Summary of Survey of Institutional Culture: Department Climate
Women Faculty at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities
Spring 2012

Survey on Institutional Culture – Methodology

Participants
An anonymous survey was sent to 750 current full-time female faculty employed at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities Campus. Of these, 377 participants answered at least one question and 304 completed the survey. This resulted in a 50.2% response rate for the target population.

Survey
Much of the content of the questionnaire was derived from a study conducted by the University of Michigan in 2001. Through consultation with stakeholders of this project, the survey was modified to meet the current, specific needs of the University of Minnesota and adapted to an online environment.

Analysis
Participants were segmented into two groups: women faculty of color and women faculty not of color. The segmentation was based on two self-report questions at the beginning of the survey. Any participants who selected “Yes” to the initial ethnicity question were placed into the women faculty of color group. An additional race question asked participants to select all of the races in a list to which they identified. Any participants who selected a race other than, or in addition to, “White” were placed into the women faculty of color group. This segmentation approach resulted in 61 participants in the women faculty of color group and 316 participants in the women faculty not of color group.

When comparing these two groups across various survey questions, two-tailed t-tests (continuous variables) and chi-squared tests (nominal or ordinal variables) were conducted to determine statistical significance. Findings were considered statistically significant at the .05 level.

Notes:
1) In this study, a completed study constituted the participant getting to the last page of the study regardless of whether she answered every item.
2) The University of Michigan-Ann Arbor study was conducted Fall 2001 using a paper format, title “Survey of Academic Climate and Activities”.
3) Question: “Do you identify as Hispanic, Latina, or Spanish origin?” Answers: “Yes”, “No”
4) Question: “Please identify your race. You may mark all that apply.” Answer: “White”, “Black, African American”, “American Indian or Alaska Native”, “Asian, Asian American”, “Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander”, “Some other race, please specify.”
5) Of the eight participants who did not select “Yes” to the ethnicity question and did not select a listed race, one was placed in the women faculty of color group due to her answer of ‘mixed’ within the “Some other race” category. The other seven participants were placed in the women faculty not of color group based on the naïve majority rule.
Summary of Survey of Institutional Culture: Department Climate Findings

Department Climate Overall

Faculty members were asked to respond to a series of words describing their departments or units, such as friendly, respectful, collaborative, supportive, etc. Women faculty of color were significantly less likely than their white women peers to strongly agree or agree that their department was friendly (55% vs. 73%), racially sensitive (45% vs. 78%), respectful (59% vs. 75%), and supportive (50% vs. 69%). There were no statistically significant differences in women faculty’s assessment of department diversity, collegiality, sexism, collaboration, cooperation, or homophobia.

Two descriptors were notably low for both women faculty of color and other women. All women faculty were unlikely to agree that their department was diverse (31% and 32% for women faculty of color and other women, respectively) and less than half of the women faculty described their department as collaborative (41% and 49%).

[Note: Findings from chart on p. 4 labeled “Please rate the climate of your unit/department on the following continuum. (midpoint excluded in analysis).” Significant differences indicated by p<.05 in bivariate analysis.]

Faculty Member’s Research and Comfort within Department

There is also troubling evident that women faculty of color do not feel they are treated as capable and equal individuals within their departments or units. In particular, women faculty of color were significantly more likely to strongly agree or agree with the statements that:

- My colleagues expect me to represent the point of view of my gender (43% vs. 26%).
- My colleagues expect me to represent the point of view of my race/ethnicity (58% vs. 10%).
- My colleagues have lower expectations of me than of other faculty (41% vs. 14%).
- I constantly feel under scrutiny by my colleagues (67% vs. 37%).
- I have/had to work harder than I believe my colleagues do, in order to be perceived as a legitimate scholar (74% vs. 49%).

It is also important to note that these perceptions are widespread among women faculty of color, with all of these statements representing over 1/3 of women faculty of color.

Women faculty of color are also significantly more likely to feel that they need to self-censor in order to protect their careers. 54% of women faculty of color strongly
agreed or agreed that they are or were “reluctant to bring up issues that concern me for fear that it will/would affect my promotion/tenure” (while 36% of other women faculty agree or strongly agree).

Women faculty of color are much more likely to report challenges fitting in with the department culture. 84% (vs. 58%) agree that “there are many unwritten rules concerning how one is expected to interact with unit colleagues.” 78% (vs. 37%) agree that “others seem to find it easier than I do to fit in.”

With regard to respect for one’s research, the contrast between women faculty of color and other women is not statistically significant but women faculty of color are more likely to report feeling pressured to change their research agenda to fit in (31% vs. 20%) and feeling pressured to change their research agenda to make tenure or be promoted (35% vs. 23%). Again, this is a common concern reported by about 1/3 of women faculty of color. Women faculty of color are also less likely to agree that “My research interests are valued by my professional colleagues” (59% vs. 67%) or that “I am comfortable asking questions about performance expectations” (68% vs. 80%).

[Note: Findings from chart on p. 4 labeled “Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements concerning conditions in your unit/department and your relationships with your unit/department colleagues.” (midpoint excluded in analysis).” Significant differences indicated by p<.05 in bivariate analysis.]

Assessment of Chair or Director

Women faculty rate their unit leader fairly high on professionalism, academic standards, effectiveness as an administrator, interest in faculty, honoring agreements, and articulating clear criteria for promotion and tenure. For these statements, over 2/3 of both women faculty of color and other women faculty rated their chair or director as “above average or superior” and the differences by race/ethnicity are not statistically significant. Other assessments are lower but similar by race/ethnicity; most notably, just about half of women faculty say their chair or director “gives me useful feedback about my performance.”

Women faculty of color are significantly less likely to rate their chair or director highly on “shows commitment to racial-ethnic diversity” (52% vs. 83%). There are also sizeable gaps (over 15% differences) that do not reach statistical significance for “handles disputes/problems effectively” (45% of women faculty of color vs. 61% of other women faculty) and “has a well-defined mission that is shared by among colleagues” (47% of women faculty of color vs. 64% of other women faculty).
Mentoring

1. Total number of participants = 377 and 304 completed the survey.
2. No differences were seen between both groups regarding promotion from first appointment to Associate Professor. And from first appointment to Full professor.
3. Mentoring:
   There was overall dissatisfaction with mentoring and the level of dissatisfaction was similar for both groups women faculty of color (WFOC) and white women faculty (WF).

Although 70% women faculty of color reported having a mentor compared with 58% of white women faculty, these differences were not significant. The quality of the mentoring was not perceived highly, as indicated by the responses, namely with regard to serving as a role model, promoting careers, giving advise for career advancement, and advocating for female faculty etc.
There were no differences between both groups of faculty.
The value of female mentors was compared with male mentors by evaluating the mentoring provided by female faculty within University of Minnesota compared with those external to the University of Minnesota and similar analyses were performed for male mentors. We found the following:

   Female Mentors within the University of Minnesota: 44% WFOC and 55% white female faculty felt their female mentors served as role models, respectively. There were no significant differences in the quality of mentoring which was reported as poor.

   Female Mentors at Other Institutions: 47% WFOC and 32% white female faculty reported they had female mentors who served as role models, but again the level of satisfaction was poor.

   Male Mentors within the University of Minnesota: No differences between both groups. Highest rated attribute was in the category of “serves as a role model” which was 59% for WFOC and 51% for white female faculty.

   Male Mentors at Other Institutions: Similar results to the previous, except WFOC received more advice from male mentors at other institutions regarding “obtaining the resources they need”