

UNT 2012 Faculty Climate Survey

Executive Summary

Introduction

The climate on any university campus has a significant impact on the members of the academic community, student learning environments, and the resulting creation of knowledge. The purpose of the **UNT 2012 Faculty Climate Survey** was to gather faculty perceptions on issues that impact institutional climate and overall job satisfaction, including recruitment and hiring, teaching, research, service, merit and promotion evaluations, workload issues, balance of work and personal life, mentoring, resources, diversity, overall satisfaction, general climate. Provost Warren Burggren appointed a task force representing all colleges and schools, to develop and administer the survey with Vice Provost for Faculty Success Christy Crutsinger as the chair. Members of the committee included:

- Mickey Abel, College of Visual Arts & Design
- Tracy Everbach, Mayborn School of Journalism
- Francisco Guzman, College of Business
- Warren Henry, College of Music
- Kuruvilla John, College of Engineering
- Linda Marshall, College of Arts & Sciences
- Mariela Nunez Janes, College of Public Affairs and Community Service
- Sanjukta Pookulangara, College of Merchandising, Hospitality, and Tourism
- Mike Sayler, College of Education
- Mark Vosvick, Faculty Senate
- Jerry Wircenski, College of Information

Methodology

The Survey Research Institute at Cornell University was contracted to administer the online survey of full-time tenured, tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty. Participants in the survey were contacted via email on November 8, 2012 with three follow-up email reminders to non-respondents. To increase response rate, an incentive was offered by the Office of the Provost. Ten faculty members were randomly selected from representative departments that achieved an 80% response rate to receive \$250 for faculty travel or other professional development. Data collection ended on January 25, 2013. In total, 700 participants completed the survey out of a possible 1062 faculty members, yielding a completion rate of 65.9%. Additionally, 60 participants answered at least one question, yielding an overall response rate of 71.9%

Key Findings

Table 1 contains the demographic profile of respondents compared to the population of all faculty at UNT. Females were more likely to respond to the survey than males. Asian and other ethnic groups were less likely to respond to the survey as compared to whites. Statistically significant differences were tested for the 212 questions, with 29% showing differences by gender, 53.2% differences by ethnicity (white, Asians, African Americans, Latino/as and other), and 77.4% differences by rank (assistant, associate, full and lecturers). Key findings from each category are listed below.

Recruitment and Hiring

Most faculty members are satisfied or very satisfied with the overall hiring process including the quality of information about responsibilities associated with the position and their colleague's efforts to meet and recruit them to UNT. Faculty members are less satisfied with their initial salary, start-up package and the negotiation process. African Americans and associate professors are somewhat less positive than others

about hiring issues, as is the case for women. Full professors are more likely than faculty at other ranks to report that hiring is conducted fairly in their department. Men and women faculty of all ethnicities indicated there is no or very little recruitment of people with specific backgrounds or characteristics. However, the highest averages are on recruiting efforts for a diverse applicant pool.

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Teaching

Evaluations of teaching issues are more positive than negative. Not surprisingly, faculty members seem to like teaching. Men and women perceive the teaching issues similarly as do faculty across ethnicities. The general pattern for rank indicates that associate professors have the most concern about almost all teaching issues listed. Associate professors are somewhat less pleased with such things as fairness of teaching load and assignments, mentoring, being treated appropriately by students, and the value placed on teaching in their department.

Research and Scholarship

Two types of issues were addressed for research and scholarship: perceptions of faculty's own research and the state of interdisciplinary research. Both the means and frequencies indicates no group feels disadvantaged by having their research and scholarship ignored, less valued or having fewer discussions about their work than did other faculty. However, women and faculty from underrepresented groups seem to have fewer discussions about their research/scholarship. Although the questions about interdisciplinary or collaborative research are not equally relevant for all disciplines, some findings are of general interest. Most faculty members agree or strongly agree their department values, but does not reward interdisciplinary research. Within each group, most faculty members disagree with the statement that UNT provides the needed infrastructure. Women and African Americans are slightly less positive about how their department views the research and the opportunities for interdisciplinary work.

Service

UNT faculty members understand that service activities and participation in governance are an important part of their job. Almost everyone (96.6%) believes that at least some of their service is recognized by their chair or colleagues. Only half of the faculty members agree or strongly agree that committee assignments are made fairly, with full professors reporting more recognition and reward for their service than those of other ranks. Male faculty members perceive committee assignments are made more fairly and rewarded more than their female counterparts. More than half of faculty members believe they are doing more service than others at the same rank. Assistant professors scored lower on several items, which is likely a result of efforts to protect them from service activities that might interfere with their research and teaching on the way to tenure and promotion.

