ADVANCE

ADVANCE Program for Inclusive Excellence
Advancing women, transforming the University, investing in a culture of inclusive excellence

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Career Advancement and Institutional Support of Career Advancement

The UMD ADVANCE Grant Towards an Institution for Inclusive Excellence (UMD = TI2E), the Office of Faculty Affairs, and the Office of Diversity and 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. There were 784 tenure track respondents, approximately 47% of full-time UMD tenure track faculty in fall 2012. Here major findings are reported for tenure track/tenured 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.

"[There is a] lack of support from the administration to advance, and most of all I need to find other means of supporting my family financially due to the very low salary I receive as an Associate Professor."

Studies suggest that differences exist by gender and race in terms of perceived support for career advancement on the tenure track (Glazer-Raymo, 2008; Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007).

Major findings:

- Most participants perceived clear requirements (67%) and fair processes for tenure (68%).
- Just over half perceived clear requirements and fair processes for promotion to Full Professor (54% and 56%, respectively).
- Yet, 33% had concerns about their own advancement.

Most respondents viewed themselves as strategic in their careers. Seventy-nine percent seize opportunities when they are presented to advance and 86% have intentionally made choices to focus their careers in ways that are personally meaningful to them. However, open-ended comments revealed critical concerns about deficient salary, lack of administrative and institutional support, and time investments that can hinder advancement.

DIFFERENCES BY GENDER, RACE, AND RANK

As alluded to above, differences by gender revealed women, on average, were more likely to:

- Feel less control over their careers
- Feel stuck in their ability to advance
- Disagree that if faculty work hard they have the freedom to succeed in their unit

There were two differences by race. Faculty of Color were less likely to agree that they have received helpful feedback from their department chair/unit head in support of their career advancement and that the promotion process for advancing to Full Professor is fair.

All survey items differed according to personal assessment of and institutional support for career advancement by rank. Associate Professors perceived a less favorable situation for advancement, overall. Full Professors perceived more control over their ability to advance as well as greater institutional support for clear and fair advancement. Assistant Professors scored higher on the following variables than either Full Professors or Associate Professors, suggesting a greater sense of agency: being strategic in achieving career goals, seizing opportunities to advance, and receiving helpful feedback from department chair/unit head in support of career advancement. However, Assistant Professors were less likely to agree that the promotion requirements for advancing to Full Professor are clear and fair.

Figures 1 and 2 present some sample survey items on which tenured and tenure-track faculty differed appreciably by career stage. These findings indicate that perceptions of opportunities and institutional support for career advancement differ by career stage.
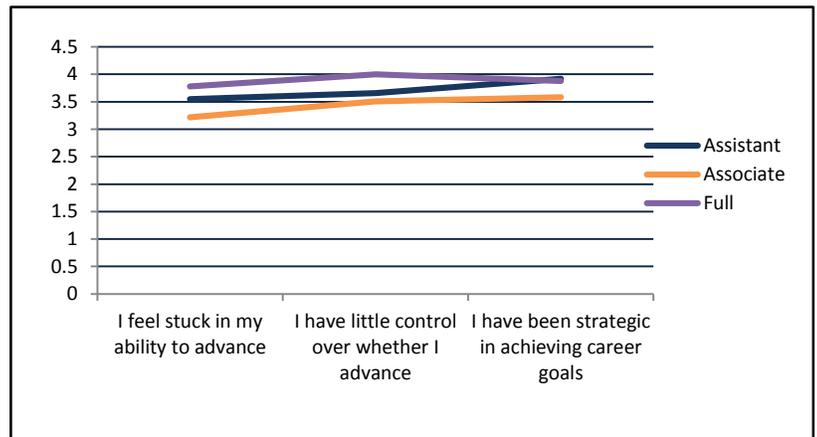

Figure 1: Sample Survey Items.
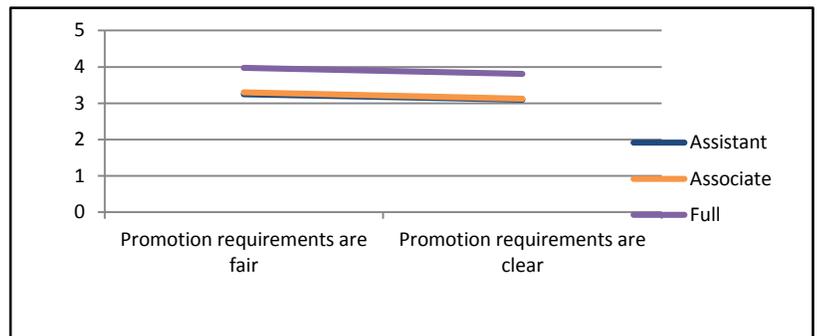Note: Strongly Agree = 5; Strongly Disagree = 1. Survey wording truncated for figure presentation.

Figure 2: Sample Survey Items.
Note: Strongly Agree = 5; Strongly Disagree = 1. Survey wording truncated for figure presentation.

REFERENCES

Gappa, Austin & Trice. (2007). *Rethinking faculty work: Higher education's strategic imperative.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Glazer-Raymo, J. (2008). *Unfinished agendas: New and continuing gender challenges in higher education.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

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

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