A STUDY OF THE CAMPUS CLIMATE FOR DIVERSITY: THE IMPACT OF CAMPUS CLIMATE ON FACULTY WOMEN

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Introduction

In this paper we will discuss some of the results of a campus climate survey by comparing the responses of all female and male faculty and of female and male engineering faculty as a subset of the entire faculty. Survey instruments were designed to assess personal opinions about diversity, individuals' efforts to enhance diversity, their personal experiences regarding diversity, and their perceptions of the climate for diverse individuals. The research was conducted at a large midwestern land-grant university in order to develop baseline data about the campus climate for diversity so that progress could be measured over time.

Methodology

The survey population for the faculty study consisted of all faculty in residence during the fall semester of 1993. A stratified sampling design was used with faculty being defined by ethnic minority status and gender. For purposes of this paper, we will compare the responses of engineering female and male faculty with those of the total female and male faculty. The overall faculty response rate was 59.3% . Seven of the 157 female faculty respondents were engineering faculty as were 32 of the 175 male faculty respondents. Due to the small number of female engineer respondents, the data reported for them is not statistically reliable. This will continue to be a problem for such studies until such time as a critical mass of women engineering faculty is reached.

Weights were constructed to account for differences in sampling rates and for differences in response rates. A raw weight for each respondent was defined to be the number of people in the weighting-class population to which the respondent belonged divided by the total number of respondents in that weighting class. These adjusted weights were then cumulated, rounded and differenced to produce an integer weight for each respondent. The use of integer weights insures that estimated numbers of faculty are always whole numbers.

Departmental Climate

Faculty responded to several questions about their personal perceptions regarding the climate for diversity within their departments. Table 1 summarizes these items.

Table 1. About your department . . .

(% responding)	Female	Eng Female	Eng Male	Male
How strong is the desire to develop a climate that supports diversity?				
Very/Fairly strong	68.5	**40.0**	**45.4**	62.3
Lack of/No desire	11.2	**45.0**	**9.6**	7.6
Is it receptive to incorporating gender/ethnic material into curriculum?				
Yes	75.2	**25.0**	**20.7**	53.4
No	16.6	**60.0**	**55.0**	30.5
Doesn't apply in our field	3.1	**15.0**	**13.5**	11.1

Over 60% of all female and male faculty respondents indicated that their departmental colleagues had a "very" or "fairly strong" desire to develop a climate that supports diversity. However, only 40% of female engineers and 45% of male engineers agreed with this statement while 45% of female engineers responded that their departments had no desire (compared to 9.6% of male engineers). Over 75% of all female faculty and 53% of all male faculty agreed that their departments were receptive to incorporating gender and ethnic studies material into the curriculum. Only 25% of the female engineers and 21% of the male engineers agreed with this statement.

Faculty were asked to rate their departments on a number of items concerning their professional and personal relationships. Table 2 summarizes the data from these items.

Table 2. Thinking of your department . . .

(% responding)	Female	Eng Female	Eng Male	Male
My relation with other faculty in my department is good:				
Agree	82.0	**70.0**	**92.5**	85.4
Disagree	7.0	**15.0**	**4.0**	5.6
My approach to teaching is valued				
Agree	67.8	**55.0**	**68.1**	70.4
Disagree	8.1	**15.0**	**5.6**	0.0
My department's environment is conducive to my academic advancement:				
Agree	53.6	**55.0**	**82.8**	68.7
Disagree	27.1	**30.0**	**11.2**	17.7
Department members have given me adequate guidance about my research and teaching:				
Agree	36.0	**40.0**	**66.7**	50.3
Disagree	43.3	**60.0**	**23.1**	29.7
I often feel I don't fit in well socially with my colleagues:				
Agree	34.4	**70.0**	**16.7**	17.3
Disagree	49.3	**30.0**	**71.7**	70.9
I am not as likely to be counseled on tenure/promotion as other faculty:				
Agree	34.2	**45.0**	**18.4**	20.1
Disagree	34.8	**25.0**	**49.4**	52.0
My research is valued:				
Agree	31.5	**40.0**	**66.6**	66.7
Disagree	17.0	**30.0**	**11.2**	11.8

While over 81% of all female and male faculty indicated that their relations with other faculty in their department are good, only 70% of the female engineers compared to 93% of the male engineers agreed with this statement. Approximately 70% of all female and male faculty and male engineers agreed that their approach to teaching is valued compared to only 55% of the female engineers. Roughly 55% of all female and engineering female faculty agreed that their department's environment is conducive to their academic advancement compared to 69% of all male faculty and 83% of male engineers. Only 36% of all female faculty and 40% of female engineers agreed that their department members had given them adequate guidance about their research and teaching compared to 50% of all male faculty and 67% of male engineers.

More than 34% of all female faculty and 70% of engineering female faculty agreed that they often feel they don't fit in well socially with their colleagues compared to approximately 17% of all male faculty and male engineers. Over 34% of all female faculty and 45% of female engineers agreed that they are not as likely to be counseled on tenure and promotion as other faculty compared to approximately 20% of all male faculty and male

engineers. Approximately 32% of all female faculty and 40% of female engineers agreed that their research is valued compared to two-thirds of all male faculty and male engineers.

