

ADVANCE Program for Inclusive Excellence

Advancing women, transforming the University, investing in a culture of inclusive excellence



Satisfaction with Department and UMD

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.

"[I want] a higher salary that allows me to focus on research and less on outside jobs to make up for no raises during the last 4-5 years."

"I have been overburdened with service and administrative work to the detriment of my ability to focus on research, scholarship, and creative work."

Job satisfaction with significant dimensions of the faculty experience, such as degree of autonomy, professional development, workload, and salary are integral to retention efforts, and have been associated with intent to leave in previous studies (Daly & Dee, 2006; Hagedorn, 1996; Rosser, 2004). Faculty satisfaction has tended to differ by gender, race and ethnicity, rank and discipline (Rosser, 2004; Seifert & Umbach, 2007; Xu, 2008a).

Major findings:

- Over half of participants were satisfied with their overall experience at UMD (67%, n=494) and working in their unit (68%, n=509).
- Participants were most satisfied with degree of autonomy (79%, n=585) and diversity on campus (69%, n=506).
- Participants were least satisfied with assistance with finding grants (30%) and their salary and benefits (40%).

In contrast to the majority of respondents who indicated an overall satisfaction with University of Maryland, there was considerable variation among respondent satisfaction with specific factors of the UMD tenure-track/tenured faculty experience. For example, degree of autonomy was considered most satisfying (79%), while assistance with finding grants (30%) and salary and benefits (40%) less satisfying, comparatively.

Faculty respondents expressed frustration with stagnant salaries, heavy service loads, and a lack of time and resources to support research in open-ended comments.

Some respondents identified positive attributes about their unit and their experience at University of Maryland, overall. Unit collegiality, for instance, has had a satisfying impact on career for some respondents in spite of the challenges met by most of the faculty who responded to the survey.

“I’m in a great unit but I don’t feel I have a lot of control over how I allocate my time. We have a fairly heavy teaching load and limited TA support and this takes up a lot of time. I do feel that my unit is supportive and my colleagues are invested in my success.”

“My department is extremely supportive. My concerns are mainly in ensuring that my teaching and mentoring and department participation is of reasonable quality, I will not get enough done to meet tenure requirements...There’s just too much to do...”

DIFFERENCES BY GENDER, RACE AND RANK

Differences by gender emerged with a small effect size on 8 of 21 survey items, with women reporting less satisfaction than men on the following variables:

- Finding grants
- Access to TAs, RAs
- Committee service
- Research administration
- Salary and benefits
- Diversity on campus
- Time on research vs. teaching & service

One exception was the university’s location, in which women reported greater satisfaction than men.

Three differences by race were found. Faculty of Color were less satisfied than White faculty with the diversity on campus and more satisfied with the university’s location and overall experiences working at UMD.

Satisfaction differed by rank for varying aspects of the UMD faculty experience, with Associate Professors less satisfied than Assistant or Full Professors on 13 dimensions. These included those which differed by gender (bulleted above), in addition to the overall

experience in the faculty member’s unit, clerical/administrative support, autonomy, support of colleagues, sense of fit between values and those of the unit, leadership of the college, and priorities and vision of the college. Assistant Professors were less satisfied overall with diversity than other faculty members.

These findings are consistent with other results from the Faculty Work Environment Survey, which suggest that Associate Professors are less satisfied overall than either Full or Assistant Professors across multiple dimensions of the tenured or tenure-track faculty experience at UMD.

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