

2013 Campus Climate Survey: Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intentions and Faculty Perceptions of Climate

Executive Summary

The 2013 Campus Climate survey was conducted from February 19th through March 19th, 2013. The survey was designed to accomplish multiple goals, but its primary purposes were (a) to monitor the extent to which faculty members are satisfied with their working environment; (b) enhance our understanding of the climate, both departmental and institutional, in which faculty work; and (c) to evaluate the changes over time, if any, in the climate within departments, within colleges, and across the University. Differences in satisfaction and climate with respect to gender, race/ethnicity, rank, and college have been analyzed. This report describes the responses of both STEM and nonSTEM faculty.

A total of 1,222 of 2,689 faculty responded to the 2013 climate survey. This 45% response rate was sharply higher than the 24% response rate for the 2009 survey (742 of 3,133) or the 30% response rate for the 2006 survey (820 of 2,718).

The pattern of responses to the 2013 climate survey was generally representative of the faculty at Texas A&M University, but there are two areas of possible concern which should be considered when interpreting the survey results.

1. Non-tenure-track faculty members appear to be under-represented in the survey responses. The response rates for tenured and tenure track faculty each exceeded 50%, whereas the response rate for non-tenure-track faculty was no higher than 36%.
2. There appears to have been an unusually low response rate for Asian faculty members. Only 5% of the respondents identified themselves as Asian, even though 13% of the faculty members are identified as Asian in Texas A&M's administrative records. Although it is possible that Asian faculty were systematically less likely than other faculty groups to identify their race/ethnicity and not systematically less likely to respond to the survey, the calculated response rate for Asian faculty members was only 15%. No other EEOC group had a calculated response rate below 27%.

It is also important to note that any apparent changes over time could arise from changes in the population responding to the survey rather than from changes in the perceptions of the individual respondents. Furthermore, individual respondents could have provided demographic information (like their racial/ethnic group or departmental affiliation) in one year but not another, causing them to be categorized differently for analysis purposes from one survey to the next. Therefore, one should be cautious in concluding that climate has not changed, just because there has been no change in the survey responses.

The following are key points that were extracted from an analysis of the responses to questions regarding job satisfaction, turnover intentions and faculty perceptions of climate.

- General satisfaction is weaker than it was in 2009, when it was characterized as moderate.
- Female faculty members report systematically lower levels of job satisfaction than do male faculty members. This pattern persists even after controlling for differences in rank and college.
- Satisfaction has generally declined for non-Hispanic white faculty, while it has remained unchanged for non-white faculty.
- As a general rule, satisfaction has declined more for tenured faculty than for other faculty ranks.
- There are statistically significant differences in satisfaction within colleges between male and female faculty members once differences in faculty rank are taken into account. In all such cases, female faculty report lower satisfaction than male faculty.
- Despite the differences in job satisfaction, there are no systematic differences in turnover intentions between male and female faculty.
- Overall, there was no difference between the 2009 and 2013 climate surveys in the level of perceived job discrimination on the basis of sex, race/ethnicity or caregiver obligations.
- 23% of female faculty respondents reported experiencing job-related sex discrimination in the previous 12 months with respect to at least one of 13 types included in the survey. The most common type of discrimination reported was salary, followed by collegiality.
- 30% of non-white faculty respondents reported experiencing job-related racial discrimination in the previous 12 months with respect to at least one of 13 types included in the survey. Again, the most common type of such reported discrimination was perceived discrimination in salary, followed by perceived discrimination in collegiality.
- In 2009, 28% of non-white female respondents reported that they had experienced job-related sex discrimination; in 2013, that fraction had increased to 47%.
- Female respondents rated their departments significantly lower than male respondents with respect to inclusivity or valuing diversity.
- Female faculty respondents were more likely to believe that search committees talk about candidate's personal characteristics, treat male and female candidates differently, and are dubious about diversity. Differences between male and female faculty respondents persist even after controlling for rank and college.
- There were significant differences among racial/ethnic groups in their responses to most of the climate scales. As a general rule, Hispanic faculty members report the least favorable perceptions of climate. On average, African-American faculty also report significantly less favorable perceptions of climate than those reported by non-Hispanic white faculty.
- Where there were significant differences across faculty ranks, administrators and/or non-tenure-track faculty were more likely to agree with positive climate statements than assistant and associate professors.