Annual Evaluations and Merit Reviews

Although 78% of faculty members report regularly receiving feedback on their performance, an important concern is that 22% do not receive feedback. For example, only 70% of Latino/as and 75% of lecturers report regular feedback and one in seven assistant professors are not receiving feedback from merit reviews. In general, the feedback given by department chairs is viewed as more constructive, helpful, accurate, and clear than feedback given by the PAC or PAC Chair; with neither receiving particularly high marks. Full professors and lecturers report better feedback from their department chair than do assistant and associate professors, respectively.

Promotion

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Within all groups, most faculty members believe achieving the rank of full professor is very important. For the questions in this section, full professors looked back on their own promotion, but the other groups looked forward to their next promotion.

Most assistant professors indicate the requirements for promotion to associate professor are clear and they receive helpful advice from their department. An overwhelming majority indicate it is likely or very likely that they will be promoted to associate professor. Ideally, averages between 3 and 4 would indicate UNT was doing a good job for assistant professors' progress toward tenure and promotion, but most scores were near or below 3. This suggests the need for improving the type, quantity and consistency of advice, clarity and transparency of requirements, mentoring and perceived fairness of the process.

Associate professors hold less favorable views on measures related to promotion. Most associate professors report that it is difficult to know what to do to become a full professor and perceive the requirements for promotion are unclear and the process is unfair.

Among full professors looking back on their promotion, males had believed themselves to be ready for promotion more so than females. Other factors that influenced their decision to apply for promotion to full were colleagues' opinions and the need for a better salary.

Workload

About half the faculty think the time they spend preparing to teach and teaching is about the same as others. Conversely, about half the faculty believe they spend more time mentoring students and conducting research than do others. Males believe they spend more time than others conducting scholarly activities and writing proposals while females report spending more time than others preparing to teach and teaching. This was also true for lecturers who perceive that they spend more time than others preparing to teaching, teaching, and working with student organizations.

Some predictable patterns emerged. For example, full professors report more mentoring of their colleagues and more service; faculty from underrepresented groups report spending more time advising students than do others; Asian American faculty and assistant professors indicate spending more time than others doing reviews and writing proposals. Within the groups, approximately 75% of faculty members believe they and their colleagues are equally satisfied with their workload.

Resources

Both ease of access to tangible and intangible resources and satisfaction with resources were assessed. Access is a challenge for many faculty members, particularly concerning support for travel. This is of greater concern for assistant professors. More than half of the faculty believe it is difficult or very difficult to get help to seek external grants. Asian American faculty report having the least access to time for personal matters compared to other ethnic groups. Overall, full professors report more ease of access to resources they need to perform their academic activities. Most faculty are satisfied with their office, space for research/scholarship, course assignments, and administrative support. However, the average ratings on all items were well below the maximum of 4 (very satisfied), indicating room for improvement.

Mentoring

Some results for mentoring reflect change in the culture at UNT and across the country, both in academia and in society as a whole. Most faculty members indicate mentoring is important or very important to help them improve their teaching and research efforts, as well as to navigate their department and the

university. However, males believe mentoring is less important in all five areas (how things are done, how to get along, managing teaching and students, improving research/scholarship and moving to leadership) than do females and full professors think it is less important in four areas. More males and assistant professors had been assigned mentors. Fewer than half of the African Americans either chose their mentor or had faculty offer to mentor them, in contrast to the other groups which had a higher proportion for both questions. More than 75% of Asian American and lecturer faculty were satisfied with the mentoring they receive at UNT compared to half to two-thirds of the other groups.

Work/Life Balance

Faculty experience stress on many levels – meeting work expectations, time for their research and scholarship, the cost of living, salary, morale, subtle discrimination, etc. Nearly one-third of female faculty experience a great deal of stress in terms of personal life and work interfering with one another, and a significant percentage (41%) report a great deal of stress about meeting work expectations. Salary, household responsibilities, health, and subtle discrimination are all areas for which female faculty indicate greater stress. Subtle discrimination and the racial/ethnic/cultural climate cause stress for the majority of faculty in underrepresented groups. Assistant professors, feel stress about meeting work expectations and having a successful career. Full professors report less stress from almost all factors than do faculty of the other ranks.

