Improving Departmental Climate

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A Little About My Background

- Director of Research an Assessment for *AdvanceVT*, a "second round" institution.

- Faculty work-lives is my area of expertise.

- My interest in women in SET has grown over the courses of three NSF-funded projects.
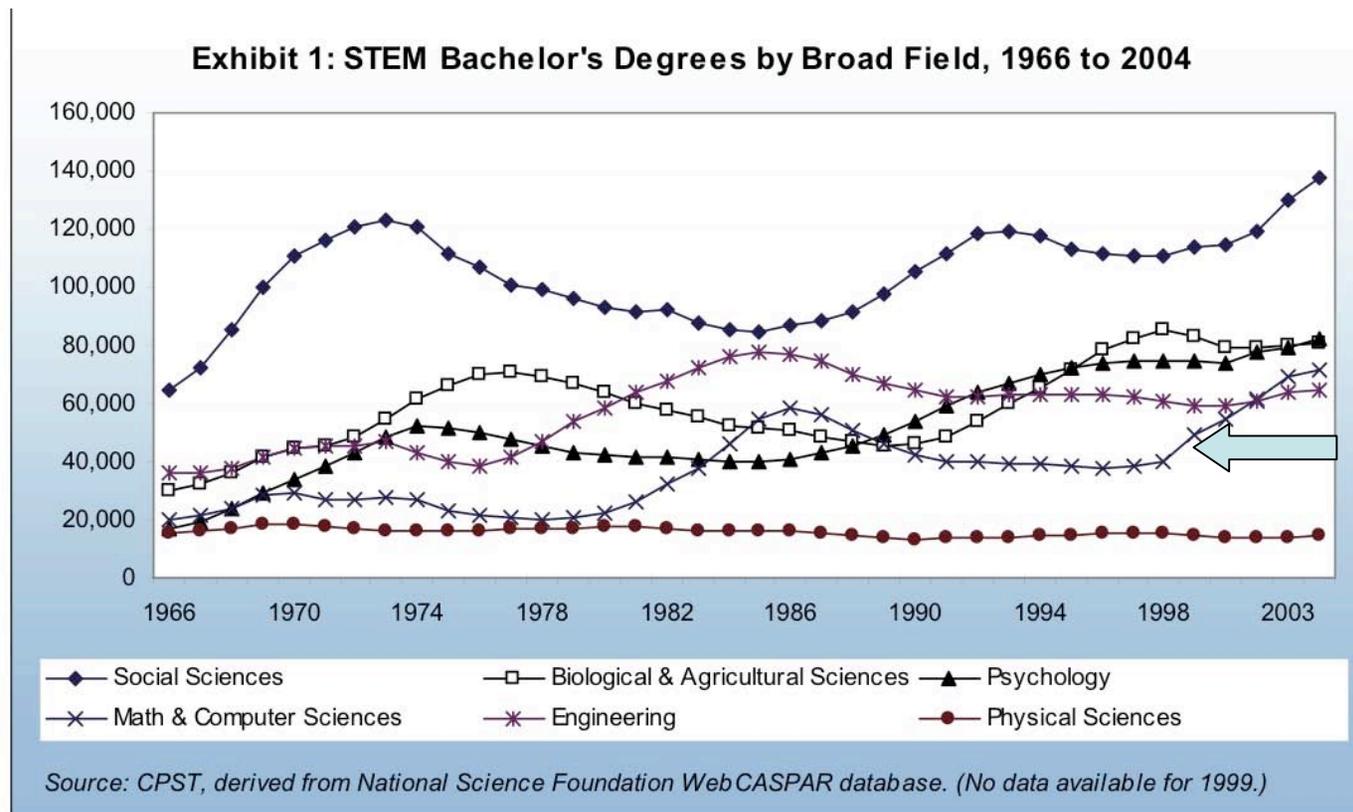
2003 Faculty VT Cohort Study

- Three Key findings from Year 1-3:

  1. Concern about the ambiguity about the expectations for tenure and promotion dissipate with concrete feedback about performance.

  2. Work-life and dual career issues do not go away.

  3. Supervising students or managing a research team is the number one challenge for faculty in engineering.

Why the Concern about Female Faculty in Science and Engineering?

