

TRANSFORMATIONS

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EQUITY AND DIVERSITY FINDINGS FROM THE 2008 FACULTY WORK-LIFE SURVEY

In fall 2008, *AdvanceVT* conducted its second Faculty Work-Life Survey, following an initial survey in spring 2005. The purpose of both surveys was to assess faculty perceptions of overall job satisfaction and various attributes of the work environment at Virginia Tech.



In 2008, a total of 700 tenured and tenure-track faculty responded to the survey, a response rate of 53%. In 2005, 810 tenured and tenure-track faculty members responded to the survey, a response rate of 59%. Preliminary findings were presented at the January 12, 2009, Advancing Diversity conference co-sponsored by *AdvanceVT*. These findings can be found at [www.advance.vt.edu](http://www.advance.vt.edu). This newsletter focuses on findings related to perceptions of equity and diversity at Virginia Tech.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

A link to the online survey was sent via email to all full-time instructional and research faculty at Virginia Tech, with follow-up reminders over the next few weeks.

Most questions in the survey were answered on a 4-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, and 4 = strongly agree. Questions stated in the negative were reverse-coded so that a higher mean score always represents a more desirable response. Mean scores higher than 3.0 reflect generally positive perceptions (“somewhat agree” to “strongly agree”).

Groups of questions are combined to form “scales” representing constructs of interest regarding faculty work-life. Scales create more valid and reliable measures of topics of interest compared to using single questions. All scales in the survey demonstrated acceptable internal consistency reliability (Cronbach’s alpha greater than 0.70). Scale means from the 2005 and 2008 surveys were compared for statistical significance at the  $p \leq 0.05$  level using T-tests.

KEY FINDINGS: EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

- Women and African-Americans indicated improved perceptions of equity and diversity from 2005 to 2008.
- Women, African-Americans and Hispanics generally have less positive views about equity and diversity than men and Caucasian faculty.
- Women are more likely than men, and African-American and Hispanic faculty are more likely than Caucasian or Asian faculty, to report diversity related activities on their Faculty Activity Reports.

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# TRANSFORMATIONS

## PERCEPTIONS OF EQUITY AT VIRGINIA TECH

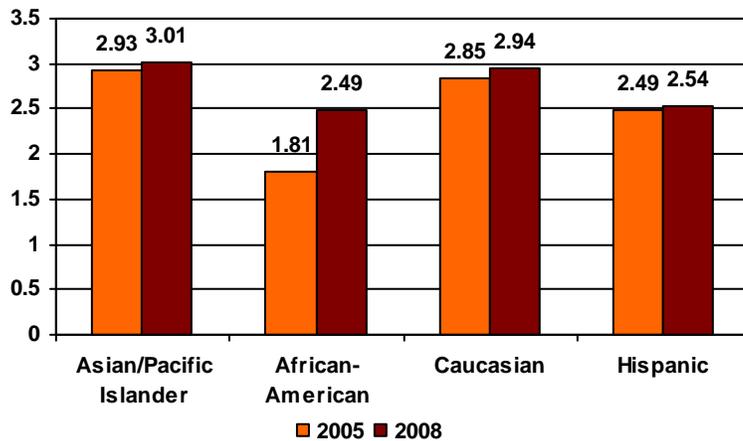
A “diversity scale” measured respondent perceptions about equity and fair treatment at Virginia Tech regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. Questions on the diversity scale included:

- *In general, the Virginia Tech campus is free of intimidation, harassment, and discrimination.*
- *Policies at Virginia Tech are generally applied in a uniform and equitable manner.*
- *I have read, heard and/or seen disparaging comments or materials in the workplace that were offensive to me.*
- *Faculty members are treated fairly at Virginia Tech regardless of their race or ethnicity/gender/sexual orientation. (three separate questions)*
- *Faculty members with disabilities are treated fairly at Virginia Tech.*
- *There is accountability at Virginia Tech for racist behavior.*
- *There is accountability at Virginia Tech for sexist behavior.*



Perceptions of equity at Virginia Tech, as measured by the diversity scale, showed a statistically significant improvement among African-American and Caucasian faculty members between 2005 and 2008. However, the continuing difference in perceptions between Asian and Caucasian faculty compared with African-American and Hispanic faculty indicates that efforts to improve equity and inclusion need ongoing attention if progress is to continue.