Diversity

Diversity was addressed by having faculty consider and estimate how comfortable it might be for new faculty in their department, depending on their background characteristics (i.e., varying ethnicities, orientations, cultures, countries, etc.). Overall, most faculty (64% to 97%) thought people in each group would be comfortable or very comfortable, but all groups rated the comfort of whites higher than members of any other group. When differences were associated with ethnicity of faculty, Latino/as thought many more of the characteristics would be associated with less comfort than did faculty of other ethnicities. Latino/as thought new faculty who were gay/lesbian, transgender, African American, Latino, Native American, Asian American or Middle Eastern would be less comfortable than estimates by faculty of other ethnicities.

Satisfaction

Almost 70% of faculty would ‘very likely’ or ‘likely’ work at UNT knowing what they know now; White, Asian American, and lecturer faculty members indicate the greatest likelihood. Males, whites and full professors more than their counterparts would be more likely to leave UNT if it were not for family considerations. Respondents clearly like being an academic; between 55% and 80% of every group would again choose to be a faculty member.

Climate and Fairness

Faculty reactions to departmental climate were measured by a series of opposites using a semantic differential format. Considering scores near the endpoints of the scales (i.e., 1 to 3.5 and 6.5 to 8), department climates are generally friendly, nonracist, accepting, welcoming, complimenting, inclusive, tolerant, helpful, civil, strong, casual, fair, equal, and warm. Males and females give similar ratings, with differences in the other groups worthy of note. Whites think departments are more casual and equal than do other ethnicities. Asian Americans rate departments as most friendly, collaborative, inclusive, supportive, helpful, and strong in comparison to the other groups. African Americans’ departments are the most accepting, individualistic (vs collaborative), and competitive. Latino/as perceive their departments as more negative than the other groups - most sexist, intolerant, isolating, narrow-minded, fragmented, reserved, and regressing (vs improving). For associate professors, their departments’ climate is more

negative on several scales than for those at other ranks. In contrast, full professors rate their departments as quite high on friendliness, casualness, fairness and equality.

Caveats

It should be noted that this preliminary analysis has several limitations which are noted below:

- Some of the statistically significant differences were likely due to chance because four tests (gender, ethnicity, rank, and sexual orientation) were done on each question.
- It is likely that other analyses would show statistically significant differences not evident in this executive summary. Conversely, some differences found in this overview may not be revealed in subsequent analyses.
- Differences by sexual orientation were tested but not reported. Due to widely disparate numbers of participants, the results may be misleading.
- No information on possible interactions (e.g., ethnicity or rank by gender) or sectors of the university (e.g., similarities or differences for COM and CVAD) were presented because the data were collapsed across the entire campus. Stated differently, each grouping (gender, ethnicity, rank) included everyone in the other groups such that gender differences were tested across ethnicity and rank.

Next Steps

The **2012 Faculty Climate Survey** reveals that UNT is doing well in many areas but also identifies areas where changes are needed. Steps to address these challenges are already in progress. Currently, university committees and task forces are using the data to inform decision making and revise/develop new policy (e.g., ADVANCE Grant Initiative Team, Opportunity Task Force, the Faculty Senate Mentoring Committee, the Tenure and Promotion Review Committee). In the coming months, the Provost's Office will be developing a comprehensive list of long-term and short-term action items that specifically address issues highlighted in the key findings. Please look for this list on the Faculty Success website. Comments and suggestions should be directed to facultysuccess@unt.edu.

Table 1 Comparison of Demographic Characteristics of Participant Pool and Population						
	Respondents		Non-Respondents		Population	
	n	%	n	%	N	%
Gender						
Male	426	56%	211	69%	637	60%
Female	334	44%	91	30%	425	40%
Total	760	100%	302	100%	1062	100%
Race/Ethnicity						
White	575	76%	208	69%	783	74%
Asian	94	12%	49	16%	143	13%
African American	29	4%	14	5%	43	4%
Hispanic	42	5%	16	5%	58	6%
Other	20	3%	15	5%	35	3%
Total	760	100%	302	100%	1062	100%
Rank						
Assistant Professor	156	21%	48	16%	204	19%
Associate Professor	217	29%	86	28%	303	29%
Full Professor	212	28%	84	28%	296	28%
Lecturers	169	22%	60	20%	229	21%
Other	6	<.05%	24	8%	30	3%
Total	760	100%	302	100%	1062	100%