- Women with STEM degrees LEAVE the science and engineering work-force at one-and-a-half to two times the rate of their male counterparts (Clewell & Campbell, 2002).

- Family characteristics (e.g. young children) account for a good deal of the absence of women from the faculty pipeline, but they do not account completely for why women leave tenure track positions prior to earning tenure at nearly twice that rate of men (Mason & Goulden, 2004).

Changes in Enrollments in STEM Fields

Exhibit 1: STEM Bachelor's Degrees by Broad Field, 1966 to 2004

Legend: Social Sciences; Biological & Agricultural Sciences; Psychology; Math & Computer Sciences; Engineering; Physical Sciences

Source: CPST, derived from National Science Foundation WebCASPAR database. (No data available for 1999.)

Overview of the Presentation

1. What is climate?

2. How is climate measured?

3. What are key indicators of climate change?

4. What have we learned from ADVANCE about improving departmental climate?

5. What role do department heads play in climate change?

What is climate?

- It is both local (e.g. lab and department) and institutional, bt the departmental has a much stronger effect on job satisfaction.

- It includes:
  - Formal policies
  - Informal practices
  - Attitudes

Why is departmental climate important?

- It is a key part of institutional transformation, the goal of ADVANCE. It is directly linked to;
  - Overall faculty job satisfaction which is linked to productivity.
  - "Global Job Satisfaction"
  - Retention.

Climate is Perceived Differently

- Women and under-represented faculty members almost always have significantly less positive views about the climate.

- For example, pre-tenure female faculty members completing COACHE reported less clarity about the criteria and process than did male respondents.

At all institutions, women say they are less clear about tenure policies.

COACHE 2007 Data: Mean Tenure Clarity, by Gender (N=6733 at 77 institutions)

Clarity of tenure...	All Faculty	Gender	
		Female Faculty	Male Faculty
process	3.67	3.63**	3.71
criteria	3.57	3.55	3.59
standards	3.23	3.20*	3.26
Body of evidence	3.49	3.44***	3.53

1=very unclear; 5=very clear. ***p<.001, **pp<.01, *p<.05

How is climate measured?

- Attitudes about
    - Collegiality
    - Sense of "fit"
    - Clarity and use of policies.
    - Satisfaction with alignment of work and family or personal responsibilities.

How would you know if climate has changed?

- Implementation and use of new policies at the institution level.
- Visible support for change from top leaders.
- Establishment of new organizational structures (e.g. positions, offices).
- Changes in attitudes, particularly greater appreciation for the contribution of diversity to innovation.
- Changes in practices at the departmental level.

What Have We Learned About Climate?

# What Have we Learned about Policies?

- Work-life issues are a key area of policy change.
  - Policies that provide flexibility to manage work-life pressures are critical.
  - Dual-career issues are an issues for the majority of faculty members in all disciplines.
  - Work-life issues are a concern for men too.

There is a real generational shift among about men about work-life priorities.*

- National study of 1008 men and women, ages 21-65.
- 85% of women and 82% of men ages 20-39 put family as #1 on their list of important job characteristics. This is a big generational shift.
- 71% of men ages 21-39 said they would give up pay for more family time.

*Harvard University Gazette (May, 2004).

Positive views about work-life integration increases overall job satisfaction for both men and women.

