

Faculty Work-Life Survey Data Report

Faculty Leadership Issues



The *AdvanceVT* Faculty Work-Life Survey, distributed to all teaching and research faculty in January 2005, addressed, among other things, leadership issues at Virginia Tech. This report presents findings from tenured and tenure-track faculty members (N=816) about items on the questionnaire related to leadership including: aspirations of Virginia Tech faculty members towards leadership positions, their views about the possibility of maintaining a balance between leadership and other responsibilities, trust and confidence in departmental and university leaders, perceptions about the representation of women and minorities in leadership roles, and departmental support for women and minorities.

Survey Demographics

Responses to the *AdvanceVT* Faculty Work-Life Survey were received from 1,209 teaching and research faculty. This is a 59.8% response rate. Respondents are representative of the population of teaching and research faculty at Virginia Tech:

- 32% female (n=388) and 68% male (n=821)
- 67% tenured or tenure track (n=816) and 32% non-tenure track (n=393)
- Most (93%, n=1129) are from the Blacksburg campus.
- 86% Caucasian (n=1043), 9% Asian/Pacific Islander (n=106), 2% Black (n=28), 2% Hispanic (n=29), 1% other (n=3)
- From each college: Agriculture & Life Sciences (n=205), Architecture & Urban Studies (n=66), Business (n=63), Engineering (n=206), Liberal Arts & Human Sciences (n=274), Natural Resources (n=70), Science (n=181), Veterinary Medicine (n=61), and Administrative/Other (n=83)

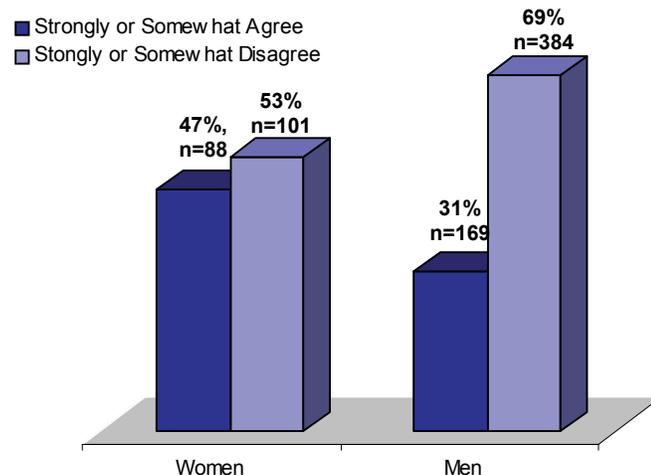
Eight-hundred and sixteen (816) tenured and tenured track faculty completed the questionnaire (599 men, 217 women; 718 Caucasians, 98 Non-Caucasian). Because of the small sample sizes, all minorities were grouped into a single category.

Additional information about the demographic characteristics and statistical procedures used to conduct the analysis appear on the *AdvanceVT website* (www.advance.vt.edu). This includes a breakdown of the gender of respondents by college and a comparison of the demographic characteristics of respondents with those of Virginia Tech as a whole.

Interest in Leadership

There are significant differences by gender in the (a) expression of interest in a leadership position at Virginia Tech and (b) interest in leadership development opportunities. Of those responding to the question (n=742), significantly more tenured and tenure-track faculty women than men expressed an interest in a leadership position at Virginia Tech beyond their current position, such as a department chair, center director, or dean (women, 47% of 189; men, 31% of 553). Similarly, significantly more female than male respondents expressed an interest in opportunities to develop leadership skills (women, 77% of 194; men, 55% of 563). Non-Caucasians (all minorities) expressed significantly more interest (76% of 87) than Caucasians (59% of 670) in opportunities to develop leadership skills.

Figure 1: Percentage of tenured and tenure track respondents who strongly or somewhat agreed that they aspire to a leadership position beyond their current position, by gender. (n=742)



"I share the viewpoint of many of my female colleagues that leadership would be more appealing if there were better representation of women in those positions. I would like to see that happen at Virginia Tech."

