

ADVANCE Program for Inclusive Excellence

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



Career Advancement and Institutional Support of Career Advancement

2015 Faculty Work Environment Survey Results

The University of Maryland Faculty Work Environment Survey (FWES) was designed to measure the degree to which faculty perceive and experience their units, colleges, and the university to be investing in their professional growth and creating an inclusive work environment. Much social science and educational research has found that supporting faculty professional growth (agency, learning, professional networks, and recognition) and creating inclusive work environments (fair workload, diversity climate, work-life climate) is linked to faculty retention, advancement, and productivity. The Faculty Work Environment Survey (FWES) was designed and implemented by the University of Maryland ADVANCE Program with support and consultation from the Office of Faculty Affairs and Office of Diversity & Inclusion. The FWES was implemented in spring, 2011, 2013, and 2015.

This brief summarizes results from all full-time tenure track participants in 2015 survey. A full institution-wide report can be found at the ADVANCE website, research and evaluation section:
<http://www.advance.umd.edu/research/research-evaluation>

RESPONDENTS

53% (n=854) of full-time UMD tenure track or tenured faculty completed the work environment survey. Demographics of respondents included:

- 41% female, 59% male
- 20% Faculty of Color, 80% White
- 23% Assistant, 32% Associate, and 44% Full Professors

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).

SURVEY RESULTS

Major Findings

- Most participants perceived clear requirements (67%) and fair processes for tenure (70%).
- Just over half of faculty perceived clear requirements and fair processes for promotion to Full Professor (52% and 56%, respectively).
- Yet, 35% of respondents had concerns about their own career advancement at UM.

Participants felt generally positive about their own actions with regard to career advancement: they mostly agreed that they have been strategic in their career goals (70%) and they seize opportunities when they are presented to advance (80%). Additionally, a majority (86%) have intentionally made choices to focus their careers in ways that are personally meaningful to them.

However, open-ended comments revealed concerns about opportunities for career advancement related to a lack of time for research, deficient salary and insufficient mentoring support.

DIFFERENCES BY GENDER, RACE, AND RANK

Differences by gender revealed women, on average, were less likely to:

- agree that faculty in their unit have the freedom to succeed if they work hard
- perceive the tenure and promotion requirements and processes for advancing to Full Professor as clear and fair

Regarding race, Faculty of Color were more likely than White faculty to agree that they have received helpful feedback from their department chair/ head in support of their career advancement, but less likely to agree that the promotion process for advancing to Full Professor is fair.

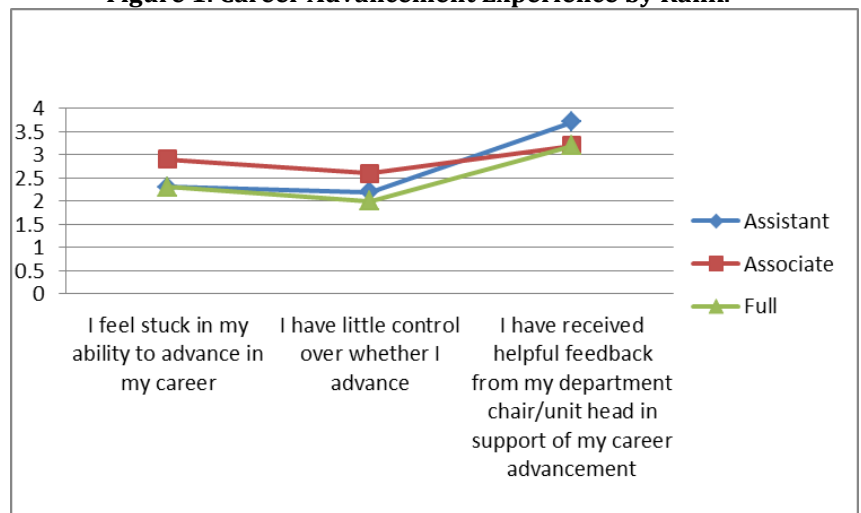
Not surprisingly, all items related to career advancement (both personal assessment of and institutional support for) differed by rank. The pattern continues over the years regarding Associate professors perceiving less favorable conditions.

- Associate Professors were most likely, compared to Assistant and Full Professors, to feel stuck in their ability to advance in their career and least likely to feel control over their career advancement.
- Assistant Professors reported higher scores than both Associate and Full Professors for receiving helpful feedback from their department chair/unit head in support of their career advancement.
- Assistant Professors were least likely to perceive tenure requirements as clear and fair, while Associate Professors were least likely to perceive promotion requirements for advancing to Full Professor as clear and fair.

“Associate professors are loaded with service work, making it difficult to advance.”

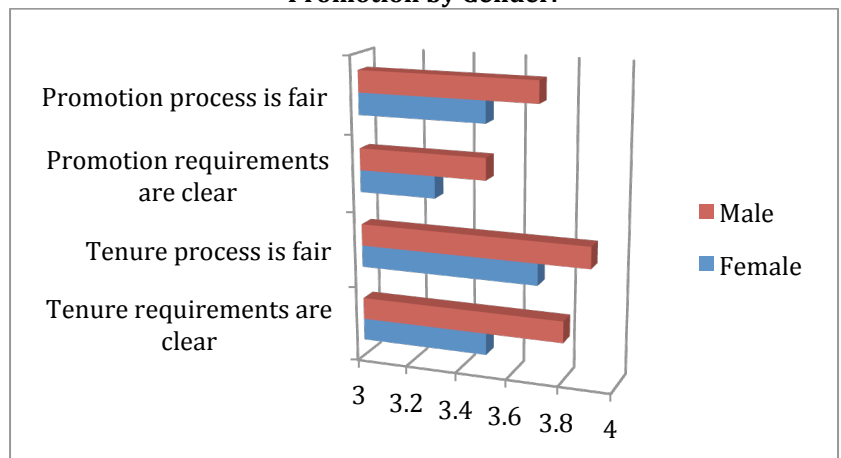
“As a working mother, I am balancing my scholarly career with an administrative position and family. I have been teaching, administrating, and raising my kids for the last five years. During that time, I have been denied access to my own research funds several times because of state budget crises and other internal rules. I have little time to do research.”

Figure 1. Career Advancement Experience by Rank.



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

Figure 2. Perception of Clarity and Fairness of Tenure & Promotion by Gender.



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

“As an Associate Professor, I have become mired in all the teaching and service responsibilities in my department. I am no longer protected, and I find myself being asked to take on more and more responsibilities. I have many doubts about making Full here at UM, and I have often wondered if leaving and going to another university would better my chances for promotion.”

REFERENCES

Gappa, Austin and 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.

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The ADVANCE Program for Inclusive Excellence aims to improve work environments and opportunities for women faculty in ways that improve the university for all. ADVANCE is Directed by Professor KerryAnn O'Meara and coordinated by Kristen Corrigan, Projects Manager. ADVANCE reports to the Provost's Office and is located in 1402 Marie Mount Hall. Founded initially through an NSF ADVANCE grant, the program is now supported by the campus, and engages in four activities found to have high impact in supporting faculty and improving work environments: (a) Strategic Networks (for assistant professors, associate professors, ADVANCE professors, under-represented faculty of color, leadership fellows and professional track faculty); (b) ADVANCE Professors assigned to each college to mentor women faculty and work with Deans to create structures and cultures of support; (c) Data collection, analysis and dissemination to increase awareness of equity issues, mentor, and improve work environments (e.g., faculty work environment survey and dashboard); and (d) Crafting policy change as relevant with other offices in areas that specifically affect women faculty. Please contact the ADVANCE office with questions or ideas related to these activities and goals advance@umd.edu