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with their situation at the university. Approximately 60% of all male and female faculty indicated that they were fairly or very satisfied with their situation compared to 55% of female engineers and 70% of male engineers.

Respondents were asked to evaluate the climate for diversity within their departments. The climate was defined by 17 pairs of antonyms such as friendly or hostile, sensitive or insensitive, etc. Respondents identified their views for each of 17 word-pairs by selecting a number between 1 and 5 on a Likert scale and mean responses were calculated. Table 3 summarizes this data.

Table 3. The climate for diversity in your department is:

(Mean response)		Eng	Eng	
	Female	Female	Male	Male
(5) (1)				
Non-sexist/Sexist about Females	2.24	**1.30**	**2.77**	2.82
Non-Homophobic/Homophobic	2.51	**2.00**	**2.33**	2.66
Relaxed/Tense	2.66	**2.20**	**2.71**	2.73
Supportive/Unsupportive	2.76	**1.75**	**2.77**	2.94
Supportive/Unsupportive of the Disabled	2.76	**1.85**	**2.76**	2.81
Non-sexist/Sexist about males	2.86	**3.00**	**3.00**	2.95
Respectful/Disrespectful	2.90	**1.60**	**3.03**	3.14
Non-racist/Racist	2.90	**2.25**	**3.12**	3.25
Communicative/Reserved	3.44	**2.80**	**3.42**	3.66
Open/Closed	3.54	**2.80**	**3.83**	3.77
Sensitive/Insensitive	3.60	**2.75**	**3.59**	3.76
Concerned/Indifferent	3.70	**2.80**	**3.04**	3.51
Improving/Worsening	3.73	**3.20**	**3.50**	3.56
Accepting/Unaccepting	3.74	**2.80**	**3.89**	3.84
Accepting/Unaccepting of religious differences	3.75	**3.20**	**3.73**	3.75
Cooperative/Uncooperative	3.79	**2.90**	**3.96**	3.97
Friendly/Hostile	3.88	**3.05**	**3.97**	4.03

The mean responses of female faculty were lower than 3 on eight items and lower than males on 14 of the 17 items, suggesting that, in general, women have more negative perceptions about the departmental climate for diversity. The mean responses of female engineers were lower than 2 on a total of four items, lower than 3 on 13 items, and lower than those of all female faculty and the male engineers on 16 of the 17 items, suggesting that, of the four comparison groups, female engineers have more negative perceptions about the departmental climate for diversity. The mean response of female engineers on the sexist/non-sexist about females item (1.3) was the lowest score on the entire scale.

University Climate

Respondents were asked to rate the university's efforts to encourage diversity. Table 4 summarizes this data.

Table 4. Rating the university's effort to encourage diversity

(% selecting each response)		Female	Eng Female	Eng Male	Male
Mentorship opportunities for women faculty	Not enough	57.8	**60.0**	**21.0**	40.9
	Too much	1.7	**0.0**	**4.5**	2.9
Mentorship opportunities between junior and senior faculty					
	Not enough	55.1	**60.0**	**38.7**	47.6
	Too much	2.1	**0.0**	**2.2**	1.8
Mentorship opportunities for minority faculty	Not enough	52.4	**60.0**	**25.0**	42.4
	Too much	2.1	**0.0**	**2.6**	1.8
Special funds/efforts for recruitment of women faculty					
	Not enough	42.7	**35.3**	**11.9**	18.8
	Too much	1.9	**0.0**	**26.7**	12.6
Faculty development funds/release time for women faculty					
	Not enough	41.0	**64.3**	**28.4**	18.6
	Too much	1.9	**0.0**	**11.4**	7.8
Special funds/efforts for recruitment of minority faculty					
	Not enough	37.7	**78.6**	**6.8**	21.9
	Too much	5.8	**0.0**	**28.2**	13.2
Faculty development funds/release time for minority faculty					
	Not enough	35.0	**64.3**	**28.9**	22.7
	Too much	4.4	**0.0**	**12.0**	6.7
Competitive compensation packages for minorities in demand					
	Not enough	31.5	**57.1**	**6.6**	19.1
	Too much	7.0	**0.0**	**15.7**	9.3
Encourage minority faculty participation in minority-specific professional activities					
	Not enough	23.2	**64.3**	**5.4**	13.6
	Too much	9.3	**0.0**	**12.0**	9.9
Encourage women faculty participation in female-specific professional activities					
	Not enough	28.2	**64.3**	**88.2**	11.3
	Too much	10.1	**0.0**	**0.0**	11.1

More than 57% of female faculty (compared to 41% of male faculty) and 60% of female engineers (compared to 21% of male engineers) indicated that mentorship opportunities for women faculty were not enough. Comparable percentages of all female and engineering female faculty and higher percentages of all male and engineering male faculty agreed that there are not enough mentorship opportunities between junior and senior faculty. With the exception of one item on this scale, a higher percentage of engineering female faculty selected the "not enough" response than faculty in the comparison groups and a lower percentage of engineering male faculty selected the "not enough response. Similarly, except for one item, a higher percentage of engineering male faculty selected the "too much" response than faculty in the comparison groups. The one exception is the last item on table 23, which readers are encouraged to examine and interpret for themselves.