Dept. Climate

Family Characteristics

POSITIVE WORK-LIFE TENSIONS
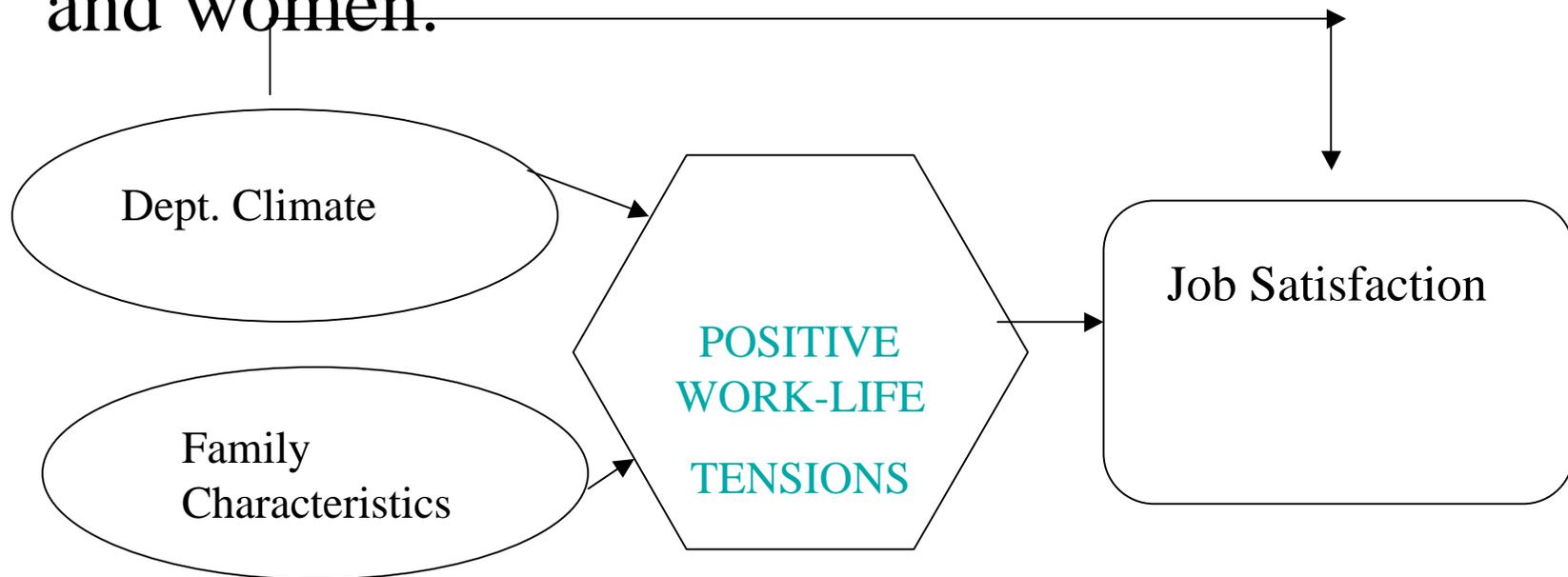
Job Satisfaction

*Amelink, C. T., & Creamer, E. G. (in press).

Work-life Balance Often Has a Positive Impact on Satisfaction and Productivity.

"Since my wife and I had a baby, I've changed the way I use my time. I have to be more careful about my time. It's helped me to be more focused. I don't waste as much time as I used to. It limits how much time I am willing to devote to work." (Male, EE, Pre-tenure, January 2008)

Critical Work-Life Policies and Structures

- Work-Life Policies that Offer Flexibility
  - Stop-the-Clock
  - Modified Duties
  - Opportunity for part-time post-tenure
- Dual Career Office and information on web sites visited by candidates for faculty positions.
- Documentation of tenure policies.

Perceptions about *Collegiality* are Shaped by Informal Practices in the Department.

Mentoring

Supports for collaboration

Support for having a life outside of work

Equitable treatment

Respect for expertise

Opportunity for input

Support for Interdisciplinary Collaboration

- Requires a climate and reward structure the promotes *self-authorship*, or a combination of individual agency and interdependence.

- Self-authorship (see Wabash Study of Liberal Arts) is about complex ways of thinking, seeing oneself, and relating to others. (http://www.soe.umich.edu/liberalartstudy/)

Kegan et al., 2001.

