College of Information Studies

The UMD ADVANCE Grant Towards an Institution for Inclusive Excellence (UMD = TI2E), the Office of Faculty Affairs, and the Office of Diversity & Inclusion, are all engaged in efforts to improve professional growth opportunities and work environment for UMD faculty. A critical part of those efforts is research to benchmark the current status of faculty work environments and to see if there are important differences by gender, race and ethnicity, career stage, and college. This report presents findings from a spring 2013 UMD work environment survey.

The UMD Work Environment Survey assessed specific aspects of faculty work environment, such as faculty perceptions of their own professional growth, institutional and unit supports for professional growth, climate for work-life balance, fair treatment and diversity, and satisfaction, all of which have been linked to retention, advancement, and productivity. Here major findings from the college are reported for respondents. A full institutional report with all data and tables, as well as college-specific reports can be found at the ADVANCE website: www.advance.umd.edu.

RESPONDENTS

71% (12) of full-time UMD tenure-track or tenured INFO faculty completed the work environment survey. Demographics of respondents included:

- 50% female, 50% male
- 10% Faculty of Color, 90% White
- 50% Assistant, 17% Associate, and 33% Full Professors

SURVEY RESULTS

Comparisons are provided between INFO and university-wide University of Maryland respondents.

Organizational Commitment and Intent to Leave

- 33.3% of INFO participants stated they were likely to leave the university in the next two years.
- 66.7% of INFO participants stated that there was at least one faculty member in their unit who left in the past three years.
- 37.5% of INFO respondents had an outside offer while at UMD.

INFO respondents were more likely than UMD respondents to intend to leave UMD for an offer from an institution in a more desirable geographic location (33.3% INFO vs. 12.8% UMD), to be closer to family (25.0% INFO vs. 7.8% UMD), and for career opportunities at another institution for their spouse/partner (25.0% INFO vs. 6.5% UMD).

The most frequent reasons INFO participants listed for wanting to leave UMD were:

- for an offer from an institution in a more desirable geographic location (33.3%),
- to be closer to family (25%),
- career opportunities at another institution for their spouse/partner (25%),
- a higher salary, and
- a better work-life balance in a different type of position.
Satisfaction with Department and UMD

- INFO respondents were less likely than UMD respondents to be satisfied with the University’s location (p<.05): 22.2% for INFO vs. 59.3% for UMD.
- INFO respondents were more likely than UMD respondents to be satisfied with assistance with research administration in their unit (100.0% INFO vs. 41.8% UMD), and assistance with finding grants (66.7% INFO vs. 29.5% UMD; p<.05).
- The majority of INFO participants were satisfied with assistance with research administration in their unit (100.0%), the amount of autonomy (77.8%), the support of colleagues (77.8%), their overall experience working at UMD and in their unit (77.8%), the diversity on campus (77.8%), the university’s and their unit’s national reputation (77.8%), leadership of their college (77.8%), and the amount of time they spend on research vs. teaching & service (77.8%).
- The fewest number of INFO respondents were satisfied with the university’s location (22.2%), professional assistance for improving teaching (22.2%), the quality of campus facilities (33.3%), and expectations for committee service (33.3%).

Fair Treatment and Diversity

- There were no significant differences between INFO and UMD respondents in perceptions of fair treatment and discrimination.
- About half of INFO respondents perceived that Faculty of Color receive fair treatment at UMD, while fewer perceived that female faculty receive fair treatment.
- About half of INFO respondents agreed that they have to work harder than some of their colleagues to be perceived as legitimate scholars.
- 11.1% of INFO respondents reported discrimination in their unit based on their individual or multiple identities.

Work-Life Climate

- There was only one significant difference between INFO and UMD respondents in their perception of work-life climate. INFO respondents were less likely than UMD respondents to agree that they have control over creating a satisfying work-life balance (10.0% INFO vs. 56.5% UMD).
- The majority of INFO respondents agreed that they have taken strategic steps toward creating a satisfactory work-life balance and that their unit supports faculty scheduling work commitments around family schedules.
- About two thirds of INFO respondents agreed that in their unit faculty can be honest with colleagues about family/life roles and responsibilities, that there is no bias against family care-giving in their unit, and that the institution does what it can to make family life and the tenure track compatible.
- Half of INFO respondents were satisfied with their unit’s culture around work-life balance.
- Fewer than half of INFO participants agreed that there are role-models in their unit for how to create a satisfying work-life balance.
- Similar to UMD respondents, INFO respondents rated many of UMD’s policies and programs for work-life balance as valuable, but few respondents took advantage of these programs and some had not heard of the programs.

Open-ended responses on the topic of work-life balance addressed needing more realistic expectations, changes in tenure requirements, and sharing of information on work-life programs.

