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Executive Summary of the 2016 UD ADVANCE Faculty Climate Survey *Prepared by the UD ADVANCE Institute leadership*

The UD ADVANCE Institute aims to improve faculty diversity on campus and to improve the climate for all faculty. A positive campus climate attracts and retains excellent faculty and is key to university success. The 2016 UD ADVANCE Faculty Climate Survey was designed with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the campus climate for all full-time (FT) faculty at UD.

The 2016 survey is a revised version of the “Study of Faculty Worklife,” conducted by UD ADVANCE in spring 2014. For the 2016 survey the research team added a more robust set of items and scales for topics including mentoring, climate for diversity, work life balance, and departmental climate. These changes proved positive; the 2016 survey is more informative. However, one consequence of the changes is that direct comparison of responses to the two surveys is not possible. To allow for longitudinal analysis, subsequent waves of the faculty climate survey will employ 2016 survey items and scales.

The survey population includes all full-time tenured, tenure-track, and continuing track faculty who were not on leave in spring 2016 (N=1,049). 525 FT continuing-track (CT) and tenure/tenure-track (T/TT) faculty members opened the survey, with 393 completing the survey (37.5% response rate). This was a slightly lower response rate than for the 2014 survey (39.4% response rate). The proportions of respondents across demographics are close to the proportions within the faculty population, with some small exceptions. For details on the sample characteristics and analytic strategy, see the full report available on the UD-ADVANCE website.

New trends are visible in the 2016 survey. These may be attributable to the revised questions or to actual changes in the UD climate. One potentially important factor is the high turnover in administrators UD has seen recently, which may be contributing to elevated uncertainty and anxiety among respondents. We note that President Assanis assumed his role in June 2016, after the survey was administered.

Highlights of the 2016 Survey

Professional Satisfaction

Faculty were asked a number of questions about satisfaction with aspects of their professional lives. Faculty satisfaction ratings are neutral to slightly favorable, particularly when looking at satisfaction with the overall experience of being a faculty member at UD (46.2% satisfied/very satisfied) and teaching load (53.1% satisfied/very satisfied). About a quarter of faculty express satisfaction with their salary, funding for research, and experience of community at UD. Associate professors have less positive experiences than peers at other ranks across many measures of professional satisfaction.

When asked about factors contributing to or detracting from professional satisfaction, themes from write-in comments (N=253) include: dissatisfaction with university administration, including a decline in shared governance and lack of transparency in administrators’ decision making; underappreciation for faculty work, including a lack of alignment between work responsibilities and reward structures; and concerns about salary, benefits and retirement. One element of dissatisfaction with salary may be over merit pay. When asked about the clarity of merit pay policies, over 40% of faculty feel these policies are not clearly/slightly clearly communicated by their department documents or by their department chair. These concerns are more evident among assistant and associate professors.

Faculty were asked about their departmental climate in three series of questions. The first scale measures overall departmental inclusiveness, the second measures collegiality, while the third measures the strength of faculty voice in departmental decision making processes. While men and women consider their department to be somewhat inclusive and collegial, both report lower scores on faculty voice. Women also perceive their department to be less inclusive than male peers ($p < .05$). Associate professors view their department as less inclusive than peers, and report less faculty voice in department decision making than do full professors.

Particularly germane in this series of questions was whether faculty had thought of leaving UD – nearly a third reported thinking of this very often or all the time, one quarter indicated they were likely to search for a new job in the next year, and more than a third indicated they were likely to look for a new job within the next three years. The primary reason indicated for wanting to leave UD was to find a more supportive work environment (almost half the responses), with almost a third stating they needed more time for research, and over a quarter indicating the need for an increase in salary. When asked about the factors that influence their decision to stay or leave UD, faculty cite concerns with the administration, including its increasing size, decreased transparency, and lack of trust; concerns that their research is not valued or supported (especially in the humanities); a lack of opportunity for advancement; and concerns surrounding salary, benefits, and retirement.

