

# Faculty Work-Life Survey Data Report

## Faculty Recruitment Issues



One of the primary goals of *AdvanceVT* is to increase the representation of women and minority faculty at all ranks in the sciences and engineering. Responses to the *AdvanceVT* Faculty Work-Life Survey, distributed to all research and teaching faculty in early spring 2005, included questions about the importance of recruiting women and minorities to faculty positions, the effectiveness of recruiting practices, and the contribution of spousal hiring to recruitment. There was also a behavioral measure as respondents who had served on a search committee in the last two years indicated if they had engaged in practices that are associated with diversifying the faculty.

### 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)

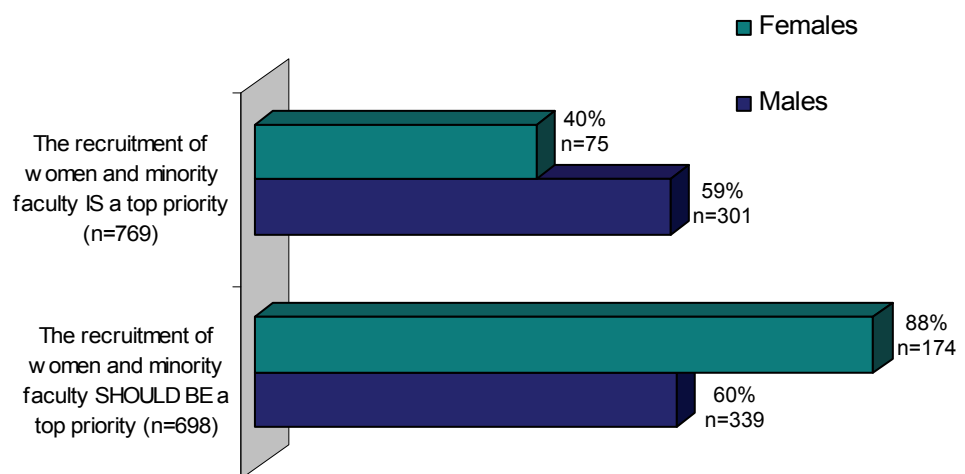
See the *AdvanceVT* website ([www.advance.vt.edu](http://www.advance.vt.edu)) for breakdown of the gender of respondents by college.

\*A majority of the data used in this report focuses on tenured and tenure track faculty respondents (n=816). Differences discussed in this report are statistically significant unless otherwise indicated.

### Importance of Recruiting Women and Minorities by Gender

There is a sizable gap between tenured and tenure track men and women about the importance given to the recruitment of a more diverse workforce and the current reality of diversity recruitment. As has been found on other national studies of faculty, women were significantly more likely than men to agree that recruiting of women and minorities should be a top priority. Similarly, female respondents were less likely than male respondents to agree with the assertion that recruitment of women and minorities is a top priority at Virginia Tech (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: The percentage of tenured and tenure track males and females who strongly or somewhat agreed that the recruitment of women and minority faculty IS and SHOULD BE a top priority at Virginia Tech.**



*“It did help (my decision to accept a position at Virginia Tech) that there are two other women in my department. That played a big role actually, because at the other schools I interviewed at, I would’ve been the first and only woman.”*

*Female, Engineering,  
New Faculty Interviews, Fall 2004*

Not surprisingly, there is a greater concern about the recruitment of women and minorities among faculty in the colleges of science and engineering where the representation of women on the faculty, as in the disciplines, has historically been low. Ninety percent of tenured and tenure track women in the College of Science and the College of Engineering agreed that the recruitment of women and minority faculty should be a top priority at Virginia Tech. Women respondents from these two colleges ranked significantly higher on this item than all other colleges at Virginia Tech.

### Search Committee Practices

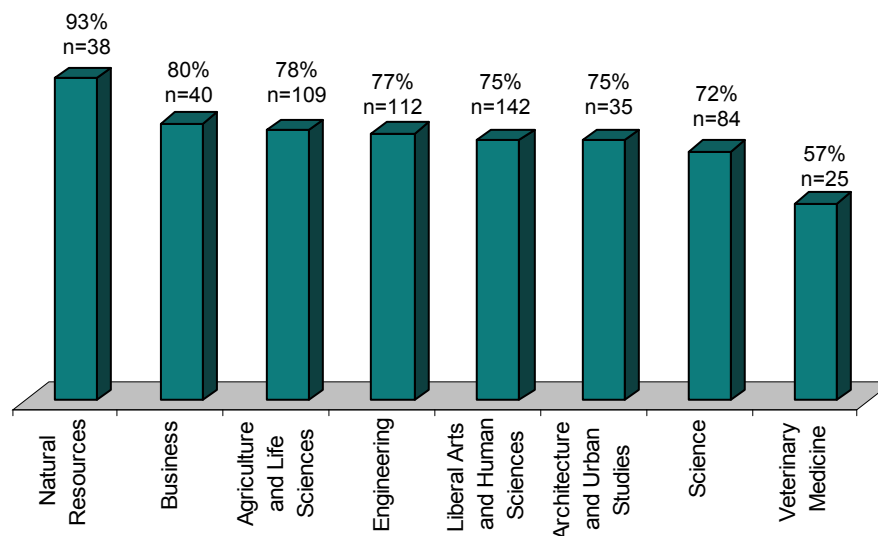
Sixty-eight percent of tenured or tenure track respondents reported they have served as a member of a search committee for a faculty or administrative position at some point during the last two years (n=546). Slightly less than half of the faculty members responding who had served on a search committee in the last two years had completed one or more of the activities that have been found to enhance diversity. The table below shows what percentage of the faculty respondents who had served on a search committee in the last two years had engaged in activities associated with diversifying the faculty:

