

# Climate Change for Faculty at UW-Madison: Evidence from the 2003 and 2006 Study of Faculty Worklife

## Introduction

### *The Study of Faculty Worklife at the University of Wisconsin-Madison*

The *Study of Faculty Worklife at UW-Madison* survey was conceived of in 2001, as an element of the proposed ADVANCE project at UW-Madison. The ADVANCE project was funded (WISELI, the Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute, is the research center that was formed to centralize all ADVANCE activities), and development of the survey instrument began in 2002 with in-depth interviews of 26 women faculty in the biological and physical sciences. Their comments formed the basis of an instrument designed to investigate gender differences in workplace experiences of men and women faculty in biological and physical sciences. In late 2003, just before the instrument was to be fielded, the Office of the Provost requested that the survey be sent to all faculty in all divisions, and funded the additional costs associated with the expansion of the survey. This survey was implemented from February through June of 2003, and received a 60.2% response rate.

In 2006, as proposed in the original ADVANCE grant, WISELI re-surveyed the faculty in order to evaluate the impact of the ADVANCE grant on campus, and document any changes that

occurred between 2003 and 2006. The 2006 instrument was nearly identical to the 2003 instrument. The survey was again extended to UW-Madison faculty in all divisions through the contributions of the Office of the Provost. It was in the field from February through April of 2006, and received a 55.7% response rate.

The two surveys in 2003 and 2006 now provide the UW-Madison campus with a rich source of faculty attitude data. The datasets are reasonably representative of the faculty at large, with some exceptions. As is common in most surveys, women tended to respond at higher rates than men, and response rates also varied quite widely across schools and colleges, with the Law School and School of Business showing the lowest response. In the 2003 survey, women faculty of color responded at the same or higher rates as majority faculty women, and men faculty of color tended to respond at lower rates, particularly Asian males. In 2006, all faculty of color (men and women, all racial/ethnic groups) tended to respond at lower rates than their majority counterparts, and in contrast to their high participation in the 2003 survey. Aside from these differences, response was quite consistent across measurable demographic characteristics of the faculty (see <http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/initiatives/survey/results/facultypre/resprates/summary.htm> for more detail.)

## **Analysis Plan**

In the analyses that follow, we will investigate differences among faculty based on their response to the items reproduced in Appendix 1. Two main

types of analyses were performed for the main climate-related variables:

1. Faculty responses were compared for several variables, including:
  - a. Gender
  - b. Race/ethnicity
  - c. Department chair status
2. Responses in 2006 are compared to 2003 responses for all items that appeared on both instruments.

It is important to highlight the cross-sectional nature of these data. We cannot ascertain causation in any of the findings contained in this report; these are correlations only. When significant differences are found among groups, we will often need more in-depth data to really understand the relationship. Certainly some characteristics of the working environment might be affecting the groups differently, but it is also possible that faculty who are in those groups vary on some individual characteristics that we did not measure which could also cause the observed relationship.

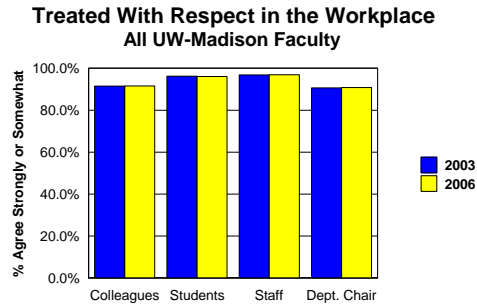
## Results

Graphics created to highlight selected results are included in this report. Where a red asterisk is included (\*) in the graphic, the difference illustrated is statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level (t-test); where a red tilde is included (~), the difference is significant at the  $p < .10$  level.

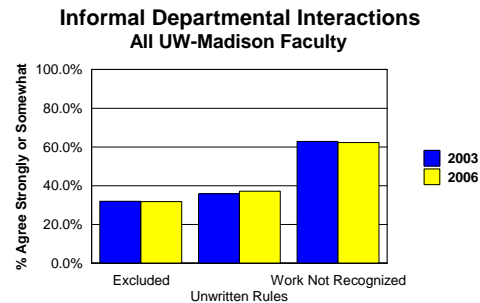
## Self-Reported Experiences of Climate

Little significant change was seen in the responses of faculty on climate items asking about the faculty member's *own*

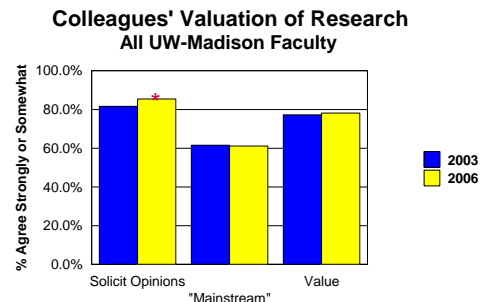
*experiences* between 2003 and 2006. Faculty report about the same levels of respect by colleagues, students, staff, and their department chairs.



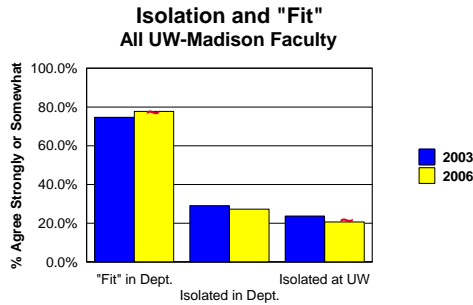
They report feeling excluded from informal networks, encountering unwritten rules, or performing work that is not recognized in their departments in about the same proportions in both surveys.



They perform non-mainstream research and their research is valued at about the same in 2006 as it was in 2003, and they feel isolated in their departments in about the same proportions in 2006 as in the past. Only three items showed differences between 2003 and 2006, and they are climate *improvements*. Faculty are more likely to agree in 2006 that their opinions are solicited about work-related matters,

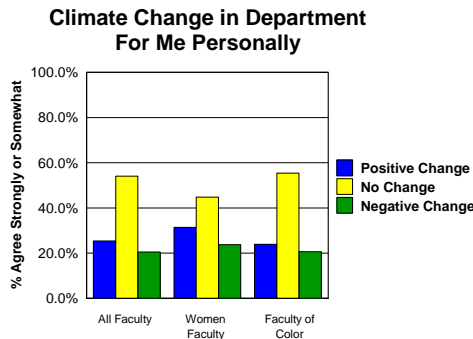


they more often feel like they “fit” in their departments, and they feel less isolated on the UW-Madison campus overall.



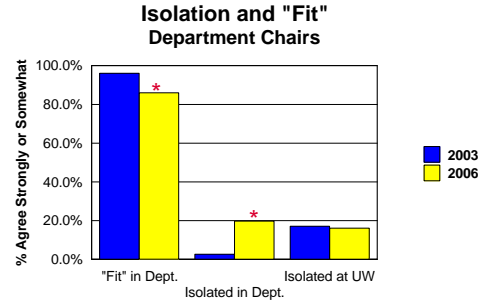
These trends appear for women faculty and faculty of color as well, although the differences between 2003 and 2006 are not always significant.

We asked faculty to report their own perceptions of climate *change* between 2003 and 2006. Most faculty reported no change in their own experiences of either departmental climate, or campus climate. For those who did indicate a change, more faculty indicated a positive climate change than a negative one. This is true for faculty as a whole, for women faculty, and for faculty of color as well.



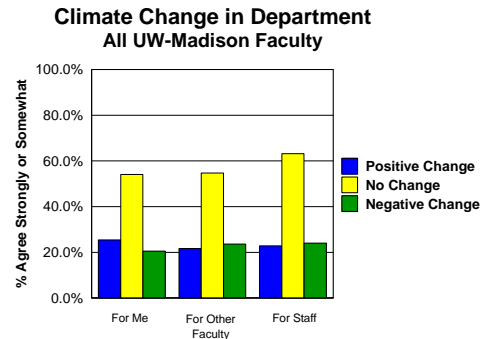
When measured from an individual perspective, one could say that climate is either the same or slightly improved between 2003 to 2006 for faculty who responded to our survey. The only group that has been reporting a decline in some specific experiences of

departmental climate is department chairs.



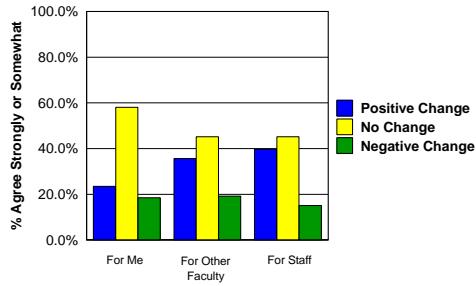
### Perceptions of Climate Experienced by Others

At the same time that faculty are reporting slightly improved climate for themselves, they are generally less optimistic about the climate experienced by others. When faculty are asked to report on climate change for other faculty and staff in their departments, they generally report worse climate in 2006 than they saw in 2003, and this is in contrast to the climate they report experiencing themselves.

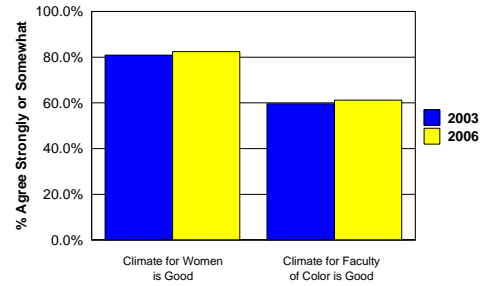


Department chairs appear to be the only group that is positively evaluating climate change over time in their departments for faculty and staff.

