“Managing Department Climate Change”
Presenters

• Ronda Callister
  Professor, Department of Management and Human Resources, Utah State University
  P.I. Utah State’s NSF ADVANCE IT program, 2003-2006

• Joan Williams
  Distinguished Prof., University of California’s Hastings College of Law
  Director, Center for Worklife Law

• Eve Fine
  Researcher, WISELI – Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Plan for this Panel

• Brief Introduction
  – Why focus on department climate

• Each panelist will describe an intervention designed to improve department climate
  – Ronda Callister
  – Eve Fine
  – Joan Williams

• Conclusion
  – Results of interventions

• Q & A/Discussion
Why focus on Department Climate?

- Individuals experience climate in their immediate workplace – the department
- Perceptions about department climate are key determinants for faculty satisfaction and retention
- Numerous campus surveys show that women faculty experience a more negative climate than do male faculty
- Improving department climate is critical for the retention and advancement of women faculty
Why Assess Department Climate?

- Assessment is essential for determining strategies for initiating change
- In a research environment, data (quantitative and qualitative) is a powerful inducement for change
- Data is necessary for evaluating change/improvement (or lack of it)
- Pitfalls – issues of confidentiality
Options for Assessing Department Climate

• Listening
• Observation
• Interviews (and other conversations)
• Surveys
• Consultants

Ronda Callister

Utah State
Eve Fine
WISELI
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Enhancing Department Climate:
A Workshop Series for Department Chairs
What is Climate?

- Behaviors within a workplace or learning environment, ranging from subtle to cumulative to dramatic, that can influence whether an individual feels personally safe, listened to, valued, and treated fairly and with respect.

- The atmosphere or ambience of an organization as perceived by its members. An organization's climate is reflected in its structures, policies, and practices; the demographics of its membership; the attitudes and values of its members and leaders; and the quality of personal interactions.
Selected Methods for Assessing Climate:

- Individual interviews
  - With 26 women faculty in the sciences & engineering (2002)
  - With representatives of various campus groups -- Climate Workshop Design Team

- Campus-wide Survey

- Department Climate Survey
Common Climate Themes

- Lack of respect/consideration/politeness
- Insufficient sense of community or belonging
- Lack of recognition/visibility/value
- Ineffective communication
- Lack of support/inequitable access to professional development opportunities
- Difficulties achieving balance between work and family or personal life
- Illegal behaviors and demeaning, sexualizing, or condescending language and behaviors
- Retention/tenure of women and minority faculty, staff, and students
- Chair plays a power role in influencing climate
Intervention to Improve Department Climate

Enhancing Department Climate: A Workshop Series for Department Chairs

- Session 1
  - Departmental Climate Survey
- Session 2
- Session 3
Description of Climate Workshops

Session #1

- General Discussion of Climate – what it is, why it matters.
- Chairs initial assessments about climate issues in their departments
- Discussion of findings from campus-wide surveys
  - 2003: 59.1% response rate
  - 2006: 54.4% response rate
- Introduction to Departmental Climate Survey
Study of Faculty Worklife at UW-Madison, 2003 -- Findings

Faculty Perceptions of Respectful Treatment in the Workplace, by Gender and Department Chair

*I am treated with respect by …*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Women (n=375)</th>
<th>Men (n=864)</th>
<th>Dept. Chair (n=76)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues</td>
<td>92.0%</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
<td>96.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
<td>97.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
<td>96.0%</td>
<td>97.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept. Chair</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates difference significant at $p < 0.05$
Study of Faculty Worklife at UW-Madison
Sample Climate Questions

51. With respect to the recruitment of, climate for, and leadership of women faculty, how much would you agree or disagree with the following statements about your primary department/unit?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle one number on a scale of 1 to 4 for each statement.</th>
<th>Agree Strongly 1</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat 2</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat 3</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly 4</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. There are too few women faculty in my department.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. My department has identified ways to recruit women faculty.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My department has actively recruited women faculty.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. The climate for women in my department is good.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. My department has identified ways to enhance the climate for women.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. My department has taken steps to enhance the climate for</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>DK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DK = Don't Know
Findings – Campus-wide survey, 2003

Figure 1. The climate for women in my department is good

* Statistically significant at p<.05
Description of workshop

Between Sess 1 and Sess 2

- Homework
  - Climate from others perspectives
- Implementation of Survey
Description of workshop

Session 2

- Receive Survey Results
- Share selected results
- Obtain advice, resources and consider possible actions
Results from departmental surveys

- Since Fall 2003, 38 departments participated and completed the survey
  - Physical Sciences: 13 departments
  - Biological Sciences: 17 departments
  - Social Sciences: 3 departments
  - Humanities: 5 departments
- Total # respondents: 1,836
A majority of all groups surveyed report positive perceptions of their departmental climate.

