ADVANCE

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

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

A. James Clark School of Engineering

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. Here major findings from the college are reported for 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.

RESPONDENTS

41% (87) of full-time UMD tenure track or tenured ENGR faculty completed the work environment survey. Demographics of respondents included:

- 20% female, 80% male
- 27% Faculty of Color, 73% White
- 23% Assistant, 25% Associate, and 52% Full Professors

SURVEY RESULTS

Comparisons are provided between ENGR and university-wide UM respondents.

Organizational Commitment and Intent to Leave

ENGR respondents were less likely than UMD respondents overall to intend to leave the institution (p<.05).

- 19.3% of ENGR participants stated they were likely to leave the university in the next two years (vs. 27.3% of all UMD respondents).

The most frequent reasons ENGR participants listed for wanting to leave UMD were:

- for a higher salary (28.7%);
- a more prestigious institution or department (26.4%);
- a more desirable geographic location (10.3%);
- a closer location to family (9.2%);
- a better work-life balance in a different type of position (8.0%); or
- for retirement (8.0%).

DIFFERENCES BY GENDER AND RANK

- ENGR men were more likely than women to have had an outside offer while at UMD.
- ENGR women were more likely to intend to leave UMD for reasons of being closer to family and feeling not well suited for the faculty career.

- Associate Professors were more likely than Full or Assistant Professors to intend to leave UMD in the next two years.

Satisfaction with Department and UMD

ENGR respondents were overall more satisfied with their experiences than other faculty at UMD (p<.05):

- 81.0% of ENGR participants were satisfied with their overall experience working in their unit and
- 70.2% were satisfied with their overall experience at UMD (compared to 68.4% and 66.5%, respectively, of all UMD respondents).

There were six specific aspects of the faculty experience that were rated more favorably by ENGR respondents than UMD faculty respondents (p<.05):

- leadership of college/school;
- priorities and vision of their college/ school;
- assistance with research administration in their unit;
- clerical/administrative support;
- expectations for committee service;
- the amount of time they spend on research vs. teaching & service.

Two aspects that were rated less favorably by ENGR respondents than UMD respondents (p<.05):

- professional assistance for improving teaching; and
- the amount of access to TAs and RAs.

The fewest number of ENGR respondents were satisfied with:

- professional assistance for improving teaching (32.1%);
- access to TAs and RAs (36.5%);
- assistance with finding grants (37.6%);
- salary and benefits (42.9%); and
- transparency of decision-making within their unit (48.8%).

DIFFERENCES BY GENDER

ENGR women were more likely than men to be satisfied with the leadership of their school, but less satisfied with the amount of time they spend on research versus teaching and service, and with the amount of access to TAs and RAs.

Fair Treatment and Diversity

The majority of ENGR respondents perceive that female faculty and Faculty of Color receive fair treatment (75.6% and 77.1%, respectively). These two dimensions of fair treatment were rated significantly more favorable by ENGR respondents than UMD respondents (p<.05) (see Table 5).

DIFFERENCES BY GENDER

- ENGR women were less likely to agree that the opportunities for female faculty and Faculty of Color at UMD are at least as good as for male and White faculty.
- ENGR women were also more likely than men to indicate that they have experienced discrimination and that they have to work harder than some of their colleagues to be perceived as legitimate scholars.

OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

"A number of years ago, the faculty salary committee ranked my service as low because I was doing a great deal of university based service (advising, committee work, etc.) and was not a journal editor. I have felt that if I was a male this would not have been as much of a problem."

"I have seen gender discrimination and report it. It was applying purportedly "equal" standards for research that seriously undervalued work of greater interest to women. This type of discrimination is very common at UMCP."

"I see very little discrimination based on gender, race/ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation. Age discrimination is the elephant in the room."

"It is more subtle discrimination these days – instead of being viewed as a colleague, I feel that I am sometimes viewed as a 'daughter' or equivalent to the older male faculty. They are helpful, but (from what I can tell), they still don't see me as a colleague."

Work-Life Climate

ENGR respondents generally had a better assessment of work-life climate than other UMD faculty.

- 67.5% of ENGR respondents agreed that there is no bias against family care-giving in their unit (vs. 48.5% for UMD) and that the institution does what it can to make family life and the tenure track compatible (45.2% for ENGR vs. 34.2% for UMD).
- Similar to UMD respondents, ENGR respondents rated many of UMD's policies and programs for work-life balance as valuable, but few respondents took advantage of these programs and many had not heard of the programs.
- Full Professors were most likely and Assistant Professors least likely to feel that they have control over creating a satisfying work-life balance.

OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

"I believe that much of our struggle in this area comes from our University's culture of trying to do everything all the time. Perhaps if we created a culture of focusing on fewer things and excelling at them, we might be more successful and have some free time that would be helpful both in being more effective and in allowing us to better care for our families. So to answer the questions, I would try to build a culture of being focused."

"Life-work balance doesn't just mean childcare! It can also mean dealing with death/illness, suicide, mental illness, etc. for a loved one, including divorce, and mental illness/counseling for the faculty member. This is not to mention other favorable activities requiring long-term commitments, such as high-level artistic or outdoor endeavors, sports, etc. These can all enrich and improve the scholarly output, even though they be perceived as unrelated."

"Overall it seems people are working at a breakneck pace. If there's a bump in the road, it's very difficult for many of us to manage our work and home responsibilities. There is a culture of rewarding people who are competent with more service or more demanding teaching responsibilities and some of these overloaded people are in danger of burning out or of

not achieving tenure if untenured. A realistic work assessment that takes into account committee service, teaching intensity, etc. and not just course equivalents and MS and PhD student counts would be helpful."

"Stop glorifying people who answer e-mail at all hours of the day and night. I can't tell you how many times I hear someone (especially administrators) saying of a colleague […] that I sent him/her an e-mail at 3:00 AM and he/she responded right away. This is silliness. We all have smart phones and can do such things if we sleep with them. It says absolutely nothing about the quality of a person's service. In fact, the only thing it says conclusively is that this person's life is WAY out of balance. If we are really interested in promoting work-life balance, WHY are we doing such things?"

Career Advancement and Institutional Support of Career Advancement

ENGR respondents generally had a better assessment of institutional support of career advancement than other UMD faculty.

- Most participants perceived clear requirements and fair processes for tenure (77.9% and 81.2%, respectively, for ENGR, compared to 67.4% and 67.9%, respectively, for UMD).
- 74.1% of ENGR respondents believe the process for advancing to full professor is fair (55.5% for UMD) and 64.0% of ENGR respondents perceived clear requirements for promotion to full professor (54.2% for UMD) ($p<.05$).

DIFFERENCES BY GENDER, RACE, AND RANK

- ENGR women were less likely to agree that the promotion process for advancing to Full Professor in their unit is fair.
- Assistant Professors were more likely to report receiving helpful feedback from their department chair/unit head in support of their career advancement.
- Associate Professors were less likely to agree that the promotion requirements for advancing to Full Professor in their unit are clear.

OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS ABOUT CAREER ADVANCEMENT

"Associate Professors (especially women) tend to end up with the highest teaching and service loads which can impact their ability to develop new research areas and new funding. Some of this is my own fault for not being a strong enough self advocate and not being strategic enough in my career. However, I attribute some to bias by senior faculty that they have more important things to do than teach the most time intensive undergraduate classes."

"In general there is a lot of support for Assistant Professors which I agree with. However, there is not much support for Associate or Full Professors. The committee work falls on a few Full Professors and the Associate Professors. Several Full Professors do not do their share."

Professional Networks and Collegiality

ENGR respondents were more likely than other faculty at UMD to be satisfied with the opportunity they have to collaborate with other UMD faculty (74.7% for ENGR vs. 41.0% for UMD), and more likely to have relationships with other faculty on campus that have supported their career advancement (73.8% for ENGR vs. 64.8% for UMD).

Perceptions of Productivity

OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS ABOUT FACULTY SUPPORT

"Again, encourage and support bold initiatives. Also, the internal screening for proposals that limit the number of submissions from one University has been VERY disappointing at UMD."

"Provide annual, honest feedback (doing ABD; need more in XYZ); pair me with a mentor with specific knowledge in my research area; provide more protected research time."

"I was given a great start up package that included teaching buyouts and more that I asked for to build my laboratory."

"Provide research funding to cover shortfalls that occur in funding cycles so as to preserve my research group if this happens."

"Publishing at UMCP has become a numbers game – nobody reads what you write or looks at the quality of your research – all they want to know is how many papers you have published not what's in them!"

"Reward scholarship and creative work: in the form of pay raises, recognition, early promotion, chaired professorships, discretionary funding, lab renovations, additional lab space."

"Effectively recognize variation in types of research productivity. We are not all in the same mould. Patents, juried shows, refereed conferences and many other types of productivity are seriously undervalued."

"Reduce teaching and service work load, provide support on identifying potential sources for funding opportunities, and provide administrative support for proposal preparation."

REFERENCES

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