*Female Faculty Member
Leadership Program Participant March, 2005*

Interest in leadership positions is probably affected by perceptions of the availability of leadership opportunities. Slightly fewer women (56% of 180) than men (60%, of 529) somewhat or strongly agreed that significant leadership opportunities are available to them at Virginia Tech. Differences were not significant on this item by gender or ethnicity.

Balancing Leadership and Other Responsibilities

For faculty members, interest in leadership positions is probably influenced to some extent by perceptions about the ability to maintain an active research agenda and a concern about the impact on family and other work-life issues.

Only a small percentage of faculty respondents perceive that it is possible to hold a leadership position at Virginia Tech while maintaining an active research agenda (women, 18% of 183; men, 24% of 551) (see Figure 2). Differences by gender and ethnicity are not significant.

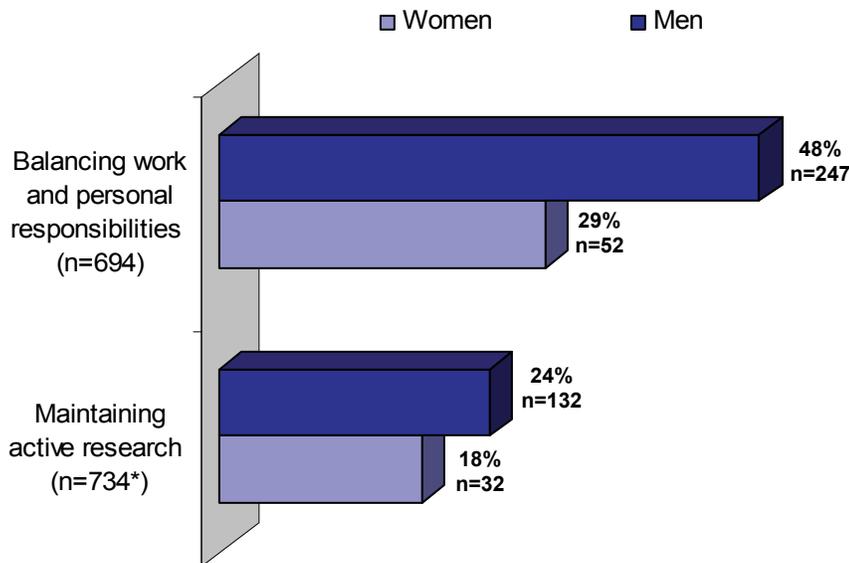
Concern about the ability to hold a leadership position and balance work and personal responsibilities is a second reason that may deter faculty members from considering a leadership position.

Women have significantly greater reservations than men about the possibility of holding a leadership position at Virginia Tech and maintaining a balance with work and personal responsibilities. Male respondents (48% of 515) were significantly more likely than female respondents (29% of 179) to somewhat or strongly agree that it is possible to hold a leadership position at Virginia Tech and balance work and personal responsibilities.

"There are some leadership roles that I'm interested in, but I am really active in research right now and have to see how that plays out first."

*Female Faculty Member,
March, 2004
Associate Faculty Interviews*

Figure 2: Percentage of tenured and tenure track men and women who strongly or somewhat agreed that it is possible to hold a leadership position at Virginia Tech while maintaining an active research agenda or balancing work and personal responsibilities.