A significant minority (12-15%) of faculty and staff rated their department’s climate as very negative or negative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Climate Rating*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classified staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-docs/fellows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All[1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Response to the question: On a scale from one (very negative) to five (very positive), please rate the climate in your department. [1] Includes some respondents who were not classified as faculty, academic staff, classified staff, grad. student, or post-doc/fellow.
Departmental Climate Survey: Results

Some positive results for faculty:

- Approximately 73% feel their department is a welcoming place to work
- 86% understand their roles and responsibilities in the department
- 71% are happy with the professional relationships they have formed with others in the department.
- 90% feel their work contributes to the mission or purpose of the department.
Some negative results for faculty:

- While 90% feel their work contributes to the mission of the department –only 64% report that others recognize how their work contributes to the department’s mission/purpose.
- A significant minority, 21%, feel under-appreciated for their work.
- Approx. 20% report a lack of agency in decisions made in the department.
- 24% feel isolated in their departments.
- About 10% report experiencing subtle or overt harassment or discrimination due to gender, race, or other personal attributes.
Departmental Climate Survey: Chairs’ Responses

- The dissmisser
- The knower
- The statistician
- The victim
- The traditionalist
Description of Climate Workshops

Session #3

- Report on sharing results with departmental members
- Report on actions taken/changes implemented
- Continue discussion of advice, resources, possible actions
Examples of Changes made/enacted

- Removing toxic faculty members/staff from the department
- Improving communication – especially in the area of decision-making
- Creation of departmental committees to further examine issues of climate for women and make recommendations
- Creating opportunities for social and/or professional engagement – weekly lunch, academic seminar series, community service projects, social events
- Changing traditions & practices
  - Mentoring – committees/individuals
  - Creating more inclusive departmental traditions/practices
    - Inviting students/student representative to dept mtgs & other events
    - Including staff/staff representatives in dept. mtgs & other events
Results – One department resurveyed 5x
Results – One department resurveyed 5x

Differences among people are valued in the department.

Graph showing data from Spring 2004 to Spring 2009.
Results – One department resurveyed 5x

I feel appreciated for the work I do in the department.
Results – One department resurveyed 5x

The Chair of the department appropriately consults or delegates decisions to a group or committee.
Results – One department resurveyed 5x

I am aware of places or people to go to if I am faced with a problem or issue in the department.
Findings – Campus-wide surveys: 2003, 2006

Figure 2. The Climate for Women in My Department is Good
Findings – Campus-wide surveys: 2003, 2006

Figure 3. Climate for Women is Good
Responses of Women Faculty

% Agree Strongly or Somewhat

Climate Workshop

No Climate Workshop

2003

2006
Findings – Campus-wide surveys: 2003, 2006

Figure 5. Climate for Women is Good
Responses of Department Chairs

% Agree Strongly or Somewhat

Climate Workshop | No Climate Workshop

2003 | 2006

Figure showing the percentage of department chairs agreeing strongly or somewhat with the statement that the climate for women is good, comparing responses from 2003 and 2006 for those who participated in a climate workshop and those who did not.
Resources

Session #1

- Departmental Survey
  http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/climate/deptsurvey_zoomerang.pdf

- Benefits & Challenges of Diversity (booklet)
  http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/Benefits_Challenges.pdf

- Enhancing Department Climate: A Guide for Department Chairs (brochure)
  http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/ClimateBrochure.pdf
Factors fostering success

- Interactive discussion and sharing of ideas and practices between chairs
- Skilled facilitators with broad knowledge of campus issues and resources and strong commitment to equity
- Commitment of chairs to the process of improving climate
Challenges limiting success

- Scheduling
- Chair responses to survey Results
- Commitment of chairs
Joan Williams

Hastings College of Law
Center for Worklife Law
University of California
Conclusion:

Q&A

Discussion