Respondents were asked whether they disagreed strongly, disagreed somewhat, were unsure, agreed somewhat or agreed strongly with a series of ten statements about diversity at the university. Table 5 lists the percent of faculty who agreed somewhat or strongly with these ten statements.

Table 5. About diversity at the university . . .

(% agreeing somewhat or strongly)	Female	Eng Female	Eng Male	Male
The top administration should be committed to diversity	96.9	**85.0**	**95.3**	90.0
Diversity is good for us and should be actively promoted	95.6	**100.0**	**88.1**	86.0
The top administration is committed to diversity	48.9	**25.0**	**77.5**	59.7
Results in admission of too many underprepared students	40.4	**30.0**	**64.0**	45.0
Feel I must change some of my personal characteristics to fit in	34.4	**60.0**	**15.1**	17.1
We have placed too much emphasis on diversity at expense of enhancing its prestige as top research university	23.2	**30.0**	**43.0**	46.3
We have achieved a positive climate for diversity	21.1	**25.0**	**46.3**	41.2
Affirmative action leads to hiring lower quality faculty/staff	19.5	**30.0**	**51.4**	37.9
Emphasizing diversity leads to campus disunity	12.0	**15.0**	**30.7**	18.8
Current emphasis on Western culture in curriculum should not be diluted	11.6	**0.0**	**20.7**	15.7

At least 85% of respondents in all four comparison groups agreed that the top administration should be genuinely committed to diversity and that diversity is good for the university and should be actively promoted. However, only 49% of the female faculty and 25% of female engineers agreed that the top administration is committed to diversity. Approximately 60% of all male faculty and 78% of male engineers agreed with this statement. More than 34% of female faculty and 60% of female engineers agreed that they feel they must change some of their personal characteristics to fit in. The disparity in responses of female and male engineers range from 10 to 45% on this scale.

Solutions

Respondents were asked to indicate how a list of 16 items would affect the climate for diversity by selecting a response ranging from 'hurt climate' to 'improve climate' on a ten-point Likert scale. Table 6 summarizes their responses.

Overall, the mean scores of female faculty and female engineers were higher than those of male faculty and male engineers for all items, indicating that the women felt more positive about these activities. The mean responses of male engineers were lower than those of the other three groups on all items. The largest differences between groups were found on two items that the male engineers rated most negatively: diversifying faculty by hiring our own graduates from under-represented groups and including service that enhances climate for diversity as one criteria for faculty/staff evaluation.

Table 6. How might the following activities affect the climate for under-represented groups on campus?

(Mean response: Hurt=0, no effect=5, improve=10)	Female	Eng Female	Eng Male	Male
Bringing more visiting scholars from under-represented groups to campus	8.6	8.5	7.7	8.1
Providing faculty/staff exchanges with historically black and women's colleges	8.2	7.6	6.6	7.3
Including issues of diversity in faculty, staff, and student orientation programs	8.2	7.9	6.8	7.1
Encouraging the university's faculty/staff to work on problems of discrimination	8.1	8.3	7.0	7.2
Hiring more women for top administrative posts	8.1	7.5	5.6	6.2
Hiring more racial/ethnic minorities for top administrative posts	7.8	6.9	5.6	6.5
More programs that recognize various cultural heritages	7.3	6.4	6.3	6.4
More awareness/sensitivity workshops about needs of under-represented groups for faculty	7.6	7.3	6.3	6.5
Providing counseling/advising to under-represented students by hiring members of their groups	7.6	7.3	5.6	6.4
Regular meetings between the administrators and representatives of student racial/ethnic groups	7.1	6.4	5.8	6.4
Requiring all students to take one general education course on issues about under-represented groups	7.3	8.2	4.8	6.0
Encouraging faculty to incorporate research/perspectives on under-represented groups in curriculum	7.3	7.9	4.9	5.6
Awarding financial aid to students without regard to race, ethnicity, or gender	6.5	5.5	7.3	7.0
Providing more funding for organizations for under-represented groups	6.5	6.4	5.0	5.6
Diversifying faculty by hiring our own graduates from under-represented groups	5.9	7.6	3.7	4.5
Including service that enhances climate for diversity as one criteria for faculty/staff evaluation	6.3	7.2	3.7	4.3

Discussion

This study found that female faculty in general are less satisfied than male faculty about the climate for diversity. The differences between female and male engineers' perceptions are more pronounced, with female engineers being less satisfied than the general female faculty and male engineers being more satisfied than the general male faculty. This disparity presents special problems for female engineers and special challenges for WEPAN members and others who are interested in increasing the number of women engineering faculty at our universities. We must be prepared to provide women engineering faculty with special support mechanisms until such time as the culture in their departments becomes more supportive for them.