ADVANCE

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

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Faculty Learning

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. 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 not enough time to focus on scholarship. We spend ever more of our time chasing ever scarcer dollars. When you are out of time, the first thing that goes is scholarship: time to think and work on new ideas that may (or may not) lead to something. These realities of the modern academic environment are rapidly turning academia into a business...

Faculty learning is a key aspect of professional growth that has been associated with greater job satisfaction and retention (O'Meara, Terosky, Neumann, 2008; Neumann, 2009). Institutions that provide work environments that stimulate professional growth via opportunities for learning are likely to find more satisfied and productive faculty.

Major findings:

- 77.0% of respondents reported learning a great deal regarding their research and/or scholarly agenda in the past year.
- 60.2% reported that their unit provides an environment that stimulates their academic learning.
- Associate Professors perceived lower support for learning as compared to Full and Assistant Professors.

Regarding departmental and institutional support for faculty learning, 60.2% reported that their unit provides an environment that stimulates their academic learning and 58.7% reported that the university provides such an environment. Between 52 and 58% of faculty said their unit supports their learning external to campus, financially supports their learning in their field or discipline, or has helped them to make room to immerse themselves in their learning.

DIFFERENCES BY GENDER, RACE AND RANK

Regarding institutional support for learning, men felt more strongly that their unit provides an environment that stimulates their academic learning. Additionally, faculty of color were more likely to agree that the university provides an environment that stimulates their academic learning and that their unit has financially supported their learning. There were several differences by rank. Assistant Professors were more likely to agree that their unit financially supported their learning. Associate Professors were less likely to agree that their unit has financially supported their learning or helped to make room among responsibilities for immersing themselves in academic learning. Additionally, Associate Professors agreed less that their university or unit provided a stimulating environment for their academic learning.

Create a culture of scholarship and teaching that is less based on metrics and benchmarks, which are proliferating, and include in this culture renewed emphasis on deep and rigorous scholarship as more important than quantity of publications and teaching performance indicators...

REFERENCES

Neumann, A. (2009). *Professing to learn: Creating tenured lives and careers in the American research university*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

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.

O'Meara, K., Terosky, A., & Neumann, A. (2008). Faculty careers and work-lives: A professional growth perspective [Monograph]. *ASHE Higher Education Report, 34*(3). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

TO CITE THIS BRIEF:

Follman, R. & O'Meara, K. (2013). *Faculty Learning*. College Park, MD: University of Maryland ADVANCE Program.