Promotion & Tenure Process

Faculty were asked a number of questions about P&T standards, fairness in the P&T process, and perceived support for advancement. T/TT faculty generally agree that the standards are reasonable. There was less agreement, however, as to their flexibility in terms of the weight given to teaching, research and service. About 25% of T/TT faculty agree/strongly agree, while nearly the same percentage disagree/strongly disagree that the system is flexible. Over 50% of the T/TT faculty perceived that the P&T standards have changed over the last five years. Faculty responses also indicate perceived bias in the P&T process. Only 15.7% of the faculty agree/strongly agree that the system is free from bias, while nearly 50% disagree or strongly disagree.

When asked about perceptions of fairness in how various groups apply P&T standards, faculty are more likely to agree/strongly agree that the standards are applied fairly by departmental P&T committee and by chairs. Levels of perceived fairness are higher for College and the University P&T committees than for the deans and provost.

Faculty were also asked to rate the degree to which they feel or felt supported in their advancement through the ranks. With respect to advancement to associate professor with tenure, the majority of respondents indicated that they felt supported by their department chair and by colleagues in the department. Faculty perceptions of support by the dean are less consistent, 29.2% report feeling extremely supported but 20.8% reporting feeling not at all supported. A similar pattern was observed in perceptions of support in advancement to full professor.

Write in comments suggested that there is a need for better understanding of the P&T process. With respect to promotion to full professor, faculty indicate spending significant time on administrative duties and suggest a desire for better alignment between workload and expectations for promotion. Faculty also indicated a disconnect in the criteria applied by the departments versus those of the upper administration.

Mentoring

Faculty were asked about the availability and quality of formal and informal mentoring – inside their department, outside the department but within UD, and outside UD. Close to 25% of the T/TT faculty and almost 20% of the CT faculty indicate that they receive formal mentoring within their department. Looking at rank among the T/TT faculty, 50% of the assistant professors, 27% of the associate professors and 10% of the professors report that they receive formal mentoring within their unit. Women indicate higher levels of mentoring overall (e.g., 28% versus 18% for formal mentoring within the department; 62% versus 43% for

informal mentoring outside of UD). This result may be explained by the preponderance of men at the full professor level in the survey sample—full professors report receiving less mentoring in general. Variation is high among the colleges regarding formal mentoring. In one college, over 50% of respondents indicate they receive formal mentoring within in their department; in another college it was 4%.

With respect to the quality of mentoring, of those who receive formal mentoring within the department, over 40% rate the mentoring above average to excellent and just over a third rate it as poor or below average.

Work-Family Balance

Of the close to 85% of respondents who indicate they have a partner, just over 60% have partners who work full-time. Of these, 40% work in academia, and of those, almost 75% work at UD (63% of men and 82% of women). Note that in some cases, both partners in a faculty couple may have answered the survey. Notably, women are more likely to report that their partner's employment was important in their decision to accept a job at UD. This finding may have implications for recruiting and hiring women faculty.

The survey indicates that individuals at UD frequently assist faculty in finding partner employment opportunities. Of those with a partner working in academia, over 40% indicate that someone at UD had assisted them in the job search. However, when it comes to partner job satisfaction, almost one third of those with a partner at UD indicate that their partner is dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied with the opportunities. Just over 10% of partners are satisfied/extremely satisfied. Women indicate partner dissatisfaction to a greater extent than do men.

With respect to family-friendly policies, faculty indicate that parental/family leave policies are well communicated in documents. Over 50% of T/TT respondents agree that these are moderately/extremely clear. Still, almost a third perceive them as slightly or not clearly communicated in writing, indicating that more work is needed to disseminate these policies to faculty. Faculty are less satisfied with the communication of the policies by department chairs. Over 50% of T/TT faculty rate communication by their chair as slightly or not clear. In general, women indicate less clarity than men. Assistant professors indicate less clarity than the other ranks. With respect to the stop-the-clock policy, over 60% of T/TT faculty find the written documents moderately to extremely clear. The response to communication by the chair is bimodal -- roughly 40% rate this communication as moderately/extremely clear and another 40% rate it as slightly or not clear. Faculty with children were asked about their satisfaction with on-site childcare options at UD. Of these, nearly 40% of men and 65% of women indicate that they are dissatisfied/extremely dissatisfied.