Diversity is Important to Everyone's Perceptions of Collegiality*
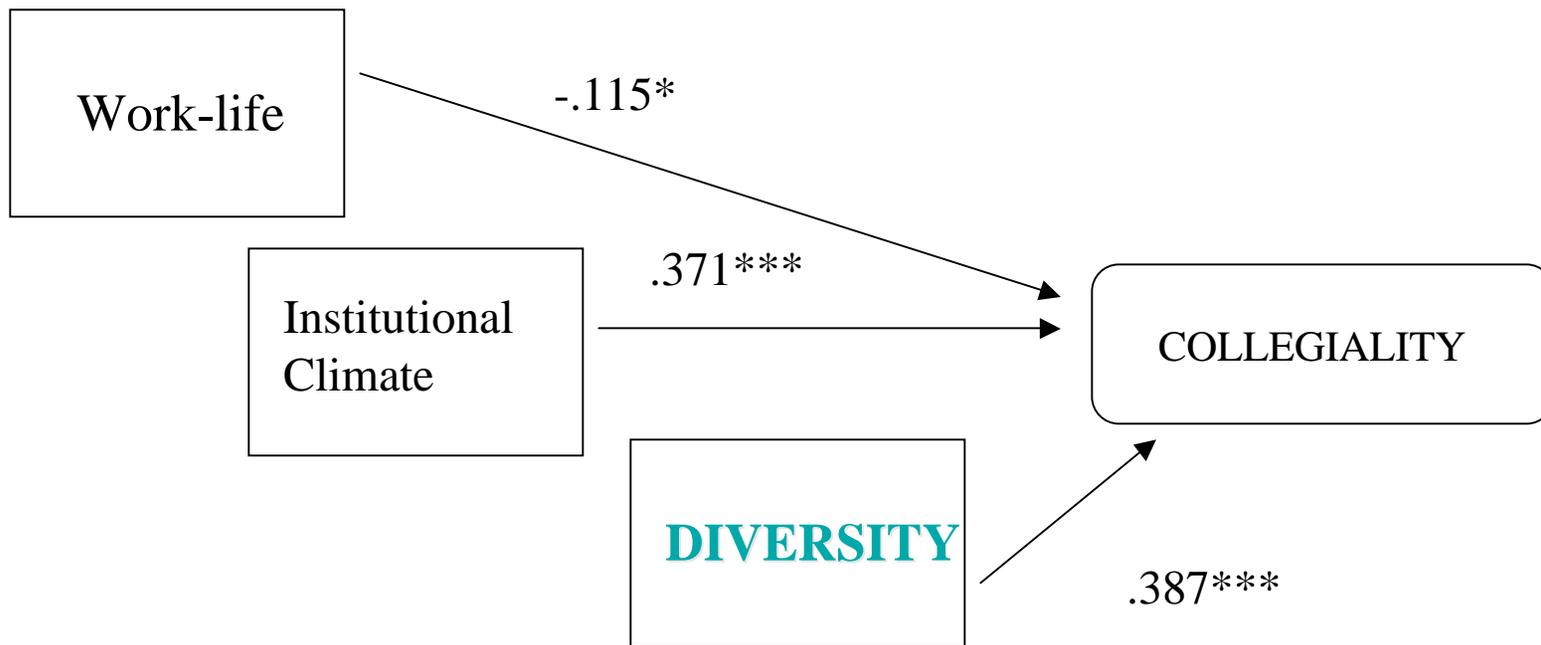
*Saddler, T. S., & Creamer, E. G. (2007).

What have we Learned about Other Practices in the Department?

- Frequent feedback about performance….
    - reduces concerns about the clarity tenure policies; and
    - Eases women's concern that there are hidden penalties for having and caring for children.

*Creamer, E. G., Saddler, T. S., & Layne, M.A. (2008)

Departmental Practices- Mentoring

- Part of perceptions about *collegiality*.

- Pre-tenure faculty want senior faculty to seek them out (COACHE).

- The nature of the relationship shifts over time (VT Cohort Study).

What are other practices that improve the climate for women?

- Collegiality is ranked higher by women in departments where
  - Meetings are not held after the normal public school day.
  - There are positive stories about previous experiences with dual hires.
  - Stop-the-Clock is *automatic* (don't have to ask or apply) with money for hire-behinds.
  - Faculty feel free to talk about families.

SUMMARY: Roles of the Department Head-Formal Policies

- Knowledge and communication about current policies.

- Equitable application of policies.

- Clarity of expectations.

- Scheduling of meetings.

Role of the Department Head - Practices

- Promoting collegiality by
  - Facilitating collaboration.
  - Promoting diversity on the faculty through recruiting.
  - Intervening when racist or sexist comments are made.
  - Facilitating mentoring.
  - Intervening when conflict occurs among faculty.