**Climate Change in Department Department Chairs**

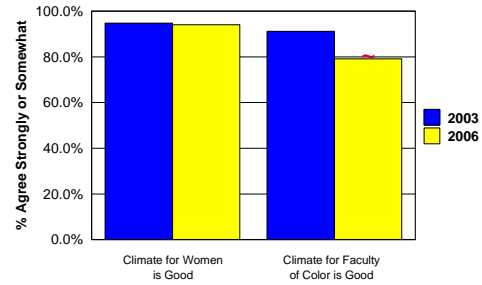


**Climate for Women and Faculty of Color Faculty of Color**

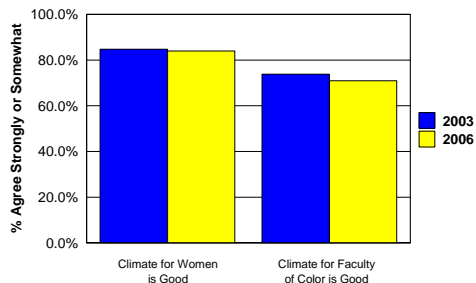


At the same time that faculty are reporting their perceptions of things getting worse for other faculty in their departments, we saw a genuine decrease in the percentage of faculty who report that “climate for faculty of color in my department is good” between 2003 and 2006.

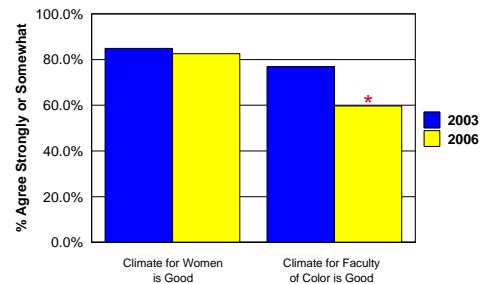
**Climate for Women and Faculty of Color Department Chairs**



**Climate for Women and Faculty of Color All UW-Madison Faculty**

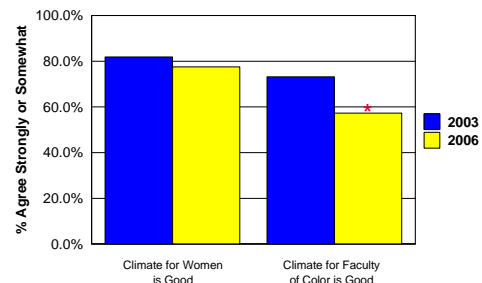


**Climate for Women and Faculty of Color Hiring Workshop Participant**

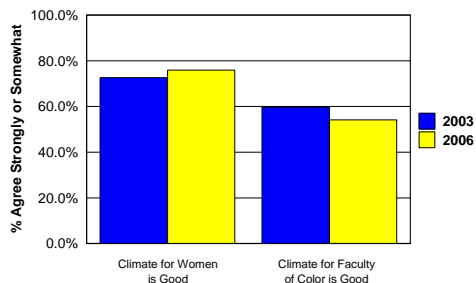


Women faculty, department chairs, and faculty who participated in WISELI events (in particular the hiring workshops) appear to show the biggest decline in agreement on this item between 2003 and 2006 (and in contrast to the slight *increase* in agreement for faculty of color).

**Climate for Women and Faculty of Color Any WISELI Participation**



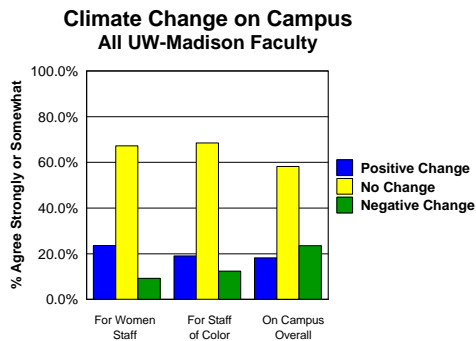
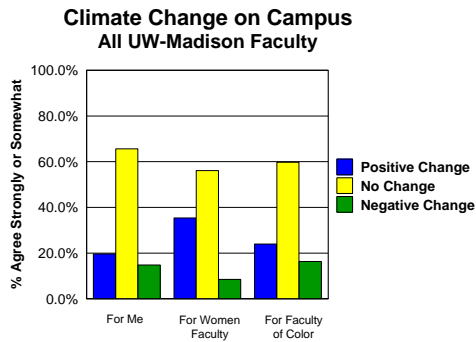
**Climate for Women and Faculty of Color Women Faculty**



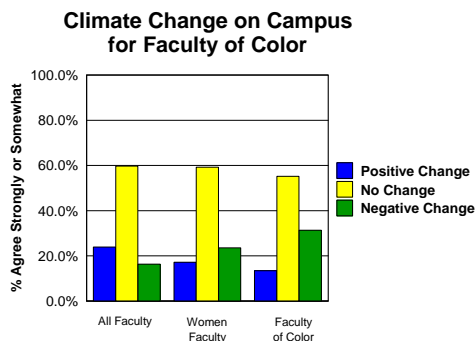
Affirmative response to the item “the climate for women in my department is good” decreased between 2003 and 2006 for some groups (e.g., men, faculty who participated in WISELI events), even while it increased for women.

