

Successful Strategies to Promote Department Climate

AdvanceVT Department Climate Initiative
AdvanceVT Workshop, January 9, 2007

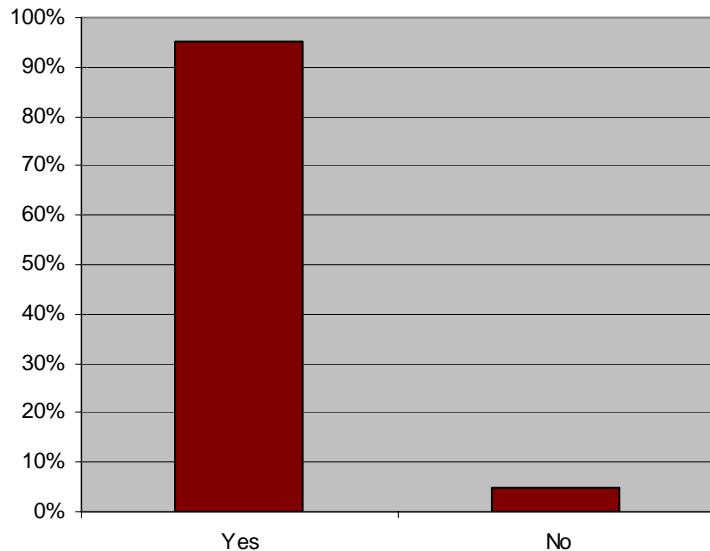
The AdvanceVT Department Climate Committee:

Jack Finney (College of Science), Carla Finkelstein (Biological Sciences),
Joe Merola (Chemistry), Ishwar Puri (Engineering Science and Mechanics)
and Eileen Van Aken (Industrial and Systems Engineering)

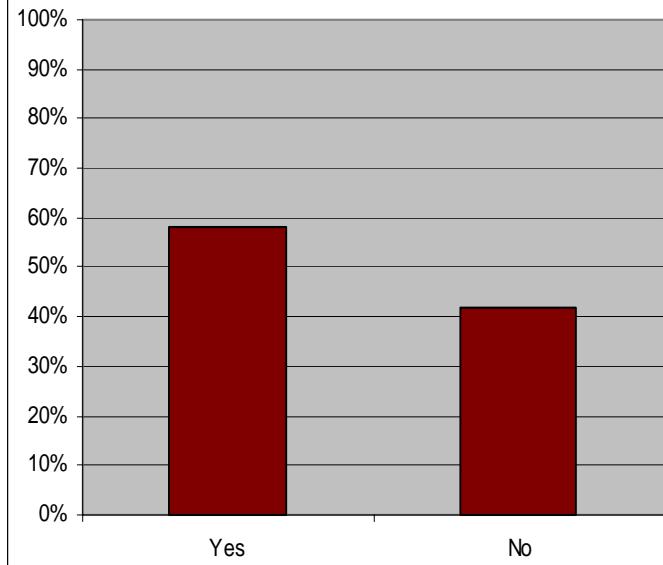
The AdvanceVT Department Climate Committee surveyed the heads and chairs from the Colleges of Engineering and Science about successful strategies used to promote department climate. Selected results from the survey, completed in December 2006, are summarized in this document.

Annual Evaluations and Reviews

Do you provide a written evaluation?



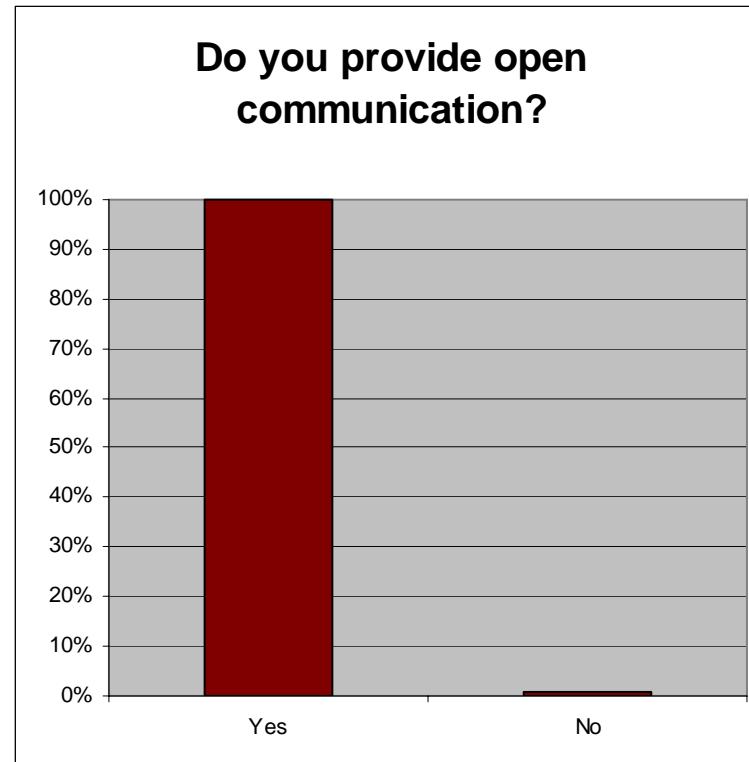
Do you have an annual meeting with every faculty member?