“Promote quality of life issues. As our budgets have been cut, faculty pay cut, rises in costs of living with no real raise in pay, reductions in staff, etc., absolutely none of the work that needs to be done has gone away. If anything, expectations keep growing -- bring in more money, publish more, etc. We are a finite resource of which more and more is being asked. This campus has unrealistic expectations in general, and for those with families in particular.”
Career Advancement and Institutional Support of Career Advancement

- There were no significant differences between INFO and UMD respondents in perceptions of career advancement and institutional support of career advancement.
- All INFO participants agreed that they seize opportunities to advance in their career.
- Almost all INFO participants agreed that they have been strategic in achieving their career goals and have intentionally made choices to focus their career in ways that are personally meaningful to them.
- The majority of INFO respondents perceived tenure and promotion requirements as clear and fair.
- 80% of INFO respondents agreed that faculty in their unit have the freedom to succeed here if they work hard, while fewer agreed that they have received helpful feedback from their department chair/unit head in support of their career advancement.
- 30% of INFO respondents felt stuck in their ability to advance in their career.
- 16.7% of INFO respondents had concerns about their own advancement.

Evaluation of Research and Creative Work

- INFO respondents were more likely than other UMD respondents to agree that interdisciplinary scholarship (100.0% INFO vs. 54.4% UMD), and engaged scholarship (100.0% INFO vs. 46.8% UMD) are rewarded in their unit.
- INFO respondents were more likely than other UMD respondents to agree that collaborative research and grant work is encouraged in their unit’s reward system (90.0% INFO vs. 53.6% UMD).
- About two thirds of INFO participants agreed that in their unit faculty are rewarded for taking risks and trying to be cutting edge in their research.

Management of Teaching, Research and Service Responsibilities

- There were no significant differences between INFO and UMD respondents in their perception of evaluation and support of teaching, research and service.
- Half of INFO respondents agreed that faculty have control over managing their teaching responsibilities.
- A third of INFO participants agreed that there is support in their department for effective teaching, and that it is possible for them to say no to additional on-campus service activities without negative consequences, and that they are in control of their participation in service activities.
- All INFO respondents agreed that they are in charge of the direction of their research agenda.

Recognition

- There were no significant differences between INFO and UMD respondents in their perception of recognition and valuing one’s commitments.
- Most of INFO participants agreed that faculty in their unit value their teaching contributions and care about their personal well-being, while two thirds agreed that faculty in their unit value their research and service contributions.
- 12.5% of INFO respondents indicated that they have been nominated for an award at UMD at least once over the last three years.

Leadership Opportunities

- There were no significant differences between INFO and UMD respondents in their perception of leadership opportunities.
- The majority of INFO participants agreed that they have opportunities in their college to become involved as leaders.
- More than half of INFO respondents indicated that at least once during the past twelve months they have been encouraged to pursue a leadership position.
Faculty Learning

- INFO respondents were more likely than UMD respondents to agree that their unit and the University provide an environment that stimulates their academic learning (80.0% and 100.0% INFO, respectively, vs. 68.0% and 58.7% UMD, respectively).
- Almost all INFO respondents agreed that in the last twelve months they set aside time to advance their scholarly learning, that their unit has helped them to make room among their responsibilities for immersing themselves in their academic learning and supported their learning external to campus, and that their learning contributed to their research and/or scholarly agenda and made them better teachers.
- However, only 40.0% of INFO respondents indicated that their unit has financially supported their learning in the field or discipline.

Professional Networks and Collegiality

- INFO respondents were more likely than UMD respondents to agree that they receive useful feedback from colleagues at UMD that improves their work (100.0% INFO vs. 68.0% UMD), and that individuals at this institution have made an effort to connect them with important people in their field (66.7% INFO vs. 34.4% UMD).
- INFO respondents were more likely than UMD respondents to be satisfied with the opportunity to collaborate with other UMD faculty (88.9% INFO vs. 41.0% UMD).
- Almost all INFO faculty respondents perceived that their professional network was helpful in a number of areas, including influence, visibility, feedback, advice, and awareness of professional opportunities.
- Most INFO respondents agreed that they have relationships with other faculty on campus that have supported their career advancement.
- Two thirds of INFO respondents indicated that they have been effectively mentored by someone in their unit and were satisfied with the collegiality in their unit.
- 70.0% of INFO respondents said that their core discussion network was mainly on campus (vs. 32.1% UMD; p<.05).

Perceptions of Productivity

- 55.6% of INFO respondents ranked themselves as more productive than researchers in their field and rank nationwide.
- 0% of INFO respondents ranked themselves as less productive than researchers in their field and rank nationwide.
- 44.4% of INFO respondents believed their unit views them as more productive than researchers in their field and rank nationwide.
- 22.2% of INFO respondents believed their unit views them as less productive than researchers in their field and rank nationwide.

“Reduce the service loads. This may be out of our control, since we are a relatively small unit. But our service needs are extremely high, and thus we spend considerable time on committees -- both standing and ad hoc.”

“The biggest issue for me is graduate student quality at both the master’s and doctoral level. This is not something easily fixed but I hope it will improve over the long term.”

“Help navigate funding sources and prepare grants.”

REFERENCES

O’Meara, K., Garvey, J., Niehaus, E., Corrigan, K. (2013). The Work Environment for Tenure-Track/Tenured Faculty at the University of Maryland: Results from the 2013 UMD Work Environment Survey. College Park, MD: Univ. of Maryland ADVANCE Program.


TO CITE THIS BRIEF: