



# Faculty Work Climate Survey

## University of Illinois at Chicago

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[www.uic.edu/depts/oaafaculty/climatesurvey.html](http://www.uic.edu/depts/oaafaculty/climatesurvey.html)

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## Introduction

The UIC Faculty Work Climate Survey was designed to capture the perceptions of all College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) and College of Engineering (COE) faculty members regarding their workplace: what they like, what they dislike, what is important to their daily life, and what enhances or impedes productivity. Recognizing the existing strengths and limitations of the workplace environment (climate) will help the campus develop a cohesive plan to benefit all faculty members.

## Methods

Questionnaires were mailed to all tenured and tenure-track faculty in the Colleges of LAS and Engineering.

- The initial mailing to 521 faculty members was sent in April 2004.
- A second mailing was sent to 308 nonrespondents four weeks later.
- Faculty respondents returned a separate postcard to indicate they had completed the survey. The survey deadline was June 15, 2004.
- Surveys were categorized by discipline into science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), which included the College of Engineering, LAS Natural Sciences, and Mathematics; and non-STEM, which included LAS Humanities and LAS Social Sciences.
- The overall response rate was 67%. The STEM response rate was 69%; the non-STEM response rate was 64%.
- Data were analyzed by faculty gender, rank, and STEM/non-STEM status.
- The primary outcomes of interest were satisfaction with current position, satisfaction with career progression, and consideration to leave UIC.

## Characteristics of Faculty Respondents

- 74% of respondents were men and 26% were women.
- The female:male ratio was 38:62 in the non-STEM fields and was 14:86 in the STEM fields.
- 80% were non-Hispanic Caucasian.
- The ratio of non-Hispanic Caucasian:Underrepresented Minority:Other was 83:4:13 for men and 72:20:8 for women. This was a significant gender-based difference.
- Half of all respondents were from a STEM discipline. Twenty-seven percent of women respondents were from the STEM fields as compared to 73% from the non-STEM fields.
- 85% of the men faculty respondents and 68% of the women faculty respondents were tenured.
- The ratio of Professor:Associate Professor:Assistant Professor among women faculty was 33:36:31, as compared to 56:29:15 among men faculty.
- 85% of the men faculty were married or partnered, as compared to 66% of women faculty who were married or partnered.
- Of these faculty, all women reported having a spouse/partner who worked as compared to 81% of men who reported having an employed spouse/partner.
- 84% of women and 53% of men reported spouses/partners employed full-time.
- Approximately three quarters of the faculty reported having children. Women faculty were twice as likely as men faculty to be childless.

- Overall, 21% (68) of the respondents reported that their job prevented them from having the number of children they wanted. Women were more likely to indicate that this was the case: 35% did so, compared to 16% of men.

## **Overall Satisfaction and Considerations to Leave**

In general, faculty members were more satisfied than dissatisfied.

- 67.5% of faculty were moderately satisfied or very satisfied with their position at UIC.
- 62.7% were moderately satisfied or very satisfied with their career progression.
- Colleagues, students, research, and teaching were factors that contributed to satisfaction.
- However, 61% had seriously considered leaving UIC.
- General resources, administration, and salary were factors that detracted from satisfaction.

## **Differences in Outcome by Respondent Characteristics**

Differences in the outcome variables were evident by discipline, rank, and gender.

- Faculty in the non-STEM disciplines were more satisfied with the way their career progressed than faculty in the STEM disciplines.
- The higher the rank of the faculty, the more satisfied they were with the way their career progressed.
- Male faculty considered leaving UIC more seriously than female faculty.
- Although those in the non-STEM fields reported being more satisfied, they were also more likely to have considered leaving UIC.

## **Factors Influencing Satisfaction and Thoughts of Leaving**

- Faculty who perceived their departmental climate as negative were less satisfied and thought more seriously about leaving UIC.
- A lack of resources led to less satisfaction and more serious thoughts of leaving.
- Faculty who lacked like-minded colleagues were less satisfied with their position and career progression.
- Tenured faculty were more satisfied with their position than faculty without tenure.
- Faculty who had been a principal investigator on a funded grant, or who perceived themselves as productive, were more satisfied with their career progress.
- Faculty who most seriously considered leaving UIC were not tenured, were from the non-STEM disciplines, were not married or living with a partner, had not successfully renegotiated their current position, had few resources, and worked in a more negative departmental climate.

## Gender Differences

One limitation of this analysis is the relatively small number of women respondents, limiting our ability to detect gender differences. The problem is not one of proportional response of women but rather the small numbers of women faculty. Despite these small numbers, some significant gender differences were evident.

- The only factor associated with dissatisfaction with current position for women was working in a negative departmental climate.
- For men, in addition to a negative working climate, working with fewer resources, not having tenure, and caring for dependent children were associated with less satisfaction with their current position.
- When examining negative effects on career progression, both men and women identified a negative departmental climate and having fewer resources as important.
- Women also reported being less satisfied with their career progression if they were not well published and grant funded.
- Men were less satisfied with their career progression if they had fewer like-minded colleagues and worked in a climate perceived as positive for women.
- Of the predictors of considerations to leave, the two factors that cut across gender lines were working in a negative departmental climate and the discipline. For both men and women, working in a department they perceived as negative resulted in them thinking more seriously of leaving. Faculty members in a STEM discipline were less likely to think of leaving.

## Next Steps

- The results of this survey have provided the campus with a framework for addressing issues of climate and resources that will affect all faculty at UIC.
- The survey findings have been presented to the faculty of the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Engineering and to the WISEST Executive Committee.
- A group consisting of senior campus leadership will be tasked by the Provost with developing a blueprint for policy and program recommendations based on the survey data. The Provost will be requesting an initial report by December 2006.
- Implementation of the recommendations should occur in conjunction with the Strategic Plan to create a more robust and supportive climate.
- Practical steps include workshops with Department Heads and faculty in a dialogue across campus (workshops/town hall meetings) to address these issues.
- Future research to examine gender differences should include qualitative methodologies, such as one-on-one interviews or focus groups.