Annual Evaluations and Reviews

- “I (the department head) have an hour-long meeting with each faculty member and we cover a self-evaluation by the faculty member, comments from the department head, discussion of future plans, and discussion of the state of the department.”
- “My written evaluation includes an invitation to meet; some faculty meet and others do not. Some faculty just don’t want to meet one-on-one.”
- “I have a mandatory annual meeting with every non-tenured tenure-track faculty member to discuss their evaluations and progress toward promotion and tenure.”

Do you provide open communication about department processes and decision-making?



Describe ways you communicate with faculty.

Regular faculty meetings

Hallway discussions

Listserv messages/E-mails

Memos

“From the Chair” newsletters

Meeting with each faculty member in his/her lab

Monthly briefings with the Executive Committee

One-on-one and small group meetings

Lunches

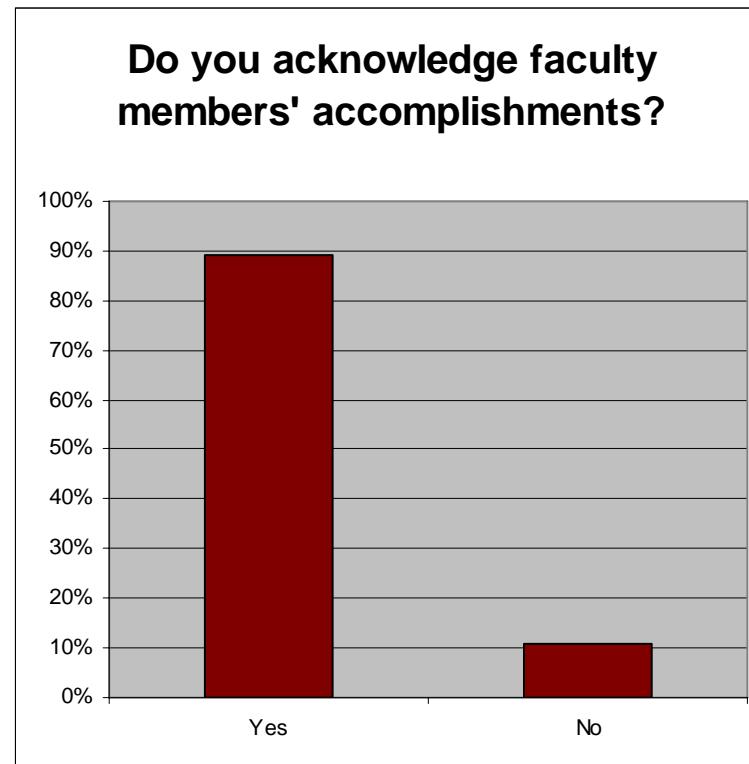
Social events

Open and closed (confidential) door meetings

Faculty retreat the week before fall semester begins

Day-long meeting at end of each semester

Do you acknowledge faculty members' accomplishments?



How do you recognize accomplishments?