Contacted a colleague outside of Virginia Tech asking for nominations	89%	n=403
Contacted a colleague outside of Virginia Tech for help identifying women and minority candidates	55%	n=249
Identified a woman or minority candidate to apply for the position at a conference or in another professional setting	47%	n=213
Encouraged a woman or minority candidate to apply	47%	n=306
Invited a woman or minority candidate to give a talk as a pre-recruitment effort	23%	n=104
Asked to meet women or minority doctoral students or postdocs when visiting other campuses	15%	n=68

### Effectiveness of Recruiting by College

The majority of tenured and tenure track respondents (81%) reported that the process used to hire faculty at Virginia Tech is conducted fairly. Significantly more men (83%) than women (76%) agreed that the hiring process is conducted fairly. About two-thirds of respondents, overall, agreed that the process of hiring new faculty was managed effectively in their department (see Figure 2). A majority (83%) of tenured and tenure track faculty agreed that they felt they have a voice in the hiring of new faculty in their departments.

**Figure 2: Percentage of tenured and tenure track faculty who strongly or somewhat agreed that the process for hiring new faculty is managed effectively in their department, by college.\* (n=779)**



\*Differences are not statistically significant.

## Spousal Hiring

While spousal or partner hiring is an issue that affects both men and women, it has particularly strong implications for the recruiting of women in science and engineering. Faculty women are significantly less likely than faculty men to be married, but those who are married are significantly more likely to have a spouse or partner working full-time, including in an academic position. National data indicate that 35% of men and 45% of women faculty members have a spouse or partner who is also an academic (Astin and Milem, 1997). Women with doctorates in science and engineering are twice as likely as men with the same credential to have a spouse or partner whose job requires technical expertise in engineering, computer science, math, or natural science (NSF, 2002). Another Advance institution, Georgia Tech, found that faculty women in computing, engineering, and liberal arts (44%) were almost three times more likely than male faculty (15%) to have a spouse or partner who is a college or university professor.

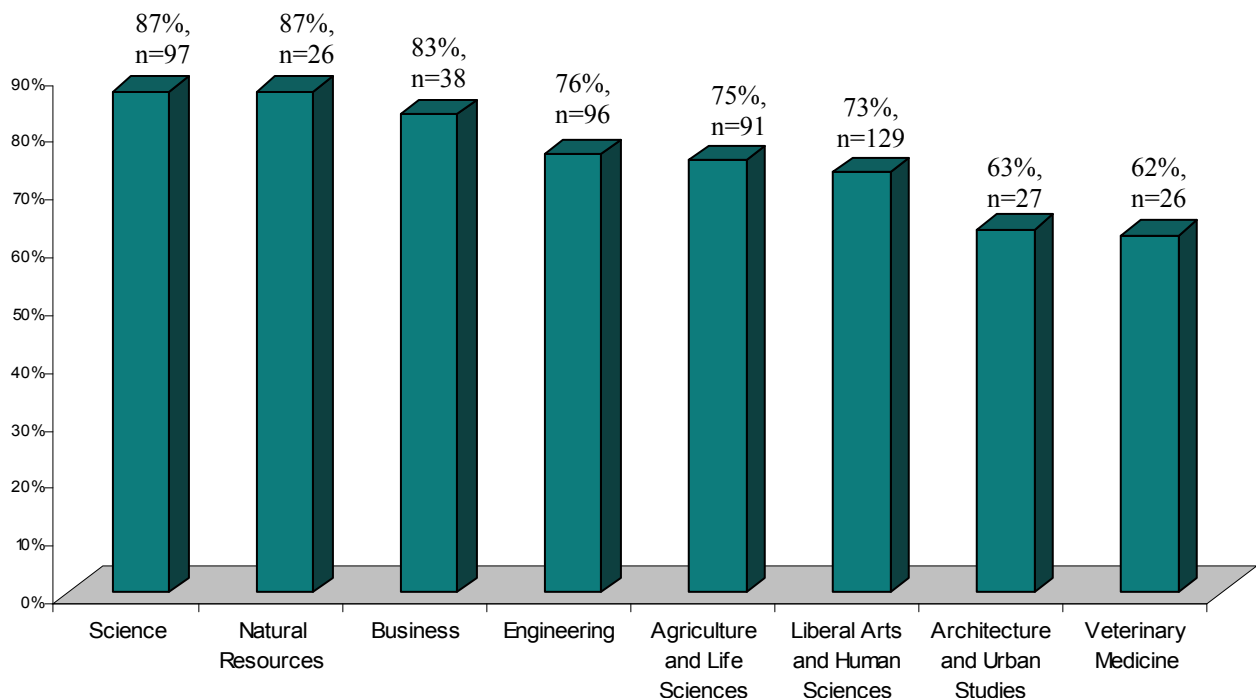
*"I have friends who have felt really alienated and second class who were part of spousal hires at other universities and neither one of us feel like that here."*