**Diversity Scale Scores**



*“Virginia Tech speaks nicely about issues of race and “diversity”, but in reality this is still a very white campus, influenced by white ethos, and quite uncomfortable for minorities”.*

*- 2008 survey respondent*

*“While much progress has been made, more is before us.”*

*- 2008 survey respondent*

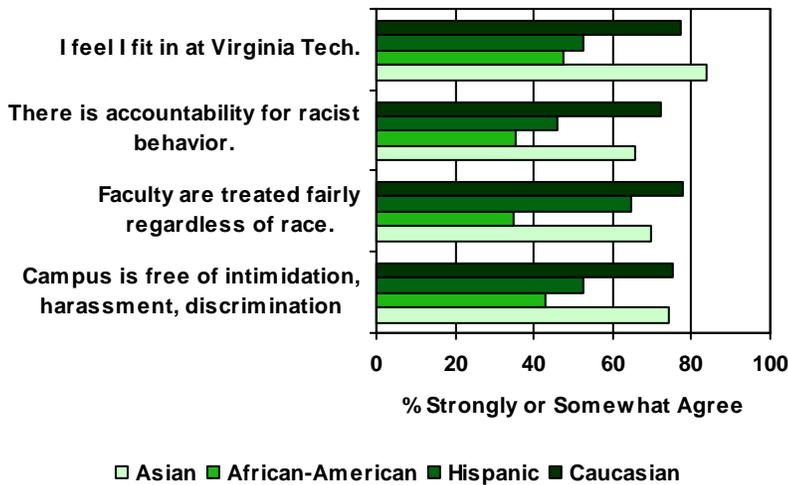
## DEPARTMENT CLIMATE, DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP, WORK-LIFE BALANCE, JOB SATISFACTION

Other scales measured faculty perceptions of department climate, department leadership, work-life balance, and job satisfaction. Perceptions of department climate, department leadership, and work-life balance showed no statistically significant change from 2005 to 2008. In 2008, there were no significant differences in perceptions between Caucasian faculty and Asian/Pacific Islander faculty on any of the scales. There were no significant differences in perceptions of department climate and department leadership between Caucasian and African-American faculty. Hispanic faculty had significantly more negative perceptions than Caucasian faculty on all of the scales, and African-American faculty had significantly more negative perceptions than Caucasian faculty of work-life balance and overall job satisfaction.

KEY DIFFERENCES BY GENDER AND ETHNICITY

While perceptions of equity and fair treatment among African-American faculty improved significantly between 2005 and 2008, African-American and Hispanic faculty are still much less likely than Caucasian and Asian faculty to agree that faculty are treated fairly regardless of race or that there is accountability for racist behavior at Virginia Tech.

2008 Survey Responses by Ethnicity



African-American and Hispanic faculty are significantly less satisfied with their jobs at Virginia Tech (66.7% somewhat or very satisfied for African-American faculty; 52.6% for Hispanics; 79.1% for Caucasians; and 78.7% for Asians) and almost twice as likely to leave in the next two years as Caucasian or Asian faculty (70% for African-American and Hispanic faculty vs. 35% for Caucasian and 37% for Asian faculty).

*“Gender and race discrimination is still fairly prevalent at Virginia Tech.”*

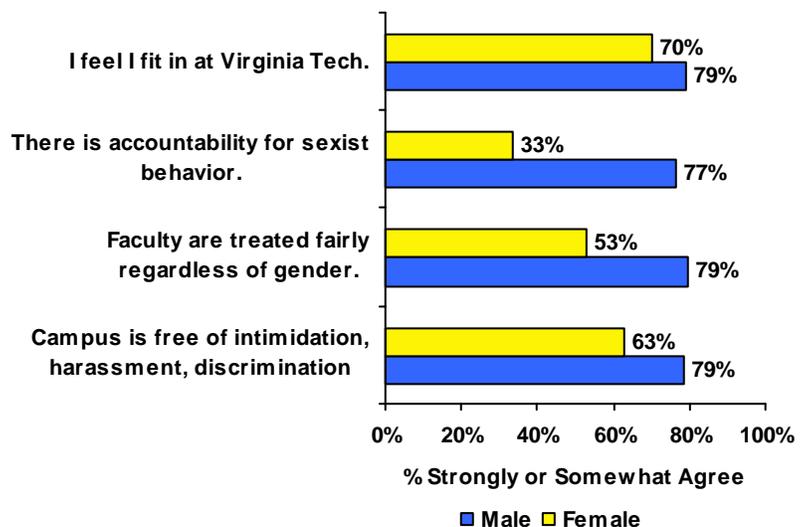
- 2008 survey respondent

In spite of the concerns expressed above, faculty of all ethnicities agree that Virginia Tech is a good place to work (87.6% of Caucasian

faculty, 87.7% of Asians, 90.5% of African-Americans, and 84.2% of Hispanics) and that they personally are treated with respect at Virginia Tech (82.6% of Caucasian faculty, 83.1% of Asians, 90.5% of African-Americans, and 61.1% of Hispanics). Likewise, faculty of all ethnicities agree that their department is a good place to work (81.6% of Caucasians, 87.7% of Asians, 85.7% of African-Americans, and 78.9% of Hispanics) and that they are treated with respect by other faculty members in their department (83.0% of Caucasians, 90.5% of Asians, 76.2% of African Americans, and 63.2% of Hispanics). (Differences on these items are not statistically significant.)