E-mails

Web postings

Good News e-mail

Departmental newsletter two times per year

Personal congratulations

COS public relations team notified

“Good News” messages, but only for really major accomplishments

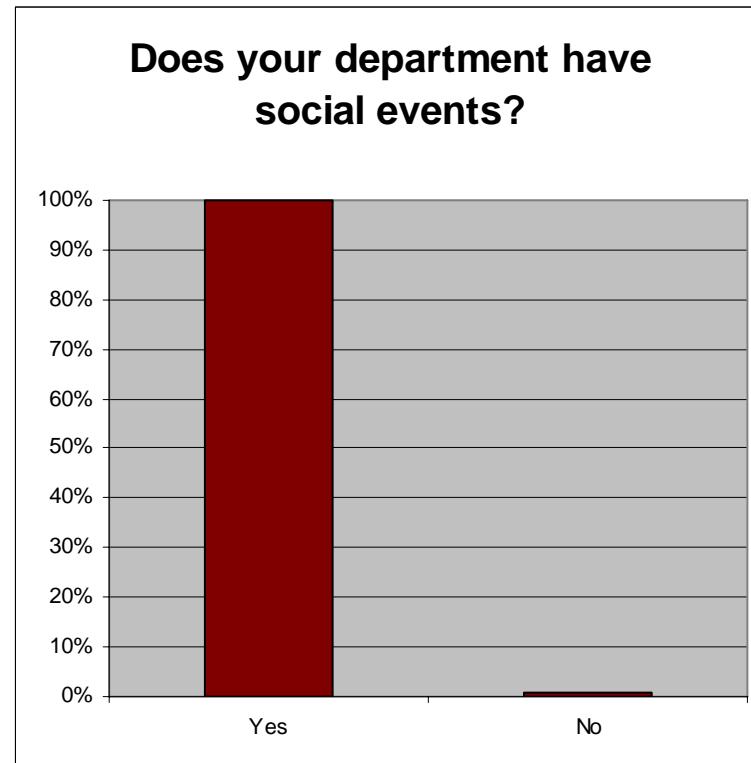
Annual awards ceremony

Faculty meeting announcements

Presentations in which I feature faculty accomplishments

TV monitor in the lobby with rolling announcements

Does your department have social events to promote a sense of community?



Social events to promote community.

Holiday Brunch in December

Annual Awards Brunch in April

Corporate Partners Dinner

Receptions for faculty recruitment

Receptions/dinners with Advisory Board

Fall graduate student/faculty picnic

Winter banquet

Christmas party

Potluck luncheons

Parties at the chair's house

Graduate student welcome party at swim club

Catered luncheons to acknowledge departures of staff and faculty

Commencement lunch for faculty, graduate students and their families

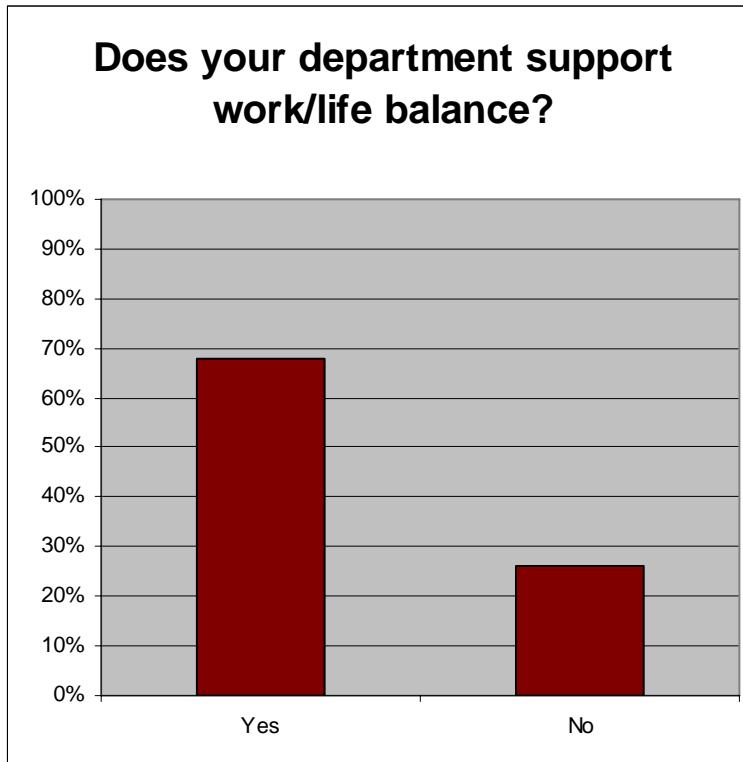
Sports teams

“Iron Chef” competitions (assistant profs vs. associate profs; asso. vs. fulls)

We don't do enough of this.

We need to do more of these things.

Does your department support a balance between work and family/personal responsibilities?



Work/Life balance practices.

Release time for illness

Flexible work times at home

Stop-the-clock process for childbirth

Meetings do not occur beyond 5:00

Faculty meetings in the middle of the day

Avoid early morning meetings

Assign teaching times to coordinate with parenting responsibilities

Coordinate couple teaching times so they are not in class at the same time

We emphasize that family comes first

We emphasize the need for work/life balance via mentoring program

We follow all university practices, but have no unique ones

We try.