Faculty respondents’ perceptions of overall climate on campus for various

groups shows some optimism for the climate for women (faculty and staff), but a perception of negative climate change for staff of color...and a perception of negative climate change overall.



Women and faculty of color detected negative climate change on campus for faculty of color, but overall most faculty saw no change or positive change:



**Summary**

There are two ways one might interpret the different findings for self-reported climate, and perceptions of others' climate. On the one hand, the lower

rating of climate for others might indicate that climate has indeed gotten worse on campus, especially for persons of color where the largest changes occurred. It may well be that this is the case; more analysis of the response patterns of faculty of color between the 2003 and 2006 survey will help answer this question. At the same time, it may well be that the reporting of more negative climate in 2006 for others is related to the climate efforts across campus. The resulting education of faculty and department chairs to the differential experiences of climate of women and faculty of color may explain the more negative ratings for others—faculty respondents are looking at the environment and reporting the reality for these other groups, rather than assuming that everything is fine, or that the experiences of these underrepresented faculty members are similar to one's own. That is, it may be that the majority faculty are beginning to see the reality of climate experienced by underrepresented groups. This awareness is, we hope, just the first step towards making real, lasting change at both the departmental and campus levels.

*Report submitted to the Committee on Women in the University by Jennifer Sheridan, Research Director, Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute (WISELI)  
December 13, 2006*

## **Appendix I: Climate Items, 2006 Study of Faculty Worklife at UW-Madison**

19. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your interactions with colleagues and others in your primary department/unit? Please answer using the department or unit that you consider to be your primary department or unit.

Circle one number on a scale of 1 to 4 for each statement.		Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
		1	2	3	4
a.	I am treated with respect by colleagues.	1	2	3	4
b.	I am treated with respect by students.	1	2	3	4
c.	I am treated with respect by staff.	1	2	3	4
d.	I am treated with respect by my department chair.	1	2	3	4
e.	I feel excluded from an informal network in my department.	1	2	3	4
f.	I encounter unwritten rules concerning how one is expected to interact with colleagues.	1	2	3	4
g.	I am reluctant to bring up issues that concern me about the behavior of my departmental colleagues for fear it might affect my reputation or advancement.	1	2	3	4
h.	Colleagues in my department solicit my opinion about work-related matters (such as teaching, research, and service).	1	2	3	4
i.	In my department, I feel that my research is considered mainstream.	1	2	3	4
j.	I feel that my colleagues value my research.	1	2	3	4
k.	I have to work harder than my departmental colleagues to be perceived as a legitimate scholar.	1	2	3	4
l.	I do a great deal of work that is not formally recognized by my department.	1	2	3	4
m.	I feel like I "fit" in my department.	1	2	3	4
n.	I feel isolated in my department.	1	2	3	4
o.	I feel isolated on the UW campus overall.	1	2	3	4

## ***Institutional and Departmental Climate Change***

***If you were first hired at UW-Madison after January 2003, please go to items 35-36 on the next page.***

The UW-Madison is continually working to improve the working, teaching, and learning climate for all University employees and students. We are interested to know to the extent to which you have seen or experienced change in the following areas *in the past three years*.

32. Since January 2003, how has the climate changed, if at all, for the following individuals or areas? See item #21 for a definition of "climate."

Circle one number on a scale of 1 to 5 for each statement.	Significantly More Positive	Somewhat More Positive	Stayed The Same	Somewhat More Negative	Significantly More Negative	Don't Know	
	1	2	3	4	5		
a.	For me personally on campus	1	2	3	4	5	DK
b.	For me personally in my department	1	2	3	4	5	DK
c.	For other faculty in my department	1	2	3	4	5	DK
d.	For staff in my department	1	2	3	4	5	DK
e.	For women faculty on campus	1	2	3	4	5	DK
f.	For women staff on campus	1	2	3	4	5	DK
g.	For faculty of color on campus	1	2	3	4	5	DK
h.	For staff of color on campus	1	2	3	4	5	DK
i.	On the UW-Madison campus, overall	1	2	3	4	5	DK