Survey responses also showed significant differences by gender in many areas. Male faculty members reported significantly more positive perceptions of department climate, department leadership, work-life balance, equity and diversity, and overall job satisfaction than female faculty members. Women are much less likely than men to agree that faculty members are treated fairly regardless of gender, and that there is accountability for sexist behavior at Virginia Tech. Only 56.8% of women agree that policies at Virginia Tech are generally applied in a fair and equitable manner, compared with 72.2% of men. Almost half of the female respondents (49.5%) have read, heard, and/or seen insensitive or disparaging comments or materials in the workplace that were offensive, compared with only a quarter (26.4%) of the male respondents.

2008 Survey Responses by Gender



## FACULTY CONTRIBUTIONS TO DIVERSITY

The 2008 Faculty Work-Life Survey asked respondents about their diversity related activities. Overall, 80% of tenure-track respondents somewhat or strongly agreed with the statement “I have participated in activities that promote diversity at Virginia Tech in the past year.” Women were significantly more likely than men to say that they participated in activities that promote diversity (90% of women vs. 75% of men), and African-American and Hispanic faculty are more likely than Caucasian faculty, with Asian faculty least likely to participate in diversity related activities (95% of African-American, 83% of Hispanic, 80% of Caucasian, and 72% of Asian faculty).

Faculty at Virginia Tech are asked to report on diversity related activities in their annual Faculty Activity Report (FAR). Overall, 69% of tenure-track respondents indicated that they reported at least one contribution to diversity on their FAR in 2007-08. Reported contributions to diversity varied by ethnicity, with African-American faculty most likely to report such contributions (95%), followed by Hispanic faculty (84%), Caucasian faculty (68%), and Asian faculty (64%). Women (87%) were more likely than men (61%) to report contributions to diversity.

Survey respondents expressed differing opinions about the value of diversity related activities.

*“Efforts made towards increasing diversity are not rewarded.”*

*- 2008 survey respondent*

*“Service activities related to diversity should not be valued in tenure and promotion.”*

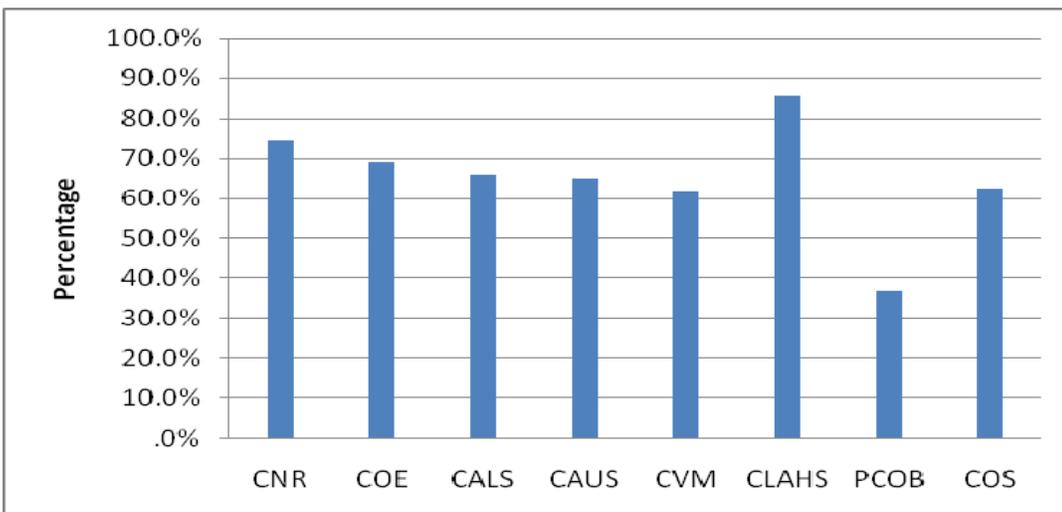
*- 2008 survey respondent*

*“Deans and department heads really need to get engaged and reward faculty who make strong contributions to diversity.”*

*- 2008 survey respondent*

The percentage of faculty reporting at least one contribution to diversity on their FAR also varied by college, as shown below.

**Percent of Faculty Reporting at Least One Diversity Contribution in their Faculty Activity Report in 2008, by college.**



CNR: College of Natural Resources  
 COE: College of Engineering  
 CALS: College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
 CAUS: College of Architecture and Urban Studies  
 CVM: College of Veterinary Medicine  
 CLAHS: College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences  
 PCOB: Pamplin College of Business  
 COS: College of Science

*AdvanceVT* is a comprehensive program to promote and enhance the careers of women in academic science and engineering at Virginia Tech through institutional transformation.

Elements of *AdvanceVT* include:

**Pipeline:** Advancing Women into Faculty Careers

**Recruitment:** Increasing the Representation of Women

**Leadership:** Empowering Women as Leaders and Scholars

**Institutional Change:** Updating Policies and Changing Culture

Go to

[www.advance.vt.edu](http://www.advance.vt.edu) to learn more about the initiative.