

Women Faculty Survey—Summer 2005

CBS SUMMARY

Summary: Full Prof.	9
Assoc. Prof.	6
Assist. Prof.	<u>7</u>
Total	22

**Q1 Rate the following strategies for their importance in increasing the success of women in science, engineering, and technology fields:**

Female role models in leadership positions

	Essential	V. Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
Full	1	5	2	1	1
Assoc.	2	3	--	--	-- (1 no ans.)
Assist.	2	3	1	1	--

Search procedures that are fair and unbiased

	Essential	V. Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
Full	8	--	1	--	--
Assoc.	5	--	--	--	-- (1 no ans.)
Assist.	5	1	1	--	--

Spousal hiring policies, procedures, and resources

	Essential	V. Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
Full	--	6	3	--	--
Assoc.	1	2	1	1	-- (1 no ans.)
Assist.	1	3	3	--	--

Gender equity in terms of salaries and resources

	Essential	V. Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
Full	9	--	--	--	--
Assoc.	5	--	--	--	-- (1 no ans.)
Assist.	5	--	2	--	--

Well-developed and supportive promotion/tenure mentoring and procedures

	Essential	V. Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
Full	9	--	--	--	--
Assoc.	1	3	1	--	-- (1 no ans.)
Assist.	4	2	1	--	--

**Q2 Rate the following potential activities that the ADVANCE proposal could support in terms of their value in promoting the success of women faculty in science, engineering, and technology:**

Training programs concerning gender and other bias for search committees

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Full	2	7	--
Assoc.	2	2	1 (1 no ans.)
Assist.	2	3	2

Training programs concerning gender and other bias for university leaders

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Full	5	4	--
Assoc.	1	4	-- (1 no ans.)
Assist.	4	2	1

Leadership training for women faculty

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Full	6	3	--
Assoc.	3	2	-- (1 no ans.)
Assist.	5	1	1

Scholarly analysis and discussion of status of women faculty at UM

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Full	7	2	--
Assoc.	2	3	-- (1 no ans.)
Assist.	3	3	1

Small grants or emergency funding to support women faculty at key junctures in their careers

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Full	4	3	2
Assoc.	3	2	-- (1 no ans.)
Assist.	5	2	--

Programs that help new faculty prepare for tenure or senior faculty reinvigorate their careers

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Full	5	4	--
Assoc.	3	2	-- (1 no ans.)
Assist.	3	4	--

## Comments

### **Full Professors:**

Protection of untenured women faculty from excessive committee/service work to allow them to focus on research.

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Yearly job performance reviews that are fair and unbiased. Fair distribution of teaching loads. Fair distribution of committee/service assignments.

Opportunities to meet with other faculty women, even if not in the same field, to discuss problems and solutions in dealing with students, colleagues, other aspects of academic life. Regular meetings with other women would provide a support group that is often absent for women, particularly in male-dominated disciplines.

Help with childcare expenses: As part of an assistant professor's start-up or as a grant that the Graduate School could administer, there should be funds that allow junior professors (male or female) to pay some of their childcare expenses. The salaries they receive make it nearly impossible for them to have children while they are junior faculty. If they can buy help in the form of childcare, cleaning their apartments/houses, assistance during attending conferences, etc., it might be easier for them to juggle the multiple tasks they would face with rearing children and establishing a successful career. I have heard this now from quite a few junior faculty (not just U of M faculty) that family issues are the most challenging ones for junior faculty in terms of finances and timing (they can't delay having children too long). Another important issue is female role models in faculty positions. It's hard to recruit a woman to a large department if there are fewer than a handful of women in that department. Sensitivity to balancing family and career: the greatest challenges are for junior faculty who need to establish themselves while starting a family. Faculty in leadership roles can certainly help by being accommodating when they assign teaching, service, etc. I'd be happy to help think about these issues if you need additional people.

I think many of these ideas are useful for men as well as women. I think that programs to mentor junior faculty early in their careers and to ensure that they are doing what they need to do to get the recognition they deserve are essential and are done only informally and to very different degrees in different departments.

Two key priorities in my mind are: 1) mentoring/development activities for associate professors. This is the time when some women lose momentum. To advance to full professor, achieve career-long research productivity, and avoid the perennial associate professor syndrome, reinvigoration of research at that time is critical. Sabbaticals or other approaches to encourage new ventures, or learning new skills, could help. Also, many women in academics postpone having children until their thirties so that in their forties they have teenagers. I think this is even harder than having preschoolers while you are on the tenure track. Some coaching/mentoring to balancing the multiple demands of academic life with those of family life may also help. 2) We need more women leaders! There seems to be attrition at every juncture. Why don't more women seek administrative positions? I don't know the answer. Perhaps this merits special study.