Climate for Diversity

Faculty were asked about the climate in their department for various aspects of diversity on a 7-point scale (with 7 excellent, 1 very poor, and 4 neutral). Results differ significantly by gender, race/ethnicity, and disability. With respect to the climate for faculty of color in the department, the mean response of the white faculty is 4.60, while the mean response of the black faculty is 2.22. This difference is significant ($p < .001$) and indicates extreme disconnect between the groups in how climate is perceived. Regarding the overall climate for diversity in the department, the same trend in responses is evident. Women rated the climate for women in the department significantly lower than men (4.43 versus 5.33, $p < .001$). Faculty with disabilities perceive a less positive climate than their non-disabled peers in a number of measures. Examples included departmental accessibility for faculty with disabilities and support of faculty with disabilities.

Experiences of CT Faculty

While approximately 60% of CT faculty are satisfied or very satisfied with their overall experience as a faculty member, there is less satisfaction with teaching load (42.8%), experience of community at UD (41.2%), current

salary (32.8%), career progression (31.7%), and service load (31.8%).

The majority of CT respondents (61.6%) agree that promotion standards have changed over the last five years. About a third of CT faculty disagree/strongly disagree that the promotion system is flexible in terms of weight given to teaching, research, and service, while more than a quarter perceive promotion criteria as not consistent with the stated responsibilities of their position. Nearly half of CT faculty disagree/strongly disagree that the promotion process is free from bias. When asked about fairness in how various groups apply promotion standards, CT faculty view departmental P&T committees and department chairs as fair. Levels of perceived fairness are somewhat lower for College P&T committees. Less than third of CT faculty agree/strongly agree that the deans, the University P&T committee, and the provost are fair in their application of P&T standards.

When asked what could be done to improve the promotion process for CT faculty, the most common themes include: the need for better alignment in workload and promotion standards; the need for greater transparency in the promotion process; and a lack of clarity in the criteria for teaching excellence.

Conclusions

While on aggregate survey results trend toward neutral, detailed analysis of responses in several cases reveals significant groups of dissatisfied faculty. This effect is most apparent with respect to diversity, but similar splits are visible in other areas of the survey. Based on survey results, we observe the need to:

- increase faculty mentoring: extend formal mentoring to all assistant and associate professors; foster opportunities for informal mentoring; ensure that mentoring interactions are useful and meaningful;
- enhance family friendly policies and practices on campus: improve faculty and chair understanding of existing policies; explore providing additional childcare benefits, such as improved on-site daycare;
- enhance communication of P&T policies among the university levels;
- clarify merit pay policies in the units;
- provide active support to faculty spouses/partners in identifying satisfying employment opportunities;
- make post-tenure reviews more effective and useful;
- improve departmental climates for faculty, taking into account the experiences of underrepresented groups such as black faculty and women faculty; and
- make more clear that faculty and their work are valued.

UD's NSF ADVANCE IT grant has as one of its goals to improve the climate for faculty on campus. The grant had been in effect only 1½ years when this survey was administered. As we work with the administration and faculty to improve our campus climate, we look forward to future climate survey responses. We hope the next survey (spring 2018) will indicate improvement, especially in areas of concern identified here. Particular programs that the UD NSF ADVANCE IT Institute is working on to address several of the issues raised in the survey are:

- Networking and support for department chairs and upper administrators (concentrating on best practices to improve departmental microclimates, particularly for women faculty and faculty of color).
- Development, in concert with the Faculty Senate and the Provost's Office, of formal mentoring programs -- across the university at both assistant and associate professor level
- Continued offering of P&T workshops in conjunction with the Provost's Office
- Networking events for the faculty, particularly women faculty, allowing clarifying discussion of university policies
- Policies and procedures review (particularly with respect to dual career situations)
- Faculty exit interviews to further inform faculty demographic and climate data