*Female, Science, Dual Career Hire Interviews, Fall 2004*

Most tenured and tenure track respondents had a favorable view of spousal hiring in general. Seventy-six percent agreed that policies that facilitate the hiring of faculty spouses/partners strengthen the success of the university's efforts to recruit the most highly qualified faculty. Over half of tenured or tenure track faculty (60%) reported *not* being satisfied with assistance offered by Virginia Tech in finding employment for the spouses/partners of its faculty members. Significantly more women (71%) than men (57%) agreed that there should be an office at Virginia Tech to assist with spousal/partner hiring.

For many faculty members, employment opportunities for a spouse or partner are critical to retention. Findings from exit interviews done by the Virginia Tech Survey Research Center indicate that 24% of 402 faculty interviewed after they left Virginia Tech stated that the insufficient opportunities for a spouse or partner was one reason for their departure. Similarly, on the Faculty Work-Life Survey, of those with a spouse or partner, 51% of female and 41% of male faculty agreed somewhat or strongly with the statement: "I have considered leaving Virginia Tech to improve the employment opportunities of my spouse or partner." Such findings highlight the critical role of dual career hires on faculty recruitment and retention.

**Figure 3: Percentage of tenured and tenure track respondents who strongly or somewhat agreed that policies that facilitate the hiring of faculty spouses/partners strengthen the success of the university's efforts to recruit the most highly qualified faculty, by college. (n=701)**



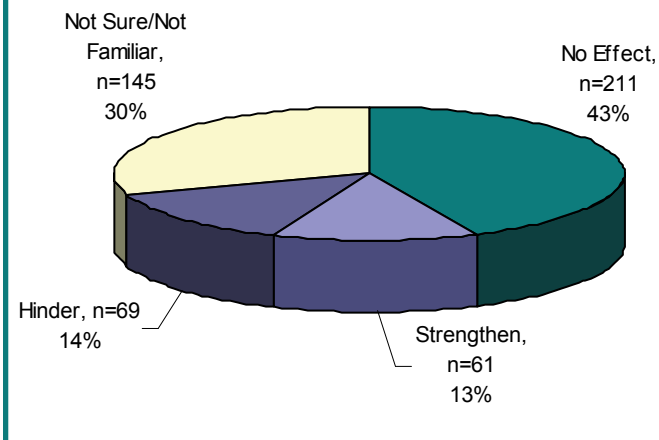
## Cluster Hiring

Cluster hiring involves creating new positions that cross departments and disciplines. Only a little more than half of the tenured and tenure track faculty respondents responded to survey questions concerning cluster hiring. In addition, many of those that responded often selected “not familiar with cluster hiring.” These factors suggest that many respondents were unfamiliar with cluster hiring and its potential benefits to diversity.

Of those who responded to the questions about cluster hiring, support was mixed. Only about one-third of the respondents agreed that cluster hiring would strengthen Virginia Tech’s status as a research institution. Twenty percent felt that it would hinder the achievement of that goal.

The majority of those responding did not perceive that cluster hiring would contribute to diversity: 43% felt that cluster hiring would have no effect on the increase of Virginia Tech’s diversity, 13% felt it would strengthen, 14% felt it would hinder, and 30% were not familiar with cluster hiring or did not know if it will have an effect on diversity (see Figure 4). Findings underscore the need for more communication about the purpose and benefits of cluster hiring.

**Figure 4: Tenured and tenure track faculty opinions on the effect of cluster hiring on increasing diversity at Virginia Tech. (n=486)**



## Summary and Recommendations

- There is relatively strong support from faculty members, particularly women, for the importance of recruiting more women and minorities to the faculty. Disseminating information about the gender and racial composition of recent hires by college will help to communicate the university’s commitment to diversifying the faculty.
- The majority of respondents expressed support for the creation of a dual-career office. A director for a dual-career office at Virginia Tech was recently hired.
- The significant number of faculty respondents indicating that they have seriously considered relocating to improve the employment opportunities for a spouse or partner underscores the importance of extending services of a dual-career office to current faculty.
- Sharing NSF data about the demographic characteristics of new doctoral recipients is one way to alert search committee members of the significance of the dual-career issue in science and engineering.
- Only a small percentage of respondents reported being involved in some pre-recruitment activities that have been found to contribute to diversity on other campuses. These include inviting potential candidates to campus before an official search is underway. This is an area where departments can partner with *AdvanceVT*.

For more information about this survey or other data obtained through assessment projects at *AdvanceVT*, please visit our website: [www.advance.vt.edu](http://www.advance.vt.edu)