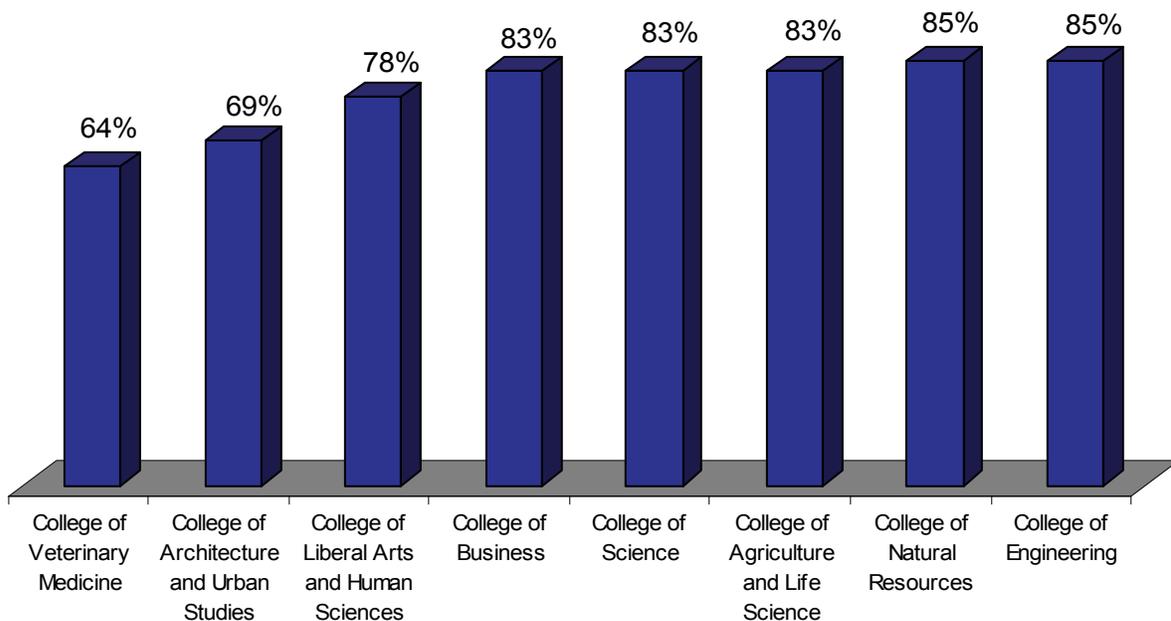
*not significantly different

Trust and Confidence in Leadership at Virginia Tech

The majority of respondents expressed trust in the leadership in their department and the belief that there are administrators at Virginia Tech who model effective leadership. Most respondents (80% of 788) strongly or somewhat agreed that the leadership in their department can be trusted. Differences by gender and ethnicity are not significant. Faculty women (83% of 184) were significantly more likely than men (72% of 529) to somewhat or strongly agree with the statement "There are administrators at Virginia Tech who model effective leadership."

A lower percentage of tenured and tenure track respondents (42% of 786) somewhat or strongly agreed that they have confidence in the university's leadership overall. Differences are not significant by gender or ethnicity.

Figure 3: Percentage of tenured and tenure track respondents who strongly or somewhat agreed that the leadership in their department can be trusted, by college. (n=788)



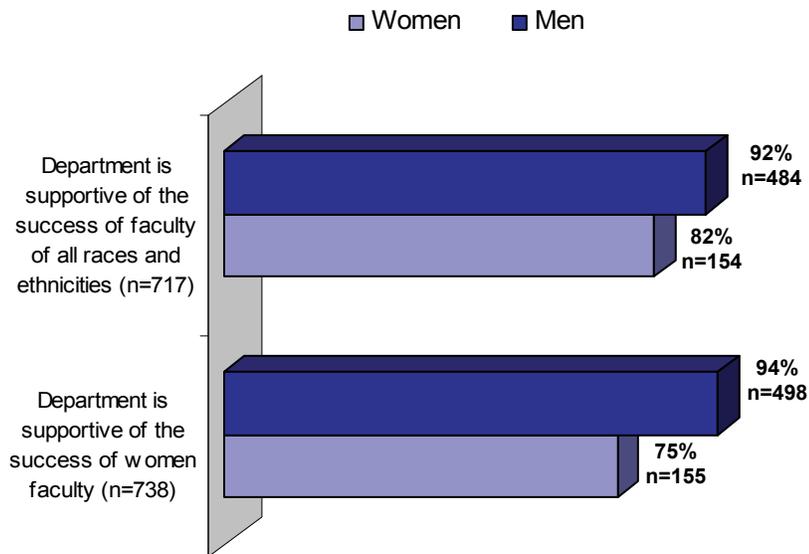
Representation of Women and Minorities in Leadership Positions

