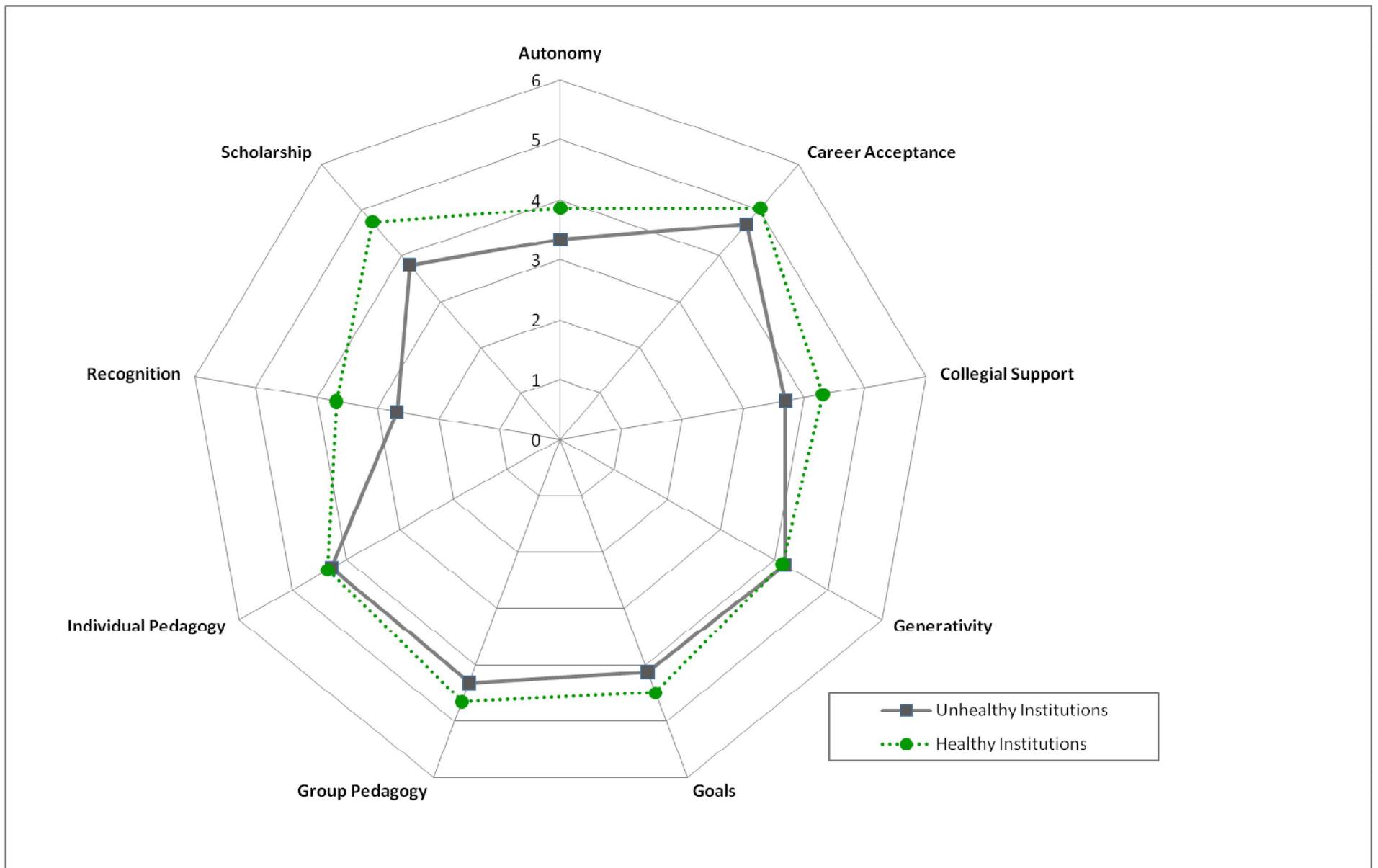
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**Figure 1: Faculty well-being at healthy and unhealthy institutions.**



**Figure 2: Well-being of lower and higher career-acceptance faculty.**

