

Climate Survey Task Force Recommendations

The charge to the Climate Survey Task Force by the Provost is to develop “a blueprint for policy and program recommendations based on the survey data” as described in the *Faculty Work Climate Survey Final Report*. Members of the Task Force provided their feedback to the Chair over the course of the semester and met on April 16, 2007 to discuss the next steps.

The following major themes of dissatisfaction emanated from our analysis and are outlined in the *Faculty Work Climate Survey Final Report*.

- Negative departmental climate
- Lack of resources
- Not being tenured
- Difficulty of caring for dependent children
- Salary
- Administration

A number of issues pertinent to faculty advancement and faculty life were addressed including those pertaining to flexibility of the tenure clock. We agreed that the focus of these initial recommendations (on the premise that the Task Force would continue to function) would be on departmental climate and the broader issue of dependent care programs.

In making these recommendations, the committee is cognizant of the number of demands made on department heads in terms of attending various training sessions and the negative backlash this may have on participation. These should be balanced with increased efforts to minimize bureaucracy and garner more resources so that the faculty numbers can be increased.

Recommendations

The Task Force agreed that it would best serve the campus by meeting every six months for the next two years to monitor the recommendations implemented and provide an update to the Provost. This would also help the campus address in an orderly fashion the various important recommendations arising from this Climate Survey.

Other Task Force recommendations fall under three categories: (1) support of on-going programs; (2) immediate/short-term recommendations; and (3) long-term recommendations.

Support of On-going Programs

1. Brown bag sessions for faculty.
2. WISEST town hall sessions – this year’s topic: training of search committees.
3. Development of modified exit surveys and establishment of exit interviews (currently under review in the Office of Faculty Affairs) to obtain an important view of faculty satisfaction/concerns.

Immediate/Short-term Recommendations

1. Mandatory training/orientation for new department heads and deans. These should be organized in a series of short (two-hour) sessions where the new heads meet various campus leaders who can focus on specific topics (e.g. building collegiality within departments; academic governance; communication skills; decision-making).
2. Consider implementing the University of Wisconsin, Madison department heads training program, three-part series.
3. Develop a program to “train the trainer” for search committees to ensure that making decisions regarding faculty hires are made in a fair, unbiased manner. Colleges should require that the “trainer” and search committee chair(s) participate in training once a year. Some concern was expressed about using only one mode of training. Both “in-person” training sessions and web-based formats should be developed.
4. Collect and compile a list of UIC departmental life-friendly or family-friendly policies and practices. After the list has been compiled, share with the departments at training sessions, town hall meetings and workshops. These practices need to be disseminated at the departmental level, perhaps as best practices endorsed by senior administration. There is concern that a number of departmental policies are unclear.
5. Conduct a short, focused benchmarked survey to compare family leave, adoption assistance, tenure clock rollback, dual career partner placement assistance, campus child care, domestic partner benefits, retirement planning and health, dental, and vision benefits with other universities. Some of this information is already available under the aegis of the ACE/SLOAN accelerator awards program. Although UIC did not get an award, our initial data would provide a good starting point. Such an examination would help UIC determine its strengths as well as its weaknesses while keeping in mind that we are a public urban research institution.
6. A major concern voiced in the survey is improved child care. This is an issue that needs regular examination, to meet changing needs and resources. Having WISEST, faculty and academic professional representation on the Infant Care Committee will provide an important and continued voice on this critical work-family issue. The Task Force recommends the following three people to serve on this committee co-chaired by Frank Goldberg and Mike Landek:
 - Linda Siebert Rapoport, Director, WISEST
 - Brooke Shipley, Associate Professor, Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science to represent faculty; Dr. Shipley also serves as the co-chair of the faculty concerns subcommittee of the CCSW.
 - Jacqueline Berger, Director, Special Programs, to represent academic professionals. (Suggested to include an individual who is not in a direct reporting line to either Frank Goldberg or Mike Landek).

The Infant Care Committee should continue investigating ways to see how we can bring infant care to campus.

Long-term Recommendations

1. Salary equity study – the WISEST grant has funds for a faculty equity study in the STEM disciplines. The campus should utilize the “lessons learned” from the previous, campus-wide

salary equity study, performed in 2002, to develop a mechanism whereby a new salary equity study can be undertaken in all colleges. The methodology needs to be tailored to UIC's unique needs with its multiple faculty tracks. The work-load can be distributed by having a few colleges participate each year.

2. Improve the departmental climate for dual-career academic couples by having targeted positions for spousal hires. The 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 arrangement for faculty hiring should be re-examined since often the spouses are from the same academic department or college. Targeted positions for academic spouses will be a useful tool for recruiting women and minority faculty.
3. Examine the climate change process at Ohio State, Kentucky and other peer institutions (CIC, ADVANCE) as well as in successful life-friendly corporations on the Top 100 Lists (e.g. Chase, IBM, Eli Lilly, Marriott and Wrigley) for their approaches to policies, practices and communication strategies.
4. Create a permanent advisory council to help address major climate issues.
5. Develop external partnerships to help address complex resources and space issues, such as child care.
6. Develop a central repository of worklife and comprehensive life-friendly policies.
7. Deans should partner with interested and high profile faculty to develop a strong endowment base and a steady stream of external support (including philanthropic support). This will address one overarching concern of the climate survey, that of limited resources at UIC.
8. Make UIC the premier urban state institution and promote access to excellence. Encourage a better link among the sister institutions of the UI family by developing a pipeline program, so that state students not served by UIUC will automatically turn to UIC or UIS rather than out of state options. Such a model exists in the University of California system.

These recommendations have been reviewed and respectfully submitted by all members of the Climate Task Force Committee.

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