As has been found in national faculty surveys, women and minorities generally express significantly more concern than men about the representation of women and minorities among the faculty and in senior administrative positions and other diversity-related issues. Significantly more women (90% of 204) than men (59% of 532) somewhat or strongly agreed that there are too few women and minorities in leadership positions at Virginia Tech. Minority respondents were significantly more likely than majority respondents to agree that there are too few women and minorities in leadership positions at Virginia Tech. Similarly, significantly fewer female than male respondents agreed that faculty members are treated fairly regardless of gender (women, 40% of 198; men, 78% of 524), race (women, 50% of 181; men, 81% of 527), or sexual orientation (women, 40% of 198; men, 78% of 524). While not an uncommon finding in climate studies conducted in other settings, the huge gender gap in perceptions of fairness in matters related to diversity points to the need to include men in diversity initiatives.

"Institutional transformation will occur at Virginia Tech as more women and under-represented minorities enter visible leadership positions on and off campus. However, individual faculty are only going to be motivated to take on this challenge if they feel that the benefits outweigh the burden and risk to them and their careers."

*Female Faculty Member
Leadership Program Participant
March 2005*

Figure 4: Percentage of tenured and tenure track women and men who strongly or somewhat agreed that their department is supportive of the success of faculty of all races and ethnicities and women faculty.



Faculty appear to have largely positive views about their department's commitment to diversity. Despite the concern for under-representation of women and minorities in leadership positions, most respondents perceived that there is support for the success of women and minority faculty in their department. Significantly more men (94% of 531) than women (75% of 207) agreed that their department is supportive of the success of women faculty and of minorities (women, 82% of 188; men, 92% of 529) (see Figure 4).

Perceptions do not always match reality. Despite the relatively low representation of women holding distinguished professorships and chairs (4 of 100 endowed professorships and chairs are women; 4 of 20 distinguished professors are women), the majority of faculty (women, 65% of 179; men, 83% of 485) believe that women and minorities are well-represented among those in their department who are nominated for awards and honors. Differences are significant with fewer women than men agreeing with this statement.

Institutional Transformation Through Leadership

Despite strong reservations, particularly in regard to the ability to balance work and personal responsibilities, female faculty members responding to the *AdvanceVT* Work-Life Survey expressed greater interest than male respondents in a leadership position at Virginia Tech and in opportunities to develop leadership skills. Similarly, minority respondents expressed significantly more interest than majority respondents in opportunities to develop leadership skills. The relatively high levels of interest expressed by women and minority faculty at Virginia Tech offers a unique opportunity to effect institutional transformation by expanding the diversity of perspectives brought to the table on important institutional decisions about policy and practice. Institutional transformation is further advanced when the representation of women and minorities achieves a level of visibility that communicates positive messages about institutional climate to potential faculty, staff, and graduate students.

AdvanceVT's Leadership Development Program

AdvanceVT addresses the empowerment of women and minorities as leaders and scholars by the creation of a leadership work group within the sub-structure of the organization. The mission and activities of this group incorporate:

- Leadership training for women and minorities.
- University-wide awareness of the representation of women and minorities in leadership positions.
- Financial support for women leaders visiting campus.
- Mentoring for women and minority faculty who might be considering leadership positions in the future.

For more information about *AdvanceVT's* leadership programs contact Dr. Roseanne Foti, Associate Professor, Psychology (rfoti@vt.edu) or Dr. Karen Thole, Professor, Mechanical Engineering (thole@vt.edu).