

ADVANCE Program for Inclusive Excellence

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



Differences By Rank: Associate Professors 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 and Inclusion. The FWES was implemented in spring, 2011, 2013, and 2015.

This brief summarizes results from Associate Professors. 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

53.3% (n=854) of full-time UMD tenure track or tenured faculty completed the work environment survey. Demographics of respondents included:

- 23.5% (n=201) Assistant Professors, 32.4% (n=277) Associate Professors, and 44.0% (n=376) Full Professors.
- These findings are representative by rank of the UMD tenure track faculty.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The UMD Work Environment survey of tenure track/tenured faculty at UMD in Spring 2015 continued to reveal important differences in experiences of work environment by rank. Specifically, Associate Professors were significantly less positive than Assistant Professors and/or Full Professors on 77 of 84 work environment items (most of the survey). Leadership opportunities, self-reported productivity or recognition of productivity, career advancement, and institutional support of career advancement were the areas with the strongest effect size differences.

SATISFACTION WITH DEPARTMENT AND UMD

Over half of participants were satisfied with their overall experience working at UMD (63.0%) and working in their unit (68.1%). However, Associate Professors were less satisfied than either Assistant or Full Professors regarding the following variables:

- Overall experience working in units and at UMD;
- Assistance with research administration and finding grants;
- Clerical/administrative support;
- The quality of graduate students in their program;
- Time spent on research versus teaching and service;
- Transparency of decision-making within unit;
- Access to TAs and RAs;
- Expectations for committee service;

- Salary and benefits, autonomy, support of colleagues, sense of fit between values and unit;
- Priorities and vision of their college/school.

DIVERSITY ISSUES

Almost half of participants perceived that opportunities are at least as good for female faculty (50.5%) and Faculty of Color (46.5%), as they are for male faculty and White faculty, respectively. However, Associate Professors perceived less favorable opportunities for women and faculty of color.

Associate Professors overall were also more likely than other ranks to agree that they have to work harder than some of their colleagues to be perceived as legitimate scholars and that they have experienced discrimination in their unit.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Overall, 51.7% of respondents were satisfied with their unit's culture for work-life balance. Differences emerged by rank, with Associate Professors less favorable than Full Professors on the following survey items:

- Their unit's culture around work-life balance;
- Their unit support for faculty scheduling work commitments around family schedules;
- Having role-models in their units of how to create a satisfying work-life balance;
- Having control over creating a satisfying work-life balance.

Additionally, Associate Professors were less likely to agree that:

- The institution does what it can to make family life and the tenure track compatible;
- Faculty can be honest with colleagues about family/life roles and responsibilities;
- There is no bias against family care-giving in their unit.

UM Faculty Participant: "Have more discussion about work-life balance for Associate Professors, because it is at this time, at least in my life, where the responsibilities and demands in both my work life and my home life significantly increased, and it is difficult to balance them."

CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Most respondents perceived clear requirements (67.2%) and fair processes for tenure (69.7%). Fewer respondents (34.7%) had concerns about their own advancement. Associate Professors perceived less favorable conditions than either Assistant or Full Professors for institutional support of career advancement. They were more likely to feel stuck in their ability to advance in their career and least likely to feel control over their own career advancement.

UM Faculty Participant: "The lack of mentorship combined with being unclear about the process about moving from Associate to Full makes me concerned. I also have doubts about my ability to meet the requirements of becoming a full professor."

EVALUATION OF RESEARCH AND CREATIVE WORK

More than half of respondents agreed that their unit supports interdisciplinary scholarship (55.3%), engaged scholarship (51.5%), and collaborative research and grant work (55.5%). Only 44.4% agreed that their unit supports cutting edge research. Associate Professors generally reported least favorable views of assessment in these areas, compared to Assistant and Full Professors.

MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND SERVICE

Overall, the majority of faculty felt they had control over their research (88.7%) and teaching (68.6%) agendas, with about half reporting control over service participation (52.9%). Associate Professors were less likely to feel control over:

- Teaching responsibilities
- Service activities
- Research agenda

Associate Professors also felt less support in their departments for effective teaching, and were less inclined to agree that it was possible to say no to additional on-campus service activities without negative consequences.

Open-ended comments centered on themes of dissatisfaction with existing teaching and service loads:

UM Faculty Participants: "The burden is highest on Associate Professors. Full Professors in my unit do not contribute as much, in terms of service or teaching."

"The professors on the Associate level like myself end up having to do a lot more service work, at the expense of our own professional development."

FACULTY LEARNING

Of all respondents, 74.9% reported learning a great deal regarding their research and or scholarly agenda in the past year. Differences emerged by rank, as Associate Professors were less likely to agree with the following survey items:

- In the past year, they learned a great deal regarding their research or scholarly agenda;
- Their unit financially supported their learning;
- Their unit supports their learning external to campus or helped to make room among responsibilities for immersing themselves in academic learning;
- Their university or unit provided a stimulating environment for their academic learning.

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

Compared with Assistant and Full Professors, Associate Professors reported feeling:

- More isolated in departments;
- Less satisfaction with collegiality;
- Less connection to important people in the field;
- Less satisfied with opportunities to collaborate;
- Less satisfied with opportunities to be mentored, receive useful feedback from colleagues at UMD, and support for career advancement

PRODUCTIVITY

Associate Professors reported a lower perception of their own productivity and their unit's productivity compared to peers nationwide.

TO CITE THIS BRIEF:

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The ADVANCE Program for Inclusive Excellence 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