

# ADVANCE Rising Tide Center



## Research

Research has shown that women's representation and advancement in academic STEM positions are affected by many external factors that are unrelated to their ability, interest, and technical skills, such as:

- Organizational constraints of academic institutions;
- Differential effects of work and family demands;
- Implicit and explicit bias; and
- Underrepresentation of women in academic leadership and decision making positions.

As part of the UMaine Rising Tide effort, the program goals, initiatives, and activities will be studied in order to expand the knowledge and literature base relative to women faculty in STEM and SBS fields. The study draws upon research across disciplinary fields including higher education, psychology, sociology, business, and women's studies. This interdisciplinary approach will lend itself to a more comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding of the contexts and cultures that facilitate or impede the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women faculty at UMaine.

[NSF 09-504 Social Science Study](#) (PDF)

**Faculty Satisfaction at the University of Maine** – As part of the NSF Rising Tide initiative, the ADVANCE Social Science research team conducted a comprehensive faculty survey over the 2010-2011 academic year. This study solicited responses on number of topics that ultimately impact faculty satisfaction and retention at the University of Maine, including hiring practices, promotion and tenure processes, and the availability of resources. Follow up surveys will be conducted in an effort to identify successful programs and ideally, to institutionalize initiatives that increase faculty satisfaction at UMaine. The report can be viewed or downloaded, in its entirety, by clicking the link below.

[Survey of Faculty Job Satisfaction 2011](#) (PDF)

**Assessing Departmental Climate at the University of Maine** – In March 2012 a survey was distributed to 23 departments and schools at the University of Maine, focusing on those in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and SBS (social-behavioral science) fields. The link to the online survey, which included 26 questions related to departmental climate, was sent to all faculty and staff in each of these 23 units (N=490).

Climate was defined as: "The atmosphere or ambience of an organization as perceived by its members. An organization's climate is reflected in its structures, policies, and practices; the demographics of its membership; the attitudes and values of its members and leaders; and the quality of personal interactions" (University of Wisconsin Committee on Women in the University's Work Group on Climate, 2002). Our survey garnered an average response rate of 53.1% from faculty and staff in the targeted units.

In their open-ended responses to questions about the attributes that made their departments' climate positive and/or negative, respondents from departments rated most positively emphasized how (a) respect and (b) collegiality were a common part of their climate, whereas individuals in the departments rated most negatively emphasized (a) uneven workloads, (b) divisions and tensions in the department, and (c) the negative role played by the department chair or director.

The following report details the survey results, and serves as the basis for broader discussion of issues relevant to retention including faculty satisfaction and departmental barriers to faculty achievement.

[A Report on Departmental Climate in the Sciences at the University of Maine](#) (PDF)

**Achieving the Rank of Professor** – Faculty at the rank of professor or "full professor" most often represent an advanced level of expertise in their field, and therefore enjoy the prestige, influence, and higher salaries afforded to scholarly authorities. Yet gender disparities at the rank of professor persist nationally, and at the University of Maine, where just 23% of all full professors are women. Researchers have observed that at 4-year colleges nationwide, women remain at the level of associate professor for extended periods, often taking up to 24% longer than men to attain the rank of professor.

While much has been written about the process of promotion from assistant to associate professor, few studies have documented the experiences of faculty seeking promotion to "full." The report below details the findings of a 2011 study at the University of Maine, and provides unique insights into the process of seeking promotion to full professor on our campus. Results support broad ADVANCE initiatives that seek to clarify promotion and tenure guidelines, to ensure consistent and fair review of candidates, and to provide mentoring for faculty throughout the academic pipeline.

[A Report on the Experiences in the Process of Promotion to Full Professor](#) (PDF)

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