Students seem to be left out of this program, perhaps because of the guidelines. However, many women do not go into these fields because of the 'image' of math, chemistry, etc., as being typical male activities. Women need support groups who will help them in their career choices, particularly when they may be excluded from informal groups that men form and that help them in their careers. For social reasons, women students and faculty will not have many contacts in the math department, etc. Women both inside and outside the discipline could fill this gap.

In fields where women are underrepresented, it would be useful to establish a list of potential job candidates. This would need to be field-specific, but it could be in the form of small awards to groups of faculty who go to conferences to scout out women candidates, who go through journal articles, contact

graduate programs, etc. I often hear in the physical sciences/math/engineering that there simply aren't any women out there. This should also include minority recruitment. There could also be small grants to 'grow' future female faculty, starting at the undergraduate level, with female mentors.

### **Associate Professors:**

I think that women tend to do better in environments that are collegial rather than confrontational. A university culture that promotes teamwork and collaboration as opposed to rewarding those who try to advance at the expense of others is helpful to women. Of course, a culture of teamwork and collaboration is better for many men as well. I observed an extreme example of a confrontational culture as a Ph.D. student at MIT. One seminar series for graduate students to present research involved the faculty members interrupting the students every few minutes and demanding that they literally defend themselves from insulting and aggressive questions. Some male students found this to be a fun challenge, but my response was to choose a lab for my Ph.D. work that did not participate in that seminar series.

I haven't seen any problems in any of the areas listed above, although I think the leadership question is tricky. On the one hand, it can be useful to have women in leadership positions. On the other hand, I see a disproportionate number of women serving in positions such as DGS which, although probably useful to the university as a whole, are most likely to hinder the careers of those women as these activities take time from the scholarly activities on which our personal professional success is usually based.

High-quality, University-associated childcare.

Educating department heads that 'opportunity hires' through internal networks are NOT in the best interests of the departments.

I think that opportunities for women to meet and talk with other women in scientific fields are very helpful. I think that part of the reason that women are still underrepresented in science is that they lack female colleagues and mentors to provide support and encouragement. They may also be put off by people who are unpleasantly aggressive and competitive. Anything that would help women who trying to juggle childrearing and a scientific career would likely be helpful, although this particular problem is outside my experience.

I hypothesize that one of the impediments that women face in advancing their careers is getting over-committed to service, relative to male faculty. I don't know if this is true, but anecdotally it seems to be the case. It would be interesting to study, as part of your 'scholarly analysis, a discussion of the status of female faculty', whether women get asked to do more service, volunteer to do more service, or both, relative to their male colleagues.

This suggestion may be part of the last item above; however, I think that informal interdisciplinary meetings of faculty to discuss their research and form scientific connections/collaborations with women whom they do not meet routinely would be very useful.

I don't know if it would be possible to do this, but it would be nice if women faculty could be better integrated in the social life of the community. This would be helpful not only on a personal level but on a professional level as well as ideas, collaborations, etc. often begin in casual conversations over a beer or other social activity.

### **Assistant Professors:**

Sufficiently high salaries so that daycare can be afforded or subsidized daycare that covers all forms: nannies.

Family-friendly policies

I think the women themselves are usually fantastic; after all, they did get this far. However, the people in high positions at UMN clearly need the training programs mentioned above.

There apparently is some research suggesting that women produce fewer publications than men but that their publications appear in somewhat higher quality journals on average. I think that some sensitivity to the quality vs. quantity issue would be appropriate for university leaders who are often involved in final tenure and promotion decisions. Moreover, despite most couples' efforts, women disproportionately care for children and take care of household chores. I think 'awareness raising' of these additional obligations would be useful....

Programs to act proactively in spousal hire situations, rather than always waiting until couples have dual offers elsewhere and are really ready to leave before making offers, and then often making offers that are substantially less than the competing offers/what the person deserves based on his/her value on the open academic market. The university doesn't do itself any favors by waiting so long that the couple in question and their friends and colleagues acquire a negative view of the university in this respect. Spousal hire programs should cut both ways. One gaping hole in the ADVANCE program in general is that one of the categories it funds is women who follow their husbands, but it doesn't fund men who follow their wives. Thus, if a couple has a choice, the sensible choice is for him to take a 'real' job and her to follow on and apply for this sort of supplemental funding. To really help women, it would make more sense to offer money to their partners as well so that the couple is not disadvantaged in choosing the place where the woman has the good position and the man follows. The last thing the women faculty at Minnesota need is another commitment that takes away from the time they spend on research and teaching. For this reason, I am strongly opposed to the idea of leadership training for women in particular. And in general I don't see much need for a program on gender bias in search committees (the U has hired a lot of women lately, and at least as far as I can tell, the hiring is in proportion to the sex ratio among new Ph.D.s). I don't know about bias at other levels of the university, but as far as I can tell, there isn't a problem. Insofar as there is a bias left in some programs, I think it is a product of an old-boy network that won't be cured by mere sensitivity training. That's a bigger issue that creates bigger problems than just a gender bias and will take bigger actions to fix.